

# Nuclear Hotseat #767 - March 10, 2026 - Fukushima at 15: Nancy Foust of SimplyInfo.org, Beverly Findlay-Kaneko

**Libbe HaLevy:** [00:00:00] Fukushima, it's been 15 years since the 9.0 tsunami off the northeast coast of Japan, triggered meltdowns in three of six nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi site, creating a nuclear disaster on par with Chernobyl. In the aftermath, entire towns were evacuated, families, broken apart, businesses abandoned, and an entire swath of Japan contaminated with radioactive fallout that has since spread around the world.

The Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company, TEPCO, which owns the site, hurried to claim that it would all be cleaned up. Don't worry, you won't even know there was ever a problem there. But through the years, the dire reality of the situation has revealed itself. And in order to cut through all the propaganda that's been trying to whitewash or minimize the ongoing problems with the site, it takes a [00:01:00] genuine expert, someone who has tracked the problems at Fukushima since the disaster began using science as the basis to understand what's really going on.

And then she tells us that when it comes to TEPCO and Japan's specific cleanup plans for the site,

**Nancy Foust:** they've been very vague. And I think it's intentional, you know, cleanup or decommissioning. Originally when they started talking about how are we going to handle this long term? So a few years after the disaster, they started those conversations and back then they were very specific and we're going to do this and this and this.

But they didn't have to say how they were gonna do that. So they were very confident in this plan, you know, we're gonna clean everything up by this date. And as they've dug into it and you know, start looking at how monumental all of this is. What they're going to accomplish gets very vague. What is the definition of done?

They don't have one.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Well, [00:02:00] when Nancy Faust of simply info.org explains that, in essence, TEPCO and the Japanese government do not know how long it will take, how successful or unsuccessful their efforts will be, even what would qualify as a so-called successful cleanup. And in this way you can clearly see the dark side of nuclear, the threat to people and the environment.

It perpetually poses the ongoing contamination of water, land, air, and life by radio activity that it creates. And how Fukushima reveals the forever nature of that awful, dangerous, deadly seat that we all share.

**Nuclear Hotseat Theme:** Nuclear Hotseat. What are those people thinking? Nuclear Hotseat. What have those boys been drinking?

Nuclear Hotseat. The choreo is sinking. Our time to act is [00:03:00] shrinking, but the activists are linking

nuclear Hotseat. It's the bomb.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Welcome to Nuclear Hotseat, the weekly international news magazine. Keeping you up to date on all things nuclear from a different perspective. We are a show for people who know nothing about nuclear who want to know, so. And people who know something about nuclear who would like to know just a little bit more.

My name is Libbe HaLevy. I am the producer and host as well as a survivor of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island from just one mile away. So I know what can happen when those nuclear so-called experts get it wrong. This week, March 11, marks the 15th anniversary of the start of the Fukushima Daiichi Triple Nuclear Meltdown [00:04:00] disaster.

To find out how Japan and Tokyo Electric Power Company TEPCOs work to stabilize and attempt to clean up the site is progressing. We talk with Nancy Faust of simply info.org. That group publishes an annual report. This year's 15th anniversary report Fukushima Daiichi. It's a clearly written, scientific fact-based footnoted, fully vetted analysis on the current situation with the cleanup and its ongoing problems, and you don't have to be a science nerd to understand what they're saying because they make it completely accessible.

We also discussed the Japanese nuclear amnesia in the attempts to downplay Fukushima as the country moves closer to nuclear expansionism by building new reactors without having cleaned up the existing nuclear mess from the old ones. We also revisit a segment from our 2023 Voices from Japan [00:05:00]

Fukushima Special where producer writer Beverly Finlay Kko visits the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum in Uba, which might also be called the Fukushima Propaganda.

It will give you insights into how the Japanese government is working overtime to manipulate perceptions about the Fukushima disaster. We'll also have nuclear news from around the world, Jack Cohen Joppa of the Nuke Resistor, with another story from our shared history of activist resistance to nuclear reactors and weapons, and we'll also have a lot more honest and verified nuclear information, all of it coming up in just a few moments.

Today is Tuesday, March 10th, 2026, and here is this week's nuclear news from a different perspective here in the us. As our battle with Iran and the Middle East continues to heat [00:06:00] up, the president has ordered the entire federal government to stop using products from the AI company. Anthropic aiming to stop what he called a quote.

Radical left woke company. End quote from encroaching on the military's decision making at issue an's refusal to budge off its two red lines using its product in mass domestic surveillance or to power fully autonomous weapons. And how AI might be used in the event of a nuclear attack on the United States.

It's known that there is an active and ongoing debate over whether and how artificial intelligence should be integrated into nuclear command and control systems, and that the US military is actively looking at the ways AI and machine learning can be used to enable and accelerate human decision making.

End quote, just what we need, faster decisions when it comes to nukes. Also [00:07:00] under debate is whether machines would ever be given control of the ability to launch nuclear weapons and the imperative to keep a human in the loop end quote For discussions of the use of humanity's deadly weapons, close the Bombay doors, hell close the Bombay doors.

We'll link to the full article on this. And there's both good news and bad news for Bill Gates and his Terror Power company. The good news for him is that they finally have a permit for a nuclear reactor to be built in ke Wyoming, and it's scheduled to start operating in 2031. The bad news, there's currently no way to fuel this reactor because it can only be fueled by high assay, low enriched uranium or hallu as it's called, which is only made in commercial quantities by a company that is a subsidiary of Rose Adam in Russia.

