

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

JANUARY
1989

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

TELEPHONE: 717-233-3072

10th Anniversary Observance Set for March 27, 1989

Central Pennsylvania's public observance of the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the accident at Three Mile Island on March 28, 1979 will be held on Monday, March 27th, with an "Accident Eve" observance. TMIA and others will be gathering near TMI's north gate at 5:15 p.m. for a procession, vigil, and the lighting of candles. A pot-luck supper is planned for 7:00 p.m. followed by a program with entertainment and speakers. Watch your mail for additional details.

The Anniversary Planning Committee is looking for additional volunteers to help with the activities. Volunteer by phoning 233-7897 or in person at the January 31 membership meeting.

Evaporation Case Advances

SVA/TMIA, GPU Nuclear and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have submitted their proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law concerning the disposal of the 2.3 million gallons of radioactive water at Three Mile Island. The licensee will submit a rebuttal by the end of January.

During the hearing it became obvious that the NRC, in preparing their environmental impact statement, had done a sloppy and unprofessional job. Their philosophy about radiation exposure is that any exposure is acceptable so long as it is less than background radiation. This, in spite of the fact that the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) in Como, Italy last year emphasized their commitment to keeping the public and workers' exposure to radiation as low as possible. The ICRP issued this policy following a reassessment of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki data which shows the risk of developing cancer from ionizing radiation was greater than previously believed.

Public Citizen Reports 2,940 U.S. Reactor Mishaps, 430 Emergency Shutdowns in 1987

There were nearly 3,000 mishaps and at least 430 emergency plant shutdowns at U.S. commercial nuclear reactors in 1987 according to a study released in late 1988 by Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy Project.

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According to Nuclear Regulatory Commission statistics compiled by Public Citizen, more than 104,000 nuclear workers received measurable doses of radiation—an all-time record. Further, at least 492 violations of safety regulations occurred at the plants in 1987.

“Public attention has recently been focused on the poor safety conditions at the nation’s nuclear weapons reactors,” noted Joan Claybrook, the President of Public Citizen. “However, in 1987, badly managed commercial nuclear plants daily threatened the safety of the public, particularly the 96 million Americans who live within 50 miles of a reactor.”

Public Citizen points out that much of the data which the NRC makes public represents only the “tip of the iceberg.” The NRC refuses to release key safety data such as “single-component failure” records and a comprehensive listing of all emergency plant shutdowns. In addition, the agency’s public records on violations of its safety regulations by nuclear utilities are incomplete and contradictory.

“The NRC appears to be using the Department of Energy as its role model,” observed Ken Bossong, director of Public Citizen’s Critical Mass Energy Project. “Lax oversight of nuclear safety and deliberate withholding of information characterize both the DOE’s handling of the nation’s nuclear weapons reactors and the NRC’s regulation of commercial nuclear power plants.”

Reuter-Stokes System Again Spots Elevated Radiation Levels at TMI

A Reuter-Stokes radiation monitor located 300 feet from the Borated Water Storage Tank (BWST) of TMI Unit 1 showed elevated readings from December 19 through January 4, 1989 when contaminated water was being processed back down to “normal levels.” It was showing an increase in BWST contaminants just as it had when TMIA’s Cherie Freidrich called NRC attention to decay heat water contamination of that tank in late 1986.

The current readings were about equivalent to the 1986 readings, which fluctuated up and down while the current readings climbed in small, steady steps—peaking December 24 and 25. GPU officials roped off the area around the tank after the high readings were discovered in 1986 to protect workers from the high levels of radiation. During the current incident—for which GPU and the NRC provide conflicting reasons—no such protective measures were taken. After GPU was able to process the contamination out of the tank, the NRC seemed satisfied and plans no investigation.

GPU has proposed scrapping the Reuter-Stokes monitoring system, but it remains the only real-time monitoring available; a system that once again proved its worth and—absent public access to in-plant data—a system we cannot do without, particularly if GPU is allowed to evaporate the 2.3 million gallons of radioactive water at Unit 2.

Mark your calendar for TMIA's General Membership Meeting & Pot Luck Dinner, Tuesday, January 31 at the Friends Meeting House and the Heartbreaker's Ball February 11.

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 Members _____ \$50 Sustaining Membership
_____ \$25 Non-Profit Organization _____ \$100 Patron
_____ \$5 Low Income/Student _____ \$200 Club Member
_____ \$5 Non-member newsletter subscription

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO TMIA, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Two Corporations Vie for Pennsylvania's Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility

On Thursday, January 5, Chem Nuclear and US Ecology came to Harrisburg to extol the virtues of their particular brand of low-level, radioactive waste management. Under a compact signed with Maryland and West Virginia, Pennsylvania is to establish a repository for low-level nuclear wastes for all three states. Hearing the presentations were government and public officials who listened politely to each presentation. TMIA took the opportunity to point out the horrendous operating records of both corporations.

Chem Nuclear is a subsidiary of Waste Management Incorporated (WMI). WMI is the target of one of the largest anti-trust investigations in U.S. history and has a criminal record of bribery, price fixing, illegal dumping, and environmental fines in excess of \$31 million. Chem Nuclear is also the manager of the Barnwell radioactive waste facility in South Carolina, which has had numerous problems with "migrating" radioactive isotopes.

US Ecology, which will soon merge with corporate giant Browning-Ferris Industries, has mismanaged radioactive waste sites in Beatty, Nevada and Richland, Washington. Their radioactive waste facility at Maxey Flatts, Kentucky was (and is) an environmental disaster. They sold the site to the state of Kentucky for \$27 million. Estimates on the cost of remediating Maxey Flatts range from \$31 to \$300 million.

