

# Nuclear waste disposal

## Scientist suggests shooting atomic garbage into space



United Press International  
WASHINGTON — An aerospace engineer concerned about the safety of future generations has revived the idea of rocketing the world's growing store of nuclear waste materials into interplanetary space.

Stanley G. Rosen recognizes such a project would have political, legal, economic and technological complications but he said it may be the best answer to a problem that promises to get worse as nuclear power expands around the globe.

"It appears irresponsible to wait indefinitely to develop the capability, or to take actions which preclude it altogether," Rosen said at the recent annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The problem, of course, is that some radioactive materials produced by nuclear generators and by defense projects remain extremely hazardous for many centuries. No acceptable, permanent Earth stor-

age site has yet been found. Rosen, an Air Force officer representing the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, said a careful space disposal plan for nuclear waste would take a long time to develop and the prudent approach probably would be to wait 20 years or so before moving ahead.

But he said now is the time to begin laying the groundwork so the option would be available to the people of the 21st Century.

"It is evident that a project of the magnitude of the space disposal option requires a significant amount of preparation," he said.

"The solution for a problem which encompasses millions of years, involves every person who will live on Earth and depends on the most advanced technological and organizational expertise will possibly take decades to finalize."

Since nuclear waste is an international problem, Rosen suggested that a space disposal project be man-

aged by an international organization, perhaps the United Nations.

Developing a way to finance such a project could be a major problem, Rosen said, because the benefits would go to future generations while the costs and risks would be borne most heavily by the generation that carries it out.

"A suitable reconciliation must be developed between these seemingly conflicting facts," he said. "In addition, an equal distribution of costs, responsibilities and risks among participants must be established."

Rosen said the basic technology to carry out such a project is already available although considerable work would be necessary to carry it out.

Not all nuclear waste could be disposed of in space because of the large amounts involved so Rosen suggested that the materials be processed so only the longest-lived, most hazardous substances be rocketed

into space.

The best place to send the waste, he said, probably would be into orbit around the sun where there would be virtually no risk of it endangering any planet for millions of years.

The most risky part of the whole scheme would be the launch from Earth because an accident could allow the waste to fall back to Earth.

Rosen suggested a launch site in a remote area near the east coast of South America so the rocket would avoid flying over land areas en route to Earth orbit.

Rosen said such a launch could not occur, however, until engineers develop a fool-proof way to recover any lost waste containers from the deep ocean in the event of a launch abort.

## Kids need check of blood pressure

United Press International  
MINNEAPOLIS — High blood pressure, a major factor in heart attacks and strokes in adults, may have its roots in childhood, a University of Minnesota researcher says.

Alan Sinaiko, a professor of pediatrics and pharmacology, said in order

to make inroads into study of the disease, "it seems the most important place to start is in childhood."

The reason the condition has been generally ignored in children in the past, Sinaiko said, is "they almost never suffer the consequences of the disease while they're young."

High blood pressure, or hypertension as it is called medically, has been defined in adults as pressures at or above 140 over 90.

No one as really established blood pressure standards for hypertension in children, Sinaiko said, but a university study led by epidemiologist Ronald Prineas may be a start.

Prineas began screening a group of about 10,000 children in first to third grades in Minneapolis public schools two years ago. Children whose blood pressure was 130 over 90 and greater are participating in a study led by Sinaiko and Prineas. Also taking part is a random selection of children whose pressures fell in the middle or low end of the scale.

The university's hypertension clinic is currently treating hypertensive children with techniques that have aided adults — diet changes, exercises and various drugs.

## Audio guide gives tours

United Press International  
JEDGURG, Scotland — A company called J.B. Tapes is producing "audio maps" giving personal guided tours of castles, abbeys and Scottish beauty points.

"The tourist merely slips the cassette into his tape player to get a running commentary on the scenery he's driving through," said company boss Jim Braithwaite.

"He'll get more information than he would find on any map, even a very detailed one, and he can listen while he drives, instead of having to stop and consult a guidebook every time he sees something that interests him."

## Alaskans pay more than other state residents

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Alaska collects more in state taxes from each of its residents than any other state, while New Hampshire has the smallest per capita tax base, a new government study shows.

In fiscal 1979, Alaska collected state taxes equal to \$2,011.60 for each of its 406,000 residents — more than double the next highest state, Hawaii at \$957.33, the Census Bureau said Thursday.

Rounding out the top five were: Delaware, \$845.20; Minnesota, \$771.86, and Wyoming, \$761.83.

The District of Columbia — at \$1,336.07 — would have been in second place if it were a state.

On the bottom end, New Hampshire had the highest state tax load, 297.75. The next four lowest were: South Dakota, \$356.36; Tennessee, \$420.98; Texas, \$428.72; and Ohio, \$430.52.

Overall, state governments collected \$125.12 billion in fiscal 1979 from all tax sources. That was 10.5 percent above the fiscal 1978 level.

The average for all 50 states and the District of Columbia was \$570.17 for each resident.

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