As regards Japan and [00:08:00] the anniversary of Fukushima, there are two articles that we will link to. One is entitled Fukushima at 15 by Thomas Bass, and it is an extensive piece that appeared in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The other article is how Fukushima's radioactive fallout in Tokyo was concealed from the public.

Both will be linked on our website, nuclear Hotseat.com. Under this episode number 767, here's this week's featured interview. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster began 15 years ago on March 11th, 2011. There were meltdowns in three of the six reactors, explosions releases of waves of radiation into the air, the water, and adjacent lands, enormous radiation spikes, and the ongoing nightmare of how to clean up this massive radioactive debris footprint that was created.

[00:09:00] If a cleanup of that sort can even be accomplished. Every year Nuclear Hotseat does a special program to mark the Fukushima anniversary. This year we talk with Nancy Faust. She is with simply info.org, a group which began out of a live blog run by Reuters News Service during the Great East Japan earthquake and the related Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

Participants in the blog wanted the real news and a way to do something about this unprecedented tragedy. On the Simply info.org webpage, they state our strength is in our diversity. People from around the globe, from various professions and industries came to to research, investigate, analyze, and educate about the ongoing incident.

We are dedicated to using the knowledge of the crowd for research and analysis of both the technical and humanitarian aspects of complex incidents and [00:10:00] concerns. Without focusing on profit, we have no affiliation or funding from any government, industry or university. Okay. Nancy Faust was intimately involved with the creation of this year's report as she has been in years past.

She has over 15 years experience in the design and production of online media through her work in the advertising industry skills she put to work in the coverage of the nuclear disaster, she led the technical team in planning and creating the Simply Info website and information systems. Nancy also operates the Fukushima photo site, a collection of early attempts to pull forensic data out of images of the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

I spoke with Nancy Faust on March 6th, 2026. Nancy Faust, always great to have you here with us on Nuclear Hotseat.

**Nancy Foust:** Hi. Great to be here.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Let's give people a little sense of your background. [00:11:00] What is it that brings you to the nuclear issues and your work on it?

**Nancy Foust:** I worked with Simply Info for. A little over 10 years.

I worked in the research team and also in our communications team, uh, making sure all of our information was compiled and out, answering questions, talking to the press. That's kind of where I came into this, and I started with the group on March 11th, 2011 when all of this went down

**Libbe HaLevy:** Ground zero.

**Nancy Foust:** Yep.

**Libbe HaLevy:** When you say getting the information out and the talking points, what is it that Simply Info does?

**Nancy Foust:** We go through the technical information. So all those buried TEPCO documents, large piles of data from the Japanese government sources, from NGOs, we go and we have various people that dig through all of that data and make sense out of it. And then we try to provide that information out to, [00:12:00] you know, to everyone else in kind of plain English, what does it mean?

Plus we provide, you know, sources for our information. So, you know, if we're saying that there's this problem or this new thing was discovered, we're gonna share where that came from. So someone can go look at the data themselves.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Who tends to use this information, where does it go, and who is taking advantage of it?

**Nancy Foust:** It's all over the place. Just people wanting news, people concerned about the issues with, you know, the environment, nuclear issues in Japan, the disaster itself, academics, journalists, other researchers. It really runs the gamut in our research as far as who looks at our content and also who's contacted us for more information or asked, you know, someone to help them with specific information they were looking for, for a reason.

Like a researcher is wondering if we have a particular piece of information [00:13:00] they need, or a journalist is looking for more information to put

together a story. So, you know, over the years we've done a lot of different information dissemination on the issues.

**Libbe HaLevy:** You've certainly been a primary source for nuclear Hotseat.

As the world, including Japan and the United States have been ramping up to build more nuclear reactors, restarting old ones, and selling the public on the need for nuclear energy, if we want AI data centers, Fukushima seems to have fallen off a lot of people's radar, out of consciousness, and yet there are still problems there at the site, and that's what I wanna explore with you every year.

Simply info puts out a report, tell us what the report is.

**Nancy Foust:** Every year we put out an annual report. What we do is we go through everything that we have found or researched throughout that year, and we compile a report to tell [00:14:00] everybody, you know, what happened in the last year related to the disaster site itself, or the tangent issues like the environment, people's lives, all those things that tie into this.

And we try to make it easy enough for a lay person to read and understand quickly, easily what's going on, but also enough information that people that are really into the data for whatever reason, you know, they work in the industry, they are researcher, they work in environmental issues, that they're still gonna be able to get usable information out of this report for their needs.

So that's our goal with this report every year, and we're now on our 15th year of putting out this report.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Generally speaking, what is the current status on the site?

**Nancy Foust:** They have gotten quite a bit of the initial disaster cleaned up and by cleaned up, I mean just kind of generally contained, that doesn't mean it solved.

They've gone through, they've dug up soil, they've put [00:15:00] down metal sheeting, they things that were destroyed and were, you know, loose and outside of the reactor buildings have been cleaned up and put into permanent storage, you know, and they've covered most of the reactor buildings in some manner. So they've kind of contained what can blow away and that type of thing.

They've managed to get the spent fuel out of unit four and unit six. So what that means is all of that spent fuel that was in those pools has been removed to casks

and put into what they call dry storage. And they've done that as a safety measure because those. Spent fuel pools are always a risk that something could happen, and that was one of the major risks right after the meltdowns was the concern that unit four's spent fuel pool would fail or would leak and lose all of its water and cause basically kind of an open air meltdown, which was kind of the worst case scenario that Tokyo was dealing with.

