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State won't allow nuclear waste in river

By Jim Colwill
Missourian staff writer

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources will deny a permit to dump 20 million gallons (76 million liters) of radioactively contaminated water into the Missouri River upstream from St. Louis, despite U.S. Department of Energy statements that the dumping poses no measurable risk.

Fred Lafser, director of the Department of Natural Resources, called the U.S. Department of Energy permit application "a dead issue." He also said the Division of Environmental Quality will not consider the application further or talk with any DOE officials about the proposed dumping until Secretary of Energy Charles Duncan talks with Gov. Joseph Teasdale about ways to decontaminate the water before discharging it.

"At this point, any issuance of a permit will require a new application," said Lafser. He said such an application would have to include changes in the dumping plan before his department would consider approving it. He criticized the existing DOE permit application as brief and inadequate.

Lafser attributed the permit denial decision to Teasdale. "I have informed the governor that I will respect his decision to deny the permit," he said.

The Energy Department's Oak Ridge, Tenn., nuclear laboratory applied in November to the Missouri Division of Environmental Quality for a permit to gradually discharge the water from ponds that formed in waste pits left from uranium processing done in connection with the U.S. nuclear weapons program at Weldon Spring, Mo., about 15 miles (24 kilometers) west of St. Louis.

The water contains radioactive and other toxic impurities, including radium 226, a cancer-causing agent present in about 5 million gallons (19 million liters) of the water in concentrations about 40 times higher than the maximum allowed by the federal drinking water standard, according to DOE officials. The remaining water contains about twice the concentration allowed by the federal standard.

Water supply intakes for St. Louis, St. Charles and St. Louis County lie along the Missouri River downstream from the proposed discharge point.

Teasdale asked Lafser Monday to deny the permit to the Energy Department and sent a telegram to Duncan asking him to withdraw his department's application.

Teasdale said there is not enough information available to issue the permit, and added, "There simply has to be a better way to dispose

of this wastewater than dumping it into the river a few miles above the largest population center in our state."

The Energy Department proposal involves releasing the wastewater five days a week between March and September at a rate of 2 cubic feet per second. DOE says in its application that the Missouri River flows at 40,000 cubic feet per second and would provide ample dilution to keep the contaminants at safe levels.

Lee Keller, director of the technical services division of DOE's Oak Ridge facility, defended the decision to propose the release of the contaminated water into the river without treatment. He said DOE health experts had carefully considered the safety of the release of the wastewater.

"We have our own health experts and they very carefully evaluated this, and they in fact

did prepare the application for the permit," said Keller. "We acted with care and attention to the problem."

"We certainly do not want to do anything that would jeopardize or create an unsafe condition for people. We don't think there's a measurable health risk," he said.

The wastewater dumping is part of a comprehensive plan for decontamination of the Weldon Spring site being worked out by the Energy Department and the Department of the Army, which owns part of the contaminated land.

The Energy Department is negotiating a no-cost contract with Cotter Corp. of Canon City, Colo., to remove 6 million cubic feet of radioactive sludge underlying the waste ponds. Cotter would transport the sludge by rail to a plant in Colorado, where it would be refined to recover uranium that could be used as fuel for nuclear power plants.

Insight Gold prices cause pain at dentist

By Lynda Gorov
Missourian staff writer

A trip to the dentist in the next few months may mean more than a toothache. It also might mean a pain in the pocket book.

Because the dental industry uses a substantial amount of gold and silver for bridgework, crowns and fillings, the soaring price of precious metals is carrying dental fees with it. And it's making semi-precious and non-precious metal alternatives look more appealing to both dentists and patients.

Many Columbia dentists send their bridgework and crowns to dental laboratories, which specialize in this type of work. And as dental laboratories raise their prices, dentists follow suit.

Dr. Neil Riley, 309 S. Providence Road, says that because the price of gold has "gone up substantially," dental laboratories have raised their prices. As a result, he has raised his fees 15 percent in the past year. "But," he says, "the increase is nothing compared to the increase in silver and gold prices because most of the cost involved is labor."

Patients of Dr. E. Lynn Miller, 1002 Locust St., have been lucky because his current fees still are based on his year-old inventory. He says that although he has not yet raised prices, he plans to do so in the near future.

"We're in the process of determining a price increase based on current market prices," says Miller, who does his own laboratory work.

The price of gold supplied to dentists and laboratories is based on the daily closing price of the precious metals on the London market, says Joseph Tuccillo, executive vice president of J.F. Jelenko & Co. of New York, the largest manufacturer of dental gold in the United States.

"What you read about is the price of pure bullion gold, but a dental alloy only contains a percentage of gold," Tuccillo says. "It may vary from as little as 1 percent to 90 percent gold."

