



Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc.

# NEWSBRIEF

[www.crcpd.org](http://www.crcpd.org)

A Partnership Dedicated to Radiation Protection December 2020

## Message from Chairperson Kim Steves

### Happy Holidays!

As 2020 winds down, I can only reflect on how unprecedented this year has been. We have all had to adapt to new ways of doing business and new ways of living safely during a pandemic. I'm proud of everything your CRCPD Board has accomplished despite these challenging times.



On December 7 and 8, we held our Fall Board Meeting (virtually), and received updates from the Council Chairs on all the excellent work which is continuing on the committees and task forces. Thank you to all our volunteers who have persevered through challenging times! We also heard from our federal and other partner organizations on their activities and ongoing joint endeavors in which we are engaged. I am happy to inform you that the CRCPD continues to move forward and we are still in a solid financial position as we end this year.

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**Message from  
Chairperson** *(continued)*

**Conference  
Planning Committee**

*“...are putting  
together a draft  
agenda for our  
2021 national  
conference.”*

**Kim Steves**

**Happy Holidays!** - *continued*

Our conference planning committee met on December 10 and are putting together a draft agenda for our 2021 national conference. We are in discussions with our contracted hotel on opportunities to modify our contract and are looking at options for holding a virtual conference or perhaps a hybrid version with a small number of persons in attendance. Stay tuned for more information on this in January.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Board members if you have questions or concerns or need assistance.

It is also that time of year when we start looking for those interested in running for a Board position in 2021, so please let us know if that is you!

Looking forward to 2021 with the hope that the pandemic will ease and vaccinations will be plentiful!

*From my “bubble” to yours, I wish you all continued health, a safe holiday, and a very Happy New Year!*



## Greetings from Your Executive Director



Ruth E. McBurney, CHP

### 2020 Conference

*“As we planned for our annual conference for May, with the theme “2020: Vision for the Future,” the vision we had for 2020 was not entirely as anticipated.”*

Ruth E. McBurney

## An Extraordinary Year!

At the end of the year, we usually pause to reflect on all that has happened over the course of the year. **Of course, this has been such an extraordinary year that has tested us and the whole radiation protection community in ways never experienced.** As we planned for our annual conference for May, with the theme “2020: Vision for the Future,” the vision we had for 2020 was not entirely as anticipated. Much of our planned travel and meetings were cancelled, the business meeting and Board meetings were held virtually, and even normal work processes have changed for those in radiation control work at both the national and state levels.

Any time we were able to get out for any reason, we must wear a mask—thus, this month’s picture. **I hope this is the one and only time I will use this picture with my greetings to you!**

In spite of all the changes in plans and the way we do things, brought about by the global pandemic, our members have shown innovation and resilience in addressing radiation control issues. We have been able to maintain our purpose and connections with each other and our federal and international partners in the virtual world. We have shared policies and experiences through a dedicated web page. We have celebrated achievements at virtual meetings and discussions online and in conference calls, and we have continued the work of CRCPD. To name a few of the key accomplishments this year, we have:

- Established an online platform for the use of the Board of Directors, which is being expanded for use by active committees working on a publication or other project where shared documents are needed.
- Upgraded the Radon Leaders Saving Lives Web Portal.
- Continued to identify and arrange for the disposal of unwanted sealed sources, some of which were high-activity sources.

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## Executive Director

Greetings *(continued)*Message from the  
OED

*“As 2020 comes to an end, we at the Office of Executive Director thank you for all you are doing.”*

Ruth E. McBurney

An Extraordinary Year! - *continued*

- Arranged for training opportunities through webinars and offers of registration-free conferences, some of which were due to the generosity of partnering organizations and budget adjustments of federal grant funding, originally designated for travel.
- Completed the proton therapy guide, updated the Healthcare Providers' Guide to Radon, and finished a white paper on foreign-origin americium.
- Continued to provide input to the federal radiation agencies on issues important to the states, such as radon standards, radiological emergency exercises during the pandemic, and radioactive waste disposal, just to name a few.
- Continued our activities under our Practical Arrangement with the International Atomic Energy Agency through:
  - Active participation in the International Conference on Radiation Safety—Dave Allard (PA) served on the planning committee and took part in the presentation of the virtual conference. I served on a side event panel, presented by the International Radiation Protection Association, on “Reasonableness in Radiation Regulations.”
  - Consultancies on healing arts and naturally occurring radioactive material issues. The latest one is the review and revision of IAEA Safety Report 34: Radiation Protection and the Management of Radioactive Waste on the Oil and Gas Industry. If any of you have expertise in this area and would like to assist on this, please let me know.