[00:16:00] Right after this disaster,

**Libbe HaLevy:** the most damaged and still dangerous units are one, two, and five. What is the condition of the spent fuel and the spent fuel pools in those three units?

**Nancy Foust:** For unit one, they have not started removing fuel yet. They know there is some damage to fuel in the pool. They have not really had an opportunity to get down in there really deep and investigate.

With a camera yet.

**Libbe HaLevy:** When you say there's been some damage, does that relate at all to radiation release?

**Nancy Foust:** Possibly. And it's kind of hard for them to figure it out at this point. So when Unit one exploded, the roof materials and the overhead crane fell on top of the pool. So this has limited their ability to put a camera in, do any other sort of remote inspections into the pool.

What their next steps are with unit one is to try to get all this debris removed. They have a new [00:17:00] cover on unit one. It's this big kind of a metal shed type cover that has an opening on the side of it. So they can now go in there and try to remove all of this junk over the top of Unit one spent fuel pool.

But that in itself is dangerous because they're concerned with the fuel handling crane or this overhead crane or pieces of it falling into the pool and damaging something that's always a concern. They don't want to break open spent fuel. They don't want to damage the pool itself. They put reinforcements on the gate between the spent fuel pool and the reactor.

Well, so once they get to the point of removing all of this debris above the pool, they'll be able to do better inspections in it.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Some of the statistics in the report were really kind of staggering that Unit one had 392 assemblies in it with none of them having been extracted. Some of them are spent, some [00:18:00] of them are new, but all of them are still there.

**Nancy Foust:** Yes.

**Libbe HaLevy:** What are the plans or are there any in place yet for their removal or their waiting for some benchmark?

**Nancy Foust:** It sounds like TEPCOs going to set a more solid date on when they plan to actually start removing that fuel. After they get all of this debris out of there. Like unit two, they've already got a plan.

They've published these plans. You know, we're going to do X, Y, Z to get the fuel out of there, and they've designed equipment and everything. Unit one. The point they're at right now is getting that debris removed and they won't make a plan beyond that. So that tells us that they don't know enough to make a plan yet.

So they're not going to do that until they've got all this debris removed. That's probably at least two years out before they'll even start talking about a plan.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Unit two has 615 assemblies in it, of [00:19:00] which 587 are spent fuel, but 26 are new and there's been no extraction.

**Nancy Foust:** Correct.

**Libbe HaLevy:** This was a parsing of information that was done consistently for the three reactors that are the greatest problem right now.

The third of them being unit five, which has 1,542 assemblies, 1,374 are spent fuel 168 are new or unused, and again, no extraction. Is there a plan in place for unit five yet?

**Nancy Foust:** Yes. And because unit five doesn't have any damage, like unit one, unit two, unit three, unit four, the spent fuel removal there is pretty straightforward.

Largely what their problem has been with this process of removing spent fuel in the units that aren't damaged is a lack of cask. A lack of places to put the casks. The casks have to be made. They have to be made to specific parameters to hold

the [00:20:00] fuel for at least 20 years. And the companies that make them are limited, I believe, Toshiba.

And they may have one other one that like Hitachi may be making 'em to, but Toshiba had been the main manufacturer of these casks and, and that had been the bottleneck. And I believe it still is kind of the bottleneck in getting these assemblies out of the pools because they don't have a cask that can't remove it.

So that limits their pace of how fast they can remove 'em, even though it's not a complicated task in unit five because it's not damaged.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Bringing up the casks, the treated water from the ALP system, which is radioactive, and it goes through this system and it's supposed to clean it up, but it is incapable of removing radioactive tritium.

So the water is still radioactive, and this water has been stored onsite in casks and is the source of the water that's been released into the Pacific Ocean every few months. There's another enormous release of [00:21:00] radioactive water tritium containing water, and what has just come out from TEPCO, I caught it in the last week, is that they're saying that they are going to be demolishing.

The empty tanks. Now, there is still radioactive water being created from the water that drains off the mountainside, from rain, from snow melt, and when it goes through the forest, the forest cannot be decontaminated and it was severely contaminated during the accident. During the meltdowns, it flows down the mountain and it pools at the bottom, and then is to be extracted into these casks.

But there haven't been enough casks, which is why the water was being released into the Pacific Ocean. It strikes me as a pretty numb nuts move, that instead of taking some more of this contaminated water that has been created and putting it in the tanks, they are saying, no, we're just gonna demolish them because they've already been used.

Do you see any rationale [00:22:00] behind that that might make even a sliver of sense.

**Nancy Foust:** Making sense is one thing. TEPCOs motivation is another. And TEPCOs motivation is they need space. And they have said that the reason they were taking down these two tank farms was the need for space for some of this other material storage.

And TEPCOs long game has always been, they don't wanna be storing contaminated water on site. They wanna be able to just dump it. And you know, they've done things to reduce how much is flowing through the reactor buildings in the basements, and it has to get pumped out. And they will probably still always have a certain amount.

So they will need some tanks on site. They will still need Alps to process it. And then there's, you know, the controversy of what they're putting out into the ocean after they've filtered it. And you know, what is in that, that it's got tridium, you know, it's got some other trace elements in it. But that's TEPCOs plan is just to keep doing that process.

And [00:23:00] because that's the way they wanna go with this, their rationale is, is that they don't need as many tanks.

