

Report back from Roger Leisner on Clamshell Alliance Gathering 2024 July

Along with members of Peace Action and the Clamshell Alliance, I attended a gathering at the World Fellowship Center for some serious talk about the future of nuclear power, safe storage of waste and weapons, and how to get these issues to the forefront of people's concerns. Not all was serious, there was music, movies, moments of remembrance and a chance to renew old friendships.

After checking into the Uphaus Lodge and having a vegan dinner at Lloyd Lodge, I walked over to the Smauch meeting room for the global premier of "Acres of Clams," a film by Eric Wolfe, covering the Clamshell Alliance from inception in 1976 through the last major actions in the late 1980s.

The Clamshell Alliance is an anti-nuclear organization founded in 1976 to oppose the Seabrook Station nuclear power plant on the coast in New Hampshire. The "Clams" were co-founded by Paul Gunter, Howie Hawkins, Howard Morland, Harvey Wasserman, Guy Chichester, Robert "Renny" Cushing, Jeff Brummer, Anna Gyorgy, Kristie Conrad, Kate Walker, Robin Read and other activists in 1976. The Granite State Alliance had launched PEP, the People's Energy Project, several years earlier, in opposition to the proposed Seabrook nuclear power plant. Clamshell Alliance's coalescence began in 1975 as New England anti-nuclear activists began to respond to Nixon's "Project Independence", which sought to build 1,000 nuclear power plants by 2000. This film captures the great organizing effort that occurred and the camaraderie of the "Clams".

After lunch on Saturday, "Clams" gathered in an open space next to the Smauch meeting room for a commemorative circle to remember Renny Cushing. Arnie Alpert, former director of the NH American Friends Services Committee, led the remembrance with a "Talking Stick". In June 1988, Cushing's father was murdered by a disgruntled off-duty policeman in his own house. Renny became involved with the trial of his father's murderer and began advocating to abolish capital punishment. During the 2019-20 legislative session, Cushing led the effort in the New Hampshire General Court to approve legislation abolishing the death penalty, including successful votes in the House and Senate to override Governor Chris Sununu's veto. After many remembrances, a memorial brick in a garden pathway was dedicated to Renny Cushing.

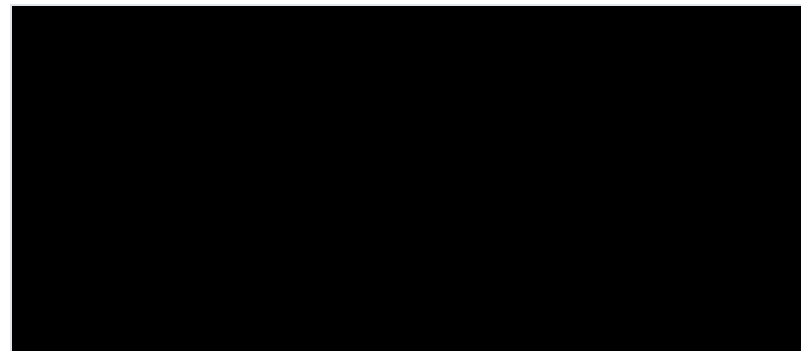
Filmmaker Eric Wolfe held a feed back session on his film "Acres of Clams". About 40 "Clams" offered suggestions on how to shorten the nearly 2 hour movie, which will be available on YOUTUBE. This dialogue eventually led to a discussion of how to make the public more aware of nuclear problems, waste and weapons. How does this issue get back on the front page? How do we reach out to others, educate and get them involved. In particular, how do we get youth involved in the nuclear resistance?

Later in the afternoon, Paul Gunter spoke about the emerging nuclear technology. Gunter has been a vocal critic of nuclear power for more than 30 years. Gunter worked as the Director of the Reactor Watchdog Project for Nuclear Information and Resource Service for almost 20 years. In 2007, Gunter joined Beyond Nuclear as their nuclear reactor

specialist. Gunter pointed out that accidents, poor design, phony insurance, out-of-control cost overruns, decades-long ramp-ups, and the absence of a long-term disposal plan for radioactive waste still haunt the industry. Germany, once heavily nuclear, has closed all of its nuclear plants as have Italy and Lithuania. Spain and Switzerland are shutting theirs down. Japan kept all of its nuclear plants shuttered for several years after the accident at Fukushima and, according to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, the 17 that did restart are at risk in future seismic events. The war in Ukraine has illustrated the vulnerability of nuclear reactors to war, attacks by terrorists, and other potential disasters. With Congress on the brink of approving legislation to speed up nuclear licensing and further shield the industry from the consequences of nuclear disasters, we're putting out a call for a new generation of climate and environmental justice activists to join us in proclaiming No Nukes.

