

PUC Gives and Takes

by Chris Sayer

After five months of exhaustive testimony (most presented by the Utility) the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) handed down a decision on whether Met Ed could keep its license, whether they would get purchase power from the ratepayers, and whether Unit 1 would stay in the ratebase.

In a decision which took a middle road and thus dissatisfied most everyone, the Commission did the following:

1. Withdrew their "show cause" order on whether MetEd could continue to operate a utility in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
2. Ordered that Unit 1 be taken out of the ratebase and all costs arising from Unit 1 be borne by the corporation.
3. Allowed the full cost of "replacement power" to be passed on to the consumers, retroactive to March 28, 1979.

The withdrawal of the show cause order allows utility to continue to operate in the state. While not agreeing that MetEd had acted in a responsible manner, the Commission passed judgement on to the federal authorities saying that it felt that the federal government preempted any regulatory role of the PUC in the question of nuclear power.

The order to remove Unit 1 from the ratebase deprives stockholders of \$26.9 million in earnings that

they had been receiving from that plant, even though the unit was not "used and useful", the standard "measuring stick" for utility property.

The replacement power decision placed nearly \$140 million in new costs on MetEd ratepayers. With the savings from Unit 1, the net cost will be nearly \$110 million to customers of the utility. In the short term this will help to keep the utility alive, while in the long term the loss to stockholders and the resulting loss of attractiveness to investors will hurt them.

TMIA immediately moved to file exceptions to the decision. TMIA attorneys Larry Selkowitz and Mark Widoff submitted a brief raising the following objections to the decision:

1. That the PUC erred in not requiring that an independent panel be appointed to assess the conversion option.
2. That the PUC erred in not requiring immediate, drastic conservation measures.
3. That the PUC erred in allowing full recovery of energy costs before considering the utility's culpability for the accident and the present litigation.

One of the arguments raised by TMIA consultant William Belmont

cont.

DEADLINE: June 16th

was that no one has ever attempted to determine the full cost of nuclear power, including the increased cost of equity capital. TMIA is arguing that a full study of the cost of conversion should take place, and should include an assessment of whether Met Ed would be better able to raise investment capital by converting Units 1 and 2 to coal or other fossil fuels.

Additionally, TMIA argued that the PUC should order, not suggest, that conservation take place.

Finally, the TMIA experts argue that the Commission has placed great stock in the NRC in determining the degree of management culpability in the accident. If the NRC places blame on the utility, the PUC may determine that portions of the replacement power should be placed on the utility. Since there is little likelihood of the utility being able to repay this money if so ordered, TMIA has argued that full cost recovery should be deferred until after the NRC decides blame for the accident and management culpability in the event.

TMIA believes and is arguing that the decision does "great violence" to the opinion stated in the PUC order of June 15, 1979 that "that the ratepayers of Metropolitan Edison and Pennsylvania Electric Company should be no worse off - and no better off - because of the accident.

In an April 30 press release, GPU announced that first quarter earnings of 28 cents per average share, down 53 per cent from the 59 cents reported for the comparable period a year ago. Net income was \$17.1 million, down 52 per cent from the \$35.7 million reported in the first quarter of 1979.

P.R. BLITZ
by Cathie Musser

Heard the latest?

The electric companies through a group called the "Committee for Energy Awareness" is buying lots of time on area radio stations for nuclear energy "advertisements" (some stations playing

the ads are WHP-FM and WKBO, but there are probably more).

What can we do about it? If you object to the ad--call the radio station and ask them to stop playing it--or you'll stop listening. Then call businesses advertising on the station and tell them what you told the station. It doesn't take a lot of protesting listeners complaining to paying advertisers before the station learns they are losing money playing the plug!

DO IT TODAY!!



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
OF A UTILITY CONSIDERING
ALL ASPECTS OF BUILDING
A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Of the nation's 72 commercially licensed reactors, 20 generated nearly a watt of electricity in March, 1980. Some were down for repairs, some for modifications, some for refueling and TMI. Another 5 reactors operated at less than 10% of their capacity. Only 29 managed a capacity factor above 75%. Peach Bottom 2 operated at 42% and Peach Bottom 3 at 62%.

[from April, 1980 ECNP article;
source: Nucleonics Week 4/24/80]

In related news, the Susquehanna Environmental Advocates are calling for an independent audit of PP&L's records in order to assess the company's need for additional power--the reason given to justify construction of the nuclear plant near Berwick. In light of the events of Three Mile Island, SEA also asks the Public Utility Commission to fully explore the consequences to our region's population, health and economy should a serious accident occur at Berwick.

