

# THE FOLDED CRANE

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility | Spring 2008

## Hanford Update 2008

By Rachel Larson  
Executive Director, Oregon PSR

*It is a remarkable fact of nuclear weapons history that every nuclear weapon state has first of all harmed its own people in the name of national security-* Arjun Makhijani, author of *Carbon Free, Nuclear Free*

As the Bush administration again seeks federal funding for new nuclear weapons facilities known as Complex 2030, Hanford, the south-central Washington site of the majority of national nuclear weapons fuel production from 1945 to 1990, is addressing over 440 billion gallons of contaminated liquids in ground tanks. These underground tanks were built in the 1940's and were designed to last for only two or three decades. Six single-shelled underground tanks have been emptied of radioactive and chemically hazardous waste; 143 tanks are left to be emptied.

The basin closest to the Columbia River has been emptied of radioactive sludge.

400 hazardous waste shipments have been sent to New Mexico. 354 of the 1,438 facilities on site have been decommissioned and demolished. Construction of a waste treatment plant that will process the majority of waste on-site at Hanford is 40% complete.

However, in spite of this success, the cleanup is drastically behind schedule. For example, in 2007, the Department of Energy (DOE) established a new timeline to remove all waste from the single shelled tanks by 2040. This schedule would leave radioactive waste underground in old, potentially leaking tanks for another 32 years.

Because funding for Hanford's cleanup is regulated through the DOE's budget, it is frequently reallocated by the government for other nuclear projects. These delays and dwindling budgets make Hanford's cleanup a slow, agonizing process. Another major concern is that the DOE might choose Hanford as a nuclear waste dumping ground from other national sites, despite all the treatment issues still remaining to be addressed.

There is more good news from Hanford. In the first week of April, some of the people whose health was damaged by radiation downwind from Hanford were granted a victory in a federal appeals court suit over exposure to iodine-131, a radioactive byproduct of nuclear weapons production.

### The Health of the Gorge

Please join Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility in partnership with Columbia Riverkeeper to learn about The Health of the Gorge

May 9th, 2008, 7:00- 9:00 PM  
Simon Benson House  
Portland State University

RSVP to 503.274.2720

See page 3 inside for details



cc: Devin Ford

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## Letter from our Newest Board Member

By Marjorie Kircher, MS OTR, Board Member,  
EH committee member



I originally joined PSR in 1980, following one of Helen Caldicott's Portland appearances, and quickly became an active member. I worked on the PSR programs to educate the public on the "Health Effects of Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War" when there was much activity in the Reagan Administration for a massive build-up of nuclear warheads, missiles, Anti-ballistic missile technology in space ("Star Wars,") and First-strike policy planning. Career pursuits and family gradually took over my time

and I retreated from active PSR membership. What brought me back to active work in Oregon PSR, and now membership on the Board, is my current alarm for children's health.



I have worked for the last 22 years as an occupational therapist with children who have motor delays and neurological impairments, including learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, mental retardation and others. I work in a local school district, and have witnessed an alarming rate of increase over the last decade or so in the numbers of children with neurological anomalies of all kinds, which profoundly decreases their ability to learn and participate functionally in daily life.

Not only are there more children with special needs, but the severity of the impairment of children we serve has also increased.

Discussion with colleagues and information from my reading confirms that others see similar increases regionally and nationally. It is overwhelming to the special and general education staff in schools to manage and fund these increasing numbers of children with serious problems, and even more devastating for families who must care for these children, some of whom will never be able to live

independently. These children are born into families from all socio-economic groups, privileged and underprivileged alike.

In an effort to understand what is happening, I started reading articles and attending the Healthy Environment Forum lectures organized by the Oregon Environmental Council and sponsored by Oregon PSR and other health groups. I learned that low-level exposure to neurotoxicant chemicals in the environment such as mercury, lead, PCBs, pesticides, and others at critical windows of fetal and early childhood development can have a profound impact on neurological development and functional outcome, with potentially strong effects on our society.

I believe that the public may have an abstract concern for environmental issues and children's health, but think outcomes may occur sometime in the intangible future, or that there isn't really a problem, it's just how the disabilities are counted, or that they are "over-diagnosed," etc. The problem for our children and families is very real and is already evident in the schools, with profound impact to society. I feel that my work with Oregon PSR's Environmental Health committee, to educate health care providers and the public on these issues, to prevent problems and protect our patients ("downstream"), and Sara Wright's work with the PSR Environmental Health committee in coalition with other local environmental groups for legislation to enact chemical regulation in Salem ("upstream") is the right way to start making a difference in children's developmental health.

