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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 21, 1982

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Mr. Nunzio J. Palladino, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

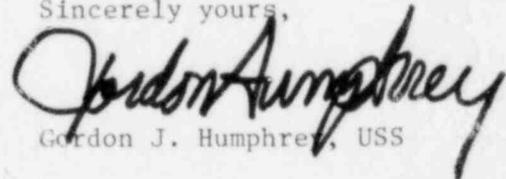
Dear Chairman Palladino:

For some time now, I have been an advocate of nuclear power, the only qualification being that operation of such power plants meet environmental standards for safety.

Just recently, I received a letter from one of my constituents alleging (via a magazine article) that terrible things were happening near the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. I have no information which would verify the allegations, but they are of such a nature that I cannot in good conscience ignore them. I am enclosing a copy of the article in question for your pursual. I would sincerely appreciate hearing from you about the alleged conditions near the Vermont Yankee plant in order that I may prepare a further reply to my constituent.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



Gordon J. Humphrey, USS

GJH:lha
Encl.

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FIRST OF A TWO-PART INTERVIEW

DOWNWIND FROM VERMONT YANKEE

—by Chris Nord

Sometime in 1984, Unit #1 of Seabrook's twin 1150-megawatt reactors is scheduled for completion. How might those living close by be affected by the reactor's presence? Many people regard the accident at Three Mile Island as a fluke, a tragedy that will not be repeated—presumably because the nuclear industry has learned from that incident how to prevent such mishaps in the future. But we may not need to cite "accidents" such as TMI in order to find reason to fear for our health and safety.

Mildred Zywna and Annie Fostyck are sisters, both residents of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. They live a short distance from each other on the Northfield Road, which parallels the Connecticut River. Within two miles of each sister's home, the 540-megawatt Vermont Yankee Nuclear power plant has operated along the Connecticut's western shore, in Vernon, Vermont, since November, 1972.

Mildred and Annie were born in Hinsdale, and raised on a farm there. Annie has continued in farm life to the present time, having maintained with her husband a herd of Jersey milking cows until the fall of 1981. Mildred also farmed for a time with her husband, before he entered the construction field. Having a keen interest in community affairs, Mildred served for three years on Hinsdale's Selectboard (1974-77). She continues to work, regularly, presently for a book bindery in Brattleboro, Vermont.

I interviewed Mildred and Annie in their homes on January 3, 1982. It is hoped that their stories will shed some light on the possible consequences of living in such close proximity to nuclear power.

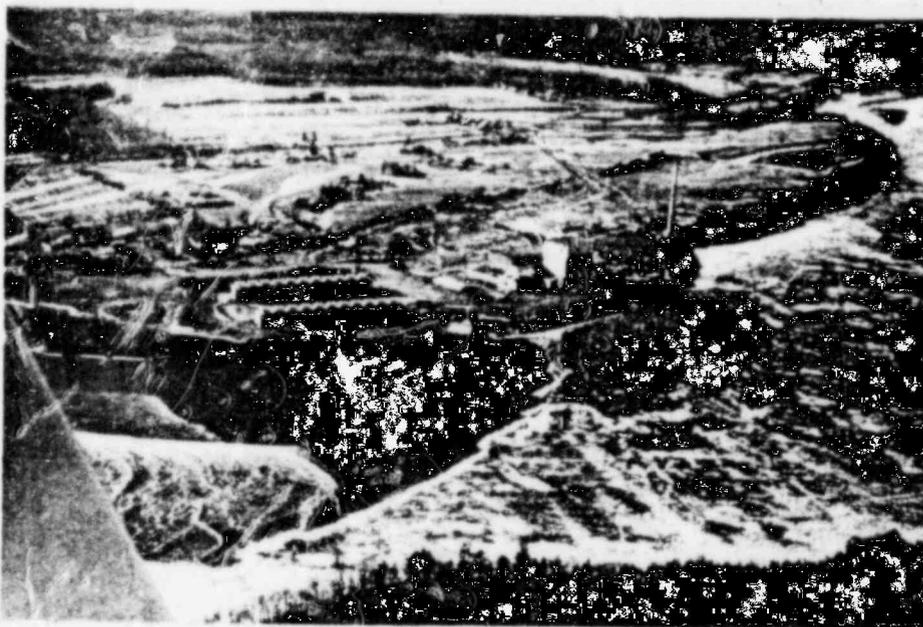


photo: Carlos Richardson

Interview with Mildred Zywna

Chris: Did you live here when Vermont Yankee was built?

