

# THREE MILE ISLAND

# THE ALERT

Vol. 2, No. 9

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

January 1981

## START OFF THE NEW YEAR RIGHT! RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP... TMIA cannot afford at this point to keep sending THE ALERT to readers whose memberships have lapsed. If the date above you name and address falls in 1980, please cut out all of this information and return with your check so that we may keep you on THE ALERT mailing list. Thank you.

### STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

By Mary Hartnett

The Steering Committee meets every Monday evening at 6:30. In the event you have a problem, you may request it be put on the agenda for that evening by calling the office or one of the members of the committee.

Barb Smith has resigned from the Steering Committee, so we have an opening for a position plus an opening for an alternate. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Areas of responsibility have been assigned to the Steering Committee members. Louise Bradford and John Murdoch will oversee education and revision of our speaking panel, which were tremendous last year. Paul Makurath will be working closely with Ruth Gentle on finances. We will consider hiring a CPA to prepare our books for tax purposes and other forms which are mandatory. Paul will also be helping with the newsletter. John Murdoch and Joel Roth will be setting up a media committee to keep the press informed.

We have so much more to accomplish this year, and it appears that it may be more difficult with Reagan in office. Anyone interested in sharing their talents or just plain hard work, call the TMIA office at 717-233-7897 and ask to be put in our volunteer book.

### CONGRESSIONAL TASK FORCE

By Bev Davis

Fears that MetEd might go bankrupt and walk away from a dangerous TMI-2 caused the PUC to meet in August with the Pennsylvania congressional delegation to urge contingency plans.

Eight Pennsylvania congressmen - Ertel (chairman), Goodling, Walker, Yatron, Ritter, Bailey, Kostmayer, and Atkinson - set up a task force in response. During the past few months, they have met with the PUC, utilities, bankers, and citizens. In January they expect to propose legislation based on the suggestions they got.

Briefly, the utility was pessimistic. Citizens had mixed feelings. Bankers were confident MetEd could survive because they were confident Unit I would go back on line and provide revenue. (TMI was not asked to testify.)

At the same time, the staff of the NRC recommended to its commission a shopping list of options, among them, turning the plant over to the Department of Energy to operate and allowing Unit I to reopen. GPU's answer to the problem was a plan to have utilities and their ratepayers across the U.S. chip in.

The Ertel task force has come up with a seven-point plan which it will consider soon and will use to draft legislation. The items getting most attention seem to be a Chrysler-type guaranteed loan

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and a National Nuclear Property Insurance.

The task force is still open to citizen comments, which can be sent to your congressman or to Chairman Ertel in Washington, D.C. A copy of the seven options is also available from there or can be seen at the TMIA office.

## THE TMI LEGAL BOARD

By Sam Milkes

This is the first in what will become a regular column in the newsletter on activities of the Legal Board. The TMI Legal Board is a coalition of a number of anti-nuclear groups in the TMI area. I am the representative from TMIA.

The primary purpose of the Legal Board is to distribute funds to the anti-nuclear groups for litigation. The funds come mainly from nationwide direct mailing efforts and grants. While the Legal Board distributes these funds, the Public Interest Resource Center (PIRC) is primarily responsible for raising them.

Until about one month ago, the Legal Board had a fair amount of money to distribute and it has now all been distributed. Now, with funds low, we are using our twice-monthly meetings to develop priorities for distributing the limited future funding. We're assessing what forms of litigation seem to have the best chance of success, and which seem most important. We're hopeful that by developing this priority system, the future funding decisions we'll be having to make will be easier ones. Probably the hardest, but of course most necessary thing we have to do is to sometimes say no. Obviously there is always more of a need for money than money available.

Next month I hope to be able to discuss how these priorities are developing.

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DID BOB ARNOLD MEAN TO TELL US THAT WHEN THEY'RE OPERATING, OUR TMI PLANTS DISCHARGE A MINIMUM OF 100 CURIES OF RADIOACTIVITY EACH MONTH? HE SAID IT WHILE TRYING TO REASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT 10 OR 15 CURIES PER VENTING WAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. LET'S SEE - 100 CURIES TIMES TWO REACTORS TIMES HOW MANY MONTHS...

## FUNDRAISING REPORT

By Mary Osborn

TMIA and PIRC representatives met with Charlene Devoky to discuss fundraising methods and ideas. She covered many ways to make money: personal gimmicks, such as giving up the use of electricity for a day, or not sending holiday cards to friends and instead, donating the money saved to TMIA or PIRC. Another possibility mentioned was "corporate giving," or donations of large sums of money to various needy organizations. In order to be helped by this funding, an organization must be tax-exempt. (PIRC is working on this.)