On Saturday evening, "Clams" were entertained by a classical trio of musical artists. Tomas Rodriguez (guitar) with Julian Gerstin (percussion) and Barry Kornhauser (cello) presented an engaging mix of music ranging from the tunes of Venezuelan harp masters to unique arrangements of the compositions of the Malian kora virtuoso Toumani Diabaté. Their own compositions, emerging from their diverse musical inspirations, include Argentinian milongas, Brazilian choros, and contemporary flamenco.

[24.07.26-28 - 40th Anniversary of the Clamshell Alliance at the World Fellowship Center in NH](#)



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The World Fellowship Center is on the southeastern edge of the White Mountain National Forest, directly east of Mount Chocorua off Route 16 in Albany, it currently comprises approximately 455 acres, including a conference room and dining lodge, nature trails, soccer field, several cabins, campsites and additional lodging facilities, as well as boating and swimming access on a large pond. The first official year of operation was summer

1941, during which an attendance of 253 people was recorded. The initial mission statement of the camp was "In a time of war, prepare for peace."

On Friday, I drove from Augusta over to Gilead on Rt 2 and caught Rt 113 heading south. This highway, which is closed during the winter, winds in and out of Maine and New Hampshire and ends in Fryeburg. As I was driving along a narrow, winding road with 10 inch wooden guard rails, I asked my travel mate how high up did we appear to be? She replied, about 200 feet. Eventually the highway spilled out onto a beautiful alluvial farming valley.

Alan Clemence from Maine attended the event and wrote:

Re the waste, to my knowledge most decommissioned plants are in the same situation: approximately that the waste belongs to the Federal government--or at least it will when they take possession of it--but since there's no Federal repository the respective nuclear owners must keep it and keep it safe until a Federal repository opens. So there is a sort of long term financial battle between the owners and the Fed but that probably fits in somewhere with the tax code.

Different 'temporary' storage sites DO HAVE various challenges and vulnerabilities regarding terrorism/sabotage, fuel assembly-specific conditions that may pose problems in the future (levels of remaining reactivity or compromised fuel assemblies, for example), and possible natural disasters (such as earthquakes and tsunamis) and rising seas coupled with storm surge.

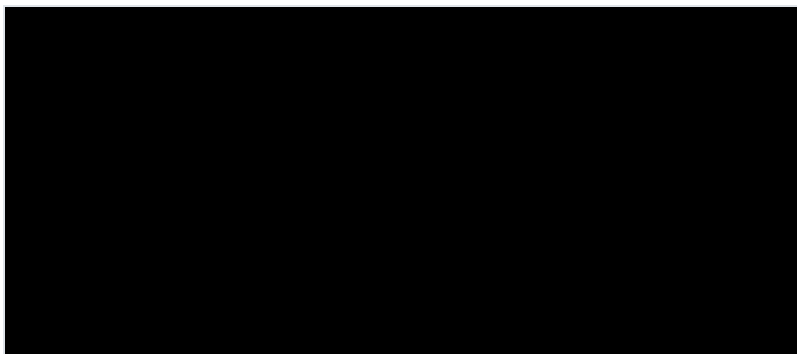
My understanding is that Maine Yankee's situation is stable, more or less, for the time being, financially and technically. At decommissioning both FERC and NRC are intimately involved--with the FERC proceedings being where the real action is: Who's going to pay for this crazy mess?

Ray Shadis and I were Intervenors in Maine Yankee's FERC decommissioning case. Ray has great depths of knowledge on this but I have no contact info to pass along.

So, with this general local background I'm sure the Internet has more to offer regarding the owner-Fed relationship as it is current.

I tried to contact Ray Shadis before this event, but was unable. Here's is a video of Ray Shadis speaking about the nuclear waste storage problems at the former Maine Yankee site.

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Clamshell Alliance Steering Committee: Adam Auster, Anna Gyorgy, Arnie Alpert, Brian Tokar, Doug Bogen, Eric Wolfe, Jay Gustaferro, Judith Kaufman, Paul Gunter, Phil Stone, Shel Horowitz, Sharon Tracy, Susanae Glovacki, Tom Wyatt
info@clamshellalliance.com

**Roger Leisner
The Maine Papparazzi
Radio Free Maine
207-242-0643**