

# THREE MILE ISLAND

# ALERT

Vol. 2 No. 8

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

December 1980

## STEERING COMMITTEE NEWS

The new Steering Committee has elected officers for this term. Mary Hartnett of Mechanicsburg was elected chairperson, with Louise Bradford of Harrisburg as vice-chair. The man behind our main fundraising efforts, Paul Makurath of Lower Paxton, was elected treasurer. Mary Osborn of the Swatara-Steelton group was elected secretary. Barb Smith, John Murdoch, and Joel Roth make up the rest of the Steering Committee. Ed Nielsen had also been elected, but has resigned.

We thank the outgoing members for their long hours of hard work that has resulted in making TMIA a respected and well-known anti-nuke group. Guiding TMIA will be quite a challenge for the new officers. The Steering Committee is looking forward to working closely with the Planning Council to keep things moving. If you've got any ideas --or complaints-- jot them down and mail to TMIA-Suggestion Box, 315 Pepper Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.

## UNIT 1 HEARINGS

The opening round in the legal battle to keep TMI Unit 1 shut has ended, but not before TMIA, through its attorneys, appears to have scored a series of telling blows against the nuke plant operators.

The 3-member Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which opened the restart issue hearings on October 15 in Harrisburg, listened in rapt silence as company witnesses tried to explain away a consistent rec-

ord of maintenance postponed for more than a year on critical plant parts, and of workers pushed to the point of exhaustion through excessive overtime to get the plant back "on line" in order to churn out electricity and more dollars for GPU's and Met-Ed's coffers.

The records, accepted into evidence, are examples of those gleaned from Met-Ed's own files by three dozen diligent and dedicated TMIA volunteers who devoted more than 1,000 hours of work to digging out the damning facts.

The NRC's own staff attorneys have appeared to be joining the high-priced lawyers of Met-Ed in arguing that what happened in the past doesn't count. Together they have fought against having the evidence accepted. However, Ivan Smith, respected Board Chairman,

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## BULLETIN

The law firm of Widoff Reager Selkowitz & Adler has sent a letter to TMIA emphasizing that their ability to continue to represent TMIA in the Unit 1 restart hearings now depends on the provis-

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? The date above your name and address indicates when your TMIA membership should be renewed. Please cut out all this information and return with your check so we can be sure our records are correct. Thank you.

ion of funds needed to further meet past (and anticipated future) legal expenses incurred by the firm, and to provide for much-needed expert witnesses.

Mary Hartnett, TMIA Chairperson, in noting the seriousness of the financial need, praised those individuals and organizations whose past contributions made possible what has already been accomplished in the hearings.

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was quoted by the Harrisburg Evening News on October 17 as warning that if TMIA were able to make a case that Met-Ed was incompetent in the past and "continues to be bad" then "somebody's going to have to disabuse the Board of that impression."

The opportunity to prove the second part of that case will come when TMIA, through its attorneys, gets the chance to cross-examine Met-Ed's own presentation to the Board, by early next month, of the company's sanitized plans and much-vaunted management shake-up, on which the plant operators are thought to have been working feverishly since the "worst-ever" accident of March 28, 1979 at Unit 1's sister reactor.

(Whether TMIA will be able to seize that opportunity and complete its case likely will depend on what happens as a result of the situation described in the "Bulletin" above.)

Meanwhile, other intervenors are presenting their arguments before the Board on a score of reasons why (they contend) Unit 1 should not be permitted to reopen. The hearings are expected to continue until next April. Anyone is entitled to sit in on the hearings as an observer. They are being held each week, Tues. thru Thurs., on a 9-5 schedule, and Friday mornings, in a ground floor hearing room (enter from Court St.) in the parking garage across Walnut St. from the Federal Building.

