

MEMO FROM THE MAYOR

SUBJECT: In Truth, the US Government Still Isn't All That Helpful, Final

- "The care of human life and happiness, and *not* their destruction, is the first and *only* legitimate object of good government." —Thomas Jefferson (1809) (emphasis supplied)
- To be considered radical for simply desiring a return to the original constitutional form of what's left of our Republic, the one gifted to us through the blood and treasure of our Founders, provides an important clue to how corrupt and debased our culture has become. Heirs of an incredibly rich tradition, we have frittered it away like the Prodigal Son for an ill-conceived and misperceived sense of security, all in trade for our God-given freedoms. Me (c. 2024)

Apparently, It's Still Who You Know

Nearly 72 years after Tumbler-Snapper Shot 8 (5 June 1952) discussed last month, the headline in the 13 March 2024 edition of *The Messenger-Index* read, "Downwinders one vote away from RECA inclusion". RECA stands for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. That "one" vote takes place in the House of Representatives—if it ever comes. If passed in the House, it must happen before 7 June 2024; RECA expires then. Sadly, RECA funding of more Downwinders did not make the \$1.2 Trillion spending package passed on 21 March 2024. Speaker Johnson seems to promise a vote as a stand-alone attempt sometime later.

Emmett's own Downwinder Warrior, Tona Henderson, had the honor of watching the vote take place in the Senate Gallery as a guest of Idaho Senator Mike Crapo, as detailed in Del Gray's excellent piece in the aforementioned newspaper article. As Gray documents, Congress kicked the can in 2022 when it extended RECA for two years with no changes, but for a good purpose: to allow more attempts to amend. It seemed to work, because in July 2023, the Senate passed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have included our Downwinders. However, in conference with the House in December of 2023, the committee eliminated that amendment.

While hardly shocking, one of the major opponents to expanding RECA, noted by Gray, was the avuncular Senate Minority Leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. But for prodigious lobbying efforts by Missouri Senator Josh Hawley, the potential of expanding RECA would likely have collapsed. For those not familiar with the ex-Attorney General, now Senator, from Missouri, he seems a Frank Church-like Senator, bright and articulate, but of a conservative bent; one who

supports United States sovereignty, not hindering it. Hawley recently discovered that Missourians currently suffer ill-effects from radioactive waste as well. The government buried it during the Manhattan Project and apparently, schools and subdivisions now stand over or near it.

As former Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, used to say, borrowing it from the days of the Great Depression, "All politics is local". Hence, Hawley wanted RECA expansion to happen, thus ensuring compensation for those suffering Missourians, as well. By compromising on the previously proposed total of the RECA funding package, Hawley ultimately extracted a "yes" vote from McConnell. Aristotelian logic can still win the day when required.

There Is Nothing New under the Sun

In a fascinating 17 March 1955 article of the *Emmett Messenger* (before it became conjoined with the *Index*) under the headline, "Emmett Man Finds Rain Residue to Be Radioactive," Gem County readers in those halcyon days of the Eisenhower Era discovered that on the previous Saturday, 12 March, which we now know, thanks to Richard Miller's work on his Atlas of Nuclear Fallout, was the day after atomic shot TP4-1 where "great blobs of white residue" formed on automobiles and objects left outside in the rain. The article goes on to explain how local resident Paul Weseloh told the *Index* reporter that his visiting brother-in-law just happened to bring along his new, functioning Geiger counter. Did they have an intuitive notion something was amiss? Whatever the circumstances, they decided to test the white blobs for radioactivity—and sure enough, they contained above-normal readings.

However, according to Weseloh, the blobs were "far below the level usually considered dangerous to humans." Regrettably, the article fails to contain any *bona fides* that allows Weseloh's assessment to stand with any authority. The article does go on to explain that non-blotchy areas not exposed to the rain had half the readings of the blotchy-white areas. While the article does not set out the readings, Weseloh's lay opinion could not and did not contain the knowledge that the danger would continue to accumulate for almost another decade, creating a wake of death, coupled with years of pain and suffering for thousands of people in Idaho and throughout the intermountain west as it traveled through time to our present day.

After above-ground testing ended during the Kennedy Administration, Gem County would hold slot 63 out of over 3000 counties in the lower 48 states in terms of volume of fallout settling from the Nevada tests. Richard L. Miller in *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout (1951-1970), Vol. II, the General Reader Edition*, tells us that Gem County garnered at the end, 1030.75 micro-Curies

per square meter. Such fallout, particularly when infiltrating the food supply, such as from cow's milk from local dairies, does considerable damage to one's health.

In the 1 August 1997 edition of *The Idaho Statesman*, the headline read, "Gem County's thyroid cancer rate higher than average." Phil Batt, then governor, "demanded an explanation and compensation." The article continues to cite radioactive Iodine 131 as poisoning cows and milk in Gem County as one possible cause.

Later, as an editorial in the same newspaper on 26 August 2004 put it, "When the National Cancer Institute said Idahoans were exposed to radioactive materials that may cause cancer, the politicians promised to fight. Kempthorne called it an 'outrage'. Here's another outrage. Seven years later, Idaho cancer victims aren't getting a dime in federal aid."

Twenty years after that, an equally feckless Congress still hasn't delivered.