

# THREE MILE ISLAND

# ALERT

FEBRUARY  
1988

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

TELEPHONE: 717-233-3072

## SHARPEN YOUR PENCILS! "LETTER LOBBYISTS" NEEDED ON PRICE-ANDERSON ACT RENEWAL! Vera Stuchinski

Because of the huge controversy surrounding the renewal of the Price-Anderson Act (liability insurance for the nuclear industry), the inadequate legislation proposed in the U.S. Senate last year never made it to the Senate floor for a vote in the last legislative session. Letters need to be kept flowing to Senators Heinz and Specter urging that legislation be adopted that:

- o holds Department of Energy contractors (weapons and research) responsible for accidents;
- o provides full victim compensation; and,
- o extends Price-Anderson for no more than ten years.

If you feel constrained from participating in issues you care about because of personal responsibilities, you can still affect change by lobbying elected officials by letter writing. Remember, the nuclear industry supports a small army of well-paid influence peddlers and a simple handwritten letter or post-card will allow your voice to be heard.

Recently the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal of radiation victims downwind from the Nevada test site who have been denied the right to sue the federal government. The Court's decision means the only recourse for radiation victims is through legislative change.

The Atomic Veterans and their families are fighting for the right to compensation for illnesses and deaths resulting from cancers caused by radiation exposure during nuclear weapons testing. The National Committee for Radiation Victims is lobbying hard on their behalf. You can write to:

- o The Chairman, Senate Veteran Affairs Committee, 414 Russell Bldg, Wash. D.C. 20510. Urge support of Senate Bill 9 which would compensate atomic veterans suffering from cancers, who were exposed to at least one rem of radiation.
- o The Chairman, House Veteran Affairs Committee, 335 Cannon Office Bldg, Wash. D.C. 20515. Urge support of House Bill 1811, which would compensate veterans whose cancer appears within 30 years of exposure.
- o Senators Heinz (227 Russell Senate Office Bldg.) and Specter (331 Hart Senate Office Bldg.) (both Wash., D.C. 20510) urging them to support Senate Bill 612, which would give veterans and civilians the right to sue defense contractors involved in nuclear weapons testing (they currently enjoy immunity from medical costs and damages thanks to legislation endorsed by the Reagan administration in 1984).

A RED X INDICATES  
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**Three Mile Island Alert**  
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Harrisburg, PA 17102

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Planning Council Meets  
February 1, 1988



**MARY OSBORN MEETS CHERNOBYL'S CHILDREN IN GERMANY**

Editor's Note: Mary Osborn recently spent two weeks in Germany talking about the health effects of the TMI accident to people who are feeling the impact of Chernobyl. Her account seems all the more ominous when read alongside the Associated Press dispatch from the 1/21/88 **Patriot** which follows the article.

The Chernobyl accident in April, 1986, spread radioactive fallout over much of the northern hemisphere with high levels recorded in Europe. Some of the northern part of West Germany was spared, but an area near the city of Lubeck got heavy fallout in the rain. The southern part of the country was heavily contaminated, with Bavaria receiving the highest doses. Nuts, particularly hazelnuts, and mushrooms are quite high in contamination as they concentrate radio-nuclides.

Frightened parents in West Germany feared for their children's health and the food supplies. They were also concerned about contamination of the air, rain, soil and sand boxes. Rain brought puddles of water so radioactive that if it had been a spill in a laboratory the room would have to be evacuated!

Concern and caring brought people together. Citizen groups were formed in Hamburg, Berlin, and many other cities and towns. Equipment was purchased with membership dues and donations to monitor radiation levels in food, both domestic and imported. (I saw a package of California almonds checked with a 3 becquerels per kilogram cesium 134/137.) A weekly magazine with a circulation of 7,000 publishes the radiation content of food items. Some businesses voluntarily donate their products for testing.

Germany still exports "bad food." Some countries only do spot checks of imports, but the bulk of contaminated food goes to third world countries. (In the United States it seem to be "buyer beware.")

I was invited to Germany to speak about my experiences during the Three Mile Island accident and its aftermath. In 14 days I spoke in 13 different towns. Translators and I spent three hours speaking and answering questions in churches, a sports club, a university lecture hall, and the most luxurious synogogue-social hall.