I have only mentioned a few of the great work still going on in CRCPD in 2020. **Kudos to you all for your contributions to this important work and tenacity in getting through this difficult year!** As 2020 comes to an end, we at the Office of Executive Director thank you for all you are doing.

***We wish you and your loved ones a happy, safe holiday and a 2021 filled with professional and personal growth, opportunities, and HOPE.***



## CRCPD AWARDED TWO POSTHUMOUS RADON HERO AWARDS

The Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors announced the recipients of this year's Radon Hero Awards, both presented posthumously to two individuals, both of whom have dedicated a large part of their lives to radon awareness and reduction, and who passed away this year. This year's Radon Hero Awards was presented in memoriam to the following persons for their long-term dedication and demonstrated commitment to reducing radon exposure. The award is usually given during the annual National Radon Training Conference to an individual who has demonstrated leadership and commitment in reducing the health effects of radon exposure. This year, the recipients were honored during the virtual AARST International Radon Symposium, November 9-13, 2020.

### Janice E. Nolen

*American Lung Association*



From as far back as the early 1990's, when Janice joined the American Lung Association (ALA) as a program director in a state ALA organization and among the first proponents in the nation

for strong building codes that would protect occupants from radon in newly built structures, to 2020, in her role as ALA's Assistant Vice President for National Policy, she has been a champion for a strong national program addressing radon reduction and strong state laws that made radon an integral part of housing policy. She built her career on a foundation of leadership, service, and the strictest standards of excellence.

In addressing Janice's achievements in radon reduction, Deborah Brown, Chief Mission Officer of the ALA stated, "There is nothing about Janice's career that was more exemplary of her striving to accomplish impactful work on radon through collaboration than her leading a diverse partnership of government agencies and non-governmental organizations (eventually called the Leadership Council) to develop, commit to, and persevere in making solid progress on goals and strategies of what would become known as the National Radon Action Plan (NRAP). In all of Janice's work, not only through her leadership to fulfill NRAP's bold goals and strategies, but also when advocating for laws or policies, ... she maintained a steady focus on the role that radon plays in causing lung cancer and on the mission to save lives from radon."

### Lou Witt

*U. S. Environmental Protection Agency*



Lou Witt spent more than three decades educating the public about the risks of radon and helping support programs aimed at reducing unnecessary radon exposure. Lou spent his earlier career at the National Association of Counties (NACo) advancing radon awareness and action, before he transitioned to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where he became a fixture in the radon community. His contributions to radon awareness helped build the foundation of EPA's Radon Program and set the stage for future radon reduction policies and action at both the state and federal level.

During his many years with EPA, Lou served in several capacities, including project officer for another important radon partner, the National Environmental Health Association, EPA Radon Team Leader, and Regional Coordinator, collaborating with regional teammates to increase education and communication about the risks from radon exposure and advocating for strong public health policies. His communication and interaction skills led him to be an important "public face of EPA's radon and indoor air program for many years." He often volunteered to staff the EPA booth at various conferences; answered numerous public inquires; promoted press coverage, partnerships and progress aimed at indoor air health risks, including radon; and developed EPA communication packages to promote National Radon Action Month activities. His tireless efforts to advance indoor air quality, his honest communication style, including a wry sense of humor, and his instinct to recognize the contributions of others before himself, make Lou Witt very deserving of the title "Radon Hero."



**Fillable 2579 Forms Available for Reports of X-ray Installations****2579 Forms**

**The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has made the REPORT OF ASSEMBLY OF A DIAGNOSTIC X-RAY SYSTEM (Form 2579) available as a downloadable fillable form on their website at <https://www.fda.gov/media/144454/download>. They have also provided information on how to submit it to them.**

**Many states also require a copy of the form upon installation of diagnostic x-ray systems in order to have the facilities properly register the devices. A copy of the completed form can be sent electronically to the state program. Contacts at individual state programs to whom the 2579 Forms should be sent by the installers can still be found from our map of state programs at <https://www.crcpd.org/page/map20> by clicking on the state program, then going to that state's Healing Arts Contacts/2579's.**

**We have also provided the link for the form from our State Contact Directory for easy access:**

**State Contact Directory - Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc. at <https://www.crcpd.org/BlankCustom.asp?page=StateContactDirector>**

**You can find this from the home page of the CRCPD website under Healing Arts/State Contact Directory.**





## A VIEW FROM THE SIDELINES

by Roland G. Fletcher, Past Chair



*In many ways, I am still trying to appreciate my abrupt retirement in April 2017. Following a bout with pneumonia in November of 2016, I got deathly*

