

THE FOLDED CRANE

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility | Spring 2015

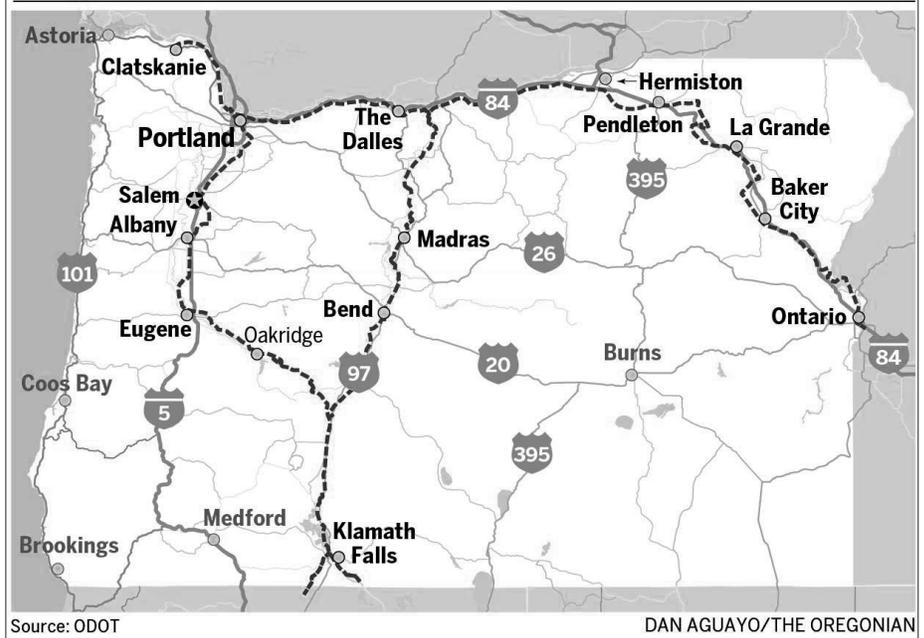
Help Us Prevent Dangerous Oil Shipment and Storage in Our Region

Regna Merritt, *Healthy Climate Program Director*

In February, two oil trains derailed and burned with spectacular fireballs. In West Virginia, a train carrying Bakken crude oil derailed and burned for days. Hundreds were evacuated and one home burned to the ground. The drinking water supply for two counties was shut down as flaming tankers leaked oil into the Kanawha River. In Ontario, a train carrying oil from Alberta's tar sands (combined with petroleum-based diluents) went off-track and burned for a week. In both cases, it was the new generation of 'safe' tanker cars that ruptured.

Days later, a 2014 US Department of Transportation analysis surfaced. It predicts that trains carrying crude oil or ethanol will derail 10 times per year on average for the next 20 years, including 15 derailments in 2015.

Oregon's oil train routes



According to the report, derailments could kill hundreds and cause more than \$6 billion in damage. This report

does not analyze the risks associated with leaks or fires at tank farms proposed for urban communities.

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Join Our Efforts to Shut Down the Northwest's Last Nuclear Power Plant

Chuck Johnson, *Oregon and Washington PSR Joint Nuclear Power Task Force Director*

Readers of *The Folded Crane* and Oregon PSR's website will know that one of our top priorities over the last three years has been to shut down the Columbia Generating Station (CGS) nuclear power plant. The CGS, located on the Columbia River within the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, is a 31 year old GE Boiling Water Reactor of similar design to those which melted down and exploded in Fukushima, Japan in March of 2011.

In a nutshell, here are our main concerns about the continued operation of this dangerous nuclear reactor in the center of our region and along its major river:

- 1) The CGS remains a flawed design, known to be susceptible to a buildup of potentially explosive hydrogen gas during a malfunction;
- 2) Earthquake standards originally established for the CGS are now known to have been set too low;

- 3) The CGS stores an enormous amount of high-level nuclear waste in an elevated spent nuclear fuel pool, increasing the likelihood of a catastrophic radiation leak in the event of a reactor malfunction;
- 4) The CGS remains economically more expensive than replacement power available on the market.

