

From the Editor's Desk

A Radiological Contemplation of Katrina

The devastating hurricane that was Katrina has come and gone now, leaving horrific stories of loss as well as tales of heroism in her wake.

In a fight for personal survival, the primitive instinct of self-preservation kicks in. We are learning about nursing home owners who abandoned their charges when threatened by the approaching storm in order that they themselves might escape. There will be other similar stories. It must be terrifying to face such a complete and utter loss of hope.

And what of the radioactive isotopes that surely were stored in the Gulf Coast area? What has become of them? Certainly they were a minor consideration when the evacuation orders came as the storm approached. If pets were stripped from their owners' grieving hands in order to board evacuation transportation, surely radioactive materials with all of their protections were denied access as well.

The potential harm from losing control of these radioactive isotopes was likely not much of a consideration in the face of the impending natural disaster. If so, perhaps then it is time to reassess the rigorous controls in place during more settled climatic times. Perhaps, put into perspective, the potential danger from most radioactive isotopes do not warrant the rigorous controls currently in place to monitor them. Perhaps the dangers are more perceived than real. Perhaps it is time to reconsider such things.

Steve Kidd presents a discourse on the public perception of things nuclear. He offers a compelling argument that the nuclear business is not so odd.

In this issue, we meet historian and humanitarian Ronald L. Kathren. He is a past President of the Health Physics Society who has made it his personal mission to preserve historical artifacts associated with the birth and development of the radiological sciences.

Also in this issue, Paul R. Steinmeyer offers up a valuable primer on the use of GM Pancake detectors. You will want to keep this article handy to reference again and again.

I welcome your comments, criticisms, or recommendations as always. Contact me at lbrady@radpro.com.

To those of you directly impacted by Katrina, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with you.

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