The health effects suffered by TMI area residents and the thousands of law-suits with the millions of dollars already paid brought the most questions, while the Rickover cover-up brought many. Some were shocked that our government covered-up the health damages and that I blamed the government for the accident more than I blamed the utility.

I also presented a 20-minute slide show of plant growth abnormalities and mutations found near Three Mile Island. Most of the effects I've found were within 25 miles of TMI, while Germany is about a thousand miles from Chernobyl and suffering this kind of radioactive contamination. I was not surprised to learn from people in the audience that similar effects of flora damage were now appearing in their own yards and gardens. People brought specimens for me to see and I was given a few slides to take home.

I taught the German people some things, but I learned very much from them. One young man found the blue lily in his garden grew white and his dahlia had a fused double bloom. Another man found and photographed a thick stemmed, multiple headed dandelion similar to the photo in the May 13, 1986 **Village Voice**. He also found a clump of dandelion leaves over 30" long which he mailed to authorities, but never received a reply.

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**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, THEN GIVE MORE TO SUPPORT TMIA ACTIVITIES**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Intervention Fund Contribution:    \$10    \$20    \$50    \$100    \$MORE (Checks in the amount of \$50 or more can be made payable to the TMI Legal Fund for tax deduction purposes.)

- Membership:    \$15 Regular Membership    \$50 Sustaining Member  
   \$25 Non-Profit Organization    \$100 Patron  
   \$5 Low income, Student    \$200 Club Member  
   \$5 Non-member, newsletter subscription

I met people who complained of skin rashes, breathing difficulties and other effects of Chernobyl rains. One mother told me about her children getting red spots under their skin after the rains came. (I only spoke of skin rashes and reddening, not of petechiae, the red spots.)

All of this is tragic. Members of food monitoring groups are careful to purchase safe foods for their families. This meant giving up completely some of their favorite foods, beverages and chocolates. To give you an idea of the situation, the reality people must encounter, one mother told me she took her daughter to a birthday party. She inquired about the ingredients in the birthday cake. "Oh, it's delicious, with nuts and chocolate," replied the hostess. Well, the mother thanked her and said her child was not permitted to eat the cake. A heated discussion followed with some hostility and guilt. This happens often, especially at school and church events. And, while you may think this frivolous, some foods are really quite contaminated.

These concerned mothers and others from Germany chose to take it upon themselves to learn and to do. It is your responsibility to learn and up to you to decide what is acceptable to you.

As we approach the ninth anniversary of the TMI accident, why don't you write your Congressman and both Senators asking them each to explain why there has NEVER been an investigation of the symptoms and health effects caused by the accident. I'm not talking about cancers and the Columbia Cancer Study! I'm talking about the full range of effects suffered by some local residents during the early days of the accident and of the 40 rads per hour and 10 rads per hour over Goldsboro and the Gamble Testimony. Too much is still covered up.

Mary Osborn

## ***Effects of Chernobyl may linger in Britain***

Associated Press

LONDON — Agricultural restrictions in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the Soviet Union may have to remain in force for the next 30 years in parts of Britain, a report said today.

The report, by the Country Landowners' Association, which represents large landowners in Britain, criticized the government for underestimating the effects of

the April 1986 nuclear accident.

The explosion and fire at the Soviet nuclear reactor killed 31 Soviets and sent radioactive rain clouds sweeping across Europe.

Many upland areas in Britain are still affected by the radioactive fallout and the movement and slaughter of hundreds of thousands of sheep are still restricted as a result.

More than 600 farms in Britain are affected by restrictions

because radioactivity in their areas exceeds government safety levels.

John Wynne, spokesman for the landowners' body, said two areas of north Wales "may be the last citadels of Chernobyl fallout, with local sheep still giving radiation readings over 1,000 becquerels in 30 years' time."

A becquerel is a unit for measuring radiation contamination.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS PLANNED ON TMI WATER EVAPORATION**

Leslie R. Klein of the Lancaster *Intelligencer Journal* succinctly summarized the contentions (arguments) raised by TMIA and the Susquehanna Valley Alliance which the Atomic Safety & Licensing Board agreed to hear during hearings on the proposed evaporation of 2.3 million gallons of radioactive water stored on the island. The contentions the ASLB will hear include:

- o GPU Nuclear and the NRC have not shown that evaporation meets standards requiring that the release of radioactivity be "as low as reasonably achievable." Other disposal methods would not release all the radioactivity into the environment.

