



## THE SPOOF

## Robot Pitcher is Latest Trend in Major League Baseball



By Gail Farrelly

It had to happen. With robots now in education, medicine, space exploration, science, manufacturing, and many other fields, it was only a matter of time before they invaded professional sports. And the time is now!

Okay, okay, the debut of a robot pitcher (it threw out the first pitch) last month at a Phillies game wasn't impressive. Nothing to write home about. But still, it was an event that opened the door and sparked

lots of interest in the robot phenomenon in baseball. "We've only just begun," says a computer scientist working on robot pitchers. "Rome wasn't built in a day, y'know."

The rumor is that several major league teams are supporting this research and are willing to fork over big bucks for a robot pitcher that can come up with the goods. As one manager says, "With the proper programming and everything, I think it would be fantastic. I'd have me a star whose

behavior I could trust. No drinking, late night carousing, womanizing, insulting of fans, or temper tantrums. In short, a totally dependable player who'd always be ready to play, sign autographs, mingle with the fans after the games, etc."

Cash-conscious financial managers of baseball teams are also enthralled by the prospect of robot pitchers. To them it means bye-bye to ice packs, physical therapists, days off for rest, and the financing of those expensive scouting trips to the

Dominican Republic to find pitching prospects.

There is, however, one dissenting voice. The voice of a skeptical fan, who's reminding anyone who will listen: "Sandy Koufax, star pitcher of the Brooklyn Dodgers, once said, Pitching is the art of instilling fear. Let's see them invent a machine that can do that. It ain't gonna happen."

*Gail Farrelly (www.FarrellySistersOnline.com) writes mystery novels and short stories as well as Op-Eds. Her latest mystery novel is Creamed at Commencement: A Graduation Mystery. The first chapter is available on her website. Gail is working on a fourth mystery, The Virtual Heiress.*

## GovernmentSection

### Indian Point Still Scrutinized in Fukushima's Aftermath



By ABBY LUBY

BUCHANAN, NY -- The aging Indian Point nuclear power plant fell under scrutiny after two members of congress

toured the Buchanan facility last week.

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-Westchester/Rockland) and Congressman Eliot Engel (D-Bronx/Rockland/Westchester) visited the twin reactors accompanied by Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Chairman Gregory Jaczko on Tuesday, May 10, 2011. Congresswoman Nan Hayworth (R-Mount Kisco) who lives near Indian Point did not tour the plant. Hayworth has gone on record for keeping the plant open.

Lowey balked at the NRC's re-licensing process that will keep the plant open for an additional 20 years.

"We want aging nuclear power plants to be held to the same standard as are new plants that are applying for licensing," she told a large press core gathered at the plant with the containment domes clearly in the background. Both she and Engel have introduced legislation that would require older plants like Indian Point to be re-licensed only if they met the same criteria as new plants.

In the aftermath of the tragic destruction at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power complex in Japan from the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, fears have surfaced about two seismic fault lines under Indian Point.



Jaczko talking to protesters after press conference

Lowey and Engel want the NRC to evaluate how an earthquake would impact leaks in the spent fuel pools and the loss of power.

Engel said he wanted to know if Indian Point's back up systems would keep the irradiated fuel stored in the spent fuel pools cooled. Indian Point spent fuel pools currently hold about 1,500 tons of irradiated fuel. In Fukushima, three of the seven damaged cooling pools lost back up power and released large amounts of radiation after the tsunami. A problem in 1999 caused the Indian Point reactors to be disconnected from the grid and battery back up only lasted seven hours.

Lowey said the reactors would not be built where it is today because of the population density and proximity to New York City and that if there was a disaster at Indian Point, evacuating 20 million people within a 50-Mile Radius of the plant would be impossible.

"It would be reckless and irresponsible for relicensing to go forward with an evacuation plan that we know to be inadequate," she emphasized.



State Trooper ordering Anti-nuclear protesters off the Indian Point site

With Jaczko standing next to her, Lowey questioned the NRC for having a double standard when they advised Americans near Fukushima to evacuate within a 50-mile radius of the reactors.

"But why do the regulations require only people living within a 10-mile radius to evacuate if there is an accident at Indian Point?"

Engel said he's been calling for the closure of Indian Point since the 911 terrorist attacks, when the terrorist jets flew directly over the reactors on their way to the World Trade Center.

"The world we live in has changed," he said. "Indian Point should be closed and my constituents believe it should be closed." Both representatives are calling for updated guidelines from emergency agencies who would respond to a nuclear disaster.

Jaczko said that the tour with Engel and Lowey allowed him to hear their concerns first hand.

"We want to keep an open and transparent dialogue," he told the press. The NRC chairman also said the agency's primary job



(L-R): Jaczko, Lowey and Engel at Indian Point Plant in Buchanan

was to evaluate the aging components of the plant itself in the re-licensing process. "But we will also look at lessons learned from what happened in Japan."

Entergy has applied to the NRC to extend their operating license until 2035. To date, the NRC has never denied a relicensing application and have approved 66.

Prior to the press conference, anti-nuclear protesters waiting to talk to Congresswoman Lowey and Engel were forced off the grounds by state police. Security for plant owner Entergy asked some 20 protestors to leave claiming Engel and Lowey were scheduled to speak only to the press. When the protestors refused to leave, state troopers were called in to escort them just outside the plant gates. Neither Engel or Lowey stopped to talk to the protestors after addressing the press. Jaczko however did listen to the protestors while shaking their hands.

The NRC will hold their annual assessment of safety performance of Indian Point for 2010. The meeting is public and will be on June 2nd at Colonial Terrace, 119 Oregon Road, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567.

*Abby Luby is a Westchester based, freelance journalist who writes about current, local news, environmental issues, art entertainment and food.*