

# Letters to the editor



## Another side to the atomic waste story

First let me commend you on the variety of subjects you are covering in **Home & Country**. It is becoming a most interesting magazine.

May I comment on the article you had in the last issue (page 7) on atomic waste disposal. When I read it over a few times I felt the content is misleading in terms of what Mr. Finley had claimed.

This is a serious problem facing us today. I wrote to a woman who works in this field, for the betterment of our world. She has published 80 academic papers and articles in a range of international journals and books. She wrote a book, published last year called *No Immediate Danger? Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth*. She was a consultant for the Citizens' Advisory Commission on the accident at Three Mile Island. These are just a few of her credentials.

The following is the letter she sent me. It may be of interest to **Home & Country** readers.

**Gladys McCullum  
Dundas**

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Dear Mrs. McCullum:

The article is clearly a public relations garble of a very serious problem. It especially disturbed me since I attended a meeting in Winnipeg last year and Mr. Dixon of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited announced publically that their firm did not resort to public relations when dealing with radioactive waste.

A few particulars in reference to the **Home & Country** article:

"Radiation is a natural part of life." — This includes sunshine, ultra-violet, radio waves and other types of non-ionizing radiation. Xray, gamma ray and cosmic rays are ionizing radiation. Life emerged on earth **after** levels of ionizing radiation decreased. Ionizing radiation contributes to the aging problem.

"Children sitting eight feet away from a color TV receive 1 unit per year." No estimate of length of

time spent in front of the TV and no "unit" are given. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 520/1-77-009) estimates individuals in North America receive 0.025 to 0.043 millirem per year from watching color television. An individual dose from nuclear fallout is given as 2 millirem per year, cosmic radiation as 41-45 millirem per year, and terrestrial radiation as 30 to 95 per year. The latter two are unavoidable.

"Those who smoke a pack of cigarettes a day for a year will receive 8,000 millirems." Uranium decay products released from mining and mixed (naturally) with fer-

tilizers have increased both the lung dose (not whole body like the other exposures) and also the lung cancer rate. This is no excuse for increasing exposures. Nor is it a choice of ionizing radiation exposure by smokers. Generally they have no idea what pollutants are inhaled.

The rest of the article is equally faulty and misleading. The only saving grace appears to be that "the industry is working to ensure that nuclear waste is not added to natural radiation."

**Rosalie Bertell, Ph.D., GNSH  
International Institute of Concern  
for Public Health**

## Change WI name? NO say readers!

As a 93 year-old charter member of the Navan Branch of the Women's Institute in Russell District, I am writing objecting to a change in name of the Womens' Institute, as suggested in the Spring **Home & Country** and to the question why Women's Institute? I don't think any members disliked the word institute or would want the name changed.

I cannot imagine anyone objecting to the word institute, so I looked up the meaning in an English Concise Dictionary: institute, n. society; organization for the promotion of scientific or other objects:

digest of elements of subjects, especially jurisprudence  
institute v.t. establish; found; set on foot; inquiry etc. appoint (persons to or into a benifice) from Latin in (statuerre) -tutstatuerre or set up  
institution n. instituting familiar object

established law, custom, or practice: organization for promotion of some public object

organized into or, finding expression through:

just below was the word instruct v.t. teach, inform.

All of these are in W.I. work.

I do not think that the W.I. members are a bunch of old fogies living in the past. I always considered them alert, forward looking, especially in ways of improving their community.

I vote to retain our vibrant name of "Institute" with a wonderful history, of which we can be proud. I cannot take in yet many of the proposed changes, and I'm sure you have studied the issues well, but is it wise to implement so many all at once? I believe in taking one step at a time as in learning to walk; easy does it, is a good rule to follow. We do not discard things simply because they are old, unless they are worn out.

**Mary A. Cotton  
Navan W.I.**

The letter from Ivy R. Johnson of Alford & Park Road W.I. interested me very much because I am surprised by her lack of knowledge regarding the name of the organization she so obviously enjoys.

Her suggestion that the name of

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