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## **Three Mile Island Resources**

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# the newsletter of Three Mile Island Alert

February 2004

*Art Shows, Briefings, China Syndrome screening, Banquet on Tap*

## **TMIA Gearing Up for 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

March 28<sup>th</sup> marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the accident at Three Mile Island (TMI). Though hardly a time for celebration, the occasion will be observed with events fitting what has been characterized as one of the most significant events in Pennsylvania history.

"A historian told me he considers TMI to be right up there with William Penn's founding of the state, the creation of America in 1776, and the Battle of Gettysburg as the most important things ever to happen here," said TMI Alert vice chair Bill Cologie. Given that significance, it is important the anniversary be observed.

Plans include a "The People of Three Mile Island" photography show in the atrium of Harrisburg City Hall during March and an art show at Penn State-Harrisburg for April through June (see "A Call to Artists" right); the development of a press packet to share our history with journalists from around the world; and a press-only luncheon featuring nuclear engineer David Lochbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists and epidemiologist Dr. Steven Wing of the University of North Carolina, who has studied the health effects of TMI.

On the weekend beginning Friday, March 26, 2004, the press briefers will also answer questions at a 7PM screening of "The China Syndrome" at the Midtown Cinema; Dickinson College will be in Middletown taping personal experiences for an oral history project they're conducting; a banquet, including open mike time for recollections will be held in Middletown on Saturday night. Also being planned is the production of a play as after-dinner entertainment. A 4AM vigil on Sunday is planned for the plant gate.

Those planning to attend the banquet can register and pay with a credit card on-line. Visit the TMIA website at <http://www.tmia.com/> for details.

## **A Call to Artists**

TMIA plans an art exhibit as part of the 25th anniversary observance from April 1 through June 30, 2004 on the first floor of the Olmstead Building at Penn State Harrisburg.

The exhibit, staged in cooperation with the Art Association of Harrisburg, presents an opportunity to look back on 25 years of citizen action and artistic expression about TMI. So dust off those old paintings, prints, and photographs and let your creative vision be seen. Art works or photographs depicting TMI, the protests, the events, the faces of TMI and TMIA, or other creative two-dimensional works related to nuclear power, particularly TMI, are sought.

Please confirm your intent to exhibit no later than March 7, 2004. If possible, provide a digital image of your work, including title, via email in advance to allow us to reserve appropriate space in the exhibit and confirm your selection. Submit images to Maureen Mulligan at [maureenm@pa.net](mailto:maureenm@pa.net) and copy Angela McClurkin at [angmclurkin@comcast.net](mailto:angmclurkin@comcast.net). If unable to send a digital image, send a photograph of your submission to Maureen Mulligan, 33 Greening Life Lane, Shermans Dale, PA 17090 with a return envelope, phone, or email address to confirm your entry.

We can accommodate no more than two entries per artist. Please arrange the delivery and return of your art with Valerie Duhig at W101 Olmsted Building, at PSU-Middletown between March 25 and March 31. Her phone is 717-948-6086 and her email is [vxd3@psu.edu](mailto:vxd3@psu.edu). Entries must be properly mounted for hanging. There are chains with "s" hooks available and all you need do is provide a wire backing or small hook that can be attached to the "s" hook. Glass and clips make nice consistent looking mounts. Glass frames are optional although advisable since the works will be hung in a busy public hallway.

If you have questions, call Angie at 717-329-2920 or Maureen at 717-582-7484. TMIA reserves the right to refuse entries that aren't in keeping with the spirit of environmental activism and good taste. Penn State is insured for all art works.



## Dickinson Alumni Magazine Focuses on TMI 25<sup>th</sup>

*Dickinson Magazine* devotes the cover and eight pages of its Winter 2004 edition to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of TMI. The magazine is available at local public libraries.

Dickinson College serves as the repository for all of Three Mile Island Alert's files, photographs, and memorabilia. TMIA has sent more than 50 cartons of files which are now archived in the special collections section of the Waidner-Spahr Library on campus. The collection currently

takes up 40 linear feet on the archives shelves.

TMI Alert Chair Eric Epstein, who arranged the donation of the materials, noted that future historians will not be able to research TMI without stopping at Dickinson. "As a historian myself (*Epstein is the author of "The Dictionary of the Holocaust," editor*), I know how important it is to preserve these records and to make them accessible to the academic community."

