

# THREE MILE ISLAND

# ALERT

Vol. 2, No. 11

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

March 1981

## MARCH 28TH RALLY

March 28's Second Anniversary will see a rally in Harrisburg of labor and anti-nuclear groups joining hands to assure no more TMI's and a national safe energy policy.

The March will start on City Island at noon and move to the back of the Capitol, where there will be speeches and music from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. William Winpingsinger, feisty head of the International Association of Machinists, will be the principal speaker.

Eleven national unions and 21 Pennsylvania labor and anti-nuclear groups are sponsoring the rally. United Mine Workers, whose contract comes up on March 27, will play a prominent role.

TMIA will be one of the sponsors in the coalition dedicated to:

- No more Three Mile Islands
- No opening of Unit 1
- No dumping of radioactive water in the Susquehanna
- Support for the United Mine Workers for a decent contract
- Jobs for all through a shorter work week and massive public works
- Guaranteed alternative jobs for nuclear workers at union rates

Project David sponsors will burn MetEd electric bills in a protest on March 27 at 7:00 p.m. on the Capitol steps.

Rather than pay their March electric bills, residents of Newberry Township have held the money in their bank accounts.

The ashes from these bills will be mailed to officers and shareholders

of MetEd, Governor Thornburgh, and the PUC members.

For additional information on the March 28th events or the Project David Strike, call the TMIA office at (717) 233-7897 or the Greater Harrisburg Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment at (717) 232-0396.

## STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

In the Steering Committee news this month, Joel Roth has been elected TMIA chairman. He replaces Louise Bradford, who was interim chair following the resignation of Mary Hartnett. Louise continues as vice-chair. Mary Osborn continues as secretary and Paul Makurath as treasurer.

Louise Bradford is also TMIA's Legal Representative in the Unit 1 restart hearings and has been working very hard to sustain our intervention. If you would like to help her, please call 233-7897 and leave your name.

The Steering Committee tapped Chris Sayer to be volunteer coordinator of the effort to turn out a large number of people for the February 19th meeting of the advisory panel on the TMI cleanup.

TMIA has received a \$1000 grant from the Pacific Alliance in California. Portions of this have been applied to the unpaid balance of our account with our former attorneys, Widoff and Adler, and to the debt owed the consulting firm that testified for us before the PUC last spring.

Continued

It has not been decided how the rest of the grant will be spent, but part could go to help pay for the audit of TMIA's books now in progress. More on the audit next month.

-Paul Makurath

## PIRC REPORT

TMI Public Interest Resource Center, of which TMIAAlert is a member group, has continued to run with what promises to be a very active 1981. In order to keep the membership of TMI Alert informed on what PIRC is doing, this article will highlight significant issues raised in PIRC meetings.

Two issues immediately stand out: one is the national Labor Rally that will be held here on March 28, and the second is the possible development of a scientific resource group that will access anti-TMI groups to studies and data regarding the future of the Island.

As most of you know, the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment met in Harrisburg a month ago with the result being a commitment to have a rally in Harrisburg on the two-year anniversary of the start of the accident. Active solicitation of anti-TMI groups has begun; people are needed to serve in a variety of capacities for the rally. TMIAAlert will be needing people for a booth at the Rally, so call the office to volunteer your time at this most important event. An interesting note on the Labor support that has developed for our movement has been the intent to use the Rally as a starting point for more organizing to prevent TMI from reopening.

Also, PIRC has begun exploring the resources available for a scientific "institute" that will lend support and credentialing to the anti-TMI groups in the Central Pa. area. While details are still vague, PIRC is requesting anyone with questions regarding any technical/scientific aspect of TMI, to contact Sue Shetrom at the PIRC office, and she will be able to forward the request to the contact in New York. Further details will be in the next Alert.

In addition to these issues, the following have been discussed: persons desiring to make limited appearance statements before the AS&LB should contact TMIAAlert or PIRC to let folks know what you want to say and for how long; PIRC is also exploring a meeting with Richard Kinane (Washington) to discuss strategies regarding the federal bailout question.

If anyone has ideas or questions that they would like to see the PIRC address, please contact Ed Nielsen through the TMIAAlert office.

-Ed Nielsen

## FUEL TRANSPORT

With the announcement that spent fuel rods were being transported through Harrisburg from New Jersey last month, the problem of radioactive transport drew more attention from local residents.

Allan Chen of the Critical Mass Energy Project has come up with some interesting facts about such transport.

