

# CACC



# NEWS

*The Future of the Earth is in our Hands*

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

## Great Lakes Radioactive Waste Issues Heat Up

*Kay Cumbow, CACC Member*

CACC and the Peace Education Center of Greater Lansing recently sponsored a visit by Mary Olson, radioactive waste specialist for the Southeast Office of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS). NIRS ([www.nirs.org](http://www.nirs.org)) is a national networking/information clearinghouse on nuclear energy/radioactive wastes, working for a non-nuclear energy policy since 1978.

On August 19, Mary briefed members of the Michigan Environmental Council. The following day she spoke at the Peace Education Center of Greater Lansing. At both events, which were open to the public, Mary provided information on current, critical issues dealing with the storage and possible transport of irradiated fuel from nuclear reactors.

In the Upper Great Lakes, communities face the possibility of two permanent deep underground radioactive waste dumps. If built, either would be a long-term threat to the Great Lakes - 90% of North America's fresh water supply - on which our communities and watersheds depend. CACC is intervening in the hearings before a Joint Review Panel in Ontario, Canada this fall on the first of these possible dumps - Ontario Power Generation's proposed deep burial site for reactor wastes near Kincardine, Ontario.

Visit [www.caccmi.org](http://www.caccmi.org) and check out the "Safe Energy in the Great Lakes" section to learn more about important U.S. and Canadian nuclear waste issues we face right now, the "green" alternatives to nuclear power, the many upcoming opportunities for public comment this fall, and how you can take action!



*Mary Olson, NIRS radioactive waste specialist  
Photo credit: Kay Cumbow*

## Investigation Finds Elevated Death Rates, Possible Link to Palisades Nuclear Reactor

*Tanya Cabala, CACC Newsletter Editor*

Results of an investigation released in August found elevated death rates for all age groups, genders and major causes of death in Van Buren County, Michigan, from 2003 to 2010. The study reports that the death rates in the county, which has been the home of the Palisades nuclear power plant since 1971, were 3 to 6% lower than the state's death rate in the 1970s and early 1980s, but are now 12.5% greater—the highest of the 34 most populated counties in Michigan. The investigation, done by Joseph Mangano, executive director of the Radiation and Public Health Project, suggests radioactive emissions and releases from the Palisades nuclear reactor as a possible cause.



*Frogs are particularly susceptible to abnormalities from exposure to radioactivity.*

*Photo credit: Kay Cumbow*

Visit: [www.neis.org/560](http://www.neis.org/560) for more information.



## Help CACC with a Workplace Donation to EarthShare of Michigan

CACC is a member of EarthShare of Michigan, which means that if your workplace participates in its charitable giving program, you can designate CACC (Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination) as the recipient of your donation.

To get your workplace involved or if you have questions, please see [www.earthsharemichigan.com](http://www.earthsharemichigan.com).



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## Update on Lafarge Cement Kiln in Alpena

*Bill Freese, Director, Huron Environmental Activist League (HEAL)*

For the first time in over 23 years, HEAL agreed to a permit for which Lafarge recently applied. In the past, just about every permit application for Lafarge (owner of the cement kiln we're fighting) was for an addition of some sort of substance to use as a fuel or waste to be used in the cement making process. These wastes were Canadian coal ash, non-halogenated chlorine free plastics, a "so called safe pesticide broth," ammonia, and who knows what else. The coal ash is the source of the excess highly toxic mercury emissions from the plant, responsible for more than 50% of the mercury that Lafarge emits. The mercury emissions are oxidized vapor, the most toxic form of mercury.



*Bill, shown here with his grandson Trevor, says one of the main reasons for his environmental work is for the children.  
Photo credit: Bill Freese*

The plastic used as waste by Lafarge started as an unauthorized trial burn of coatings from milk cartons from a paper plant in Cheboygan, Michigan. Lafarge was told it was doing so at its own risk. It turns out that it was at *our* risk. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) finally, after many months, approved the permit. What was once a limited amount has now become an unlimited amount through the permit process.

Then there is the "so-called safe pesticide broth." We really question why it has to come to Lafarge in Alpena. The "broth" is brought here from the Dow Agra plant, formerly owned by Monsanto, in the thumb area of Michigan. Since Midland is much closer than Alpena, it would make more sense and cost less to take it to Midland, where Dow has its own incinerator. An ex-Dow employee informed us via an anonymous phone call that tankers of the "broth" were being diverted to Alpena because the contents in some of the tankers would show up in the emissions from Dow and enforcement was lax at the Alpena facility.