## Clean Energy Expo at Penn State April 2 & 3

Just after the TMI 25<sup>th</sup>, we can all focus on alternatives to nuclear power with a visit to the Bryce Jordon Center at Penn State University. Those attending will see exhibits on wind power, fuel cells, photovoltaics, bio-diesel, and other clean and renewable fuels. The exhibit

floor will be augmented with a series of seminars and workshops focusing on alternative fuels, energy conservation, pollution prevention, and other related topics. The event is free to the general public thanks to a long list of sponsors listed on the web at: <http://www.wppsef.org>.

## EFMR Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

More than 100 attended a banquet last March to salute the EFMR Monitoring Group on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

There is no nuclear facility in America monitored like TMI. That's because EFMR maintains the very latest, state-of-the-art monitoring system around the plant augmented by dozens of portable monitors in the hands of some 75 volunteers throughout central Pennsylvania.

In 1993, Eric Epstein negotiated a settlement in a

lawsuit he filed against GPU Nuclear, then the owner of TMI. As part of the settlement, GPU agreed to provide radiation monitoring equipment to EFMR and share data from the 16 monitors it maintained around the plant. The company also agreed to invest \$900,000 in robotics to reduce its workers exposure to radiation.

In its ten years, EFMR volunteers have taken more than 300,000 readings which were recorded, analyzed, and reported.

## TMI Alert Will Oppose Unit I License Renewal

The license for Unit I isn't scheduled to expire until 2014, but with a pro-nuclear administration in Washington, plant owners are rushing to get licenses approved before the Bush NRC is replaced. To date, the nuclear industry is 33 and 0 in its requests for license renewal.

Exelon just invested \$15 million in replacing the reactor head after the original was, like the head at the Davis Bessie reactor in Ohio, too corroded to survive this decade. To keep TMI Unit I alive will require the replacement of hundreds of steam tubes at a cost that'll make the reactor head switch look minor.

Not long ago, Exelon executives were talking like renewing the TMI license was a long shot as it didn't appear economically feasible. Now, with an administration in the White House that's friendly to the nuclear industry and relaxing rules and regulations for polluters of every stripe, renewing the license doesn't seem so far fetched.

Should the company seek a renewal, TMI Alert is prepared to fight it. Given the alternatives now available—see "Clean Energy Expo" story—plants like TMI should be phased out and replaced with clean, safe, renewable sources.



## **Pennsylvania Nuclear Plant Decommissioning Underfunded**

The General Accounting Office identified significant funding shortfalls in nuclear decommissioning funds throughout the nation. Among the plants with inadequate trust fund balances:

Limerick 1 & 2;  
Peach Bottom 1;  
Three Mile Island-2; and,  
Susquehanna 1 & 2

The GAO estimated that the combined value of all owners' decommissioning fund accounts in 2000—about \$27 billion, was less than half of what would be projected to be sufficient to ensure adequate funds would be available for eventual decommissioning. The report is on GAO's Web site <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0432.pdf>.

Eric Epstein, Chairman of TMI-Alert and an expert witness before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on nuclear decommissioning, says, "This report verifies our research over the last 20 years and points to a substantial underfunding on the scale of 1980s Savings & Loan collapse." Epstein added, "Our position remains steadfast: Shareholders, and not rate payers, are liable for inadequate funding and dubious accounting methods."

Epstein said the shortfall is actually worse than the GAO reported because the NRC estimates are based on partial projections known as "targeted funding levels," not the actual funding levels.

## **Epstein Will Make State Senate Run**

TMI Alert Chair Eric Epstein has decided to seek election to the Senate of Pennsylvania. A resident of the 15<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District, Eric will face incumbent Jeff Piccola and run on a platform emphasizing three things that have long been important to him, education, the environment, and economic development.

According to Epstein, he has no opposition in the primary but will nevertheless launch his campaign shortly after the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TMI accident. His campaign is accepting contributions payable to "Epstein for Senate" at PO Box 669, Harrisburg, PA 17108.

## **TMI's Loud Siren Song**

TMI owner AmerGen is spending about three-quarters of a million dollars to upgrade the warning system around the island after tests showed the system to be flawed. AmerGen's Ralph DeSantis explained that shifts in population, increased traffic noise, the growth of sound-muting vegetation, and other

factors combined to have the utility augment its current system with six new, louder sirens. All the sirens are expected to be in place by the end of the summer. AmerGen reminds its central Pennsylvania neighbors they were not forced to do this by the NRC or any other regulatory body, just trying to be neighborly.