For tooth replacement, a dentist uses about 1 pennyweight of gold (1/20 of an ounce). "So the actual gold may cost only about \$20 per tooth even though a dentist may charge \$200 for the work," he says.

Jelenko manufactures Olympia, which Tuccillo says is the most widely used alloy in the country. "For every \$100 that the price of gold increases,

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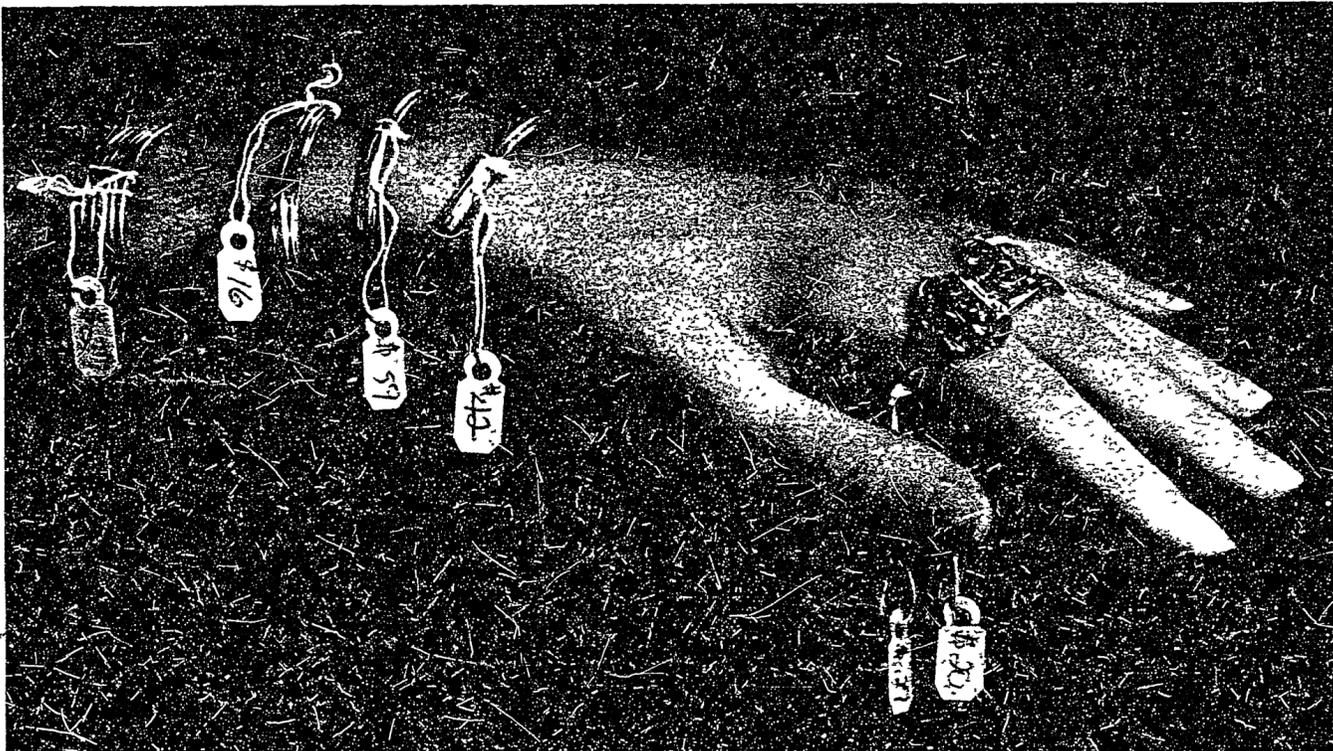


Photo Illustration/Patricia McDaniel

Many Columbians are rushing to take advantage of the soaring prices of precious metals by selling old gold and silver items.

That's fine, but it's a good idea to shop around, as a Columbia Missourian reporter learned this week.

Peddle that family silver wisely

By Tom Seery
Missourian staff writer

Been thinking about hauling out your good family silver to see what its worth? Food tastes just as good on stainless steel. And what about getting grandfather's gold watch appraised? After all, it doesn't work anymore.

And memories can't pay the rent. Perhaps you've done a little of this reasoning yourself lately after seeing gold and silver prices reach record highs. You're not alone, as lines of customers at local metal-buyers demonstrated Friday. But there are a few things you should know before you go peddling the family jewels.

Visits with buyers in Columbia on Friday revealed widely differing offers for a "market basket" of gold and silver jewelry that the buyers subsequently sell to smelting firms.

Offers for one of the articles differed by more than 400 percent.

