

# THREE MILE ISLAND

# ALERT

MAY  
1990

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

TELEPHONE: 717-233-3072

## Monitoring Network Now has 32 Readers

*by Deb Baker*

The Three Mile Island Citizen's Monitoring Network is going strong with its 32 readers. We are in the process of obtaining monitors for all readers.

Thank you to TMIA for providing the network with five monitors and to Susquehanna Valley Alliance for providing the network with one monitor. Each monitor is of major importance because it provides data for a specific quadrant around TMI.

Beware of the newspaper accounts of emissions reported on a monthly basis. Per GPU spokesperson Gordon Tomb in an April 23 phone conversation, those totals only reflect the Reuter-Stokes Sentri System information which only measures Gamma (not Beta) radiation. Most of the noble gasses emitted from nuclear facilities emit Beta along with Gamma. Our Radalert monitors measure both and we reflect totals two times higher than what GPU reports.

The response from our elected officials who receive our reports: they wish to continue receiving this information as they are concerned with the operation of TMI and this gives them an additional avenue in which to monitor the utility.

We are always looking for additional readers. The reader is the backbone of the monitoring network and without them we would fail. If you wish to take an active part in monitoring, contact Deb Baker at 566-7466. Each reader will remain confidential to ensure their privacy.

## Soviet & US Environmentalists Meet at Earth Day Conference

On April 19, Eric Epstein participated in a Soviet-American Earth Day conference sponsored by Keystone Junior College and ECOLOGIA in La Plume, Pa. The theme of the conference, "Linking Local Problems with Global Solutions," featured the following workshops: environmental problems and grassroots politics; Soviet and American environmental law; Soviet-American joint business ventures; and Chernobyl and Three Mile Island: Comparing Official and Public Response. Representatives were on hand from citizens' environmental groups from Estonia, Moldavia, Lithuania and the Ukraine. The workshop on TMI and Chernobyl featured Epstein, Tom Gerusky of DER's Bureau of Radiation Protection, and Jonas Tamulis, a member of Lithuania's Parliament.

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Three Mile Island Alert  
315 Peffer Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102



OPEN  
IMMEDIATELY

**GPU Shareholders Meet in Johnstown**

On May 3, General Public Utilities (GPU) chief operating officer Stanley Hoch announced that the utility was one of the top 15 investor-owned utilities in America at GPU's annual shareholders meeting in Johnstown, Pa.

Hoch boasted of a dividend increase of 18% over the last year and an increase in return of equity from 7.4% in 1985 to its present rate of 13.8%. He also noted that GPU's stock was selling at a near record high of 42 3/4 as of May 2. In addition, GPU was able to retain \$1320 million in capital last year to be devoted to new projects.

TMIA representative Eric Epstein pressured Hoch to disclose in what businesses GPU's new holding company, General Portfolio Corporation (GPC), was investing. Hoch was evasive, but finally explained that GPC's subsidiary, Energy Initiatives, Inc. (EII), is primarily involved in investing in cogenerating plants outside GPU's traditional rate base, i.e. three cogenerating plants in California and one in New Jersey. Through December 31, 1989, GPU has invested \$25 million in EII and GPC and is currently seeking SEC approval to invest an additional \$60 million.

Epstein also pressured Hoch to disclose GPU's plan to finance decommissioning at TMI. Hoch provided no assurances that GPU will have the ability to finance decommissioning and added that GPU has no plans to conduct decommissioning research. Although Hoch had earlier commented that the, "Cleanup program was essentially finished," he later modified his statement to "the defueling process is now complete." It is interesting to note that GPU has money on hand to speculate in new investments, yet is reluctant to devote any additional resources to the decommissioning fund.

**Stello Withdraws as Nominee for Weapons Program Post**

As though a fresh wind blew a dark cloud from the skies, Victor Stello, Jr. withdrew his name from consideration as President Bush's nominee to head the Dept. of Energy's nuclear weapons program. Within weeks, DoE Secretary James D. Watkins has ordered the release of thousands of pages of documents which showed most of the allegations anti-nuclear activists had made over the years concerning the operations of the nuclear plants was valid, including news of off-site irradiation. Suddenly, sunshine at DoE.

Stello was opposed by many environmental groups because of his penchant for secrecy and cover-up. Central Pennsylvanians will long remember Stello for lying to the Justice Department during its investigation of the TMI accident.

**62 Pounds of Plutonium (enough for 7 bombs) Lost at Rocky Flats**

Seven nuclear bombs' worth of plutonium escaped into air ducts at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Colorado during the 30 years the plant has been in operation. "This is a very substantial quantity of plutonium that was simply not accounted for," said Dan Reicher of the National Resources Defense Council. That such a quantity could be found without the government's knowing it was missing casts doubt on the government's system of keeping track of the material. Plutonium is so toxic it is usually accounted for in quantities expressed in grams or thousandths of a kilogram.