**Libbe HaLevy:** The nuclear damage, compensation and decommissioning facilitating corporation, that's a mouthful. That's Japan's, NDF has described clearing the spent fuel pools as the single most urgent priority.

And part of their rationale is because another earthquake or tsunami could strike at any time. How dangerous might that be?

**Nancy Foust:** Would need to look at unit four and what happened there during the initial disaster because when the tsunami hit, unit four had no fuel in the reactor vessel. That was under maintenance.

All the fuel was in the spent fuel pool, but it still managed to have an explosion. It still managed to have damage, and there was a big risk that that pool could collapse or leak and cause this big issue. [00:24:00] And I think that's where they come up with considering unit five and Unit six to be a risk. Even though those buildings aren't damaged, the pools are still a risk.

And then when you look at unit two and unit one, those reactor buildings are damaged and they still have fuel in the pools. So they're even more of a risk because they're not functioning units, you know, they don't have proper electricity. There's damage to the buildings. So if something does happen, it's even more of a challenge to try to keep it under control.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Besides the fuel runs in the spent fuel pools, there was also the problem of radioactive debris that was created with all this damage, all this wreckage. In November, 2024, TEPCO succeeded in their first removal of

debris from a reactor, and they succeeded in removing a whopping 0.7 grams of nuclear fuel debris.

From that first time, just [00:25:00] off the top, about how much debris is estimated to exist on site, that's going to have to be removed.

**Nancy Foust:** I don't have a number off the top of my head, but this is very much a, what they pulled out for testing is very much a drop in the ocean compared to what remains in unit one, two, and three that needs to be removed.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Have they been handling debris all the way through, or They're doing the fuel rods

**Nancy Foust:** first and then the debris? They're doing a little bit of both. They're kind of staggering between units and either what's a priority because it's dangerous or is something that they have a plan and can actually approach and do something with it.

Now, like with unit two, they're going to be doing both things kind of at the same time. They're actively working on setting up to remove the spent fuel out of the pool. They're also doing these initial investigations to try to analyze the fuel debris and the reactor and the in containment so they can get a better idea of what [00:26:00] is gonna work to try to get most of it removed out of the containment vessel for the

**Libbe HaLevy:** workers who are there, what are the radiation levels that they are facing and what is being done to protect them or mitigate the situation so that any potential harm is kept to a minimum, if not eliminated completely.

**Nancy Foust:** They've restricted how much inspection work they're doing inside the reactor buildings, and that has helped cut down on radiation exposure levels. We get data every year as far as what's the official recorded doses, but we never get those tied to the work anymore. They used to originally when they'd send a group of workers, then they'd say, you know, these workers had a maximum exposure dose from this work of X, Y, Z, and we don't see that anymore.

They'll just give us. All the workers in this year, or from this month to this month had, you know, exposures in these brackets. So it's a little harder to know what someone's exposure is [00:27:00] from what they were doing, but because they've got a lot of kind of the initial cleanup work, you know, pulling debris

out of, you know, like the hallways in the reactor buildings, that has reduced the need to have a number of workers inside the building.

So if there's workers inside the building, they're doing something very specific, you know, like pulling this fuel sample or setting up a robot to go in and inspect something that needs to be done so that they have information for the next phase of planning.

**Libbe HaLevy:** It sounds like each of the units has variable problems and there's no one unified plan that can.

Deal with all of them in the same way. Would that be accurate?

**Nancy Foust:** Yes. Because the damage to all three is different. And the way the meltdowns took place and where that damage is, is all different in each unit. They need a different approach for each one. You know, they may be able to repurpose some of the [00:28:00] technology, some of the understanding, but like unit one, there's a lot of the fuel debris is in the suppression chamber room.

It's in the suppression chamber, it's in the bottom of the containment vessel, but it's underwater. So that's very different than like unit two, where there's really not any standing water in containment. And you know, when they've inspected in there, they've found there's fuel debris in the bottom of the containment vessel, but it's not underwater.

So that fuel retrieval may be very different than what they do in unit one.

**Libbe HaLevy:** So it sounds like they have to strategize the equivalent of three separate campaigns to straighten these things out as best they can.

**Nancy Foust:** Yes.

**Libbe HaLevy:** We'll continue with this week's featured interview on Fukushima at 15 with Nancy Faust of Simply Info, and we'll do that in just a moment.

But first, it's hard to believe that it's been 15 years since the start of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear [00:29:00] disaster, three reactors in meltdown, explosions, radiation releases, and the official aftermath Nuclear Theater that makes it look like decontamination has happened. And the problem is well at hand when in truth it's just Japan and TEPCO kicking the problem down the road in green plastic trash bags and hoping you don't notice.

And now there's the ongoing release of radioactive tritium contaminated water from Fukushima into the Pacific Ocean. It is a mess, but you won't be hearing much detail about this on mainstream media. Nothing beyond, of course, a cursory mention of the anniversary. That's because so many media outlets have been compromised into promoting nuclear energy as some imagined solution to climate change when it's not, and especially the need for electricity.

For ai. Data centers. Media conglomerates are not interested in giving [00:30:00] you the full story about Fukushima and nuclear reactors because quite frankly, it's scary and it's against their financial interests. No. If you want the real picture, the full picture right here is where you come. Nuclear Hotseat.

