



the newsletter of
Three Mile Island Alert

March, 2009

After Seven Years NRC Says No to Guards at TMI Gate – The day after 9/11, September 12, 2001, TMI Alert petitioned the NRC asking that at least one guard be stationed at the front entrance to the plant. The request was prompted in part by TMIA noting there was not a guard at TMI's front gate on the afternoon of 9/11. After seven years of foot dragging, obfuscation, misinformation, and crass disingenuousness, the NRC finally ruled last December that they'll leave the matter to the local utility to decide. Plant officials have repeatedly rejected TMIA pleas for a guard at the front gate. Neither bridge to the island is protected and any terrorist organization launching an offensive against the plant, by merely disabling vehicles on the bridges, could guarantee no land-based emergency personnel or security reinforcements would have access to the island.

TMIA Security expert Scott Portzline said, "The visual deterrence value of entrance guards should not be downplayed, yet the NRC ignored our visual deterrent argument in its rationale. In fact, on more than 40 occasions the NRC ignored its own rules and guidelines as it mishandled and delayed this decision."

Portzline added, "During the seven years of waiting, the NRC changed the rules of the process, created needless and excessive delays, kept us in the dark, and showed virtually no accountability when challenged. The NRC demonstrated a pervasive lack of care for its own guidelines, displayed a shameless disregard for public stakeholders, and brazenly misled Congressional leaders on this national security matter."

NRC Denies TMIA Petition to Better Protect Children – In the event of another accident at TMI, a pick-up point for school children located ten miles and one inch from the plant would comply with current regulations. TMIA asked that the pick up points be located at least five to ten miles from the existing Plume Exposure Boundry Zone's (PEBZ) ten mile limit, but the NRC denied that request in late January. The request had been pending since April 2007 when TMIA, seeking greater protection for children whose parents may be delayed by traffic conditions in the event of a nuclear emergency, asked for a modification of the rules. If the NRC had the capability to lower wind speeds or suspend the laws of physics for the duration of an accident, they might have reasonable cause for denying the TMIA petition. Though lacking such authority, they allowed their arbitrary ten mile demarcation to stand.

NRC Rejects Petition Seeking Inclusion of Evac Plans in Re-Licensing Cases – Last summer the NRC rejected a petition filed by TMIA Chair Eric Epstein asking that emergency plans be reviewed as part of the Commission's consideration of the extension of operating licenses. The request was denied with one significant dissenting opinion. Commissioner Gregory B. Jaczko wrote that he thought the license renewal process, where operators seek an additional twenty years of operation, provides "the opportune time" to evaluate emergency preparedness issues. He concludes that such a review would "improve public confidence in the licensees and in all levels of government."

Events Will Mark 30th Anniversary of Accident's Start – A vigil at the plant gate, a photography exhibit, a series of policy luncheons, and an anniversary dinner with an open mike for community members to speak out on TMI are all part of a series of observances being coordinated by TMI Alert to observe the beginning of the accident thirty years ago. For more information, see page 5.

Health Concerns Persist 30 Years Later - Epidemiologist Dr. Steven Wing, of the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, will be back in central Pennsylvania in March to discuss the health effects of TMI. He did a study published in 2003 documenting health effects similar to those experienced by the victims of the atomic weapons dropped on Japan and those who lived downwind from nuclear test sites in the 1950s. Like them, people who lived near TMI at the time of the accident experienced hair loss, a metallic taste in their mouths, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, erythema, deaths of pets and farm animals, and plant mutations.