*ill on January 20th (inauguration day, someone else can make the connection) because my kidneys decided not to function properly. The doctors uttered words that essentially meant I was only a few hours from being issued my harp, halo and white robe (for those of you chuckling, I do believe those are my future gifts). Since then, I've been adjusting to my new status outside of the radiation information mainstream and in the "What do I do now? Reality." I do have dialysis three times a week and continue my youth scholarship activities as Foundation Chairman. As cruel as it seems, COVID - 19 has caused more of us to remain at home as well.*

*I didn't really realize how much I missed the mainstream until I saw the previews of an HBO miniseries on Chernobyl. For many reasons, this was a connection I couldn't ignore. Unfortunately, my life was again revisited by medical necessity, i.e. spinal fusion surgery and, like Tiger Woods, I wondered whether my golfing records were in danger (most rounds over par).*

### CHERNOBYL REVISITED

By acknowledging that there is not much new and exciting regarding radiation in the daily "real world news," I could barely wait for the beginning of the HBO program. The five part miniseries on Chernobyl was frightening and sobering all at the same time. It was of great interest to me because the actual event occurred on April 26, 1986, during my second month as Maryland State Director of Radiation Control. It was the second of a radiation one-two punch with the first being a week-long television special report from Washington D.C. on radon. Then there was worldwide attention generated by the ominous and frightening black plume emanating from the Ukraine and gradually covering a large part of the Soviet Union. Worldwide public concern and apprehension aided by mass media coverage was inevitable

Almost immediately, in addition to over 2500 radon inquiries, members of my staff and I were inundated with calls from frantic citizens concerned about the plume being shown on the evening news. The demand was so intense that we were asked to participate in a multimedia news conference with all major television and radio stations and newspapers. This introduction gave us recognition and instant credibility as we transmitted

## A View from the Sidelines: Chernobyl Revisited *- continued*



information we received which projected a level of optimism regarding how innocuous this cloud was, based on what we were told by Soviet authorities.

Unfortunately, the reports we received, along with other states and federal agencies, were far from truthful. Depending upon the accuracy of the miniseries, which has apparently been verified, all outside the Soviet Union were misled about the true danger to the world due to the Chernobyl accident. I was giving advice about relatives traveling in Europe, decisions on potential contamination of ordered vehicles and a variety of other items being shipped from Europe. I was answering questions regarding the impact of the large cloud shown on many U.S. magazines and television news shows based on seriously flawed information.

In the miniseries opening dated April 28, 1988, two full years after the event, a middle-aged man, later identified as Dr. Valery Legosov, the Chief Soviet Nuclear Physicist tasked with finding a solution to the Chernobyl disaster, sat in a poorly lit room. He was in the process of completing audiotapes lamenting the lies that had been perpetrated by the Soviet authorities. He was portrayed as one of the few voices of reason recognizing the potential catastrophic devastation of the event. When asked directly by Soviet political officials how to solve the problem, he stated, "We are dealing with something that has never occurred in the history of mankind."

From the moment it occurred the Chernobyl explosion was potentially more deadly than the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but no one, especially those on site, realized it. Apparently, the use of graphite to moderate the neutron (flux) bombardment from the uranium 235 was considered sufficient in several Russian nuclear power plants due apparently to cost considerations. Chernobyl proved this to be a false assumption. Though the specifics were apparently never completely understood or revealed, it appears that a 10-hour delay in the completion of a safety test produced more reactions than the graphite cover could handle. Supersaturated "with trillions more U-235 neutron bombardments" than it was built to handle, it exploded.

This outcome was apparently never considered by reactor operators and engineers or local reactor officials who sought to minimize and control public information regarding the event. The lethality of the exposure levels soon made information control impossible. Fireman and plant workers in close proximity to pieces of exploded graphite were collapsing on site with very red skin, uncontrolled bleeding, vomiting and unconsciousness.

The cloud from the Chernobyl fire quickly filled the skyline and soon could be seen for miles. The Soviets tried to minimize worldwide concern by reporting lower than actual levels of radioactive contamination escaping the facility. At its worse, according to the miniseries, radioactive materials with exposure rates of more than 15,000 rads per hour

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## A View from the Sidelines: Chernobyl Revisited *- continued*

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were escaping the facility with the potential of contaminating large areas of the Ukraine, Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for at least 100 years.