Mildred: Oh yes. Outside of eight years, we've been here since 1940. In fact, I have lived in Hinsdale all but eight years of my life. I'll be 60 next month.

Chris: How far are we from Vermont Yankee right now?

Mildred: Well, as the crow flies, I would say about 2 miles. The Connecticut River is right outside the window here, so the plant is north of us and just on the other side.

Chris: When did you first suspect that Vermont Yankee's presence was having some kind of effect on the local environment?

Mildred: We began hearing that so many people around town were getting cancer, all of a sudden. It seemed unreal.

Chris: All of a sudden?

Mildred: All of a sudden, it seemed that sections of Hinsdale were getting awfully high percentages of thyroid cancer. Sometimes it would be two or three in one household. Then we heard from a doctor we know (name withheld) that thyroid cancer was of epidemic proportions in this locality, and that people were getting leukemia and bone cancer. Also, animals—who ever heard of an animal dying of cancer? But all of a sudden, you would hear. Somebody would take their dog or cat to the vet and find that it had leukemia. It was mind-boggling and you would start wondering, well, how come?

Chris: Can you say when this started happening?

Mildred: It started about six years ago...

continued

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Chris: Six years ago would make it 1975, or thereabouts.

Mildred: Yes. So, the Selectboard from Hinsdale and Winchester talked this over. We didn't like what was going on and wanted some answers. We contacted Governor (Meldrim) Thomson, and made an appointment. And all of a sudden, we were almost ordered to go on the day he specified. And so we went. And he wasn't even there. He was at a fund raiser! We were really insulted to think that this man would take six people's time, and practically order us to meet with him on the problem, and then not even be there. The Director of Public Health, Maynard Mires, was there, as well as Governor Thomson's aide, Frederick Goode. They told us, "There's nothing to worry about, nothing...." So I asked Dr. Mires, "How many people have died—what are the percentages—in Hinsdale versus the rest of the state, from cancer?" He told us there was a much higher percentage rate of deaths from cancer in Cheshire County than the rest of the state. So I said, "We're only interested in two towns: Hinsdale and Winchester. They're just a small percentage of Cheshire County," (Cheshire County having Keene and other large towns in it). "Would you break it down by towns—Hinsdale and Winchester—first against the county, then against the state and then against the country?" And he said, "Oh, yes,"—he would get that done. But they haven't yet come up with that information.

Governor Thomson came through Hinsdale later, when he was running for governor again. And he said, "Well, Mildred, are you still having trouble with cancer in Hinsdale?" And I said, "More so than ever." He said, "Oh, you worry too much." And that's all it ever amounted to. But by then, things were really beginning to show up. Cattle were aborting, and later on it got to the point that a lot of the calves were being born deformed.

Before the atomic plant, it was a rare thing for people to have cancer. Even after the atomic thing was built...it's a gradual thing that's increasing all the time.

We tried—the Town Clerk and I—to go through the deaths, because she herself has had cancer. It became a curiosity to see if we could determine the deaths in Hinsdale and their causes from, say, ten years prior to the atomic plant up to the present time. But deaths are written up in medical terms and neither one of us can read the jargon.

Chris: But an increase in cancer, especially thyroid cancer, is evident.

"The vets would admit it to you in private, that it was that damned atomic plant . . .but they would not admit it in public."

— Mildred Zywna

Mildred: The doctor who made these very statements refuses to become public about it. If anyone goes to him and asks him about it, he'll just shake his head and not be put on the spot. He seems to know that this is what's happening, but nobody wants to be put on the spot because they cannot defend their position there...How do you prove it?

Veterinarians know it's happening. The farm that you can see from here across the river was for sale, and a local veterinarian put a down payment on it to buy it. But then he thought—that land goes right up to the atomic plant. And he withdrew the down payment.

Chris: Before we go on, are there any further specific phenomena that you yourself have noticed?

Mildred: Well, my sister, Annie Fostyck, has a farm right up the road, and I have seen what's happened to her cattle.

Chris: So tell me as much as you want to about your sister's place—what kinds of things have happened?—problems mainly with cows?

Mildred: Yes, and cats...they had a lot of barn cats that were dying all over the place. Now a lot of them are born one-eyed. Most of the calves were born dead or deformed. She's farmed all her life. We had a farm that we

were brought up on. Farming was nothing new to her. This was something that had never happened to her before. You'd lose cattle—you know, a cow would lose a calf once in a while—but not like they had down there. Everything was going wrong. And the vets would suspect, they would admit it to you in private, that it was that damned atomic plant...but they would not admit it in public. You could contact any of the vets and they would not go on record.