Every week we provide verifiable nuclear information that's been sourced, checked and footnoted. Plus interviews with people who are genuine experts on a wide range of nuclear issues and the impact on life health, and our shared genetic future. We also tell you about people on the front lines of activism around the world, their triumphs challenges, and what you can do to help.

Here's one thing you can do. Nuclear Hotseat runs on donations, and we cannot survive without your support yours. So if you're grateful for the information you get from this show, now is the time to help us out. Be it a one-time donation [00:31:00] or monthly recurring, you'll be supporting the services required to keep this program up and running and speaking the truth.

We are a 5 0 1 C3 nonprofit organization, which means that your donations are tax deductible. Just go to nuclear Hotseat.com and look for the red donate button. If you have Zelle, you can send money directly to info@nuclearhotseat.com. Don't wait. Go to nuclear Hotseat.com to donate right now and know that whatever you can do to help, I am deeply grateful that you're listening and that you care.

Now, back to this week's featured interview on Fukushima at 15 with Nancy Faust of simin info.org. In the earliest days after the triple meltdown began, one attempt at mitigating radiation releases was the placement of zeolite and activated charcoal sandbags in the basements of several buildings to absorb radioactive materials [00:32:00] out of the stagnant water.

Now, as they're attempting to remove these bags, problems have come up. What are these problems?

**Nancy Foust:** They've had a number of problems come up trying to remove these. The radiation levels in these zeolite bags that they threw in, these

basements are high, so they can't have people go in there. They're using remote equipment, but as they've been trying to remove 'em, they discovered that they've been down there so long under water that the material, the bags were made of has disintegrated.

So now they're just pulling up all of this loose, basically like cos sand, which is, you know, the zeolite and charcoal mix. So they're having to come up with better equipment, adjust what they've got to basically shovel this out and put it into some sort of shielded storage.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Do the workers get any kind of specific medical treatment?

Are they being taken care of? Or it's being treated like, well, here's a work site. Go do your work and here's your paycheck.

**Nancy Foust:** The workers get [00:33:00] scanned every year. There is a follow-up program, at least with the initial workers that worked the first couple of years and had higher exposures. They get scans every year, and I believe they get a checkup through the a government program.

The current workers, I'm not aware of them having any sort of ongoing program to monitor their health. They do have a medical office on site. If someone gets hurt, there's someone there that can do some initial treatment and call an ambulance, that type of thing. But beyond that, there really isn't any formal program that I'm aware of.

**Libbe HaLevy:** What has been the impact on the food grown in the area, and what, if any, groups are paying attention to this and monitoring it?

**Nancy Foust:** The primary group that we've been following, because their information is so good, is Mother's Radiation Lab in Milwaukee.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Is that the Tara Shene group?

**Nancy Foust:** Yes, they've got a state-of-the-art lab they've set up in the years since the initial [00:34:00] disaster.

They do really good work. Their results are consistent. They test a variety of things. So, you know, we will go through their testing for a year and see what, you know, what is showing up, where is it showing up, and. We're starting to see some trends that have kind of settled in. And from what we know about Chernobyl, it's almost kind of expected.

What we're seeing and what we're seeing is soil samples from certain places are still consistently really high. They're four digits. They're from parks like around Milwaukee, places where dust collects around Milwaukee. They've had some in Minimi Soma, but they'll get dust samples from like an air conditioner, a filter, and those will show unusually high and it'll be in a certain spot.

So, you know, they'll test one in one spot and it'll be super high and they'll test one from another spot. You know, in another town nearby will be fine or be really low. So that is looking like there's [00:35:00] hotspots. That's kind of expected. As you know, as things migrate through the environment, it'll concentrate certain places.

Things like a house filter, an air conditioning filter. Those are gonna accumulate that because they're sucking up all of that stuff out of the air. There was another one was lichen. They found a lichen sample that was over 40,000 beck rolls per kilogram, which. Pretty significant. And again, this is something they found in the fallout areas from Chernobyl, that that's a bio accumulator as far as food goes.

This year we looked at what's in the top 10, rather than digging really deep down into the results. So you know, that doesn't mean there isn't food that's contaminated, just when we're looking at what's hitting in that top 10 every month. For the last year, mushrooms was the big one. Also, forest vegetables that are forage like bamboo shoots.

They were still finding some that are wild harvested out of the mountains that are high. And again, those are things we [00:36:00] expect. What they find after Chernobyl, you know, blueberries, wild boar, anything that's forged out of the forest seems to be where they're finding high radiation level. Still

**Libbe HaLevy:** those sound like foods that would be more pertinent to the people living in the area, or Japan in general, as opposed to being export crops.

**Nancy Foust:** Correct. And this is what again, what they see, you know, decades later after Chernobyl is, you know, those local things that people might go and eat, you know, whether it's wild game or berries, mushrooms, you know, and Japan does have some cultivated mushroom industry that's, you know, kind of hyper-local.

It's not, you know, something where it's being grown in a big warehouse. You know, you have small farmers who are doing this as a side crop, or you know, they've got forest land and they're trying to grow mushrooms in their natural

environment, how they normally would, but they're bio accumulators and they're picking up all this radiation.

So then they're showing [00:37:00] up in this top 10 list.

**Libbe HaLevy:** This might be a little afield from the Simply Info report, but only the equivalent of 17% of the pre-disaster population has returned to the area to live. Have there been incentives by the government? Have people been ignoring them? Are people just not willing to go there because of the risks that are already inherent and that might be growing if there's another accident?