Ms. Devoky, having some contacts with funders, gave us some very important do's and do not's: Do have a plan of proposals; give funders a good background of what has happened to us and what is still going on here. Do tell what our accomplishments are, as well as our problems and goals. Do make personal contacts - they are a must. Do not assume that a funder knows what is happening here. They just know a little. (The same goes for people in our area - what is a matter of fact to you may be totally unknown or misunderstood by your neighbor!)

PIRC is planning to have Ms. Devoky back early this year for a more detailed fundraising meeting. This would be an excellent opportunity for each of us to come to grips with one of the most difficult areas any organization has - RAISING MONEY. It just might be easier to tackle this problem if we have the know-how. Ms. Devoky has and she is willing to help us help ourselves.



## UPDATE ON HEARINGS

By John Murdoch

With TMIA sidelined, other intervenors now are carrying the ball against Met Ed in the continuing hearings on whether TMI Unit 1 should be allowed to re-open.

The prestigious Union of Concerned Scientists, with Robert Pollard as witness and questioner, has been hammering away at numerous issues related to plant design. Equipment, UCS contends, was not designed with "environmental qualifications" in mind, and so would be incapable of coping with Class 7 or 8 accidents, much less a major, "Class 9" accident such as happened March 28, 1979 at Unit 1's ill-fated twin.

While the emergency core cooling system and the "scram" system are "safety grade", the 3-member Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has been told by witnesses, turbine and switch controls, for example, are not "safety grade" but should be.

As expected, NRC staff has opposed all these contentions as unnecessary, as has Met Ed, which doesn't want to spend the money required to upgrade equipment, even though it would assure greater safety margins. (For example, Met Ed for months has vehemently fought NRC orders to install a monitor to record water levels.)

Steve Sholly, another intervenor, well-known for his work with the TMI Public Interest Resource Center (PIRC), has continued to question an integrated control system, involving safety analyses. He points out that a new plant computer system is partially installed, but that no back-up system is provided! Vital in-core temperature readings, he points out, will still feed into the computer and will then have to be "called up" each time, short-circuiting any chance for immediate direct read-out.

Although there is an evident crucial need for a safety-grade

radiation monitor on the reactor building purge system, Sholly has presented evidence that Met Ed remains content with a less reliable monitor, hoping it will do the job if emergencies arise.

The basic fault, Sholly contends, is that Unit 1 is "grandfathered" on lots of safety requirements. This means that Unit 1 meets the standards required at the time that it went on-line in 1974 but couldn't (and isn't required to) meet the stricter requirements imposed since. And Met Ed, he contends, isn't interested in doing anything more than meet the barest minimum requirements.

In spite of this, Herman Dieckamp, GPU president, in a critical letter published in the December 18 Lancaster "Intelligencer Journal" insists (with, it can be imagined, something less than a straight face) that "GPU has and will continue to work diligently to protect the public's health and safety."

By mid-January, it is probable, Met Ed and the NRC will be giving their rebuttals before the Board to the management incapacibilities arguments so devastatingly brought to light by TMIA's attorneys.

Emergency planning, Met Ed's financial capability, and further design contentions will be spelled out later as other intervenors have their opportunity to be heard.

The drama of Unit 1 continues almost daily in the austere courtroom-like setting of the Court St. hearing room, in Harrisburg, but the hundreds of thousands of persons whose future well-being very much may depend on the outcome of those hearings appear oblivious or unconcerned.

## RATE BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN

By Jack Knake

The rate boycott campaign was devised to encourage people to take direct action against their electric utility company -- people who are angry about the dangers of nuclear power and the uncaring attitudes of

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the companies. We need to have people actively attempt to get others to join the boycott. We want folks to send in their names and addresses to TMIA so that we can keep track of how many people are boycotting and how much money we've withheld.

So far the response has been slow, but the numbers are growing. We've printed about 2,500 Rate Boycott leaflets. Our list of boycotters is far from complete. Based on personal contacts and telephone calls to the office, there are a lot of people who don't know that we are encouraging boycotting and trying to keep track of rate boycotters. If you are currently withholding, send a postcard to the office telling us so. If you're not withholding, seriously consider it.

MetEd has responded to the boycott with a form letter of their own. About 50 letters were sent from MetEd to people who have been withholding part of their electric bills. Basically the letter was a scare tactic. They threaten to request an additional deposit, inform us of the late payment charge of 1½% monthly, and state that "the continued existence of an unpaid balance can ultimately result in the termination of service." We knew all that! The best part of the letter was, "We would urge you to reconsider your position with regard to the withholding of a portion of your billing." I reconsidered and resolved that I would like to get even more people withholding -- 500 or 5,000 would be real nice!