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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

### **TMIA Helps Derail INPO Training Program**

A three-judge federal appeals panel ordered the NRC to establish training requirements for nuclear plant operators. The order came as a result of a lawsuit filed by Public Citizen, TMIA and six other safe energy groups which argued that Congress had required the NRC to set up training requirements.

Instead, in 1985, the NRC issued a policy statement that encouraged utilities to set up training programs. In practice, all operator training programs are established and certified by the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations (INPO), an industry trade group. The NRC welcomed this arrangement as part of the general deregulation approach it has adopted in recent years.

The appeals court, however, accepted TMIA's contention that Congress had intended that the NRC itself establish and enforce specific training requirements. The NRC has not yet decided if it will appeal the decision.

### **Landmark TMI Studies Coming to a Close**

The February, 1990 issue of the Audubon Science Quarterly reports that the "behind-the-scenes scientific studies" about the TMI accident are "quietly coming to a close," including the one on which Jan Beyea, the National Audubon Society's Senior Staff Scientist, worked. Beyea has served as Principal Investigator of the Dosimetry Research Program and consultant to the Epidemiology Study for the TMI Public Health Fund. Anyone wishing to receive a copy of the final TMI report should write to Beyea in care of the National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

The Epidemiology Study, done in collaboration with the Epidemiology Department of Columbia University, has been a detailed analysis of the possible links between doses of radiation and the occurrence of cancer at Three Mile Island. "This study is the most sophisticated ever done for an energy facility," Dr. Beyea asserts.

The primary objective of the Dosimetry Project was to review all published data on TMI and to obtain the best possible estimation of the amounts of radiation delivered to the population. Of interest were the noble gas doses delivered to the "whole body," ingested radioiodine, and long-lived radio-nuclides, such as radiocesium or radiostrontium. All possible retainers of radiation signals from the accident, including vegetation, red blood cells, bricks or tiles, and enamel or porcelain in people's teeth, have been considered as sources of information.

With the admitted possibility that non-radioactive yet harmful chemicals may have also been released, the abnormal taste and smell sensations reported by people at the accident site have been investigated. And other studies continue: Streams and other waterways that may have transported released radioiodine are being sampled, as are deer tongues. Of particular importance has been validation of the Epidemiology Study computer models tracking the paths cut by the radiation plumes and the development of complex models for air pollution exposures.

### **Recycle Your Household Batteries at Rutter's Farm Stores**

Instead of putting their heavy metals into the waste stream (i.e. Mt. Ashmore) you can recycle your household batteries in special containers in the Rutter's Farm Stores in York County. The batteries collected are sent to a battery recycler who recovers a portion of the metals and discards the remainder in a hazardous waste landfill. For more information, contact Mary Jane Rodkey, Recycling Coordinator for the York Co. Solid Waste Authority (717)845-1066.

### **Penn State Professor Authors Work on Citizen Mobilization around TMI**

Edward J. Walsh, an associate professor of Sociology at Penn State, has authored a book titled "Democracy in the Shadows: Citizen Mobilization in the Wake of the Accident at

Three Mile Island." The 241-page book covers the political struggle surrounding the TMI accident. Walsh documents the dynamics of the conflict between local communities and the national nuclear elites in the wake of the accidents. The book examines how the citizens made their voices heard, particularly in the effort to block the restart of Unit 1. The publisher says: "*Democracy in the Shadows* is indispensable for students of sociology and political science, as well as community activists and others with significant interest in nuclear power issues." The book may be ordered from Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, PO Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 at \$39.95 and \$2.00 shipping. The ISBN code is 0-313-26063-X. A discount may be possible if ordered through the TMIA office. Call Kay at 233-7897.

### TMIA Had Earth Day Role

TMIA was one of 30 organizations participating in the April 22 Earth Day celebration at Fort Hunter. Hundreds of interested people took literature, asked questions, and purchased tee-shirts, buttons and posters. Thanks to Vera Stuchinski, Phil and Cheri Friedrich, Eric Epstein and Kay Pickering for staffing the TMIA booth.

### "Everyday is Earth Day for Nuclear Power"

The words above appeared in ads placed by the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness (that patriotic sounding front for the nuclear industry) in Newsweek and the New York Times in April. Combining those words with claims that nuclear energy will fight global warming and stories about how wildlife is flourishing near various nuclear reactors, the Council is trying to sell Americans on the myth that nuclear power is good for the environment.

Something the nuclear industry won't tout is a report released last year that California's San Onofre nuclear power plant's intake system kills at least 20 tons of fish each year, that 13 species of snails and populations of sea urchin were reduced by 30 to 90 percent below the levels that would have occurred had the plant not been operating. The report also showed that fish living near the bottom of the area's kelp beds have been reduced by about 70 percent.