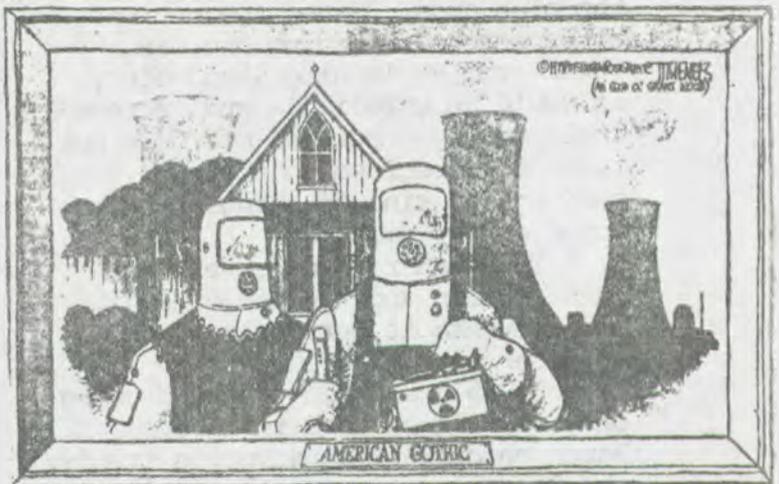
UCS On Krypton

As most readers already know, the Union of Concerned Scientists has issued their report to the Governor on the proposed venting of Krypton 85. Briefly they stated that there would be no "directly induced radiation health hazard" but a great deal of psychological stress if the venting were carried out. They also disputed Met Ed's claims of dangers inherent in prolonging the decision and said that there was time and good reason to consider alternatives such as a different kind of venting, selective absorption, or the cryogenic process.

After the UCS report was released, Governor Thornburgh said that he would no longer oppose venting.

On May 17, TMIA held a press conference commending the study and Rep. Allen Ertel for his work on selective absorption. Joel Roth, speaking for TMIA, said that the UCS conclusion as to the lack of health dangers would go a long way toward relieving fears of area residents, but that no radiation should be released where an alternative exists. Roth also called for full consideration of the alternatives and the establishment of an independent technical panel (preferably the UCS) and a Citizens Advisory Panel while condemning the "shallow and incomplete" exploration of alternatives by the NRC.

This month the ALERT has a different letter-writing recommendation. In the past we've pushed critical letters to government officials. Let's try our hands at a thank you note for a change. U.S. Representative Allen Ertel has put a lot of time and energy into opposing venting of Krypton and favoring the use of a selective absorption system. Congressman Ertel deserves a pat on the back and reassurance that anti-nuclear voters will remember him at the polls. You can write him at local office in the Harrisburg East Mall.



HEALTH AND OTHER EFFECTS NEAR TMI

A Pennsylvania Health Department study released this month showed "surprising" levels of anxiety among people living near TMI. The study showed disturbing increases in the use of sleeping pills, tranquilizers, alcohol and cigarettes. According to Peter Houts, a behavioral scientist at Hershey Medical Center and the director of the study, "The distress as we define it, has persisted for nine months, out to a distance of 15 miles."

One of the figures drawn from the study will have major significance for anyone trying to plan for an orderly evacuation. 54% of the people living within 5 miles of TMI said they would "evacuate immediately" in another nuclear crisis. That means that at the first word, 19,000 people will be packing up, going to the schools to pull out their children and getting on the road to get away. They will not assemble patiently at street corners, waiting wishfully for the school buses that may come to take them somewhere.

[from April, 1980 ECNP article;
source: New York Times 4/18/80]

PA Energy Plan

On May 19 Lt. Governor William Scranton 3d, Chairman of the Governor's Energy Council, released a state energy plan. Among the 61 recommendations was one calling for no new licensing of nuclear construction. The plan would, however, allow completion of plants under construction in Limerick, Berwick and Beaver Valley. And on a further note of caution,

the plan adds, "Given the current atmosphere surrounding nuclear power from a planning standpoint, it would be unreliable and increasingly costly. But the staff is not ready to foreclose that option, pending any kind of changes in the world energy picture."

The plan relies heavily on conservation and the use of coal. Pennsylvania is currently a net exporter of coal producing approximately 85.3 million tons and using only 61 million tons in 1978.

Based on current consumption trends, the Council estimates that PA's coal reserves would last 500 years.

The final shape of the plan will depend upon legislative and administrative action. A series of public hearings is planned for June and July with a hearing in Harrisburg on June 25. Scranton predicts opposition from utility firms, the construction industry and others.

