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DOE's expense that would help it monitor and evaluate the data obtained by DOE. Anderson and the Southwest Research and Information Center, an environmental group based in Albuquerque, complain that the panel leaves much to be desired because it has only one geologist on its staff. The committee, "is our only backup for scientific expertise," said Bingaman. "It would be ideal to have our own people, but the state legislators refuse to pay the bill."

The state relies somewhat on Ander-

son, who was a consultant to Sandia, one of WIPP's prime contractors, during the early stages of the project. It was Anderson who told Sandia in 1976 in a memo that another test hole should be dug where the latest brine pocket was found. Wendell Weart, who is in charge of nuclear waste management programs for Sandia, said, "Roger wanted us to drill a lot of holes. I doubt if the budget would have allowed it. We have been pretty responsive to his ideas."

The National Research Council panel could be the best independent source of

information but its most recent comprehensive report on WIPP was issued 21 months behind schedule. Frank Parker noted that during those months the committee sent out "letter reports" dealing with specific issues in lieu of an in-depth analysis.

Parker said the panel has no plans to publish a special report on the brine pocket unless DOE makes such a request. "The brine is not good news," he said, but "we don't see anything yet to disqualify the site."

One of the nagging worries among many in New Mexico is that the brine at some future date will leach into the repository and carry radionuclides to the surface. The state's scientific panel postulated in a report, however, that if this scenario came to pass, the consequences would be "small." It estimated that in the year 2010, the projected population for the area could receive radiation doses that might result in "one or two fatal cancers."

What is troubling to state officials is the possibility that the federal government will suddenly assign the repository high-level commercial waste, a change that is quite conceivable given the flip-flops of WIPP's purpose during the Carter presidency. Goldstein said, "We're not sure the site will be used mainly for transuranic waste. DOE is only using a small portion of the tract for the site." Bingaman agreed, saying that "There's no question that for the amount of money DOE is spending on the site, it's doubtful that the repository's ultimate mission is storage of low-level military waste. There is suspicion on the part of many state officials, myself included, that Congress may change its mind and make it into a repository for high-level waste—commercial and defense." Larry Harmon, DOE project manager in Washington for WIPP, rebuts these claims: "It is absolutely unlikely that WIPP will become a high-level waste repository. It will remain R & D for high-level waste."

Some individuals argue that if the government is going to spend a half billion to a billion dollars to build a repository for transuranic waste, it should from the start find a site suitable for high-level waste. "You could then backfill it with transuranic waste," said Thomas Cochran of the Natural Resources Defense Council. But such an idea doesn't have much currency in the present Administration. The proposed 1983 budget would give WIPP its full request of \$125 million. Harmon of DOE said, "We've never been in such a good position to finish."—MARJORIE SUN

## News and Comment Wins Polk Prize

*Science* has won a George Polk Award in Journalism for the "lucidity and pertinence" of the News and Comment section. The Polk Awards, given this year in 12 categories, were established in 1949 by Long Island University "to honor the memory of a reporter who valued an important news story even more highly than his personal safety." George Polk, a CBS correspondent, was slain in 1948 during the Greek civil war while trying to reach insurgent leaders for an interview. The awards are based on recommendations by a 111-member national panel that includes former winners, media executives, and heads of journalism schools. This prize, only the sixth for science reporting since the Polk Awards were established, was given to News and Comment for the excellence of the section as a whole rather than for a single article or series. Barbara J. Culliton will accept the Polk Award on behalf of the staff on 24 March in New York.

Other winners of the 1982 Polk Awards are:

*Foreign Reporting:* John Darnton of *The New York Times* for reporting the complex story of the Polish crisis with discernment and clarity.

*National Reporting:* Seymour M. Hersh, Jeff Gerth, and Philip Taubman of *The New York Times* for an intensive investigation of the illegal activities of former intelligence agents who have used their connections and expertise to sell munitions and sophisticated technology to countries hostile to the United States.

*Magazine Reporting:* William Greider for "The Education of David Stockman," in *The Atlantic*.

*Book:* Edwin R. Bayley, for *Joe McCarthy and the Press* (University of Wisconsin Press).

*Television Documentary:* Pierre Salinger, Paris Bureau Chief for ABC News, for "America Held Hostage: The Secret Negotiations," a report on America's behind-the-scenes efforts to free the hostages in Iran.

*Television Reporting:* Ted Koppel of ABC News, managing editor and anchorman of "Nightline."

*Radio Reporting:* John Merrow for "Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Justice," co-produced by the Institute for Educational Leadership and National Public Radio.

*Regional Reporting:* Stephanie Saul and W. Stevens Ricks of the Jackson (Miss.) *Clarion-Ledger* for a series of articles, written at personal risk, exposing crime and official corruption on the Gulf Coast.

*Local Reporting:* The Orlando (Fla.) *Sentinel Star* for "The Federal Impact," a series of articles revealing the extent of federal spending in conservative Orange County.

*Consumer Reporting:* Phil Norman of the Louisville (Ky.) *Courier-Journal* for an extensive investigation of the power of a dairy cooperative.

*Special Award:* George Seldes (91 years old), for a singular and often controversial career as a newsman.