No one that I know of had their power terminated yet for withholding. The best advice is to pay up when you receive the termination notice and start boycotting again with the next month's bill. You will have at least ten days to pay after you get the notice. If you want to hassle the company some more, file a complaint with the PUC.

Edith and Frank Brown filed a complaint. They have been boycotting since the summer of 1979. They are PP&L customers and claimed that since there is no permanent method of nuclear waste disposal, PP&L should not be able to operate the nuclear plant that they're building near Berwick, Pa.

The PUC regulations give the PUC the power to set standards of safety for public utilities. The PUC ruled that they lacked jurisdiction as the NRC has taken over jurisdiction of nuclear facilities. The Browns did succeed in getting some attention drawn to the problem. I applaud their efforts! Edith has told me that they will continue with the boycott.

I realize that we can't all make the time to file a formal complaint with the PUC, but boycotting a portion of your bill takes very little time at all. Simply write two checks when you pay your bill - one to your utility and the other to put in you savings account so that you'll have the money to pay when you receive your termination notice. Now surely we all have the time to write one more check each month!

There is great potential for the boycott. At a recent PUC hearing, a petition was presented with 7500 signers who are willing to withhold payment of their electric bill should MetEd be granted their most recent request for an increase. Pat Smith of Newberry Township had presented 5,000 signatures at an earlier hearing.

An article in the December 15th issue of the Harrisburg "Evening News" reported that there is \$5,000,000 in outstanding bills owed to MetEd; 47,000 customers are behind in payments. A company representative stated that it is especially important to get payment as MetEd is in dire need of cash. The representative said that the percentage of customers withholding part of their electricity due to TMI is insignificant. Would you expect them to say anything different? The companies are being hurt and we can hurt them even more. We don't have to accept nuclear power! We can fight it every way we can. Hit them in their pocket-books! Let Central Pennsylvania be a model of how to stop the nukes. Get involved in the boycott. Join us with your next bill!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack Knake's Rate Boycott leaflet is available at the TMIA office, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

The following article appeared in the December 17, 1980 issue of the Harrisburg "Evening News."

### NUCLEAR SUBSIDIES OF \$37 BILLION CUT ELECTRIC COSTS

The government has poured about \$37 billion in public subsidies into nuclear power since 1950, which has resulted in a savings today of as much as 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour, a draft report says.

The Energy Department draft, written by Joseph Bowring and obtained by United Press International Tuesday, adds up 30 years of public subsidies to reactor design, nuclear exports, uranium production, federal atomic fuel enrichment and waste management.

"The total constant dollar value of these subsidies since 1950 is just over \$37 billion," it states. "A kilowatt hour of nuclear electricity would cost about 2.5 cents more than its current cost in the absence of government subsidies."

David McNichol, an official of the Energy Department's Energy Information Administration, said he had "signed off" the draft and "it is indeed in the final stages of the

clearance process."

A spokesman for the Atomic Industrial Forum trade group said he expected substantial revisions before the report is issued. He challenged the subsidy figure, saying his group's estimate is \$15 billion to \$17 billion.

And he charged that government has spent \$77 billion to subsidize oil, \$6.8 billion on competing coal, \$15 billion on gas, and \$9.2 billion to \$17.5 billion on hydroelectric power.

The draft report, which drew on Battelle Institute statistics, did not consider subsidized nuclear insurance rates under the Price-Anderson Act, which limits industry liability.

It listed total public nuclear research and development expenditures since 1948 as \$23.6 billion. The public paid another \$237 million to encourage foreign reactor sales, it said.

Commercial uranium production got \$2.5 billion and government-run fuel enrichment \$7.1 billion. Waste-disposal subsidies accounted for the rest.

"Each of these subsidies has reduced the cost and/or uncertainty to private firms of investing in nuclear power," it states. "The result has been that current production of electricity from nuclear power is substantially larger than it would have been in the absence of such subsidies."

"The exact rationale for subsidies to nuclear power is not clear," it added, questioning a few oft-cited reasons like the alleged ability of atomic power to replace imported oil.

"This benefit is probably not as significant as frequently suggested, primarily because the baseload electricity supplied by nuclear plants cannot substitute for oil in many of its uses," the draft states.

The question of subsidies to energy producers has taken on new importance since the election, because some of President-elect Ronald Reagan's economic advisers think they should be eliminated. Energy subsidies and regulatory price controls encourage wasteful use and discourage conservation, they argue.



ANYTHING EXCITING HAPPEN AT  
THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TODAY?