## PEIS & ADVISORY PANEL MEETINGS

On Nov. 10th, the PEIS (Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement) meeting took place at the Forum. Honored guest was Mr. Victor Gilinsky, NRC Commissioner. The final document should be ready in March, '81. Dr. Peterson from Lancaster commented that long term depression is still prevalent in our area. The decision on what will finally be done with the contaminated water is a constant, gnawing concern for the residents of Lancaster and many other people who obtain their drinking water from the Susquehanna. The Clean Water Act does not prohibit the discharge of radioactive water into a navigable waterway.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and Maryland asked that the NRC be extremely vigilant on monitoring for contamination of soil, ground and surface water. The League also stated that citizens have a basic right to know about all governmental actions and decisions that concern them. Public health and environmental issues here have world-wide ramifications.

A lady from SVA made an analogy; licensing any more nuclear plants without a sound plan for waste disposal is like "building a house without an outhouse." She begged the NRC not to add any more rooms to their house.

On Nov. 12th, the first NRC-appointed Advisory Panel met at the Forum, with approximately 200 people in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to establish organizational procedures and familiarize the panel with the PEIS. The panel is composed of Dr. Arnold Muller, Pa. Dept. of Health, Mr. Cliff Jones, Dept. of Environmental Resources, (present), Lt. Gen. Dewitt Smith, Pa. Emergency

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Management Agency, Mayor Robt. Reid, Middletown (present), Mayor Arthur Morris, Lancaster Mr. John Minnich, Dauphin Co. Commissioners, Chairman of panel, Nunzio Palladino, Dean, College of Engineering, Penn State Univ., Dr. Henry Wagner, Baltimore, Dr. Thomas Cochran, Natural Resources Defense Council, Washington, D.C. (present), Mr. Joel Roth, (present), Ms. Jean Kohr, SVA attorney, (present), and Mrs. Ann Trunk, Middletown, (present).

Mr. Cochran asked why the storage of wastes inside the containment building had not been included in the PEIS. Tom also suggested an answer; that the NRC is already predisposed to restart. If you narrow the feasible choices down, people believe other options cannot be considered.

Mr. Minnich asked the NRC "to decide whether the plant will be allowed to restart or not. The people are entitled to know, after all they have been through."

The dumping of the waste water was another major issue. Mr. Jones asked the panel to hold on a decision until they had an opportunity to ask further questions.

Several citizens had requests or questions: Mike Horgan wondered how we ended up with type of panel when we had asked for a citizen's panel. Mrs. Pat Smith, Newberrytown, asked that one or two one or two representatives from York County be included on the panel. Mr. Jim Hurst asked the panel to check into the pro-lobbying efforts going on in this area and their effect on the people. Mr. Will Rodgers asked why intervenors representing the citizens couldn't obtain funding.

The next meeting will be either Dec. 10th or 12th. A representative from the Dept.

of Energy is being requested to discuss where to put the wastes and a member of Congress.

## PIRC & TMILF: TRANSITION 1981

Three Mile Island Public Interest Resource Center, consisting of the six local anti-nuclear groups in the Central Pa. area, is looking towards 1981. The areas being discussed are: maintaining the PIRC office, research, public information, education, media, political/legislative, and fundraising.

Clearly the cooperation of all groups and their members is needed to achieve our goals. Instead of each group trying to do everything, a system of organization is needed which would efficiently utilize the energies of each group while avoiding duplication. Not only would we know what each other is doing, but we would be more effective and lessen the chance of burnout. It is important to note that each group has its independence and can do whatever it decides, since by no means can PIRC mandate any group. However, without some cooperation, our efforts will be in vain.

Chairperson Bev Hess and Director Steve Sholly have met with five funding representatives (Veatch, Rockefeller, MUSE, Boehm, and Funding Exchange). Hopefully one or some of these sources will continue to sustain PIRC and TMILF in the near future.

A leadership meeting with representatives of all area groups has taken place. The purpose of this meeting was to help plan strategy and establish direct action-oriented programs. The first attempt at direct action was to encourage people to attend the first meeting of the Citizens Advisory Panel on Nov. 12. It worked! 200 people were present to give the type of support that is needed.