The number of accidents in 1979 totalled 122, a 23% increase over 1978. Eighty-four percent of the 1979 accidents occurred during highway transit.

The shipping company which reported the most accidents (92) was the Joplin, MO, based Tri State Motor Transit Company, the same company which is hauling waste from TMI-2.

Copies of this CMEP report can be obtained by writing to: Critical Mass Energy Project, Box 1538, Washington, D.C. 20013.

## LEGISLATIVE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A proposed statewide network of volunteers willing to serve as "educational conduits" in each State Assembly district, to maintain close contact with both state senators and representatives, is being formed by the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power and some of its member groups. Republicans, Democrats, and Non-Partisans are needed. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Ed Charles through the TMIA office at (717) 233-7897.

**MET-ED and PP&L RATEPAYERS**

# **ON STRIKE**

**Don't Pay March Electricity Bill**

***Join Your Neighbors***

**A Gathering of Ratepayers**

**BILL BURNING & TEA PARTY**

***Friday, March 27, 1981 7:00 P.M.***

**CAPITOL STEPS**

SEND, the top, tear-off section of your electric bill (the one you would normally pay in March) to TMIA by March 23rd or bring it with you to the RATEPAYER GATHERING, March 27. If you do not wish to part with any portion of your electric bill, write a short note explaining why you will not pay the bill in March and sign the note. Send the note to TMIA or bring it to the Capitol Steps on March 27th.



**A PROJECT OF:**

**TMI Ratepayers Congress**

**Newberry Twp. TMI Steering Committee**

**Three Mile Island Alert**

**For Information : TMIA, 315 Pepper St., Harrisburg, PA 17102**

**(717)233-7897**

**(Labor Donated)**

## ADVISORY PANEL MEETINGS

The Advisory Panel for the Decontamination of TMI-2 was due to wind up its first five meetings on February 19 and to send its recommendations to the NRC by the end of the month.

Declining to take an integrated approach to the cleanup, it broke its deliberations into consideration of disposal of the water, low level and high level waste. It heard from experts from the Department of Energy, NRC, Met Ed, and a congressional committee. By our deadline, they had completed only one recommendation, that on water.

All water should be stored on the Island prior to a decision being made about eventual cleanup, the group agreed. Met Ed has tanks capable of storing up to the two million gallons projected to be generated. However Met Ed, in a surprise move, had attempted to have the panel plan only disposing of "accident-generated" water and ignore scrub water. This plan would have allowed Met Ed to store or dispose of the remaining water in any way it wished, as long as such disposal met EPA and NRC standards. Much of the scrub water is expected to be recycled water processed from the reactor building.

The Submerged Demineralizer System (SDS) which is proposed for processing of this water has not yet been approved by NRC. Met Ed has spent more than \$8 million so far on the system, but is still answering safety questions from NRC. The Susquehanna Valley Alliance has obtained federal court permission to sue to stop the use of SDS if it is approved, but has not said definitely that it would sue.

The panel refused to call for "non-processing" of the water on the belief that pipes and valves which help control core temperature might disintegrate if left in the reactor water.

As now proposed, the SDS would separate radioactive isotopes by running it through ion exchangers much like a home water softener and similar to Epicore II. It cannot remove radioactive tritium, but removes all but traces of other isotopes.

The water in the reactor building before processing contains, according to a New York Times article, "radioactive isotopes - sometimes several - 4

of strontium, plutonium, chromium, manganese, cobalt, zirconium, niobium, cesium, ruthenium, silver, tin, antimony, americium, and curium."

### "HOT" CANISTERS

The "hot" canisters of radioactive resins which are left after processing have created a new category of commercial waste and a dilemma for those in charge of disposal.

Up to now the nuclear industry has used a catchall definition for waste - spent fuel rods (plus some transuranics created in reactor operation and reprocessing and uranium mine tailings) were called High Level Waste. Everything else - no matter how high its radioactivity - was termed Low Level Waste.

Commercial spent fuel rods, ever since President Carter wisely closed all reprocessing plants, are stored on site in borated tanks euphemistically called "swimming pools." Unit I has four loads of fuel stored in its tank on the Island. No permanent disposal site exists in the U.S., but DOE has been charged with creating one by 1990.

Low Level Waste, such as tools and clothing, is trucked to Washington state, South Carolina, or Nevada and buried.

Never before have we had resin liners with High Level Waste in them. Do they go in the "swimming pool," or should they be shipped to a LLW site? They are already showing signs of disintegrating. Met Ed admitted in December that the sump of the outbuilding in which they are stored shows traces of radioactivity. At hearings in August 1980, they were predicted to have a two year stability.