Despite “official” studies reporting no links between TMI and any adverse effects except increased stress, TMI Alert Planning Council member Mary Osborn, who has studied the effects of radiation since the accident, finds deception in studies of health effects and dosimetry. Many abstracts of health studies state they found no increases in cancers caused by TMI, “but if you read the entire study,” Osborn says, “you will actually see increases of cancers have occurred. Also cited in health and dosimetry reports is the classic comment that ‘not enough radiation escaped’ to cause any of the health effects central Pennsylvanians experienced, even though radiation monitors went off-scale during the accident.” Osborn says that the studies manipulate dose data through the use of nuclear terminology. For example, gamma radiation doses were cited in official reports, even though the predominant dose was beta radiation. The ratio of beta to gamma may range as high as 100 or 1000 to one. “When you have classic radiation symptoms like those experienced in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Utah, and Nevada, that’s proof in my book that significant amounts of radiation were unleashed upon central Pennsylvania during the TMI accident,” Osborn concluded.

TMI Alert Web Site Getting Make Over – If you haven’t visited TMIA’s website recently, you may be pleasantly surprised at its new appearance. The site, www.tmia.com, has been getting a makeover for the last several months and will eventually provide easier access to the vast amount of information that’s historically been on the site. Every bit of it is being reviewed and revamped. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

TMIA Opposes Susquehanna License Renewal – PPL Electric petitioned the NRC for a license renewal a full 17 years prior to the expiration of the current operating license. TMIA has argued that the request for renewal is premature and, in testimony offered in mid-January, questioned both the ability of an aging workforce to staff the plants and an aging rate base to pay for the ongoing operation of the plants. Demographically, Pennsylvania is the second oldest state in the nation and northeastern Pennsylvania, where the plant operates, is one of the oldest areas of the state.

TMIA Chairman Eric Epstein stated, “TMI-Alert will vigorously oppose re-licensing until PPL pays its back taxes, secures radioactive waste, and proves it has the financial resources to decommission the plant.” Mr. Epstein has sued the NRC, FEMA and the Department of Justice, “to compel PPL to provide radiological emergency plans that include nursery schools, day care facilities, and senior citizen residences.”

Obama “Agnostic” on Nuclear Power – On the campaign trail, candidate Barack Obama described himself as an “agnostic” on nuclear power. While he wasn’t flat-out against it, he didn’t see himself pouring resources into it unless it was proven safe and economically viable. At an editorial board meeting with the Keene Sentinel prior to the New Hampshire primary, he described the NRC as “a moribund agency that needs to be revamped.” Obama said it was filled with “cronies who have lost their sense of mission,” and like many of the regulatory agencies in Washington, it has become a “captive of the industry it regulates.” Regarding re-licensing, he told the New Hampshire editors that he supported an independent safety study before plants are re-licensed.

While all of that sounds positive, President Obama’s new energy secretary, Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Chu, sees a future for fusion power and believes the problem of nuclear waste can

be solved through recycling. Chu is also a major advocate of alternative forms of energy, as is Obama.

Interestingly, according to the website OpenSecrets.org, employees of the Chicago-based Exelon Corporation, owners of TMI, Peach Bottom and Limerick, contributed more than \$200,000 to the Obama campaign, more than five times their contributions to Sen. McCain. Was this just support for the hometown candidate, or are they expecting a return on their investment?

Epstein Calls for Re-regulation of Electric Rates – Saying deregulation has been a costly hoax to rate payers, TMIA Chair Eric Epstein has called for the re-regulation of the electric industry. “To date, the debate in utility circles has been whether rate caps should be extended. That’s nonsense,” Epstein said. “On average electric rates are three percent higher in so-called *competitive* states where electric deregulation was adopted than in the states that continue to regulate rates. The argument for deregulation was that competition would bring rates down, but that hasn’t been the case.” Epstein noted that PPL experienced record profits last year while also setting a record for disconnections for non-payment, a 111% increase over 2007 disconnects.

Agencies Review Modification of Exposure Standards – Federal agencies in charge of radiation protection are looking to revise radiation exposure standards to take into account the differences in susceptibility to radiation-induced cancer among men, women and children.

A report, from the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, said the rules were still too heavily based on “Reference Man,” a standard created by the International Commission on Radiological Protection in 1975. That standard is a 5-foot-7, 154-pound man who is “Western European or North American in habitat and custom.” The EPA and NRC are now working to revise standards for the different groups in response to pressure brought by then Senator Barack Obama and Congressman Henry Waxman in a letter to the EPA last May. Experts agree that women face a risk about 50 percent higher than the Reference Man from the same amount of radioactive material, while the risk for children is several-fold higher.