Nuclear Notes

- **TMIA's quarterly membership meeting will include an update on 10th anniversary activities and a report on the status of the evaporation hearings. Those attending the pot luck dinner should bring food to share.**
- Peach Bottom's restart has been pushed back to the second quarter of 1989. The NRC, the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations, and the Commonwealth are still unsatisfied with many segments of Philadelphia Electric's (PECO) reorganization plan. A comprehensive NRC inspection is scheduled for February. Peach Bottom's closure is costing PECO \$8 million a month in replacement power costs. PECO recently announced that construction costs for Limerick-2, which is 96.1 percent complete, is approximately \$2.16 billion. The projected final cost for Limerick is \$3.2 billion.
- The U.S. Supreme Court voted 8-1 to uphold the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision not to allow Duquesne Light Company (DLC) and the Pennsylvania Power Company (PPC) to recover costs from rate payers for \$50 million spent on two proposed nuclear power projects. DLC and PPC wanted to recover pre-construction costs on the proposed Erie Units 1 and 2 and Davis-Besse (Ohio) Units 2 and 3 by increasing rates for their customers over a ten year span.
- A suit filed by Suffolk County (New York) officials charged that the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) misled them about the completion date and mechanical readiness of key components at the Shoreham nuclear power plant in Long Island. Under a federal law (RICO) used primarily for enforcing racketeering charges against organized crime figures, a federal jury agreed with the plaintiffs and ordered LILCO to pay \$22.8 million. In addition, the president of LILCO, Wilfred O. Uhl, was found to be directly involved in LILCO's deceptive practices, i.e. fraud and racketeering.

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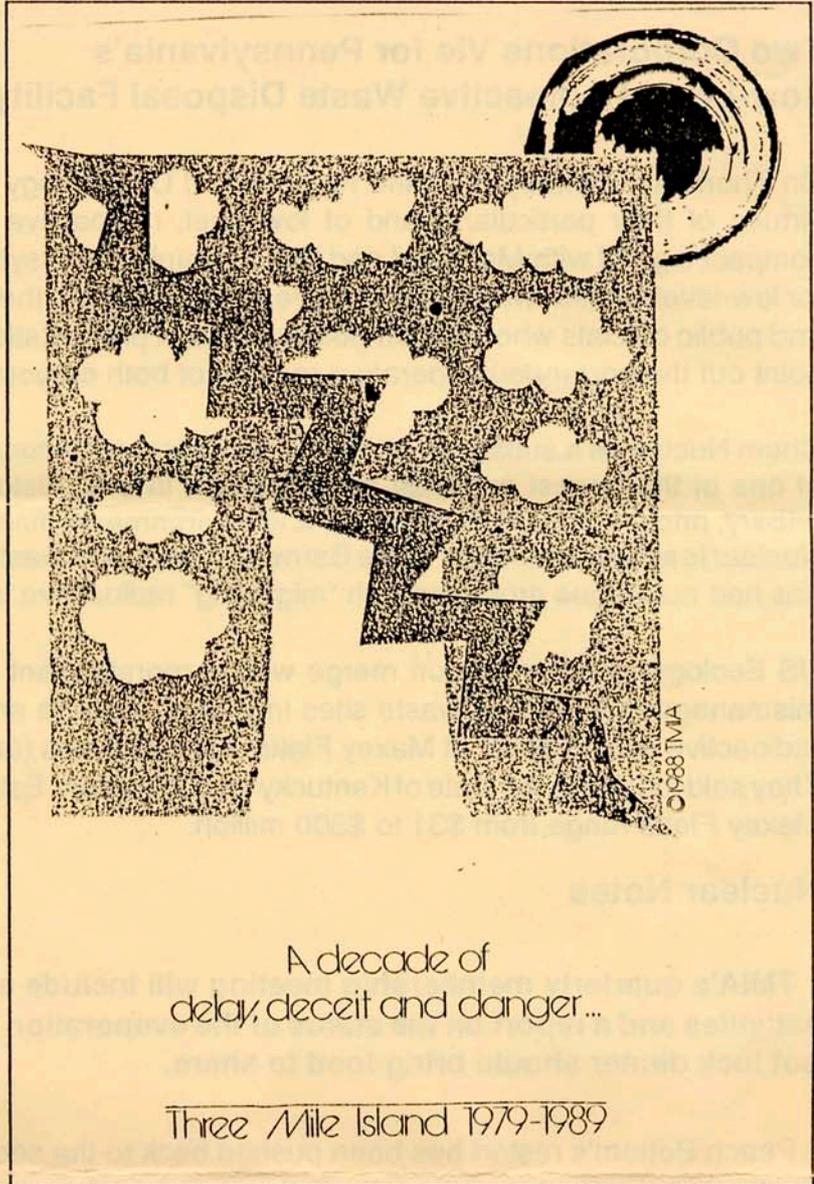
- January 31 Tuesday 6:15 p.m. Pot-luck meal at Harrisburg Friends Meeting House
7:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting, Harrisburg Friends,
6th and Herr Streets**
- February 11 Saturday 8:00 p.m. Heartbreaker's Ball, Civic Club Ballroom, Front &
North Streets, Harrisburg**
- March 27 - 10th Anniversary Activities - See Front Page Story**

10 Years After the TMI Accident

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