The liners used first in processing the water are High Level. Those used in the latter stages are classified Low Level. While presently in bead or sand form, they could become jelly-like or liquid, Brookhaven Lab has predicted.

Because of their instability, the Advisory Committee called for NRC to lift its order insisting that all these wastes be solidified in concrete or some other medium before shipping. Get them off the Island now, the panel urged.

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## SPENT FUEL

Spent fuel rods from TMI-2 also pose unique problems. The panel would like to remove them from the Island even though the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement of the NRC calls for storing them in Unit 2's "swimming pool."

No one knows what condition these rods are in until the head of the reactor is unbolted. Estimates place the number of damaged rods as high as 90 percent of the total.

Greg Cunningham of the Department of Energy offered to take some or perhaps all of the damaged rods to a military DOE High Level Waste site because of their value for research, a suggestion the committee welcomed. Since his appearance before the Advisory Committee, Mr. Cunningham has resigned from DOE. His successor has attended the panel meetings as an observer, but has not commented publicly whether the offer is still open. The Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee, working under appointment of the NRC, has asked President Reagan to use DOE sites for TMI waste.

Whether DOE can do this is largely a political decision. DOE has traditionally said "no" to mixing commercial and military wastes because Congress has indicated it clearly feared NRC control of the sites if this occurred. In response to panel questions, Mr. Cunningham cited an Idaho dump which has for years comingled waste and which could set a precedent for congressional approval.

## LOW LEVEL WASTE

Where Low Level Waste will go has also become an urgent question. Washington State, almost 3,000 miles of travel away, has been the principal repository, but voters there agreed to close their dump in June 1981. South Carolina has severely limited TMI waste since the accident. Bernard Snyder, NRC Program Office Director, told the panel that he expected Beatty, Nevada, to assume the responsibility for LLW if Washington is closed. Nevada has been reluctantly accepting this waste again since pressured by the feds to do so.

Andrea Dravo of Congressman Udall's committee, explained to the panel that a law passed in December 1980 requires every state to establish its own commercial low level waste dump by 1986 or enter into a compact with other states to establish such sites. Governor Thornburgh indicated in his public television call-in show on January 29 that he is searching for such a site in Pennsylvania now.

Governor Thornburgh has withdrawn his cabinet members from the panel, saying he did not want them voting on issues which only the Governor can decide. Their deputies remain as non-voting delegates.

Although rumors exist that the 1980 Congress wished to discharge the whole advisory panel, no such action was initiated. The group was never created by law although such a proposal was anticipated by the NRC when it appointed the members.

Even though the NRC has asked the Advisory Panel for its report by the end of February, its work is not over. The Committee will continue to meet and comment for as many years as the cleanup lasts. TMIA's Joel Roth is Harrisburg's representative on the panel.

## LEGAL FUND REPORT

Since the Legal Fund Report of the last newsletter, two meetings have been held. One ended in an allocation of money to several groups and the other concluded with a renewed goal.

At the January 21 meeting, it was decided to provide various amounts of funding to ANGRY, Newberry Township TMI Steering Committee, and PANE for their legal battles. For the most part, these groups looked to the Legal Fund for partial funding but have also gained funding from other sources.

During the February 2nd meeting, some new proposals for funding were received and those will be considered at the February 17th meeting. In addition, the Board felt that we have not been making enough effort to raise funds. It is the role of the board not only to allocate funds for legal battles of various anti-nuclear groups, but also to help raise those funds.

We will be setting aside a major portion of the mid-February meeting to review fundraising ideas which would not conflict with those of local groups or the national mailing already underway. This goal of fundraising will be an ongoing one so that people with ideas are encouraged to contact their local representative. Following is a list of groups which are members of the Legal Fund and their current representative.

NEWBERRY TOWNSHIP TMI STEERING COMMITTEE - Patricia Smith

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT-Sam Milkes

SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY ALLIANCE - Tom Smithgall

PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY - Donald Konkle or John Kovalic

ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP REPRESENTATING YORK - Martha Eyster

ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION ON NUCLEAR POWER - James Perkins

## ENERGY FILMS AVAILABLE

The Pennsylvania State University maintains a comprehensive Audio Visual Services Department which sells and rents films, videotape cassettes, and other media. The October 1980 issue of their catalogue Perspectives on Film focuses on "Energy Resources." According to the introduction, the issue "provides articles, filmographies, and related materials designed to inform people on fundamental energy issues."