812 SW Washington St.  
Suite 1050  
Portland, OR 97205

Tel: (503)274-2720  
Fax: (503)222-5348  
info@oregonpsr.org  
www.oregonpsr.org

**Executive Director**

Rachel Larson  
rachel@oregonpsr.org

**Program Director**

Sara Wright  
sarawright@oregonpsr.org

**Project Director**

Campaign for Safe Food  
Rick North  
hrnorth@hevanet.com

**If you wish to take action by becoming involved with a PSR committee or the Board of Directors, please contact Rachel Larson at [rachel@oregonpsr.org](mailto:rachel@oregonpsr.org)**

# The Health of the Gorge

By Brent Foster and Michael Lange

The Columbia River is the biggest river in western United States, and one of the most beautiful, but hydropower, pollution and agricultural and urban development have taken a heavy toll. The Gorge's air quality ranks as one of the most polluted among federally protected areas. Additional studies have shown that air pollution is contributing to acid rain in the Gorge, harming ecosystems, damaging Native American petroglyphs and threatening human health. With salmon populations already in a steep decline, global warming now threatens to speed that process by melting glaciers that are key sources of cool summer water and increasing already high river temperatures.

While all hope is not lost for one of the Northwest's signature rivers, it is going to take a focused, energized and creative effort to bring back the clean water and healthy salmon runs that the Northwest was well known for 100 years ago.

Brent Foster and Michael Lang of Columbia Riverkeeper will speak on May 9th (see box on p. 1) about the Hanford cleanup, the status of the salmon, the benefits of fulfilling the proposed removal of five dams and how



CC: NATE MARVIN

these topics affect the health of the Gorge.

*Brent Foster is the Executive Director of CRK and is a practicing environmental attorney specializing in water pollution issues. Brent has represented numerous conservation groups throughout Oregon and currently serves on the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club's Executive Committee.*

*Michael Lang, Conservation Director, joined Friends of Columbia Gorge in 1993 as Forest and Land Use Coordinator and has served as Conservation Director since 1995. Michael oversees all aspects of the monitoring and litigation program, as well as playing a key role in CRK lobbying efforts.*

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## Hanford Update continued from page 1


This ruling could allow hundreds more people who claim they were exposed to radiation to sue former Hanford nuclear reservation weapons contractors. Since 1990, some 2,300 people have sued over health problems they believe were caused by exposure to radioactive emissions from Hanford.

These issues are of primary concern for the health of our regional community! We need to increase our oversight of Hanford to prevent its use as a nuclear dumping ground, to press

for faster and more effective cleanup, and to remind the public of the historical mistakes that led to the construction of Hanford in the first place. Hanford should be a national example of the irreversible damage done by nuclear weapons to our environment and our health. Oregon PSR is committed to speaking up about Hanford in the context of continuing federal efforts to increase nuclear weapons production, If you would like to join Oregon PSR in these efforts to make Hanford a national example, please contact Rachel at 503.274.2720 or [rachel@oregonpsr.org](mailto:rachel@oregonpsr.org).

# Toxin limits should reflect those most at risk!





By Catherine Thomasson, MD

⚠ CAUTION ⚠


Current radiation standards are designed for HIM...

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...What about the rest of US?

Healthy from the Start

www.ieer.org/campaign

Many federal regulation standards, such as limits on how much residual radiation will be allowed in contaminated soil, are based on "Reference Man." The official definition of Reference Man is a Caucasian between 20-30 years of age, weighing 154 pounds, 5' 7" in height. This standard was set in 1975 and does not take into account risks for other diseases or reproductive health, only cancer. Reference man does not account for the fact that women are 55% more likely to develop cancer

given the same amount of radiation dosage

compared to a man or that a female infant exposed to the same radiation in their milk is 70 times more at risk of thyroid cancer than an adult male drinking that same contaminated milk.

A broad coalition of scientists, physicians, cancer prevention leaders, children's health organizations, environmental justice advocates and women's groups are urging President Bush to direct all federal agencies to review their exposure standards. It's time we take into account factors such as fetal death or deformities from tritium (radioactive hydrogen), pesticide ingestion in children with higher metabolic rates or minority diets (Native-fish consumption from the Hanford Reach).

Please join us by signing your name to this cause at [www.ieer.org/campaign](http://www.ieer.org/campaign)

## PSR Members in the Community

Our PSR members continue to advocate for the world we want. Check our current list to see if you can help, and let us know of projects you would like to join that are mentioned here.