Exelon Fined \$65,000 for Sleeping Guards at Peach Bottom – With punishment in the form of a \$65,000 fine, Exelon seemed to learn its lesson at Peach Bottom, dumping its Wackenhut security guards and, as at TMI, creating an in-house security team. TMIA’s Eric Epstein applauded the NRC’s January 2009 decision, which resulted in the improved security long sought by TMIA. The one question still remaining for Eric, “Who is going to discipline the NRC for deserting their regulatory post?”

TMI Info Center Now in Coatesville – Though TMIA opposition delayed the move for years, last summer AmGen announced that in the event of an emergency at TMI, information would be dispensed from a facility in Coatesville, about 55 miles from the plant. In addition to accommodations for the news media, the Joint Information Center has office space for state and federal regulators responding to emergencies at TMI, as well as at AmGen’s nuclear facilities at Peach Bottom and Limerick. Central Pennsylvania reporters not wanting to make the long drive to Coatesville to pick up the utility’s latest press release, will find room at the TMI Training Center, just opposite the island, which is electronically linked to the Coatesville facility.

No Challenge to Relicensing Nets Community Benefits – In May 2008, Exelon Generation and EFMR Monitoring Group (EFMR) announced a five-year agreement that provides benefits to the communities surrounding Three Mile Island.

Eric Epstein, chairman of EFMR said, “We have chosen cooperation over confrontation, and the big winner is the community. This agreement will have a net impact to the region in excess of \$1

million.” As part of the agreement, Epstein agreed to drop all legal challenges to TMI Unit 1’s application for license renewal before the NRC.

Highlights of the agreement:

- Resources will be provided to allow for the independent environmental monitoring and the professional training of local community organizations.
- Continue a long-standing Exelon policy that ensures that no storage of low-level or high-level radioactive waste from other nuclear power plants will take place at Three Mile Island for a period of ten years from the date that the NRC renews TMI Unit 1’s license.
- Exelon will not oppose the decommissioning of TMI Unit 2 during the period of extended operation of TMI Unit 1, unless it adversely impacts the safe operation of TMI Unit 1.
- Exelon will extend its regional profile, and increase community investment over the next four years.
- Exelon and EFMR will meet annually to review the status of matters relating to this agreement, provide mutual updates, resolve open issues and discuss workforce staffing.

River Basin Commission Plans Coordination with Energy Agencies –When TMIA first raised the impact of PPL’s proposed new nuclear power plant at Berwick on the persistent drought conditions in the Susquehanna River basin, the NRC punted, saying water use matters were outside their purview. Somehow, not having water available to cool a plant wasn’t a safety concern for them, but instead a matter for state and local authorities.

TMIA, in comments made to the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) in August 2008, pointed to the more than 40 million gallons of water PPL’s Susquehanna Steam Electric Station pulls from the river on an average day. Roughly 30 million gallons gets evaporated in the cooling process while 11 million gallons per day go back to the river. Adding yet another plant, while nuclear plants are exempt from water conservation measures, hardly seems reasonable, especially when 53 Pennsylvania counties were placed on “drought watch” in the fall of 2007.

In releasing its Comprehensive Plan in December 2008, the SRBC said it would “plan to allocate significant resources to the review and oversight of power generation. In addition to reviewing proposed facilities, staff will need to coordinate with state and federal environmental and energy agencies and devote time for thorough monitoring and planning.”

High Disease Rates Suggest Link to TMI – High rates of infant deaths, low weight births, child cancer deaths, and thyroid cancer cases in Dauphin County suggest that continuing radioactive discharges from the Three Mile Island 1 nuclear reactor may be harming local residents, according to a new analysis of official health records.