**Nancy Foust:** I think it's a little of everything that you mentioned, the government has put money into revitalizing certain towns near the plant and some of the people that have returned to these towns that have been, you know, kind of rebuilt. Some are new residents, some are old residents coming back, and they built these towns they purposely kind of rebuilt.

They did it with the intent of people that are working at the recovery at [00:38:00] the plant. To live in these towns nearby so that it's more convenient than having to drive hours in every day for work. So any recovery is also kind of intertwined with this long-term effort to deal with everything at the plant and the people doing that work.

As far as people returning that originally lived there, those numbers are still really low. This has been a pattern through all of the years as they've said, you know, you can return home now. People haven't been, and it's a combination of things. People don't trust it. They've been gone so long, they don't just don't wanna go back.

And also, there's not enough services. Some of these towns where they've urged people to come back. There's no grocery store, there was no clinic, there's nothing there. But maybe a little town office. You know, the government had some of these towns had gone in and put in a small satellite clinic so that there was a doctor around, or a little grocery store next to the city office so people could get groceries.

[00:39:00] But even when they're telling people to come back, a lot of these places, there just isn't the infrastructure to really support it.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Is there a stigma that you're aware of for people who are either from that area or who have attempted to live there in the time since the accidents?

**Nancy Foust:** I know in the years right after the initial accident, there was a lot of stigma of people who were evacuees, fear that they were contaminated, or issues with the fact that they were getting government handouts, you know, or payments because they couldn't live at home, you know, or they lost their jobs.

So there was a lot of societal things going on with that in the years right after the disaster, and I really am not finding a lot of information now how that's playing out. A lot of people that got compensation no longer get it. So how that's playing out for them is a really good question.

**Libbe HaLevy:** The Japanese government and TEPCO have cited different dates [00:40:00] at different times as to when the cleanup, however they define that, might be concluded.

They have a projected date now of 2051 to complete decommissioning, which begs the question, is decommissioning the same thing as cleanup, a genuine cleanup? And in your estimation, how probable or possible is that level of progress by 2051?

**Nancy Foust:** They've been very vague and I think it's intentional, you know, cleanup or decommissioning.

Originally when they started talking about how are we going to handle this long term? So, you know, a few years after the disaster, they started those conversations and back then they were very specific and we're going to do this and this and this. But they didn't have to say how they were gonna do that.

So they were very confident in this plan, you know, we're gonna clean everything up by this date. And as they've dug into it and you know, start looking at how monumental all of [00:41:00] this is. What they're going to accomplish gets very vague. At one point they were saying, it's gonna be completely cleaned up.

You're never gonna know this was here. And then at later points they're like, well, we're gonna clean up all the fuel debris and then worry about what we're gonna do with these reactor buildings. And then there was also maybe some conversation in between there. Well maybe, we'll, we'll knock 'em down to the foundation and then fill it with concrete.

So these plans have changed and changed and changed so they don't have a clear metric, you know, what is the definition of done? They don't have one. They admit that they don't know a lot of information to get to that point. And so,

I mean, that's one honest thing they've said is, you know, we just don't know everything we're gonna need to know.

And the idea that they're gonna be done by 2051 is, I consider it not real probable one because there's so many challenges. And two, because they [00:42:00] don't have a plan yet. How can you set a date when you don't know what you have to accomplish

**Libbe HaLevy:** with Japan exhibiting what I can only call nuclear amnesia about what it is faced from Fukushima.

And it is in the process of restarting the reactors as Kazaki ua. There is a lot of talk about the building of small modular nuclear reactors or advanced reactors or any one of the many names they are giving to the exact same non-existent technology. I am baffled by how they have so covered up Fukushima as an immediate and ongoing problem that they're actually thinking of expanding the nuclear footprint.

Do you have any insights at all on that process?

**Nancy Foust:** It tracks with what the Japanese government has done since day one. They, they have really wanna sweep this under the rug. It's expensive, it's ugly and it's inconvenient. So they wanna compartmentalize Fukushima, you know, [00:43:00] over in its corner. You know, it still gets talked about.

It's still on the national news in Japan, but they really want it as a contained, you know. Thing over here in the corner that doesn't really relate to anything else. 'cause they don't want it related to anything else. Because if people start talking about what a mess Fukushima is and how long it's gonna take to clean up and then start talking about restarting reactors or we're gonna start an SMR program, there's a lot of questions that need to be talked about that are really inconvenient.

**Libbe HaLevy:** It seems like there are two different nuclear containment problems here. One is the containment of the site and the debris and the radioactivity. The other one is the containment of the story. Is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to add at this time? Either about the report or about Fukushima or about the ongoing work of Simply Info?

**Nancy Foust:** Probably the one thing I'd wanna do is kind of connect some dots as the initial disaster had happened and we were looking at all of this and we

[00:44:00] were looking at nuclear power plants around the world, one that came up in our conversations was the large nuclear power plants in Ukraine.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Vaporia.

**Nancy Foust:** Yes. And when we were discussing that, that the thing that came out of that was, this is such a danger.

It's so huge. There's so many units in one place, and all you need is something to go sideways. Whether it's a natural disaster, whether it's a mechanical disaster or a war breaking out, this is gonna be horrible. And if anyone wants to go back and look through our old articles, there is an article somewhere around maybe 20 15, 20 16, about this very issue where we brought up what a risk this was.

And lo and behold, here we are.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Sometimes I think all of us in this movement who are speaking the truth should be part of the Cassandra Club because we speak the truth, but nobody pays any attention.