There is another new waste being added to our toxic soup – now Lafarge has added ammonia to the process. We do not know the benefits of this, but have heard that it affects the quality of the cement. We have heard of loads of cement being rejected because of poor quality. "Garbage in, garbage out."

Both the MDEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have been made aware of our concerns. As far as we know, there have not been any current unannounced inspections or testing of these wastes. If you know "company is coming," you usually clean up your house.

So, why did we agree to the new permit? The permit was for a process change that would reduce emissions. We would have preferred for there to be more emission reductions in the permit, but feel this is a start.

And there's some additional positive news: the Washington, D.C. U.S. Court of Appeals has granted Earthjustice an expedited hearing on its case against the EPA for delaying the new Clean Air Act rules for cement kilns. Submissions for both sides of the case were made in August. Stay tuned.

## Keep Your Garden Bee-Friendly!

Kay Cumbow, CACC Member

A new report by the Pesticide Research Institute and Friends of the Earth has found that over half of the plants they tested from major U.S. home garden stores contained pesticides at strengths harmful to bees.

Bee colonies already face major environmental assaults worldwide, which is concerning as two-thirds of U.S. agricultural crops rely on honeybees for pollination.



Photo credit:  
Mike Robinson

### Take Action!

Visit [www.foe.org/beeaction](http://www.foe.org/beeaction) to read the report and learn what you can do. Our backyard gardens can be welcome havens for bees – not a place to poison their hives! Write to your favorite garden stores, urging them to sell only plants that are bee-friendly. Sample letters can be found at the above website. Remember -- when you purchase or grow plants that are certified organic, you are protecting our pollinators!

## WHEATLAND 2013



Clockwise from top: Diane, Cassie and Emily (Three generations working in the CACC Kitchen), Donna preparing delicious lasagna, and Kathy doing prep work.

Photo credit:  
Angie De La Rosa



Look for more about CACC's volunteers at the 2013 Wheatland Music Festival in the November CACC Newsletter!

## The Sustainable Garden and Kitchen

This column celebrates healthy soil, seeds, and a local harvest. In a world wired for fast food and chemically treated fruits and vegetables brought in from fields afar, we honor the patient work of the gardener, the farmer, and the imaginative cook.

### The Many Benefits of Garlic

Gretchen Michaels, CACC Director

Botanists believe garlic originally came from central Asia. It belongs to the genus *Alium* and has spread around the planet as it adapts well to different climates (except the Arctic and moist jungles near the equator). For thousands of years, garlic has been eaten raw, cooked, dried and steeped. It acts as a cleanser for our digestive systems, is a diuretic, fights infection and inflammation, and is good for our arteries and circulation. Garlic has been found to be consistently medicinal in these ways on a worldwide basis.



Garlic, sketched by Gretchen Michaels

Personally, I remember helping my father plant garlic in the fall. We would pull apart the bulbs and bury each clove about three inches deep and six inches apart. We made sure to place them in rich, well-drained soil, the flat end down.

I've had my own organic gardens for more than forty years now, and I still plant garlic in the fall. Living in the Great Lakes Bioregion, I've found that waiting until October to plant prevents sprouting before spring. My extra bulbs get used to make a natural pesticide by seeping a garlic tea and then spraying my tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant and broccoli.

Sources: *Garlic: Nature's Original Remedy*, by Stephen Fulder and John Blackwood and *Family Herbal: Herbal Healing for Women*, by Rosemary Gladstar

Please check CACC's online calendar at:

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

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

**Oct. 3: Ecology Center Fall Dinner.** University of Michigan League, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI. Guest speaker is Dr. James Hansen, Adjunct Professor and Director of the Hansen Climate Science Program at Columbia University's Earth Institute. For details, contact Jenn Ketz at jenn@ecocenter.org or at 734-369-9269.

**Oct. 4 - 6: Co-op Fall Retreat.** Circle Pines Center, Delton, MI. Get away from it all to connect with nature's wonderland and other co-op friends from near and far. (Circle Pines Center is a participant in the cooperative movement, which encourages people to take more control in their lives through cooperation with one another.) See www.circlepinescenter.org or call 269-623-5555 for more information or to register.

Hearings on many important regional nuclear issues will be held this fall. Information on these hearings will be posted on the CACC online ECO-Calendar.

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