The CGS nuclear plant is operated by Energy Northwest, formerly known as the Washington Public Power Supply

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Dear Oregon PSR Supporter:

Thanks to your volunteer efforts and financial support, Oregon PSR is leading the charge to protect human health from the host of severe and growing threats posed by climate change, the shipment and storage of toxic (and explosive) fossil fuels through our region, dangerous and costly nuclear weapons and nuclear power, and misguided foreign policies that rely on violence instead of diplomacy. I hope that you will be inspired by what you read in this issue of *The Folded Crane* to get more involved in our work.

As a relatively small (but mighty) organization, we rely on the financial support of our members to bring the voice of medicine to the gravest threats to human health and survival. You will read in this issue of our newsletter about the launch of our Leadership Circle, which recognizes donors who contribute \$1,000 or more a year to our work. I've been thrilled at the response to this campaign so far and want to extend a heartfelt thanks to the many donors who've shown that you believe in our work enough to join the Leadership Circle. I encourage those of you who are able to consider increasing your gift this year to the Leadership Circle level.

I have a few changes to report as our work continues to grow and evolve. Oregon PSR is in the midst of a robust strategic planning process which will help to guide our work over the coming years. As part of this process, we are deepening and giving greater structure to our efforts to confront the massive public health threats posed by climate change. One recent change to our line-up of programs is that the Healthy Food in Health Care project of Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), which was housed at Oregon PSR for the past five years, is now its own entity operating outside of our organization. We continue to partner with HCWH and will host a booth at their annual CleanMed conference in Portland this May.



2014 Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship First Prize Winner Sashka Warner and his parents at last year's awards ceremony. (Photo courtesy of Jennifer James Long)

And another significant change is in the works: we'll be moving into a new office space in the next few months, and we will be sure to let you know where we land!

Oregon PSR continues our foundational efforts to address war and nuclear weapons and to engage the next generation of peace activists through our annual Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship. We have received more than 200 submissions for this year's scholarship, and we are excited to read the thoughts of these Oregon high school students on the role of education in creating a more just and peaceful world. I invite you to join us for the scholarship awards ceremony on Friday, April 24th at 6:00 PM at the Ecotrust Building (721 NW 9th Avenue) in Portland. I always look forward to the awards ceremony as our most inspiring and uplifting event of the year.

Thank you so much for your continued involvement in Oregon PSR. Working together, and drawing on the expertise, ideas and energy of our members and supporters, we will grow the scope of our movement towards a more healthy, just and peaceful world. We couldn't do this work without you.

In Peace and Health,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Campbell".

Kelly Campbell
Executive Director

Support the Shift from Coal to Clean Energy for a Healthy Climate

Kelly Campbell, Executive Director

Did you know that Oregon still gets one-third of its power from dirty coal-fired power plants? While Oregon PSR and our partners have campaigned successfully to close our state's only coal plant by 2020 and have held off coal exports through our region, our state still relies on tremendous amounts of coal from out-of-state power plants. In fact, Pacific Power, Oregon's second largest utility company, gets two-thirds of its energy from out-of-state coal plants. Coal causes immediate health threats and contributes to the health disaster of global climate change.

As a step in expanding our work for a healthy climate future, Oregon PSR is supporting the Coal to Clean Energy campaign that would shift Oregon off of coal entirely by 2025 and support clean and renewable energy as the replacement. This session, the Oregon legislature is taking up Coal to Clean Energy legislation, Senate Bill 477 and House Bill 2729, which would:

- Set 2025 as the date to transition away from all coal use in Oregon's

electricity mix;

- Ensure that the replacement power for coal is 90% cleaner, allowing for a replacement mix that is primarily clean, renewable energy like solar and wind, and;
- Encourage local clean energy to promote job growth in the region.

Coal-fired power plants emit one-third of all the carbon pollution in the US, making coal one of the leading causes of climate change. They are also one of the nation's largest sources of air pollutants that damage cardiovascular and respiratory health and threaten healthy child development. Particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, mercury, and more than 50 other air toxics are among the dangerous mix of pollutants spewed from the smokestacks of coal plants.

Renewable energy such as solar and wind creates clean jobs and supports healthy communities. A recent report using Department of Energy data shows that solar employs more than four times as many people as coal



based on the energy it provides. Solar and wind industries have already created about 5,000 living wage jobs throughout our state. These are middle-class jobs that can support healthy communities.