Presently the Legal Fund Board is discussing a new process to appropriate funds. They are also updating and reevaluating every intervenor's case presented before the Licensee Board hearings on the restart of Unit I.

TMIA received \$5,000 in September from the Legal Board and we are thankful for the Board's support. Fortunately we were able to raise an additional \$5,000 in order to meet our attorneys' needs of \$10,000 to begin the first phase of the hearings. The next phase - rebuttal - is due to start in March 1981.

The TMILF direct mail campaign is in its second national cold mailing. Thus far, \$14,174 has been raised, with a break-even point of \$20,000.

Although slow at times, our progress has been encouraging. We look to 1981 as a time of cooperation and further achievement.

If you have any questions or recommendations, or would like to offer your assistance in these efforts, please call Al Mirando at 774-7215, TMIA office at 233-3072, or PIRC office at 233-4241.

## EVACUATION CONCERNS

Paula Prober

Members of the Carlisle and Mechanicsburg groups have been meeting to compile a comprehensive list of weaknesses in the Cumberland County TMI Emergency Evacuation Plan. Mike Kline procured a copy of the plan (an achievement in itself). Sections were handed to members to analyze and a follow-up meeting was held to list the questions and determine the next steps.

In mid-August a meeting was held with Tom Blosser, author of the plan. He found it difficult to respond to certain inquiries, such as: "How long will it take to get the entire ten mile radius evacuated?" (assuming of course that people 11 plus miles away will not be leaving), or "Are there enough vehicles to transport school children to the various locations and will problems result when parents go to pick them up?" "Do teachers know that they are supposed to stay with the students and not return to their own families?" or "When vehicles are decontaminated by some sort of rinsing process, what happens to the run-off?"

A PennDot official, a Mr. Hackman, was questioned by phone. It was his responsibility to assign traffic volume estimates to the evac-

uation routes and make any revisions in PEMA's plan. He claims the plan is workable, but admits that there may be problems if people should panic...

We hope to meet with the Cumberland County Commissioners to see if this plan has been approved and to see if they have answers to the unlimited numbers of questions/problems that would arise following another accident at TMI or any nuclear facility. Their response or lack of it will then be passed on to the media.

As a nuke is not permitted to operate without an approved evacuation plan, and as we need to investigate all avenues open to us, we're hoping we can ultimately uncover the inherent flaws in this (and all?) evacuation designs and consequently KEEP IT CLOSED! We encourage all local groups to contact their county officials, request copies of their plans, and point out the many discrepancies.

Any suggestions or questions, call Paula Prober at (717) 697-9245.

Note: In a referendum on Nov. 4th, the people of Washington state voted to close the Hanford site as of July 1st. Call the DER's Dept. of Radiological Health and ask who is going to take TMI's waste material now.

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Mechanicsburg is holding their meeting at 7:30, Thurs. Dec. 11th, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 421 E. Simpson St., Mech. Topic: What is Civil Disobedience? Mech. is also selling "No Nuke" rubber stamps for \$2.50 (ink pad not included). Will make nice Christmas gifts with a message. You may place your orders with Mike Jones, 766-4100 or Ruth Gentle, 737-20-75.

## SPECIAL REQUEST

We are trying to locate pictures or slides taken of meetings (especially the March 19th, '80 meeting in Middletown) rallies, or shots of the Island. Please call the office if you can help in this regard - 233-7897.

## COMPUTER MALFUNCTION

Georgianna Nyce

Computer malfunction is occurring at nuclear power plants. The B & W reactors seem particularly susceptible to this serious problem. The March 28, 1980 issue of Science magazine discusses the problem which caused the Crystal River accident in late February. An electrical short circuit causes loss of non-nuclear instrumentation which in turn leads to erroneous signals to the ICS which uses a computer to perform operations.