The first stop on our comparative shopping trip was Suite 115 at the Hilton Inn, home this weekend for Nationwide Coin and Jewelry Exchange. Its one-room, temporary shop was manned by two appraisers armed with scales and cash. Lined up in front of their table were a half-dozen potential sellers with eyes fixed on the cash box, silver and gold mementos burning holes in their pockets.

The appraisers carefully weighed each item and quoted standard prices by weight. Little attention was paid to the condition or age of most of the items. They were headed for the smelter to be melted down into their pure form.

The appraisers for Nationwide Coin and Jewelry Exchange, which has an office in St. Joseph, Mo., offered \$96 for our collection of jewelry. A set of four silver bracelets were valued at \$27, a silver commemorative coin was appraised at \$10 and a 10-karat men's

class ring commanded \$59.

That same jewelry brought a \$46 offer from Gold and Silver Exchange, 106 E. Broadway. An appraiser in that office, which opened last week, was willing to pay \$16 for the silver bracelets, \$10 for the commemorative coin and \$20 for the class ring.

A visit to Art Mart Inc., 27 N. Tenth St., brought an offer of \$85 for the gold class ring, but no offer for any of the silver items. James Harmon, owner of Art Mart, said his stores have temporarily stopped buying silver because the supply is currently greater than the demand for the metal.

"When the price of silver was up around \$48 an ounce, it pulled all the silver out of the woodwork," Harmon said. "People decided to sell silver they hadn't used in years."

Harmon said that as a result of the influx of silver into the market, smelting firms "got more than they could handle" and quit buying from local

dealers.

"We aren't buying silver because we can't ship it," Harmon said. He added that Art Mart stores will resume silver buying when the smelting firms catch up on their orders.

Columbia Sterling Inc., 1013 E. Walnut St., wasn't buying gold or silver on Friday. Tom Hutchinson, president of the store, said he had stopped buying earlier in the week.

"Our buyer in St. Louis is five to six months behind on refining," Hutchinson said. "I don't want to buy silver and get stuck with no one to sell it to."

With Art Mart and Columbia Sterling hoping to resume buying in the future, sellers might find it profitable to hang on to their silver possessions until the market clears. "We believe silver will go up again," Art Mart's Harmon said.

If that's the case you might be wise not only to shop around before selling, but perhaps to hold on to those valuables just a little bit longer.

Prices rose 13.3 percent during '79

From our wire services

WASHINGTON — Pushed in December by the fastest increase in nearly a year, consumer prices rose by a total of 13.3 percent in 1979, the largest annual increase in 33 years.

The rise in December was much like the trend for the year as a whole — much of the continuing surge in prices stemmed from big increases in energy and housing costs.

And in December, for the first time in almost a year as well, an acceleration in food prices helped pull the index up to an overall increase of 1.2 percent for the month.

The results in December suggest that the immediate prospect for inflation is for little improvement, as the pressures from energy, housing and food show few signs of lessening.

"I am going to do all I can to hold down the inflation rate," President Carter said at a meeting with mayors at the White House Friday. But "we are not going to get rid of high inflation overnight," he said.

The rate of inflation reported Friday by the Labor Department is measured by the Consumer Price Index, which many economists believe overstates the impact of rising prices on consumers. Another popular measure, the Personal Consumption Expenditure index, compiled as part of the Gross National Product, showed a relatively modest jump of 9.9 percent.

The government also reported Friday that the purchasing power of American workers — when the calculations are based on the Consumer Price Index — continued to fall in December, declining by 0.3 percent after seasonal adjustment. That meant that purchasing power for the year fell by 5.3 percent, a substantial decline.

Economists have stressed that with much of the American inflation resulting from oil price increases imposed by the exporting countries, the result inevitably becomes a loss in worker purchasing power, which could lead to a decline in the overall standard of living.

On Capitol Hill, Alfred E. Kahn, chairman of the Council on Wage and Price Stability, told the Joint Economic Committee that "in the coming months, no one can promise an improvement" in the inflation picture.

Kahn said the only solution is self-discipline by the American people while the government disciplines itself and promotes savings, investment and increased productivity.

"The only solution is restraint on the demand side and fuller attention to the supply side," he said.

Sneaky passengers foil hijacker

MIAMI (UPI) — A gunman traveling with his wife and two daughters hijacked a Delta Airlines jet Friday, and forced it to Cuba, where he surrendered after all his hostages sneaked off the plane while he negotiated for a flight to Iran.

No one was harmed in the 14-hour ordeal.

The FBI identified the hijacker as Samuel Aldon Ingram Jr., 28, of Atlanta. They said he was with his wife and two daughters, aged 3 years and 13 months. All four remained in custody of Cuban authorities.