Oregon PSR members have already supported Coal to Clean Energy by meeting with legislators, speaking at hearings and communicating with the media to explain how transitioning from coal to renewable energy is a vital health issue. **Now it's your turn:** contact your state Senator and Representative today and let them know that you support Coal to Clean. Working together, health professional voices can lead the way toward a healthy climate future. Contact us to find out how you can get involved in our work to protect the climate.

Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship: Engaging Young Minds for Peace

Sean Tenney, Associate Director

In our efforts to protect human life from the gravest threats to our health and survival, Oregon PSR understands the need to engage new generations of activists. For this reason, for the past seven years we have sponsored the Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship. Open to all junior and senior high school students in Oregon, the scholarship is an opportunity for Oregon's young people to share their ideas regarding some of the most important issues of our time.

Named for Del Greenfield, our first Executive Director, this year we

asked students to respond, in the form of either an essay, poem or narrative work, to the following writing prompt:

"One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first."

—Malala Yousafzai, age 17, recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. What do you see as the role of education in creating a more just and peaceful world?

We received a record number of more than 200 entries, and our distinguished panel of judges has begun to review the student submissions. We will award the

top three entrants with scholarships and provide them with opportunities to present their winning entries publicly.

We will celebrate the scholarship winners on Friday, April 24th from 6 until 8 PM at the Ecotrust Building (721 NW 9th Avenue) in downtown Portland, and we invite you to join us! The winners will read their submissions and be presented with their awards, light refreshments will be served, and the Bravo Youth Orchestra will perform. We hope that you will join us in celebrating these young voices for peace and justice on April 24th.

Join Our Efforts to Shut Down the Northwest's Last Nuclear Power Plant *(continued from page 1)*

System (WPPSS, pronounced “whoops”), a consortium of 27 public utility districts (PUDs) and municipal utilities in Washington State. Most utilities on the Washington side of the Columbia River are Energy Northwest members, and we have been working closely with our supporters in Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties to help convince their PUD boards to reconsider continuing to operate this dangerous and expensive nuclear plant.

What you may not know is that there are actually 92 utilities that have shares in this nuclear power plant in varying amounts. Known as ‘participants,’ these utilities were involved in the original decision to build the reactor in the 1970s. The 92 CGS participants are located throughout the Northwest and include 28 of Oregon’s publicly-owned utilities.

Representatives of the participant utilities meet once a year to hear reports from

Energy Northwest staff, select a Board of Directors, and vote on the annual budget of the CGS nuclear power plant. Their votes are weighted based upon their participant shares, many of which are only fractions of a percent. Still, every vote counts.

This is where YOU come in.

If you live or work in any of the Oregon utility service areas listed below, or have any friends, relatives, or colleagues who do, we encourage you to contact us. Please check the list below and then contact Chuck Johnson at 503-777-2794 or chuck@oregonpsr.org. We are interested in setting up meetings and educating people in these communities about their options as members and customers in these publicly-owned utility districts—the co-owners of the last nuclear power plant in the Northwest.

Oregon participants in the Columbia

Generating Station Nuclear Power Plant include: City of Bandon, Blachly-Lane County Coop, Canby Utility Board, City of Cascade Locks, Central Electric Coop, Central Lincoln PUD, Clatskanie PUD, Columbia Basin Coop, Columbia Power Coop, Consumers Power, Inc., Coos-Curry Electric Coop, Douglas Electric Coop, City of Drain, City of Forest Grove, Harney Electric Coop, Hood River Electric Coop, Lane Electric Coop, McMinnville Water & Light, Midstate Electric Coop, Milton-Freewater Light & Power, City of Monmouth, Northern Wasco PUD, Salem Electric, City of Springfield, Tillamook PUD, Umatilla Electric Coop, Wasco Electric Coop, and West Oregon Electric Coop.

By working together, we can end this looming threat to our health and safety by closing the last remaining commercial nuclear power plant in our region.

Reflections on the Public Health Crisis in Gaza, Palestine

Maxine Fookson, PNP

This past November I made my third trip to Gaza as a Nurse Practitioner and member of a health delegation sponsored by Washington PSR. Gaza provides living proof of how critical it is to commit to our public health work of preventing war.