**Nancy Foust:** And that's really kind of what it feels like. And connecting the dots [00:45:00] further down what you talked about that you know, Japan has com compartmentalized Fukushima, and they're on their merry way about restarting reactors and talking about SMRs and the issue with AI data centers and the energy they need, and the fact that many of these tech companies have decided that SMRs are going to be the magic solution to their power need.

But SMRs are an untested technology. There have been questions about that technology since way before AI was a thing. They're untested. They have the same risks as large power plants no matter what the, the PR people are telling you and. How is this playing out? Countries are looking for these quick, easy solutions for more and more power and instead of looking for better technology that uses less power or environmentally friendly sources like wind or [00:46:00] solar.

And granted the, the power consumption of some of these big data centers is going to be a challenge to meet it with wind and solar without building out lots and lots of it. But this has all just become kind of this elephant in the room, if you will. They wanna build these big data centers and they've decided that this untested SMR technology is gonna be their magic solution to their power needs.

And that's gonna be the next thing that's an issue. I see people having to fight nuclear issues.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Nancy Fas, you have been a source and a font of wisdom and information for years in connection with Nuclear Hotseat, and I'm grateful for your clarity and the work you do every year to track something that most of the world would rather not pay any attention to.

So I thank you for that. I thank Simply info for that. And I wanna thank you for being my guest this week on Nuclear Hotseat. [00:47:00]

**Nancy Foust:** Thank you for having me,

**Libbe HaLevy:** Nancy Faust of Simply info.org. We'll have a link up to the downloadable PDF of their report, 15th anniversary report, Fukushima Daiichi. It will be on our website, nuclear Hotseat.com.

Under this episode number 7 67. To give you a sense of the propaganda, the Japanese government and TEPCO are throwing at the public to manipulate impressions of Fukushima Daiichi. Here is an excerpt from our 2024 Voices from Japan. Fukushima special co-producer and writer, Beverly Finlay Kko on the ground in Japan for us, visited the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum in Uba, which should be called the Fukushima Propaganda Museum.

This will give you a brief insight into how the Japanese government is trying to manipulate our perceptions about the Fukushima [00:48:00] disaster. Is it really called a PR museum?

**Beverly. Findlay-Kaneko:** Yes.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Well, truth in Advertising, tell us about this PR museum.

**Beverly. Findlay-Kaneko:** It was much of what we've come to expect from similar facilities in Fukushima.

Lots of stuff to make nuclear seem happy and familiar. There were several fun hands-on things for kids on field trips to fool around with. There was a greening cartoon character in the shape of a nuclear reactor wearing red gloves and socks. There was a giant pillar marking 6.5 meters, which is the height of the TOMA nuclear power plant sea wall.

I guess that's supposed to prove that it's safer than Fukushima's sea wall, which was only 5.5 meters. Apparently you can make special reservations to view the sea wall from the observation platform at the nuclear power plant. And on our [00:49:00] way out we saw cute handouts and a mapout front directing visitors to local tourist spots.

On this chilly October day, we were the only people at the museum.

**Libbe HaLevy:** What made the biggest impression on you about this museum?

**Beverly. Findlay-Kaneko:** I think that more than the museum itself was the striking difference between the surrounding boarded up and desolate fishing villages. And all of a sudden you're in a visibly well off area, and then through the next tunnel, you're back on the road lined with shacks that have been boarded up for the season.

Obviously, the mayors of waste dump candidates, KA and I and Tzu are grabbing for a handful of that nuclear glitter to spiff up their own little towns. Fukushima is the same way with struggling mountain hamlets and Seaside villages acquiescing to and benefiting from the nuclear industry. It's just not quite as jarring [00:50:00] as this particular area in Hokkaido because Ho Kao's landscape is starker and more dramatic, and Fukushima's is more bucolic and heavily forested, which masks some of the poverty.

Little farmhouses nestled in among the trees and pad fields are quaint, but rickety boarded up fishing huts, hunkering beneath towering stone. Cliffs give off an air of desperation. Reflecting on this, it seems odd to me that one mayor in an impoverished village of 904 can make a decision to store all of Japan's nuclear waste, or that a little town of 2000 can decide to host a nuclear power plant that has the potential to obliterate everything around it.

But Yuji pointed out that it's easier to buy off 904 struggling fishermen than the population of Tokyo. Kazu can receive around [00:51:00] \$19 million just for the first two years of the research phase of the project. That's a drop in the bucket if you consider what it would cost in a more populated area to get to convince people to go along

**Libbe HaLevy:** Beverly. Findlay-Kaneko in an excerpt from the 2023 Nuclear Hotseat Voices from Japan Special.

We'll have a link up to the full episode number 663 on our website, nuclear Hotseat.com under this episode number 767. Did you know that two

generations ago, tens of thousands of people from coast to coast in the United States organized to resist the atomic state by putting their liberty on the line?

Here with another story from our shared history of resisting nukes is Jack Cohen Choppa, co-coordinator of the Nuclear resistor. With another in a series of inspiring stories,

**Jack Cohen-Joppa:** move fast and break [00:52:00] things. That's the motto of the Tech Bros financing the latest incarnation of a long promise to nuclear power Renaissance in the reckless race to fire up three newish reactors by next 4th of July.

The things being broken include the norms of regulatory oversight, radiation exposure limits, environmental monitoring, and local democracy. And the enthusiasm is contagious, infecting the nuclear weapons industry no less. Greg Mellow's recent dispatch for this podcast from the Nuclear Deterrent Summit laid it out.