In the Crystal River accident, the computer in the ICS gave out and received erroneous information due to a short circuit in the non-nuclear instrumentation. The computer erroneously sensed the coolant was growing too cold. It began to accelerate the nuclear reaction in the core by withdrawing the rods. At the same time it reduced the flow of coolant. The reactor overheated, driving the pressure up to the dangerous level, and then shut down. The computer told the pressure relief valve to open and remain open. The emergency cooling system began pumping water into the reactor. An operator noticed the open relief valve and shut a block valve. Water filled the reactor to the top and flowed out through two safety valves. One of these did not seat properly at first. Forty-three thousand gallons of radioactive water was dumped on the floor of the reactor.

A similar accident happened on March 20, 1978, at the Rancho Seco plant in California. The following is the description as taken from NRC files: On March 20, 1978, Rancho Seco experienced a severe cool-down caused by the loss of electrical power to a substantial portion of the non-nuclear instrumentation. Two-thirds of the non-nuclear instruments were affected by the power loss. Erroneous signals provided faulty information to both the control room and the integrated (computerized) control system. The integrated control system cut off all main feedwater flow in response to faulty

signals. The cutoff in feedwater flow caused the reactor cooling system pressure to increase and the reactor to trip or shut down.

In the period following the reactor shutdown, the operators still were hampered by the lack of instrumentation and by equipment responding to inaccurate signals. These false signals had several effects. It was difficult for the operators to ascertain which indications were valid, given the changing plant conditions and the wide variety of possible errors that were introduced. Only a select few parameters were known to be valid readings, and the operators had to control the plant based on that information. The second effect was that false signals were fed into the integrated control system, so equipment was operated without regard to actual conditions.

Contrary to the Kemeny Commission Report, we can see that we have a very serious computer problem. The files show evidence of a power failure during the TMI accident. We know that some instruments malfunctioned. We know there was a cutoff of feedwater flow. We know that thousands of gallons of radioactive water spilled into the containment building. You can draw your own conclusions.

### IT'S THANKSGIVING TIME FOR ME

In March of 1979, this accident happened to me and my family (and you and yours). When I didn't know what to do or who to seek for help or information, I found a paper saying: "For Our Lives - For Your Own Lives - Support Us! Join the Rally! Sunday, April 8 - 2:00 p.m. State Capitol Steps. Three Mile Island Alert." Well, my daughter and I went and listened to the speeches. Even though I didn't know anyone there, I didn't feel alone.

It was the beginning of meeting many new friends.

Well, I want to thank those people now - from those who staffed the office to those who did petitions or stuffed envelopes or did research - everyone. It has been a long time since the accident, and even though we have a longer way to go, I need to thank you now. Thank you. M.S.O.

## HAZARDOUS WASTE RESOURCES

The newsletter "Exposure" is a free monthly publication of the Environmental Action Foundation dealing with pesticides, hazardous waste transport and disposal, worker health and safety, groundwater protection, and public right-to-know. To get on the list, write EAF, WATS Project, 724 Dupont Circle Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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For a complete reprint of the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER's "Poison At Our Doorstep" series, the six-part expose on illegal dumping of hazardous wastes, write the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, 400 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

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The National Wildlife Federation, as part of the Waste Alert project, has recently prepared a series of excellent background papers assessing solid and hazardous waste management in each state. These are available from the National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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EPA Region 3 and the Office of Solid Waste have established a grant program for Waste Alert activities. Citizens groups working on hazardous waste issues are eligible for grants up to \$30,000. Pre applications are due Dec. 10. For information: Bob Axelrod (WH-562), EPA Office of Solid Waste, 401 M St., S.W. Washington, D.C. 20460.

### FYI: REAGAN ON NUCLEAR POWER

When Ronald Reagan takes office in January 1981, he promises that there will be some changes made. With respect to nuclear power, Ralph Nader stated the following in his Citizen's Guide to the 1980 Election, "Selecting A President."