- o GPU Nuclear and the NRC have not analyzed the risks and benefits of storing the water on the island.

- o The company and agency inadequately considered two disposal methods -- evaporation with no release of radiation to the environment and storing the water in tanks in the containment building on site.

- o The plan does not show whether the benefit of evaporation would exceed the cost, which includes the impact of adding radiation to the food chain, water and air. The cost of trucking the residue left after evaporation to a disposal site has not been evaluated sufficiently.

- o The evaporator might not filter all radioactive elements.

- o Monitoring and some other safety systems have not been proven adequate.

- o A fluctuation in the amount of water being evaporated could jeopardize public safety.

- o The effects of tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, and other radioactive elements have been underestimated or ignored.

- o The impact of chemicals, such as boron and sodium, added to the water has not been determined.

Frances Skolnick of Lancaster will represent TMIA and SVA during the hearings. She needs help with "discovery," the next phase of the proceeding, and would appreciate hearing from anyone willing to provide assistance. Call Frances directly at (717)872-0803.

Readers are also urged to submit statements about their position on the proposed evaporation in writing to the three judge panel. Write to:

Administrative Judges Wolfe, Bright & Paris  
Atomic Safety & Licensing Board  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

#### TMIA PROTESTS PROPOSED NRC STAFF CHANGES AT TMI

Today, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has seven nuclear engineers and health physicists at TMI Unit 2. "Beginning February 1, 1988," according to an NRC news release, "NRC onsite staffing at TMI-2 will be reduced to two engineers." TMIA, in a letter to the Commission, cites the proposal as "an inappropriate and misguided move."

TMIA Chairperson Vera Stuchinski and Spokesperson Eric Epstein, in a joint letter on behalf of TMIA, call attention to GPU's poor management record, to the recent shutdown of the GPU nuclear plant at Oyster Creek, New Jersey (where operators destroyed data), and to the plant's unique problems.

Reducing staff levels prior to completion of core removal (which has been extended into late 1988), they write, "is sure to inspire a loss of public confidence in the NRC's commitment to safety."

#### NEWS NOTES - NEWS NOTES - NEWS NOTES - NEWS NOTES - NEWS NOTES

**On or about February 1, 1988**, the Environmental Protection Agency will transfer the radiation monitoring program at TMI to the Hershey Medical Center on a grant jointly funded by the EPA and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources.

**Bernd Franke** of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research will release their radiation monitoring report January 29, 1988. A summary of the report can be obtained by contacting the TMIA office. The TMI Health Fund has released a separate report on radiation monitoring which can be obtained by contacting the Fund directly: 1622 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. You can reach them by telephone at (215)898-4828.

**Betsy and John Robinson** are the proud parents of Kristine, born Wednesday, January 20. She weighed 7 lb. 14 oz. at birth and joins brother Stephen who is 1 1/2 years old. Betsy is Treasurer of TMIA.

**Ninth Anniversary** observance plans are now in the making--yes, it'll soon be nine years since the TMI accident. Call Kay at the TMIA office (233-7897) if you have ideas or would like to serve on the committee. Everyone pencil in now, Sunday night, March 27th!

**WANTED!** Hosts for house meetings. We supply the speakers and invitations. You supply the house and we will even help with the invitation list. This is an enjoyable way to hear the latest information on the water evaporation issue and raise some money for the upcoming hearings. Phone Kay at the office (233-7897) or Debbie Baker (566-7466).

#### CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR--CALENDAR

Monday, February 1 - TMIA Planning Council Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets, Harrisburg.

Saturday, February 13 - Heartbreaker's Ball - "For anyone who has ever felt the pain of love" - 8 p.m. at the Civic Club Ballroom, Front & North Streets, \$7.00 per person, Music by Dewey & The Decibels, call Gene at 234-0800 for info.

Monday, February 22 - Deadline for discovery in TMI Water Evaporation Hearing.

Sunday, March 27 - TMIA Ninth Anniversary Commemorative Activities