Survey Results

Nearly three out of four Pennsylvanians feel that nuclear power plants are not safe enough and their number should be reduced until more strict regulations are put into practice. And Pennsylvanians with the TMI accident still fresh in their minds, are even more strongly concerned about nuclear safety than the rest of the country.

The public opinion survey of 1,100 residents was conducted by the Gallup Organization for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette late in March. On nuclear power, the pollsters asked the following question: DO YOU FEEL THAT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS OPERATING TODAY ARE SAFE ENOUGH WITH THE PRESENT SAFETY REGULATIONS OR DO YOU FEEL THAT THEIR OPERATIONS SHOULD BE CUT BACK UNTIL MORE STRICT REGULATIONS CAN BE PUT INTO PRACTICE?

Twenty per cent of the state residents polled felt that plants were safe enough, while 72 per cent felt operations should be cut. Eight per cent had no opinion. Geographically, Philadelphia showed the most distrust with 88 per cent saying that operations should be cut back.

In the Philadelphia suburbs,

74 per cent felt they should be cut back; in the Southwest counties 67 per cent agreed on cutting back; in the rest of the state, the figure for cutback was 68 per cent.

All four of the areas were significantly higher than a national Gallup survey done in January 1980 which showed that 30 per cent felt that nuclear power was safe, 55 per cent wanted operations cut back and 15 per cent had no opinion.

Silent Majority?

On Monday, May 12 a group of 25 Central Pennsylvanians met with the NRC in Washington. Claiming to represent the "silent majority" of the TMI community they advocated venting of the Krypton so that cleanup and reopening can proceed. The group stressed their trust in the NRC, condemned "sensationalist" media reports, and apologized for the behavior of other Central Pennsylvania residents. State Representative Kenneth E. Brandt told the Commission that he wanted them to know that Central Pennsylvanians "are not represented by a group of ill-mannered individuals who are not willing to listen to or accept the views of others". Needless to say Commissioner Joseph Hendrie welcomed the group with open arms. Would anyone care to place a bet as to whether we have heard the last from the "silent majority"?

Survival Summer

A massive grassroots education campaign is being launched this summer under the sponsorship of Mobilization for Survival. Called "Survival Summer", the campaign is patterned after 1964's Freedom Summer and 1967's Vietnam Summer. Survival Summer seeks to instill a broad awareness of the threat to human existence posed by militarism, nuclear technology, energy policies and distorted national priorities.

The present national leadership is committed to a future of conventional mistakes on a grand scale. Survival Summer will offer a vision

of a strong and healthy society grounded in concern for the well-being of all Americans - and people everywhere. The specific goals are: no war, stop the nuclear arms race, sane energy policies and reordered national priorities.

Individuals and groups can make the campaign (and the future) a success by assisting in the canvassing, neighborhood forums, referendums, presentations, leafletting, candidate confrontations and teachins that make up the fiber of Survival Summer. For more information contact: MFS, 3601 Locust Walk, Phil. PA 19104 (215-386-4875).



PAC Forming

Plans for the formation of a "safe energy" political action committee are underway. The PAC will operate through the fall elections.

PACs are nothing new. Many corporations (especially energy corporations) have them. They are a legal way for groups and people to funnel money into the political process. We hope to add a new dimension.

The plans call for dollar contributions to candidates for office in the state. Additionally, however, we hope to be able to provide consulting services to candidates, volunteer help for distribution and telephone work, and graphics and media assistance. Plans are already underway for production of TV and radio safe energy spots.

One of the criticisms leveled at anti-nuclear and other safe energy people is that they have no clout at the polls - and electoral

clout may be the only thing that a politician or public official will listen to.

Anyone who is interested in finding more should write to Chris Sayer, 313 Peffer Street, Harrisburg or CALL 233-3072.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE TO BE FORMED

Help Wanted

TMIA has the following openings for top-quality personnel. Payment will be in bananas, milk bones or other non-negotiable items.

EDITOR and other editorial people - to run and help with the ALERT. CALL Terry Roth at 236-9486 or 232-1191 or the Office at 233-3072 if you can help or would be interested in taking over.

OFFICE staffpeople - we need people who would be willing to spend a day or a half day per week in the office handling normal office duties. Call Chris or Kay if you can help (233-3072).

RETAIL MERCHANDISE COORDINATOR - how's that for a good title. We need someone who would take responsibility for getting shirts and buttons to retail outlets and then coordinating money pickups, shirt deliveries, etc. Much of this can be done from the privacy of your own home. Call Chris at the office.