Other information you won't find in the Council's ads include:

- As of November, 1989, the Dept. of Energy estimated that nuclear power plants had generated 19,600 tons of highly radioactive wastes;
- By the year 2000, an estimated 40,200 tons of highly radioactive wastes will require permanent storage;
- There's still no proven safe method for storing these wastes;
- The nuclear industry is pushing to deregulate up to 30 percent of low-level radioactive wastes from power plants to allow it to be burned in incinerators buried in municipal landfills, flushed into rivers or recycled into consumer goods;
- The National Academy of Science concluded in 1989 that low-dose radioactive exposures will cause three to four times more fatal cancers and leukemias than previously thought, and that exposure to radioactivity of any level and duration is potentially harmful; or,
- That the French Atomic Energy Commission reported in June, 1988:  
"With approximately 500 nuclear reactors in operation in the world today, it is reasonable to expect a core meltdown once every five years and a major accident (on the order of Chernobyl and TMI) every ten years."

### New Explosion Threat Identified at N-Plants

A federal study says some tanks that store atomic wastes at the Hanford nuclear reservation in Washington could explode and spew radiation into the air because hydrogen gas is building inside them. A Department of Energy official in announcing the study said the Department did not believe an explosion is likely, but added: "I can't sit here and say it's not going to happen."



**TMIA 1989 Financial Report**

Beginning Balance, December 31, 1988                      \$2,613.99

**1989 Receipts**

Contributions	\$3,278.68
Special events	
(less cost of event)	344.86
Sales to the public	
(less cost of goods)	1,060.53
Membership & dues	2,999.60
Other, including interest	<u>155.67</u>
	7,839.34

Net Proceeds Available    \$10,453.33

**1989 Expenses**

Literature, newsletter	
postage and printing	4,180.96
Telephone	1,418.08
Rent	720.00
Fundraising costs	<u>323.24</u>
Total Expenses	\$6,642.28

**December 31, 1989 Ending Balance                              \$3,811.05**



The tank, one of Hanford's 20 new double-walled storage tanks, holds a million gallons of radioactive waste. The waste level has risen and fallen by up to 33 inches because of the buildup of hydrogen. All transfers of waste into or out of the tank have been stopped, and care is taken to avoid generating heat or sparks nearby.

**New York Times Offers "How to" for Reporters Covering Nuclear Accidents**

The Times has an ad that reads: "If you're sent out to cover a minor nuclear accident or a major nuclear accident like Three Mile Island, you risk exposure to radiation. Are you prepared to do your job as safely and efficiently as possible? Radiation is invisible, but it's easily detected. And with preparation, radiation exposure and the risk to health can be reduced."

The price of the tape, "Covering a Radiation Accident," is \$249. There's a 10% discount if you buy two or more copies. To order call 1-800-972-3550. Ask for Joe Sokoloski.

**Nuclear Workers Absorb Record Exposure - Peach Bottom Among Worst**

There were 105,265 recorded instances of worker exposure to measurable amounts of radiation at the nation's 107 commercial nuclear reactors in 1988, the most recent year for which there is complete data. This is the highest number of incidents of worker exposure ever recorded by the U.S. commercial nuclear power industry.

These workers were exposed to a total of 41,077 person-rem of radiation, the equivalent of more than two million chest x-rays, with each exposed worker receiving an average radiation dose of 0.390 person-rem, roughly equivalent to 20 chest x-rays.

These are among the key findings of a new study, **Glowing on the Job: Worker Exposure to Radiation at Nuclear Power Plants**, issued April 10 by Public Citizen and 35 citizen groups around the country. The study is based on documents obtained from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

"While the precise, long-germ health impacts of this exposure are uncertain, any level of radiation exposure is potentially harmful," charged Joan Claybrook, President of Public

Citizen. "Thus, the exposure of tens of thousands of nuclear power plant workers to radiation every year represents one of the on-going, but hidden, costs of nuclear power."

Public Citizen also noted that, during 1988, 100 of the nation's 107 commercial nuclear power reactors exposed individual workers to radiation doses of at least 1.00 person-rem (an annual exposure equal to about 50 chest x-rays and approximately three times the average annual radiation dose received by each person in the U.S. from all sources). In total, there were 12,584 instances in which individual workers received radiation doses of at least 1.00 person-rem.

Further, the total amount of radiation released from all reactors and the radiation dose per exposed worker had both increased from 1987 levels.

Among the five worst reactors in the country during 1988 were GPU's Oyster Creek plant in the #1 position. Numbers 3 and 4 were Peach Bottom units 2 and 3 respectively.

**TMI Postcards Available**

TMIA has printed Michael Lomma's photograph of two TMI cooling towers with tombstones in the foreground on postcard stock. The opposite side is blank and just perfect for sending short messages and meeting notices. Postcards are 25 cents each or five for a dollar. Send your money to TMIA, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.

**50+ Commemorate 11th Anniversary**

More than 50 people attended the March 28th commemorative dinner at the Friends Meetinghouse marking the eleventh anniversary of the beginning of the TMI accident. Alan Hetrick of Warm Springs Lodge supplied home-made breads and salads for the pot-luck meal.

