

Nuclear power plant

My family has always lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. No matter what township we've lived in, it has been within a 20-mile radius of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant. I've lived my entire life with sirens being sounded every few months as a practice warning. I've also grown up with having an escape plan drilled into my head. So, it was no surprise that on that fateful September 11th of 2001, that my small community panicked. When you live so close to a nuclear power plant, you tend to fear for the worst. We're only a few short hours from Washington D.C. and the radio announcers were saying that several planes were unaccounted for. There was the speculation that they might be headed for Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant. My entire family made a few calls to remind everyone about our escape plan. Luckily, it never happened. But, the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania was a pretty scary event. No one can prove where it was going.

In the weeks that followed the terrorist attacks, the government had everyone on high alert. Our local government officials scrambled to intensify security at the nuclear power plant. Everyone in town created escape plans as well. I had never minded living so close to a nuclear power plant, but I certainly did then. In fact, I never really knew the details of what a nuclear power plant actually is. Other than the fact that it created energy, I just took it for granted.

For example, I had no idea that there are only 442 nuclear power plants in the world. I had no idea that they don't pollute the air or the environment, if proper precautions are taken. I also didn't know that they cost very little to operate and require a low amount of fuel. Economically, it would seem that a nuclear power plant is gentle for the environment and incredibly practical. Of course, you have to put aside the fact that they cost an absolute fortune to create and build in the first place.

Since that fateful September day, the security measures around our local nuclear power plant have been stepped up immensely. Every so often, I hear the practice drills and I go into a split second panic mode. Then, just as quickly, I realize that it is only practice. I can't imagine how much I'd remember if the nuclear power plant really did malfunction or have an emergency. I suppose that I'd hope that my instincts would simply take over.