It was learned that Ingram, who boarded the plane through tight security in Atlanta, took aboard a .35-caliber pistol hidden in his baby's clothes — a ruse recently featured in the "Dick Tracy" comic strip.

While the hijacker was negotiating, and his family was sleeping, stewardesses sneaked the passengers off the plane in small groups, using the dumbwaiter that hoists supplies into the cabin. After that, Pilot Donald Vickers said, "the hijacker was convinced to give himself up." There was no struggle after the man was persuaded he had no leverage left, he said.

There were reports Ingram had identified himself as a black Muslim. Abra-

ham Pasha, Atlanta regional Imam of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West, said Ingram was not a member of the group. The group ceased calling itself the Black Muslims years ago, and, Pasha said, "When he said he was a Black Muslim, I knew he wasn't a member of our group."

Atlanta police said they had no record of Ingram.

Flight 1116, which originated in San Francisco and stopped in Dallas, was en route from Atlanta to New York when it was commandeered over Greensboro, N.C., at 1:51 a.m. It reached Jose Marti Airport in Havana at 4:03 a.m. and, after the hijacking was over, flew to Miami. It was to continue on to New York late Friday night.

For nearly 11 hours, the plane sat on the tarmac at Jose Marti in Cuba while the hijacker negotiated for a plane to take him and his family to Tehran. He offered to trade the passengers for Gil Noble, a black reporter for WABC-TV in New York, and an official of the Iranian embassy, who would join them for the flight to the Mideast.

But Arthur Nerhass, FBI agent-in-charge in Miami, said that while the hijacker was negotiating from the cockpit, and his family was sleeping in the

first-class section, his hostages were escaping.

Passenger Lynn Martin, 19, of Dallas said that during the afternoon the crew quietly told the passengers that women with children could take them off the plane.

"Everybody who could grabbed a kid and got off," she said. After that, she said, the passengers began creeping out through the dumbwaiter in small groups.

"It was nerve-wracking," she said. "I've never had this happen to me before and I hope it doesn't again."

Miss Martin said the entire evacuation took about 25 minutes.

A Delta spokesman explained that the L-1011 has two dumbwaiter elevators running from the passenger cabin to the galley, which is below decks. He said two people could ride at once in each elevator, after which there would be a 5- or 6-foot drop through a hatch to the pavement.

Throughout the 14 hours of the hijacking, authorities reported there was more than one hijacker. The FBI in Miami said that was based on information relayed by Cuban authorities negotiating from the control tower at Jose Marti.

After the plane landed in Havana,

and the hijacker said he wanted to trade hostages and go to Iran, negotiations bogged down over where they would exchange planes. The hijacker, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, wanted to pick up a new plane in Miami, but Delta insisted on Kennedy airport in New York.

Meantime, Delta sent a DC-8 to Jamaica to pick up Noble, who was vacationing there with his family. Noble agreed to the exchange, although a spokesman for ABC in New York said "He (Noble) has no idea who they are or why they would have asked for him."

But the hijacker surrendered before the plane reached Jamaica. Nerhass said that since an anti-hijacking treaty with Cuba has expired, he did not know if the Cubans would send Ingram back or prosecute him themselves.

It was the second hijacking to Cuba in two years involving a Delta Lockheed 1011. Last year, a former Cuban Air Force lieutenant commandeered a Delta flight with 205 persons aboard and forced it to go to Havana.

Friday's incident was the 163rd domestic plane hijacking since 1951. There were two unsuccessful hijacking attempts in 1978.

Coming Sunday

ERA poll to appear

The Missouri Senate soon will consider the Equal Rights Amendment, and state Sen. Roger Wilson, D-Columbia, wanted to know how his constituents felt about the issue. So did we, so we asked. Tomorrow the Columbia Missourian will provide an in-depth report on how the men and women of the 19th District feel about ERA. On Tuesday, the Missourian will report how residents in



the same district feel about the possible boycott of the Olympics.

In town today

9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Seminar, "Life Stages," Boone County Mental Health Association, Columbia Public Library, free for association members, \$3 non-members.

1 to 5 p.m. Lessons, Dungeons and Dragons game, Columbia Public Library, free.

1 p.m. Swimming, Park Hill at Hickman, Hickman Pool.

2 p.m. Men's swimming, Nebraska at Missouri, University Natatorium.

7:30 p.m. Boys' basketball, St. Joseph Central at Hickman, Hickman gym.

7:30 p.m. Theater, "Babes in the Big House," Stephens College Warehouse Theater, adults \$3, students \$1.50.

Flat Branch views

The question of whether the city should be involved in developing the Flat Branch area is a hot topic in Columbia right now. So the Missourian asked an opponent and a proponent of the project to answer some key questions about it. Their responses appear on Page 11 today.