Finally, my sister demanded that the State of New Hampshire come down to look at what was happening, and come up with a reason for all of it. When they did come, they were so belligerent, that they threatened to close the farm. They said it was because of unsanitary conditions and so forth that my sister was having all her trouble!

Now the other dairy farmers around here won't admit to anything going wrong. But they're all afraid! Is the State going to come and close them down if this becomes public knowledge that they're having livestock deformities and so forth?

Chris: Are there any other dairy farmers who have spoken directly to you about any problems?

Mildred: They keep their mouths shut. They know something's wrong, but they won't say anything. If the State closes them down, who's going to reimburse them? They've got their whole life in there, so they keep going.

Chris: What else has come up for you in the last few years that seems strange?

Mildred: I remember corn that was growing over here—the leaves were all black—some kind of black fuzz. Our neighbors just south of us had it a lot blacker than ours. Ours wasn't so bad, but bad enough. It's something that no one here has seen before.

Chris: What exactly happens to the corn?

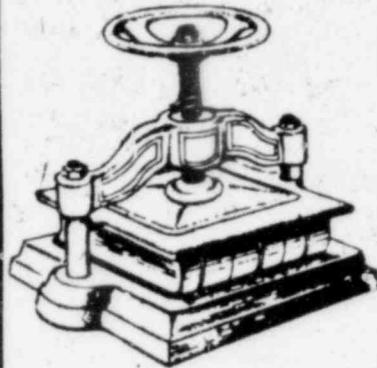
Mildred: There's spots all over the leaves. And then instead of getting ripe they get a sort of soft moss in the husks, and there's no kernels. We used to see that once in a great while—but it was a lot rarer than it is now.

Chris: Are there any other people

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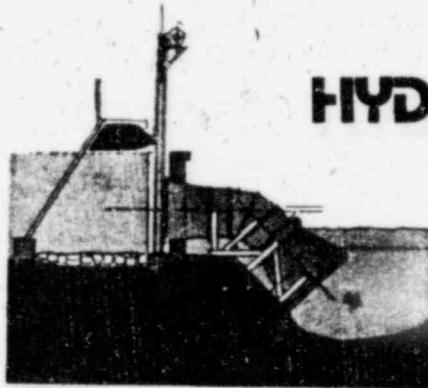
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besides the farmers that you've already mentioned who have brought problems to your attention?

Mildred: There's the ones across the river whose cattle have died of cancer. I've talked with one woman that worked in the shop with me (name withheld). I said to her, I've never heard of animals dying of cancer and she said, "Strange you should mention that, because we just had a cow that died this week from cancer." I asked if that had happened before and she said no. And since then, I've heard they had others, but again, they clam up. In fact, they were interviewed by some newspaper and her father-in-law vehemently denied that there was any problem in Vernon. I think it's ironic that within a year he had passed away—with thyroid cancer. Again, one part of the town of Vernon is petrified, and some of the residents are slowly moving out.

Chris: Before we finish, have there been any other causes for your concern about Vermont Yankee?

Mildred: Well, any time there's been a release, they'll immediately say it was not large enough to endanger anyone, that it was below the levels and so forth. What the majority of people are not aware of is that no matter how small the release, if it got into your system, it's there permanently. It's not going to go away! It stays there. So any time there's a release and anyone has gotten it, it stays. It's there. It keeps adding and adding.

Chris: Is there anything else that people should be aware of, who do now, or may someday be living near an operating nuclear power plant? Is there anything else that you would want them to know about from your own experience?—for people who might have to deal with having a plant in their backyard?

Mildred: If you can stop it, stop it. You should always stop it. The dangers from them will continue years after you're buried. If we can stop just one more from coming in, it will help the whole world.

Part II, an interview with Annie Fos-tyck, will appear in the next issue.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
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Orlando Humphrey

U.S.S.

Mr. Nunzio J. Palladino, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

JUL 19 1982

The Honorable Gordon J. Humphrey
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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There are two concerns in our view: First is the allegation that the Vermont Yankee facility is releasing substantial quantities of radioactive material; second is the allegation that there are noticeable and direct offsite effects attributable to Vermont Yankee.

Federal regulations, 10 CFR 20, Appendix B, and 10 CFR 50, Appendix I, establish limits on the types and quantities of radioactive materials which may be released in effluents from nuclear power plants. 40 CFR 190 establishes limits on both the projected annual radiation dose equivalent and total quantity of radioactive material entering the environment from the uranium fuel cycle. The 10 CFR regulations and the operating license issued by the NRC to the owner and operator of the Vermont Yankee facility require operable in-plant effluent monitoring systems to measure and record radioactivity in the radioactive materials waste treatment and disposal systems as well as implementation of an onsite and offsite radiological environmental monitoring program.