## PUBLICATIONS CORNER

Looking for some good reading for those long winter nights? The following is a partial list of paperback books available on loan from the TMA office, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg:

1. Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements. Texts and Histories of Negotiations. 1980 U.S. Arms Control And Disarmament Agency 239pp.
2. Energy We Can Live With. Approaches to Energy that Are Easy on the Earth and Its People edited by Daniel Wallace 150pp.
3. Gegen den Atomstaat (a book of photographs documenting the German anti-nuclear movement) 320pp.
4. "Irrevy" An Irreverent, Illustrated View of Nuclear Power John Gofman 248pp.
5. Liability For Nuclear Accidents Oversight Hearing before the Subcommittee On Energy And The Environment of the House Committee On Interior And Insular Affairs 214pp.
6. No Nukes: everyone's guide to nuclear power Anna Gyorgy and friends 478pp.

## WHITHER LEAKS?

By Bev Davis

It took from November 27 to December 11, but Bob Arnold finally told the public that MetEd had found a mildly radioactive spot in a cork expansion joint around a door leading to a tunnel under the auxiliary building. He does not know how it got there.

In the DER briefing at the Forum last month, Arnold termed such leaks, "Footprints of the Accident," and told the public to prepare to hear about more of them as cleanup proceeds.

The resin canisters are also giving off radioactivity in the interim storage building built to store Epicor II products, Arnold reported.

At the briefing, he also reminded the audience of the tritium leaks in the "wells" around the reactor, which MetEd suspects come from the borated water tank which keeps the core cool.

But he mentioned only offhandedly 6

the second radioactive spot which was described more fully in John Collins' December 8 report to his bosses, Bernard Snyder and Harold Denton. This additional spot is in an expansion joint "contiguous to the first (joint) and which circles the reactor building." That second expansion joint runs through the seal injection room. "The seal injection room is currently inaccessible because of high radiation levels as a result of previous reactor coolant system leakage," Arnold said.

MetEd is digging out edges of the cork where they can reach them. If the edges don't become radioactive again, then MetEd can rule out the guess that the leak could be coming from the containment building. The contamination could also be coming from scrub water used to decontaminate the auxiliary building or from water which stood in that area sometime after March 28.

## RECYCLED RADIOACTIVE METALS

By Bev Davis

The industry has learned to get rid of radioactive gases by venting them into the atmosphere, and radioactive water by dumping it into the river. Up to now it has been harder to get rid of solids.

Under rules which will go into effect unless there are serious objections from the public, NRC plans to allow reprocessing plants to throw radioactive metals into the smelting pot and recycle them into our daily lives. Mixed with ordinary metals, the resulting product will now be possible to be reused instead of buried, saving the industry 40 million dollars. This metal can turn up in cooking utensils, the coins in our pockets, or in IUD's. One metal, nickel, has a radioactive life of 1.5 million years!

If you dislike this handy-dandy idea, you can write the NRC, Washington, D.C. 20555. Even though the official comment period has expired, they will apparently take your ideas into account.

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HOW COME EVERY TIME METED ENTERS THE CONTAINMENT BUILDING, WE HEAR THAT THERE IS LESS CONTAMINATION THAN EXPECTED, BUT IT IS GOING TO COST MUCH MORE THAN PLANNED TO CLEAN IT UP???

\*\*\*UPCOMING ACTIVITIES\*\*\*

JAN 5 - Adams County Community Group meeting. Regularly scheduled news release by EPA.

JAN 6 - TMIA Planning Council meeting at the Friends Meetinghouse at 7:30 p.m.

JAN 14- Regular meeting of Newberry Township Group at the Newberry Elementary School at 7:30 p.m. Topics include the rate strike planned for March. Public is invited. (Directions: Take Exit 13 off of Interstate 81).

JAN 17- Harrisburg Area Trade Unionists meeting at HACC.

JAN 18- Regional Labor meeting at HACC at 9:30 a.m. Subject will be "Safe Energy and Full Employment." Public is invited.

JAN 19- Adams County Community Group meeting.

JAN 21- DER briefing on status of & 22 decontamination of TMI Unit 2 at the Forum at 7:30 p.m.

JAN 25- March 28th Coalition meeting at Friends Meetinghouse at 7:00 p.m. Topics include non-violent civil disobedience activities and March anniversary activities. All are invited.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Cathy Musser, Bev Davis, Paul Makurath

STAFF THIS ISSUE: Sue Olmstead, ed., Paul Makurath, Cathie Musser, Bev Davis, Jack Knake, Mary Hartnett, John Murdoch, Sue Shetrom, and Mary Osborn.

DEADLINE NEXT ISSUE: January 15, 1981

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AHAH! A LOOSE SCREW!  
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Jon Jacobs

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