It's no longer about stockpile stewardship. It's now a production mindset to go fast with new warhead designs, faster plutonium pit production, and a clamoring for new underground nuclear tests. But consider this President Richard Nixon promised a thousand nuclear reactors by the end of the last century.

While our protest and political engagement held the industry to just over a hundred, and there's [00:53:00] no denying that global protest and mass nonviolent resistance helped to reign in the nuclear arms race for a couple of decades. To tell that story in numbers, here's just a few. In the 1980s alone, the nuclear resistor chronicled well over 30,000 arrests for anti-nuclear civil disobedience in the United States at hundreds of sites across dozens of states.

These protests ranged widely from solitary prayer vigils that taugth missile silos to congressional office sit-ins, peace camps, occupations, and mass action blockades or reactor sites, bomb factories, military bases, and more. How did so many people organize to take such consequential action against the Adams state?

In short, we educated ourselves and each other about the issues, and we trained together in the evolving traditions of non-violent direct action, we learned how to make democratic decisions and prepare for [00:54:00] calculated risks in both small groups and large mass actions. People who joined the anti-nuclear movement in the 1970s or 1980s had watched on TV or were old enough to

have taken part in the great social movements for civil rights and an end to the war in Vietnam.

We had witnessed the power of nonviolent direct action to elevate a struggle for justice to a national, even a global spotlight, and to help achieve real victories. By the mid 1970s, commercial nuclear power was booming hand in hand with the accelerating nuclear arms race, both proved fertile ground for organizing and activism.

An essential tool in every organizer's kit was the action handbook. Kate Donnelley of the New Jersey Sea Alliance wrote that in 1978, the Clamshell Alliance produced a handbook for a civil disobedience action at the yet Unbuilt Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire. In the following years, most major civil disobedience [00:55:00] actions produced their own handbooks following the format of that first clamshell one.

Many of the same articles were used over and over, but each handbook committee made a few important changes to classic pieces. She wrote these handbooks ranging from a dozen stapled sheets to inexpensive newsprint booklets up to a hundred pages long. Typically began with an introduction to the local nuclear hazard, and its relation to the global nuclear threat.

Contents would also include a brief history of mass non-violent action descriptions and role-playing exercises about non-violent responses to personal violence agendas for trainings in non-violent action affinity, group formation and consensus decision making as an exercise of direct democracy possible legal consequences were spelled out.

While non-cooperation and jail solidarity were presented as viable non-violent options to ratchet up the resistance. [00:56:00] The handbooks evolved to include sections on oppression and the importance of challenging the mems, like racism, sexism, ableism, classism that get in the way of working together for positive change.

Today you can find great resources for nonviolent action and training@warresistors.org, the online home of the War Resistors League. Earlier in this story, I referred to the Adam State, that's the title of prescient, 1977 German book by Robert Yung. He argued that the widespread adoption of nuclear energy inherently threatens civil liberties and democratic institutions leading to the creation of an authoritarian surveillance state.

Sound familiar? It's been said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. We can't reconstruct the anti-nuclear movement of 40 years ago, but we can learn from it, build on our [00:57:00] history and rhyme for these times. The good news is that the tactics of non-violent action, of direct democracy, of non-cooperation with illegitimate authority, all these things the anti-nuclear movement learned about, trained, and practiced years ago are the same tactics available to us today to resist not only the new nukes, but every aspect of the authoritarian surveillance state in ascendant seat today.

This has been Jack Cohen Japa for Nuclear Hotseat, with examples from the Nuclear resistor archives for growing the activism we need today.

**Libbe HaLevy:** Jack Cohen Joppa of the Nuclear resistor, which you can find by going to [nuclear resistor.org](http://nuclearresistor.org). This has been Nuclear Hotseat for Tuesday, March 10th, 2026. If you'd like to get nuclear Hotseat delivered via email every week, just sign up and we'll send it out.

If you go to [nuclear Hotseat.com](http://nuclearhotseat.com), [00:58:00] there's a big yellow box that asks you to put in your first name and an email address. Once we get it, every week, you'll receive one email that includes the link to that show as soon as it posts, and a short description of its content. That way by signing up, you never need miss a single episode of the show and the way things are moving these days.

You wanna keep up with the stories. Speaking of that, if you have a story lead, a hot tip, or a suggestion of someone to interview, send that to me in an email at [info@nuclearhotseat.com](mailto:info@nuclearhotseat.com) and remember, important if you can go to nuclear Hotseat and donate. Thank you. We really need your help and anything will help us out.

As always, we appreciate your support. This episode of Nuclear Hotseat is copyright 2026 lieby Alvy and Nuclear Hotseat. [00:59:00] All rights reserved, but fair use allowed as long as you cite the program. Website names of any guest, choose comments you use and me for now, this is Lieby Halevy of Nuclear Hotseat, reminding you that as former chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Allison McFarland said, A nuclear accident anywhere is a nuclear accident everywhere.

There you have it, your weekly nuclear wake up call. So whatever you do, please don't go back to sleep because we are all in the nuclear Hotseat.

**Nuclear Hotseat Theme:** Nuclear Hotseat. What are those people thinking? Nuclear Hotseat. What have those boys been drinking? Nuclear Hotseat. The corium is sinking. Our time to act is shrinking, but the activists are linking

N u c l e a r Hotseat. [01:00:00] It's da bomb!