Gaza is a public health crisis—the result of a geopolitical crisis. There are no natural causes for the poverty, environmental degradation, destruction, infrastructure breakdown or suffering. There are more PhDs in Gaza than you can count. The talent and initiative is immense. However, over it all is the ongoing crushing Israeli occupation, which has been punctuated by heavy warfare every few years.

In visiting Gaza one sees a contrast between the poverty and destruction caused by repeated wars and the 8 year siege by Israel and an amazingly gracious, talented and determined people. We witnessed the contrasts, experiencing repeatedly both the sorrow and the warm friendship.

For 51 days this past summer, Israel launched ‘Operation Protective Edge,’ an all out assault on the people of Gaza. The numbers are overwhelming. The United Nations reported over 2,100 killed, and more than 500 were children and more than 300 were women. 11,100 Palestinians were wounded, including 3,374 children, 2,088 women, and 410 elderly people. We saw entire neighborhoods—homes,



Speech therapist working with a child at the Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Delays Center in Gaza City.

schools, clinics and hospitals—reduced to rubble.

In addition to the devastation of war, the Israeli siege on Gaza’s borders has made it impossible for Gazans to travel and has created severe restrictions on the entry of food, medications, medical

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Reflections on the Public Health Crisis in Gaza, Palestine *(continued from previous page)*

equipment, and other supplies needed to meet basic human needs. There is also virtually no export of goods, and thus the economy is in ruins. Essentially no rebuilding is happening, largely due to restrictions on construction materials. We saw many families living in tents and temporary shelters within the destruction. The harsh winter weather led to the death of several infants from exposure.

What sticks with me beyond the statistics are the personal stories of both trauma and resiliency. We saw doctors, nurses, counselors and teachers working tirelessly, holding their own

personal grief and trauma as they helped their patients and students. We heard and saw the most amazing resiliency, felt it in the keen interest and challenging questions from the nursing students attending my lecture on primary care, or the doctors and nurses attending trainings provided by doctors in our delegation, or in the groups of mental health clinicians learning how to help patients (and themselves) use visualization, breath awareness and meditation for stress reduction.

Many explained to us that in Gaza you learn to live when there really is no

hope or way to see the future changing. Their wishes, not unlike ours, are to be able to give a peaceful future to their children. In one neighborhood that had been completely destroyed, we encountered a man looking at a pile of rubble that had been his home. He had his dusty, tattered PhD dissertation that he wanted to give us. The title was *Contrasting the Writings of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound*—it was all he was able to salvage from the ruins of his destroyed home. We saw it as symbolic: you can bomb us, but you cannot take away our yearning for knowledge and to be recognized as human beings.

Help Us Prevent Dangerous Oil Shipment and Storage in Our Region *(continued from page 1)*

The transport, and risks, of volatile fossil fuels by rail has risen exponentially in recent years with development of the Bakken oil fields. In Washington, about three million people live within the ‘blast zone,’ a half-mile radius defined by US DOT as an area to be evacuated in the event of a crude oil tanker fire. More than half a million Oregonians are similarly threatened.

It gets worse. If all new proposals to export fossil fuels, including Bakken crude and Powder River coal, through Oregon and Washington ports were successful, **the climate impacts of burning those fuels would be five times the climate impacts of the Keystone XL pipeline.** Game over.

We could see the number of oil-by-rail trains in Washington increase from the current 19 trains to as many as 137 trains per week. Each ‘unit train’ is approximately 1.5 miles long. Each train would carry approximately 2.9 million gallons of volatile crude. If the federal crude oil export ban is lifted, the number of crude-by-rail trains and barges would increase even more dramatically.

Some oil trains speed through Washington, cross into Oregon and continue on to California. Others barrel through eastern Oregon to Portland. Still others move through Portland to Clatskanie, where the volatile crude is loaded onto barges that move down the Columbia, cross a treacherous bar, and plough through the Pacific to Washington and California ports. Think *oil spill*.

Oregon and Washington PSR have reviewed proposals for markedly increased oil transport by rail, storage and shipment through our region and have developed a position statement opposing the transport by rail and the storage and shipment of crude oil within our states. The statement carefully outlines the major risks and is backed up by evidence from medical literature.