FUNDRAISERS - all the world needs fundraisers. We need people to help with the mailings, make telephone calls. Also, we will be setting up a whole schedule of events for the summer and fall. We are looking at picnics, concerts and the 2nd HoeDown, polka parties, flea markets, etc. Anyone interested in working should call Chris at the office. Also, anyone with fresh ideas on fundraising events should contact the office - you will probably be put in charge of your own project.

News & Notes

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service has a toll free line that you can call from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays if you need help finding something or someone having to do with nuclear power. Their phone number is 800-424-2477.

Three Mile Island Alert now has available Bill Keisling's book on Three Mile Island: Turning Point.

Keisling, former editor of Harrisburg Magazine, was one of the first reporters on the site of the March 28th accident. His book looks at the accident, the utility and the NRC, the citizen response and the overall effect of the accident on the nuclear industry.

Keisling's work has appeared in several national publications including ROLLING STONE, and THE PROGRESSIVE. He is currently working on a piece for ATLANTIC on the Philadelphia Inquirer's coverage of the accident; coverage which won it a Pulitzer Prize for local reporting.

Copies of the book will be available at the TMIA office for \$4.95.

The Alert is sad to say goodbye to Andrea Chesman. Andrea, who edits Island Updates and has been a hardworking member of TMIA, is leaving to take a dream job in Vermont. Andrea, we wish for you higher mountains, cleaner rivers, good friends and a nuclear-free future.

STAFF THIS ISSUE:

Terry Roth (Ed.)
Sue Eason
Debbie R-Fetterman
The Hummels
Chris Sayer
Sue Shertom
Doug West
The Williams

"Three Mile Island: A Report by the People" will appear in the June issue of The Progressive magazine. The article is a condensation of several statements written by people in the TMI area, who explain in their own words how the accident has affected their lives. The article was edited by former York residents Susan and Russell Mills, who have been collecting the statements since September. A special thanks to all of you who have contributed statements to the project and/or helped encourage others to participate.

TMIA's fundraising drive has brought in money, members, and support. It's also brought more than one interesting letter. One person failed to check any of the spaces on the blue card and instead added some new categories which s/he checked:

"I have an instinctive dislike for any organization headed by a 'chairperson.'

Also, for organizations that use four-letter words in their solicitations.

I'm in favor of nuclear plants.

It's good you folks weren't around when coal mining, oil exploration, etc. began--have you ever tried spending the winter in a dark tent heated with burning buffalo chips?"

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration recently awarded a \$296,000 contract to the Boeing Company to help learn whether nuclear wastes can be fired into orbit around the sun, into another solar system, or elsewhere in the universe. The initial assessment due in December is part of a four year study project by NASA and the Department of Energy.

June Calendar

JUNE 1 - 3: International Anti-Nuclear Days of Protest: Local Observances around the world.

JUNE 3: TMIA Planning Council Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 7:30 P.M.

JUNE 11: TMIA Steering Committee Meeting, Avatar's in New Cumberland, 7:30 P.M.

JUNE 14: ECPN Board Meeting, Messiah Lutheran Church, 6th and Forster Street, Harrisburg, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

JUNE 19: TMIA Community Group has booth at Mechanicsburg Jubilee Days. The drawing will be held for the wood stove.

JUNE 23: P.P.&L. Public Meeting about their proposed rate increase, 1801 Brookwood St., Harrisburg, 7:30 P.M.

JUNE 25: Public Hearing on the Governor's Energy Plan in Harrisburg. Call TMIA for time, location, & details. #233-7897

TMIA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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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

FROM WHERE DOES THE WIND NOT BLOW
By Alfred J. Miranda

From where does the wind not blow
High above or far below?

Tree tops listen, bending with the wind
while flags fly at half-mast
letting us know, where we have been.

Do the builders of nuclear plants
have the wind currents in their design?
Or is it a coincidence
just sitting in my mind.

During each controlled
and uncontrolled release,
it disturbs the balance
all inner peace.

Misty steam bellows out
Air becomes too thick
Particles fall back to earth
Pieces of the "yellow cake"*

Anxiety, Fear
Anger, Enraged
Depression, Settles
Neuroses grow deep er
and

Three Mile Island feeds the Susquehanna River
Are we not the fish and other foods we eat?

The water we drink
The air we breath
How soon will the warmth
of the day
turn cold and barren as night?

*"yellow cake"--raw materials of nuclear fuel

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