- Dr. Charles Grossman created a \$100,000 NYU School of Medicine scholarship fund
- Marylou Noble, LPC, called for diplomacy with Iran in the Oregonian editorial
- Catherine Thomasson, MD, testified on Reliable Replacement Weapons to the Department of Energy in Nevada, held speaker trainings here and in Wisconsin on Global Warming, and gave several presentations calling for diplomacy with Iran
- Charles Hudson completed years of work in the efforts of the Tribal Fisheries landmark agreement with Bonneville Power Administration
- Dr. John Pearson, Dr. Jenny Pompilio, Margie Kircher, OT, and Dr. Susan Katz gave the *In Harm's Way* presentations in six different venues
- Carroll Johnson is working on strategies to address pollution from the Marion County Solid Waste Management Plan in Salem
- Andy Harris' work starting Physician Training in Global Health, a new program to train licensed Oregon physicians for volunteer medical work in developing countries, including disaster relief
- Chris Morgan is presenting a great power point on the feasibility of private solar power to community groups



## Honoring the Gift of the Greenfields

*By Oregon PSR Board of Directors and with assistance from Karen Steingart, MD*

Del and Lou Greenfield made a bequest of over \$150,000 to Oregon PSR at the end of 2007. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for such an amazing gift.

The Board of Directors and staff wish to honor their legacy by creating a number of special activities, including the re-establishment of the student peace essay contest and an annual educational peace event.

In addition, we will be hiring a peace intern to address “what is currently going on with nuclear weapons?” and a part-time administrative assistant to increase Oregon PSR’s capacity to carry out more programs. Del Greenfield was the Executive Director of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility from 1981 to 1996. In this capacity, she championed peace issues and helped to organize the highly successful 1982 symposium “the Medical Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and War.” She also established the annual Waterfront Park Hiroshima Day activities that honor the victims of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which continues each year. One of her favorite projects, due to her love of children, was the peace essay contest that ran for years.

Del was an inspiration to everyone around her. She worked tirelessly to promote a peaceful world. In her own words (on the occasion of acknowledgement for her outstanding leadership in organizing the 1982 symposium): “I haven’t yet learned to accept praise and I’m afraid I never will



– maybe because I love to work, especially in a cause that is so meaningful and with people so fine – that the work is reward enough...and the friendship and love I saw in the multitude of eyes around me is something I’ll always cherish.” Dr. Rudi Nussbaum described Del as “the heart and conscience of Oregon PSR.”

Lou Greenfield accompanied Del around the world to many meetings of National Physicians for Social Responsibility and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Lou was a staunch supporter of his wife’s work. They raised three children and also were blessed with many grandchildren.

### Join the Greenfield Events Planning Committee

If you would like to be a part of the Greenfield Events Planning Committee, please contact the PSR office at 503.274.2720

# Calendar of Events

**May 7th** – *PSR Board of Directors meeting*

**May 9th** – *PSR and Columbia  
Riverkeeper- Health of the Gorge event*

**May TBA**– *Hiroshima Anniversary  
Planning Committee Meeting*

**May 15th** – *Call Congress to prevent War  
on Iran*

**May 21st** – *PSR Journal Club on Green  
Living*

**May 21/22nd** – *Clean Med Conference,  
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania*

**May 28th** – *Press Conference with World  
Wildlife Fund on Lieberman-Warner Senate  
Bill on Climate Change*

**June 4th** – *PSR Board of Directors  
meeting*

**June TBA** – *Greenfield Annual Event  
Planning meeting*

**June 18th** – *PSR Journal Club on  
Chemical Policy*

**July 2nd**–*PSR Board of Directors meeting*

**July 16th**–*PSR Journal Club on Health  
Effects of War*

## Donations

Welcome members: Dr. Neuringer, Dr. Castanares and the Stoffers. Ginny and Robert Freemans are among our amazing monthly donors who were not thanked in January. Also, special thanks to Doris Bernard, a new monthly donor! PSR needs more individuals to join Doris' example of dedication! Twenty-three members gave in response to our last newsletter. Thank you.

## Stop War Against Iran

*Greater Boston PSR*

A troubling pattern of threatening words and actions from the White House points to a new war: a “preventive” strike against Iran. The misinformation continues, despite all available intelligence.

A military strike against Iran would be our second illegal and unprovoked act of aggression, and could initiate a global war.

Iran has not refused to negotiate. That is White House fiction. At least two serious offers have been rejected by the White House. There is still time for direct, unconditional negotiations, without sanctions.

The American people want peaceful relations and true security, not more chaos and war. Four out of five Americans favor direct talks with Iran. Congress must make the White House listen to the people. As they begin a



new legislative session, our Representatives and Senators can take leadership to stave off U.S. aggression against Iran. They need to hear from you now! Oregon Senator Gordon Smith has not supported negotiation with Iran. Tell Senator Smith it's time to call for talks with Iran without pre-conditions. Sanctions and war are not diplomacy.

**Call Senator  
Smith Today at  
503.326.3386**

**And join PSR's  
National Call-in on  
May 15th.**

Physicians for Social Responsibility  
 Oregon Chapter  
 812 SW Washington St., Suite 1050  
 Portland, OR 97205  
 (503)274-2720  
 (503)222-5348 (fax)

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Physicians for Social Responsibility  
 Oregon Chapter  
 812 SW Washington St., Suite 1050  
 Portland, OR 97205

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