In-plant effluent monitoring systems must meet specific operability and calibration standards established by the NRC. An NRC resident inspector is stationed at the Vermont Yankee facility and he routinely inspects and verifies the proper operation of these systems.

Vermont Yankee's environmental monitoring program includes analyses of airborne and waterborne radioactivity and direct radiation exposures. The airborne radioactivity monitoring program includes samples of milk, vegetation, food products and soil from several locations near the Vermont Yankee facility, including the Hinsdale, New Hampshire area. The waterborne radioactivity monitoring program includes samples of fish, aquatic vegetation, Connecticut River water and sediment, and ground water samples. Again, multiple samples are taken during the year at various locations in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. Direct radiation exposures are measured by thermoluminescent dosimeters (TLDs) which are placed by the licensee at twenty-one locations on and off the Vermont Yankee site. These devices provide a measurement of the total radiation exposure, including natural background exposure, at these locations.

OFFICE ▶
SURNAME ▶
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The results of analyses obtained from the environmental monitoring programs are evaluated and documented by the licensee. The licensee provides an annual Radiological Environmental Report and a Semi-Annual Effluent Release Report, as well as special reports, when required, to the NRC. These reports are placed in the NRC's Public Document Room and are also reviewed by NRC regional office inspection specialists.

In addition to the actions taken by the licensee, the NRC also conducts its own measurements to independently assess the licensee's results.

The NRC program provides for review of the licensee's sampling programs and includes an independent measurements program whereby aliquots of effluent samples are analyzed by the licensee, by our Region I office, and by a national laboratory. The results are compared to confirm the validity of the licensee's analytical techniques. In addition, the NRC places thermoluminescent dosimeters at various locations near all nuclear power plants, including Vermont Yankee. The NRC first placed TLDs around the Vermont Yankee site in May 1980. There are 40 TLD locations around the site ranging from less than one to about nineteen miles away. To date, no exposures were measured which were above those which would be expected from natural background radiation.

In response to your request, reports from the licensee have been re-examined. A review of the licensee's Semi-Annual Effluent Release Reports for the period 1976 through 1981 indicates that the projected annual dose equivalent based on actual effluent and meteorological measurements did not exceed the environmental standards for the uranium fuel cycle (40 CFR 190). 40 CFR 190 specifies limits on both annual dose and total quantity of radioactive material entering the environment from the uranium fuel cycle. Also, a review of the licensee's Annual Radiological Environmental Surveillance Reports for the period 1976 through 1981 indicates only a slight difference in the annual dose equivalent between environmental monitoring stations which might be affected by plant operations and background (control) stations not affected by plant operations. In all cases, the difference in the annual dose equivalent was much less than the 40 CFR 190 limits. Additionally, the dose rates measured by the NRC during operation of the NRC's TLD Direct Radiation Network, and the amount of radioactive material in effluents from the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station actually measured by the NRC, support the licensee's conclusion. We have, therefore, no reason to believe there is any radiological impact on the environment from the operation of the Vermont Yankee facility.

The State of Vermont also monitors the environment around Vermont Yankee and provides a monthly report to our Region I office. These reports reflect findings that releases of radioactivity from Vermont Yankee are very small (much less than permitted) and that levels of radioactivity in the environment (air, water, particulates and milk) are not much different than background levels obtained prior to the operation of Vermont Yankee.

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With regard to the problems at the Fostyck farm, we understand that the New Hampshire State Department of Health and Welfare conducted radiation surveys in the vicinity of the farm. We contacted Ms. Diane Tefft from the Bureau of Environmental Health who stated to us that they found no radiation levels above background. The Bureau routinely samples a farm contiguous to the Fostyck farm and has found no evidence of radiation above background. If you have any further questions, Ms. Tefft will be happy to discuss them with you. She can be reached at 603-271-4588.

In addition, we contacted Dr. George Cilley, the New Hampshire State Veterinarian, who stated that he had visited the Fostyck farm in April 1981 after receiving a call regarding premature and deformed calves. He stated that his impression was that the farm was not experiencing any more problems than farms elsewhere in the state. In his opinion, there was no evidence of particular problems related to Vermont Yankee. He can be reached at 603-271-2404 if you have further questions.

If, in the future, we identify any further information regarding the concerns discussed in your letter we will contact your office.

If I or my staff can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm
 William J. Dircks
 Executive Director
 for Operations

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