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ENERGY MATTERS

Life without Indian Point?

By **ABBY LUBY**

NEW YORK, NY -- In a landmark public hearing last Thursday, January 12, 2012, state lawmakers listened to testimony on the potential effects of closing

down the Indian Point nuclear power plants just 24 miles north of New York City. In a public hearing that lasted most of the day here in lower Manhattan, the New York State Assembly Committee on Energy heard from regulatory and utility brass who support the continued operation of the twin reactors in Buchanan and from experts who want to shutter the 40 year old twin reactors.

The hearing room was filled to capacity. More than 16 Assembly members sat on the

state's economy and electrical system? And how can we tap into the surplus electricity being generated by facilities in upstate New York, electricity that could replace

Indian Point's output?

Prohibiting the flow of needed electricity to the southern part of New York and to New York City is known as "transmission congestion."

"The last transmission upgrade was in 1987," Brennan told NYISO Chief Operating



Joseph Oates, Con Edison Vice President of Energy Management.

Gonzalez said NYISO used a model study that looked at a generic solution to congestion where the cost ratio benefits were greater than one. "In general, the beneficiaries [rate payers] would have to pay for the upgrade."

NYISO oversees and operates New York's



Protesters outside the Indian Point public hearing held on Thursday, January 12, 2012, at 250 Broadway.



A crowded room at the Indian Point public hearing held in New York City.

lines from upstate New York or Canada include the Champlain Hudson Cable, New York Power Pathway, and the West Point Transmission Line.

Gonzalez warned that replacement



Anti nuclear activist at Indian Point public hearing.

resources must be in place before closing Indian Point. "Failure to do that will have serious reliability consequences and an increase in rolling blackouts."

Verbal sparring about the reliability of electricity produced by Indian Point to the plant's safety reliability was initiated by Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee from Rockland. Jaffee intoned a history of accidental shutdowns at Indian Point, including the most recent shutdown last Monday from a broken pump seal at Unit 2.

"Given an aging plant and its shutdowns, how can you suggest that Indian Point is a reliable source of energy?" asked Jaffee, who received a round of applause.

"My reliability statement is focused on grid reliability, not the reliability of the plant," said Gonzalez.

Jaffee referred to the disaster last year at the nuclear power plants in Fukushima, where a major earthquake and tsunami caused the destruction of four plants resulting in a core meltdown and the large release of radiation. "I question whether Indian Point is reliable or safe, especially in light of what happened in Japan," she said.

Gonzalez was questioned for over an hour, a terse exchange at times only to be ironically interrupted by the lights going out for no apparent reason, garnering a moment of humor in the proceedings.

Activists made their voice heard during a break and chanted the benefits of closing Indian

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Gary Shaw, Croton-on-Hudson resident who resides near the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

panel led by Assemblyman Kevin A. Cahill, Chairman of the Committee on Energy, and Assemblyman James F. Brennan. Testimony, which was by invitation only, was heard from the New York Independent System Operators (NYISO), Con Ed, New York Public Service



(L-R): Assemblyman James Brennan, Assemblyman Kevin A. Cahill, Chairman of the Committee on Energy, and Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi.

Commission, Synapse, an energy consulting firm, Indian Point owner Entergy and others. Environmental groups such as Clearwater and Riverkeeper were not invited to speak, but the panel encouraged the groups and the public to submit written testimony.

Would closing Indian Point impact the



Occupied Wall Street environmental group activist Luna Scarano.

Officer, Rick Gonzalez. "We've been talking about upgrades for decades. Why is it taking so long?"

"This issue is the cost allocations," said Gonzalez. "Who will pay for the upgrades?"



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Point. Lead by Luna Scarano, an activist from the Occupy Wall Street environmental group, numerous anti nuclear activists echoed Scarano's shouted words admonishing the plant for threatening the lives of 20 million people who wouldn't be able to evacuate in case of an serious accident at Indian Point.

Indian Point 2 produces 1,028 megawatts of electricity and Indian Point 3 produces 1,041 megawatts. Currently Con Edison, who purchases 350 megawatts of electricity from Entergy, transmits between a total of 9,000 and 13,000 megawatts of electricity to New York City and Westchester during daily peak periods. Joseph Oates, Con Edison's vice president of energy

management told the panel that on the hottest summer day, if the plant wasn't producing electricity, there would be a 1,000 megawatt shortfall. Cahill asked Oates how they would replace the power if the state closed down the plant.

"We have not made any firm plans if the state decides that. There's been no official announcement of a plant shut down – that process hasn't been triggered," Oates answered.

"What if Indian Point has to construct cooling towers and the plant has to close? Is Con Ed prepared for that contingency?" asked Cahill.

"We are preparing generic types of solutions. If a situation of retrofitting required support, our recommendation would be to shut only one plant at a time to satisfy needs in the short term."