Summary of Major Risks

- 1) Delay of emergency vehicles;
- 2) Oil rail car fires, spills, explosions and derailments;
- 3) Adverse health impacts of train noise;
- 4) Oil storage tank spills, fires and explosions;
- 5) Oil spills during loading and transport;

- 6) Increased air pollution, including diesel particulate matter;
- 7) Increased water pollution;
- 8) Contributions to climate change-induced injury and disease.

As Oregon and Washington health professionals, we oppose the transport by rail and the storage and shipment of crude oil within our states based on these serious threats to the health of our residents. Further, we call upon the Governors of Oregon and Washington, as well as agencies in both states, to deny permits that facilitate the transport, storage and handling of crude oil by rail and/or barge.

Please Take Action Now

- 1) Visit www.oregonpsr.org to review the full Position Statement and Appendices and to sign on;
- 2) Contact regna@oregonpsr.org to learn how you can help prevent expansion of crude-by-rail facilities in Oregon and SW Washington, one of which would be the largest oil-by-rail facility in the nation;
- 3) Support a rapid transition to a clean energy future.

Oregon PSR Launches Leadership Circle

Kelly Campbell, Executive Director

I am pleased to announce that Oregon PSR is formally launching our 'Leadership Circle' campaign, which will recognize donors who contribute \$1,000 or more annually to our work. Beginning with this edition of *The Folded Crane*, Leadership Circle members will be listed by name (or as anonymous) and will be invited to supper clubs and other special events throughout the year.

The generous gifts made by Leadership Circle members ensure that we can maintain a strong organization that makes a significant impact on the most important issues of our time.

Joining the Leadership Circle is easy: simply let me know that you will pledge to give \$1,000 or more to Oregon PSR in 2015. This can be done as a one-time gift, through

monthly giving, as a donation of stock or even through an employer match.

Please contact me at 503-274-2720 or kelly@oregonpsr.org to join the Leadership Circle today. Thank you so much for your support of Oregon PSR's work for a more peaceful, just and healthy world.

Upcoming Oregon PSR Events

7th Annual Northwest Environmental Health Conference - Friday, April 17th, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, Doubletree Hotel (1000 NE Multnomah Street, Portland)

The conference brings health care professionals, researchers, students, citizens and advocates together to share the latest environmental health knowledge. Sessions include: Climate & Health Research in the Northwest; Preparing for the Health Effects of Climate Change; Climate Change Concerns and Solutions in Tribal Communities; Developmental Origins of Health: Research into Action; Health Impacts of Planning to Reduce Greenhouse Gases; Health and Nature: Research to Action; Diesel Exhaust: Small Particles, Big Problems, Easy Solutions; Neurotoxicants and Development; and others.

Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship Awards Ceremony - Friday, April 24th, 6:00-8:00 PM, Ecotrust Building (721 NW 9th Avenue, Portland)

Join us in celebrating the high school student winners of Oregon PSR's 2015 Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship. The winners will read their submissions and be presented with their awards, light refreshments will be served, and the Bravo Youth Orchestra will perform.

CleanMed Conference and Exhibition - May 12th-14th, Oregon Convention Center (777 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Portland)

CleanMed 2015 is designed to advance the health care triple aim: improve the quality of patient care, advance the health of populations and reduce health care costs. During the Physician Leadership for a Sustainable Future workshop, physicians will come together for a day of networking and education. Be sure to stop by Oregon PSR's booth at CleanMed to learn more about our work.

Public Tour of Hanford - Thursday, July 30th, 9:30 AM (Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Richland, WA)

Oregon PSR will coordinate a contingent to take the public tour of the Hanford nuclear facility. We have reserved 10 spots on the tour. Contact us at 503-274-2720 or sean@oregonpsr.org if you are interested in joining.

70th Anniversary Memorial of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima & Nagasaki - Thursday, August 6th, 6:00-7:00 PM, Japanese American Historical Plaza (NW Naito Parkway and Couch Street, Portland)

Save the date for the annual memorial event, which this year commemorates the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We will have speakers, performers, associated events, and more. We will also provide our audience with an opportunity to get involved in our work for a future free from nuclear weapons.

For more information on these and other upcoming events, visit www.oregonpsr.org.

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Help Us Conserve Resources

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