Initially, Soviet Officials, apparently unaware of the true danger, sought to minimize the impact when briefing Premier Gorbachov. They apparently told him that the level of escaping radiation was just over 3 rads per hour. Dr. Legosov, fearfully, but emphatically, gave his suspicions about what had happened. Gorbachov ordered that Dr. Legosov and Soviet Minister Boris Shcherbina go to Chernobyl and assess the damage directly. Upon approach, Shcherbina ordered the helicopter pilot to fly directly over the damaged unit or be shot, but Legosov convinced him that death from radiation was far worse than a bullet. Pieces of graphite around the damaged containment structure confirmed the worst fears ...that the core was uncovered. Legosov convinced Shcherbina that all remediation actions be pursued. Additionally, volunteers were sought to remove pieces of graphite, dig a tunnel under the burning core to prevent groundwater contamination and possibly, a megaton level explosion, and cover the burning core with tons of sand and boron to reduce escaping radiation. Hundreds of volunteers risked their lives to implement these desperate procedures which eventually worked. Populations within a 30 km downwind radius had to be evacuated. To date, no one has returned.

As noted above, the miniseries began in 1988 with Dr. Legosov lamenting that the official reports of the events of Chernobyl were covered with lies. He had prepared several tape recordings which are likely the basis for the miniseries. He knew he was being watched by the KGB so he carefully wrapped the tapes in newspaper and, under the low intensity street light carried his "honeypot" out to be emptied. Not even the watchful eye of the agent in the car across the street could detect the tightly wrapped package he placed behind loose bricks on the wall near the spot where he emptied the pot's contents. He then proceeded back to his room, fed his cat, smoked a cigarette, had a drink, then climbed on a chair and hanged himself.

The world is forever grateful to Dr. Legosov, Director Shcherbino and other Soviet scientists who recognized Chernobyl for the true disaster it was and took necessary action and shortened their own lives by the exposure. Unfortunately, I don't believe any state or federal agency in the U.S. or other nation had any idea of the potential worldwide devastation. There is reportedly, an area in Sweden from which no produce or livestock can be consumed due to radioactive contamination.

Several years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachov was asked was there any overwhelming event, including U.S. pressure, that led to his decision to end the Cold War. He reportedly responded, without hesitation, with one word.

"Chernobyl."



## Call for News

### Call for News

*Would you like to share some information about your work, or some project or issue that you're involved in?*

CRCPD is interested in what you are doing and would like to share your knowledge and experiences with other CRCPD members through a feature article in the ***Newsbrief***.

If you would like to submit an article, please contact Ruth McBurney (rmcburney@crcpd.org) suggesting a topic you'd like to present.

The ***Newsbrief*** is published six times a year, in even numbered months. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month of publication.

We welcome your news and photographs, too, if you'd like to share.

## CRCPD Board of Directors

| Board position          | Name                     | State              | Work Phone        | E-mail address                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chairperson.....        | Kimberly Steves.....     | Kansas.....        | 785/296-4359..... | kim.steves@ks.gov             |
| Past Chairperson.....   | Jeffrey D. Semancik..... | Connecticut.....   | 860/424-4190..... | jeffrey.semancik@ct.gov       |
| Chairperson-Elect ..... | Angela Leek.....         | Iowa.....          | 515/281-3478..... | angela.leek@idph.iowa.gov     |
| Treasurer.....          | Mary Ann Spohrer.....    | Illinois.....      | 217/524-3504..... | maryann.spohrer@illinois.gov  |
| Treasurer-Elect.....    | Lisa Bruedigan.....      | Texas.....         | 512-834-6629..... | lisa.bruedigan@dshs.texas.gov |
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| Member-at-Large.....    | Karen Tuccillo.....      | New Jersey .....   | 609/984-7443..... | karen.tuccillo@dep.nj.gov     |
| Member-at-Large .....   | Michael Snee .....       | Ohio.....          | 614-644-2732..... | michael.snee@odh.ohio.gov     |

## CRCPD Councils

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|--|--|
| Environmental Nuclear Council                | Karen Tuccillo (NJ) 609/984-7443<br>karen.tuccillo@dep.nj.gov      |
| General Council and Liaisons                 | Karen Farris (MA) 617/242-3035<br>karen.farris@state.ma.us         |
| Healing Arts Council                         | Mary Ann Spohrer (IL) 217/524-3504<br>maryann.spohrer@illinois.gov |
| Homeland Security/Emergency Response Council | Michael Snee (OH) 614-644-2732<br>michael.snee@odh.ohio.gov        |
| Suggested State Regulations Council          | Angela Leek (IA) 515/281-3478<br>angela.leek@idph.iowa.gov         |

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The Newsbrief is written to address the needs of all radiation control program personnel. Readers are encouraged to contribute newsworthy or informative items for the Newsbrief, with neither charges nor stipends for the items that are selected. News of state radiation control programs is especially sought.

Articles should be sent to CRCPD, Attn: Mandy Cremeans, 112 East Main Street, Suite 1, Frankfort, KY 40601 (fax: 502/227-7862; email: mcremeans@crcpd.org. The deadline for contributions is the 15th of the month before an issue is to be published.

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