Breenan asked Oates about electricity produced by the gas powered, cogenerated plant

in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and if it could make up the lost power from a retired Indian Point.

"Could taking power from a co-generated market in the future be a potentially economical purchase?"

Oates agreed. "Co-generation is a more efficient use of the fuel because we are using it twice. We are open to good ideas, especially ones that will minimize the cost for the customer."

Both operating licenses for units 2 and 3 at Indian Point will expire in 2013 and 2015. Entergy applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2007 to renew their licenses, but their application has met much resistance from Governor Andrew Cuomo and environmental groups Riverkeeper and Clearwater. Since the nuclear disaster in Fukushima last March, the anti-nuclear movement has rallied with concerns

about safe evacuation, Hudson River fish-kill by thermal pollution and the precarious location of the plant on a seismic fault.

It is unknown at this time how the Assembly Energy committee will use the information from the public hearing. The committee has the power to enact legislation and amend energy law and policies that impact energy availability and Public Service Law.

Photos by Abby Luby and courtesy of Abby Luby Photos.

Abby Luby is a Westchester based, freelance journalist who writes local news, about environmental issues, art, entertainment and food. Her debut novel, "Nuclear Romance" was recently published. Visit the book's website, <http://nuclearromance.wordpress.com/>.

HEALTH

Training to Start for New CareCircle Initiative

RYE BROOK, NY -- A training session for volunteers who want to participate in the CareCircle initiative of Westchester County's Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) will take place on Jan. 25 at Atria Senior Living, 1200 King St., Rye Brook.

A CareCircle is a group of people who volunteer to share caregiving tasks of daily living for an older person in the community that cannot be met with public funds. Those tasks may include meal preparation, pet care, laundry,



general errands or simply companionship. The idea is to create the physical and emotional support families traditionally provide that seniors are able to continue to live in their homes.

The program will be under way from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and refreshments will be served.

Participants will receive a copy of the new "Livable Communities CareCircle Guide: Step Forward and Give Back," a how-to manual that explains the way to start, maintain and coordinate a CareCircle. It also includes general information for caregivers, a listing of community resources and a glossary. DSPS sponsors the CareCircle initiative with the Westchester Public/Private Partnership on Aging Services.

The training session will be led by Ellen Wright, a licensed master social worker; Robbin Sweeney, an attorney and Better Living Life Coach; and Colette Phipps, DSPS' staff liaison to the Caregiver Coalition, which developed the guide.

The need for caregivers is at a crisis level today because fewer and fewer family members are available to help Westchester's growing senior population. Today, 20 percent of all county residents – one in five people – are 60 or older. People live longer today. Siblings pass away and children move away. As a result, seniors must turn to their friends, neighbors and other seniors for help.

Registration is required to take part in the training session. To sign up, contact (914) 813-6263 or dql7@westchestergov.com.

MENTAL HEALTH

OCD: The War Within



By GLENN SLABY

The thoughts begin simply enough with our family's weekly meal at the local diner. They are as common and as basic or simple as putting on ones coat. First there is the reminder to wash my hands before leaving and limit what I touch. Then my brain tells to keep my actions and exposures limited, such as the opening the doors to the restaurant, handling the menu, touching the table etc. I use a straw. I use antibiotic soap (only on my hands) and make sure my utensils don't touch the bare table. When someone passes me an item, I think, are there hands clean? When the waiter serves, thoughts about germs occur for they handle, probably the dirtiest item around – our paper money.

As the brain keeps sending out signals warning of the dangers of multiple bacteria from mostly every source, the mind, almost without second thoughts of fighting or ignoring such signals, easily accepts and performs the usually simple required action. Trying to remind myself of how exposure builds the body's immune and resistance level has limited success. Strangely, I don't mind working in the yard or cleaning the litter box. Go figure.

Then there are further thoughts that may not have any visible attributes. I analyze what to order – should I eat very healthy, should I vary the combinations, what did I eat yesterday, what am I having tomorrow? What are the negative affects of the meal I order – is it farmed raised and from where? (Always analyzing, always calculating thinking too much about what ifs and too little about those gathered around the able and the meal we're sharing.) It

is difficult and embarrassing to air these thoughts in public; maybe they will increase ones' understanding and avail another's pain.

Constantly, routinely, other obsessive thoughts influx the mind such as the loss of loved ones, accidents, robberies, various diseases, ailments and disorders. Financial worries, loss of a job, loss of faith, all point to the illness that robs one of a deeper security of Faith in the spiritual, Faith in God and faith in others. Some of these may be common thoughts but it is the degree, intensity and frequency of these thoughts that confirm and reinforce the disease. I am reminded of the lack of control inherent in life; the unease that exists constantly, as I am overwhelmed by this hyper brain. The outsider does not see this deeper struggle, the more personal thoughts too personal to discuss some times even within a well established relationship.

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