“Continued high local rates of diseases in those who are most vulnerable to radiation exposure raise concerns,” says Joseph Mangano MPH MBA of the Radiation and Public Health Project, and author of the analysis. “Dauphin County is not a high risk area, as it has high educational levels, low poverty levels, few language barriers, and a low percent of minorities, so these findings should be taken seriously by officials.”

“Nuclear reactors produce over 100 radioactive chemicals to generate electricity. Most is stored as waste, but some is routinely emitted into local air and water, entering human bodies by breathing and the food chain. These chemicals kill and injure cells, leading to cancer, and are especially harmful to infants and children. Some cancers, such as thyroid cancer, are especially vulnerable to exposure to these chemicals,” Mangano reported.

Three Mile Island, 1979 - 2009, 30th Anniversary Events

- **March, 2009: The People of Three Mile Island** - Exhibit and display with author and photographer, Robert del Tredecì. **Location:** PSU-Harrisburg: Library, 351 Olmsted Drive, Middletown, Pa. **Contact:** Heidi N. Abbey, heidi.abbey@psu.edu
- **Wednesday, March 11, 2009: The Economics of Nuclear Power** - Policy forum and lunch featuring Jerry Taylor, CATO Institute, Eric Epstein, Chairman, TMI-Alert, Inc. **Moderated** by Matthew J. Brouillette. **Hosted** by the Commonwealth Foundation, 11:45 am to 1:30 pm. Cost \$10. **Location:** 225 State Street, Harrisburg, Pa. **Contact:** RSVP (717)-671-1901 or info@commonwealthfoundation.org
- **Wednesday, March 18, 2009: Covering the TMI Crisis: A Reporters First Hand Account** by R.B. Swift, and **The State of Security** presentation by Scott Portzline. **Free lunch hosted** by TMI-Alert and limited to the first 50 attendees. **Event:** 11:45 am to 1:30 pm **Location:** Main Capitol, 60 East Wing, Conference Room, Harrisburg. **Contact:** RSVP: (610)-310-1048; andy@steincg.com or (717)541-1101; ericepstein@comcast.net
- Thursday, March 26, 2009 - TMI & Health Effects** - Dr. Steven Wing, epidemiologist and **Accident Dose Assessments** - Arnie Gunderson, nuclear engineer. **Free lunch hosted** by TMI-Alert and limited to the first 50 attendees. **Event:** 11:45 am to 1:30 pm **Location:** Main Capitol, 39 East Wing, Conference Room, Harrisburg **Contact:** RSVP: (610)-310-1048; andy@steincg.com or (717)-541-1101; ericepstein@comcast.net.
- Saturday, March 28, Vigil at TMI: 2 AM, North gate of TMI**
Contact: Gene Stilp, No Nukes PA, genestilp@comcast.net, (717)-829-5600
- Saturday March 28, 2009 - Community Event and Dinner Hosted by TMI-Alert:** - Doors open at 7:00 pm. Cost \$15. **Location:** American Legion, 137 E, High St., Middletown, 717-944-4797. **Contact:** RSVP to Kay Pickering at TMIA at (717)-233-7897 or Marlene Lang at blackbirdlang@yahoo.com.

Three Mile Island Alert

TMIA is a non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to the promotion of safe-energy alternatives to nuclear power, especially to the TMI nuclear plant. Formed in 1977, TMIA is the largest and oldest safe-energy group in Pennsylvania.

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A red X on your address label indicates your membership renewal is due.

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Please renew your TMIA membership and volunteer to help

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Levels

- \$20 Regular
- \$25 Non-Profit Org
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$100 Patron
- \$5 Low Income/Student
- \$200 Club

Checks of \$50 or more may be made payable to the "TMI Legal Fund" for tax deduction purposes.

Dinner Registration:

Please reserve ____ seats at \$15.00 each to the Saturday, March 28, 2009 Community Dinner for (list names). An additional contribution of \$_____ to support TMIA is included. My check is enclosed.

Return to: **TMIA, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102**

I'd like to volunteer to help TMI Alert