"Though Reagan did not strongly advocate nuclear power as a governor, since 1975 he has made it a crusade. Two weeks after TMI, he said nuclear power is 'the cleanest, most economical electrical power we can have.' Reagan believes private industry should be responsible for the storage and disposal of nuclear waste. His campaign literature says the 'waste disposal problem has been overstated,' and he has told voters that 'all the waste from a nuclear power plant could be stored under a desk.' The Republican platform supports development of the breeder."

## WOMEN AND ENERGY

Consumer Action Now (CAN) has recently launched a national energy education program to heighten female clout in the national energy picture. "Women are responsible for 80 percent of all consumer purchases, and more women than ever are becoming heads of households, yet most women are not aware of the overwhelming impact that energy has on family budgets," says Lola Redford, CAN president.

To increase their awareness, CAN's Energy Project for Women has set the following goals: to interest women in energy decision-making by showing them how these decisions have an economic impact on their daily lives; to encourage women to assess energy needs and problems at the local level; to provide them with the tools to impact state and national energy policy; to encourage more women of all ages to pursue jobs and business opportunities in the energy field; to convince women that they should promote renewable energy production.

A report on the project is available by writing Consumer Action Now, Council on Environmental Alternatives, Inc., 355 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

The Humanist  
November/December 1980

## UPCOMING EVENTS

\*\*\*A major national conference is scheduled for December 11-13, 1980 on solar energy and energy conservation aimed at bringing together state and local officials, policy analysts, and representatives of citizens organizations and community groups to focus on specific ways for state and local governments to support conservation and solar energy. The conference, to be held at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas, is sponsored by the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies under a grant from the Department of Energy. For further information, contact Becky Glass, Energy Project, Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009, Phone: (202) 387-6030.

\*\*\*The FIRST RATEPAYER'S CONGRESS will be held on December 13, 1980 at 9:30 a.m. at the Harrisburg Friends Meetinghouse, 6th and Herr Sts., Harrisburg, PA. Discussion will focus on a regional rate strike against Met-Ed, P.P.&L., etc. For more information, call Bill Keisling at (717) 233-1144, or TMIA at (717) 233-7897. The meeting should end by 3:00 p.m. at the latest, so please bring a bag lunch.

\*\*\*The 21st Annual Christmas Peace Pilgrimage will take place Saturday, December 13, 1980, beginning at noon from the parking lot under the Hill to Hill Bridge in Bethlehem, PA. Participants will be transported to Nazareth, PA, where the pilgrimage will begin at 1:00 p.m. For more information, call Joseph C. Osborn at (215) 866-3127.

### TMIA MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Check Type Membership Desired

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 15 regular
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5 low income & student
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25 non-profit organization
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50 sustaining member
- \_\_\_\_\_ 100 patron
- \_\_\_\_\_ 200 club member
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5 non-member newsletter subscription

Return to: TMIA  
315 Peffer Street  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17102

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ONLY ONE

Only one will sit on the cold stainless table  
(Wrinkling the neat disposable liner)  
Hearing through roaring ears  
Damp-palmed in disbelief as the doctor  
pronounces doom.

Only one will dread the stab of the needle  
Waiting to see if veins will collapse;  
Only one will crawl shaking and shattered  
And heave out one's hopes in a torrent of groans.

Only one will watch in despair as his hair  
Follows his energy, his appetite and dignity,  
Fleeing a body bereft of humanity,  
So gaunt and grotesque that all turn away.

Only one will finally expire in relief  
When drugs and crazed cells have done their work;  
Only one more hole will yawn in the earth  
Surrounded by mourners who sigh and move on.

"The procedure is totally safe you see.  
Oh, but of course it's remotely conceivable--  
There's just the merest tiny chance  
Of one more death -- but only one."

R.S. Albright II  
Marysville

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