Included in the catalogue are the following sections: "Fossil Fuels, Trade-Offs, and Conservation;" "Alternate Energy Sources and Appropriate Technology;" "Compleat Guide Through the Maze of Nuclear Power Films;" and "Energy Issues and Resources." Each section presents a balanced look at the various films available, pointing out both strengths and weaknesses.

The section on nuclear power films also includes a selected bibliography of articles and books on the nuclear power controversy.

The catalogue is available at no charge from The Pennsylvania State University, Audio Visual Services, Special Services Building, University Park, PA 16802; phone: 814-865-6314. In addition, the TMIA office has a copy which may be borrowed.

## JOIN THE RATEPAYERS' STRIKE...

There is nothing to it. Just don't pay your March electric bill and send your utility a letter explaining why. If you are a Met Ed customer, protest the drive to re-start Unit 1. If you are a PP&L customer, protest the construction of the Berwick nuclear plant.

Remember, there is nothing they can do to you initially but send you another bill with a slight interest charge. Then you can decide to pay up or continue withholding.

## BROWNOUT POSSIBLE? YES AND NO!

Will there be a brownout if Unit I is not allowed to reopen? Mr. Tourtellote, of the NRC staff, quoted a DOE report at the Unit I hearings saying it was possible. NRC's own staff in October 1980 (NUREG 0689) said the following:

"...the near-term reliability of the PJM (Pa./New Jersey/Maryland) system during the expected summer peaks should not be adversely affected by the unavailability of the TMI Units. Although GPU is not expected to be able to independently support its own load, excess capacity from the PJM interchange and other utilities suggests that reliable service on the GPU system can be maintained over the next two years."

"PJM's planned reserve margins during the summers of 1981 and 1982 are estimated at 27.9 percent and 27.8 percent respectively, without the TMI nuclear station. PJM has established 22 percent as adequate to maintain minimum-acceptable reliability; therefore, the PJM system should have adequate capacity to meet peak demand during this period."

When the Atomic Energy Commission was disbanded, the Department of Energy was given the research and development of nuclear power, while the NRC was given the regulation functions.

## \*\*\*\*CALENDAR OF EVENTS\*\*\*\*

March 2 - TMIA Steering Committee Meeting at TMIA office; Adams County Community Group Meeting.

March 3 - Planning Council Meeting,  
Friends Meeting House at 7:30 p.m.

March 4 - TMIA Legal Fund Meeting,  
1037 Maclay St., Harrisburg, 7:00 p.m.

March 5 - Limited Appearance Statements  
on Unit I Restart before Atomic Safety  
and Licensing Board at William Penn  
Museum, Harrisburg, 7:15 p.m.

March 7 - "Project David" 9:30 a.m.  
Canvas Newberry Township for support.

March 9 - TMIA Steering Committee  
Meeting.

March 10 - Leadership Meeting (Leaders  
of Anti-nuclear Groups in the area),  
PIRC office, 1037 Maclay St., Harrisburg  
at 7:30 p.m.

March 11 - Newberry Township Public  
Meeting, Newberry Elementary School,  
7:30 p.m.

March 16 - TMIA Steering Committee  
Meeting; Adams County Community Group  
Meeting.

March 19 - Legal Fund Meeting, 1037  
Maclay Street, 7:00 p.m.

March 21 - Film on different aspects  
of nuclear power, William Penn Museum.

March 23 - Met Ed and PP&L Customers-  
Submit top of utility bills.

March 27 - Ratepayers Bill Burning  
and Tea Party, Capitol steps, 7:00 p.m.

March 28 - National March and Rally,  
Second Year Anniversary of TMI accident.

Editorial Board: Bev Davis, Cathy  
Musser, Paul Makurath

STAFF THIS ISSUE: Paul Makurath, Bev  
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TMIA OFFICERS: Joel Roth, Chair;  
Louise Bradford, Vice-Chair; Paul  
Makurath, Treasurer; and Mary Osborn,  
Secretary.

DEADLINE NEXT ISSUE: March 15

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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ATTENTION-ATTENTION-ATTENTION

Did you get your tickets for the Schraeder wood/coal stove raffle????? Have you sent the stubs and money into the office???? This fund-raiser benefits the local anti-TMI groups and YOU. If you've already sold your ten, call the office, and we'll get you more. Winner to be drawn at the 28th Rally, so get those tickets sold and into the office.

315 PEPPER STREET  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17102

Non-Profit Org.

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