In the last chapters, the author discusses risk—what it is and what it means for different people, how science contributes to cleanup, and how choices and decision have to be made. The importance of having cleanup activities guided by science is emphasized. Remediation activities undertaken at Hanford are critically assessed.

The book contains general sections on radiation and radionuclides, which is useful for readers not familiar with these topics or readers who want to be refreshed in these topics. I found these sections very useful and helpful. A glossary of terms is included, although I would have preferred a somewhat more extensive glossary, particularly because many names of buildings or facilities at Hanford are acronyms that are difficult to understand. The book also contains a perspective on Hanford from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, one of the Indian Nations with cultural interests and rights in the Hanford reservation.

The book is illustrated nicely with many pictures and illustrations from the past and present. This makes this book an excellent resource for photographic material that is otherwise difficult to assess. The photos provide a comprehensive site history, ranging from past plutonium production operations to the present environmental cleanup activities. A remarkable feature of the book is the use of the sidebars. On every page there is a sidebar, in which the most pertinent statements or quotations are repeated and highlighted. This makes the reading very pleasant and helps the reader to grasp the most important aspects, even when skipping through the pages. The various pictures, sidebars, and illustrations make the book very attractive and interesting to read. While the layout of the book is well-designed, I did not like the page numbering system, which numbers each chapter separately. I would have preferred more standard, continuous page numbering. The book contains an extensive bibliography that is helpful for readers interested in finding references to special topics.

In summary, this book is a valuable addition to the library of anybody interested in the history, present, and future of nuclear weapons production and nuclear waste cleanup. The topics covered range from historical and technical to social and cultural aspects. Such a breadth is indeed needed to be truly “A conversation about nuclear waste.” The book is written for scientists involved in waste cleanup at Hanford, for engineers and managers handling waste cleanup activities, for politicians and regulators making decisions on cleanup, for the general public seeking information about nuclear waste issues, and as the author Roy Gephart puts it, for our children, who will have to deal with nuclear waste in the future.

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