We really appreciate this award. But what I most appreciate is the massive and enduring support and help we have received from organizations such as ANA, Beyond Nuclear, NIRS, and many others over the years. These long-standing friendships are of great value, and there is much still to be done in the ever demanding world of nuclear policy and politics.

First, the hard work part, and then what it is we celebrate:

The long Yucca Mountain battle, so like many others in the nuclear arena, has been grounded in a single primary theme – the question of what is safe? Safe for the implementer or the regulator means whatever is legal. And if they control and prevail in what is legal in their zeal to succeed in their self-defined, and often self-induced mission, those of us with a broader and longer view of safety are intended to be disenfranchised. That we all cannot stand for, and that is why we do what we do.

With Yucca Mountain, we have seen Congress disregard safety for the false notion of political expedience. We have seen the Department of Energy, when faced with disqualification of the site, proclaim and then institutionalize the notion that, “For just one bad factor, we can’t throw away an otherwise good site.” We have seen the Environmental Protection Agency throw safety and intergenerational equity into bogus ethical morass for the sake of “saving” Yucca Mountain. And we have seen the Nuclear Regulatory Commission take the science out of “reasonable assurance,” replacing it with the non-
reproducible murmurings of linked computers where real data are the enemy of ingenious computer code.

After 23 years of fighting Yucca Mountain, we have come to the end of a “lessons learning period.” Hopefully, for safety sake, we, as a nation will heed the lessons, large and small.

Now, with the depressing part over – What are we celebrating?

First, our self-selected experts inform us that we have retained our sanity after all these years...

Next, we celebrate the value of persistence in a just cause, and the value of friends who shared theirs with us...

We celebrate that our antagonists and detractors generally can be counted on to make more mistakes than we do...

And finally, we celebrate – as George Bernard Shaw put it in Major Barbara, where the young son refused to take over running the family cannon foundry business – we “know the difference between right and wrong.”

Again, thank you.