## **Coast Guard Now Patrolling TMI**

After almost ten years of hearing concern from TMIA and others about the vulnerability of TMI to a marine landing, the Coast Guard has closed off sections of the Susquehanna River to boaters. The areas, adjacent to the TMI and Peach Bottom plants, have been designated as temporary security zones in November with the expectation that such rules will become permanent in early 2004.

## **EFMR Opens Office in Middletown**

EFMR Monitoring Group coordinator Eric Epstein reports the group now has an office at 213 South Union Street in Middletown. The phone for the Middletown office is 944-3007. In addition to its monitoring activities, EFMR is active with other Middletown merchants in economic development and civic improvement activities.

## **Emergency Op Center Moves to Coatesville**

Despite a hard fought effort, the TMI Emergency Operations Center is no longer in Dauphin County. In fact, it isn't even in central Pennsylvania. It is instead in Coatesville where AmerGen, in a money-saving move, has consolidated operations. The new center was designed to serve as the EOC for nuclear plants at TMI, Peach Bottom, and Limerick. At least they didn't send the jobs overseas.



## **Rendell's Budget Advocates Alternative Power, Clean Energy**

Ed Rendell got off to a bad start with TMI Alert. First, his administration made no effort to alter the rigid stance taken by the Schweiker Administration in opposing TMIA's call to include day care centers and nursery schools in TMI's evacuation plan. Then he withdrew the National Guard troops from the island, though there wasn't much evidence that the threat of terrorism had diminished.

He finally took steps to remedy the state's position on the evacuation, going beyond what TMIA sought and including day care centers and nursery schools in disaster planning statewide. Though he again recently called off the National Guard, the utility appears to have taken up the slack with its own machine gun toting guards on the island 24/7. Now, with his 2004-2005 budget, he has endeared himself to those who advocate forward thinking environmental policies and safe energy.

In his February 3 budget address to a joint session of the legislature, Gov. Rendell proposed:

- \*An Advanced Energy Standard that would require 10% of the electricity sold in the state to come from renewable resources in 10 years

- \*A Green Tax Holiday two times per year on energy efficient appliances

- \*Expanding the PA Energy Harvest Grant Program from \$5 million to \$80 million

- \*Reviving the PA Energy Development Authority with \$30 million per year of funding for cutting-edge energy development projects

- \*Buying 20% of the state government's energy from clean

renewable energy — quadrupling the state's current use

If that weren't enough to make you smile, the Governor also proposed a tax on each pound of toxic chemicals released into the atmosphere by Pennsylvania's biggest polluters, including coal-fired power plants.

On top of that, Rendell proposed funds to preserve farmlands and forests; funds to clean up streams damaged by acid mine run-off, to replenish the Growing Green program started by Gov. Ridge, imposing a \$5 per ton tax on waste dumped in landfills, and funding efforts to clean up polluted runoff from agricultural lands.

Readers are urged to thank Gov. Rendell for his pro-environment policies and ask legislators to support these important initiatives.

### **State Now Backs TMIA Evacuation Initiative**

For two years TMIA volunteers collected signatures on a petition asking the state to drop its opposition to TMIA's request for an NRC rulemaking to include day care centers and nursery schools in the official evacuation plan. The nuclear industry and the state were among the few opposing the request. Now, after a state Senate bill sought to mandate the inclusion of the children, after hundreds of signatures were collected, and after countless hours were expended by volunteers—led by Larry Christian, the parent of a child in day care—the state, under Gov. Rendell's leadership, has reversed its position.

### **EFMR & TMIA Put the "KI" in Kipona**

More than 20,000 potassium Iodide (KI) tablets were distributed free at Kipona during the last two years to any Central Pennsylvanians requesting them. The pills, donated by the EFMR Monitoring Group and distributed by EFMR and TMIA volunteers, were given to several thousand central Pennsylvanians during the Labor Day weekend event.

For those who didn't get free pills during Kipona, KI tablets are available for sale at 25¢ each—far below the list price—at Transit News, the newsstand at the Harrisburg train station. The pills are available inexpensively because EFMR helped to underwrite the cost.

TMIA is planning to distribute KI tablets during several of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events. KI pills are also available free from the Pennsylvania Department of Health to those who live within ten miles of TMI.

EFMR and TMIA thank the volunteers who spent a portion of their Labor Day weekend distributing the life-saving tablets to their neighbors.

### **A "Modern Marvel?"**

While not many in central Pennsylvania would characterize TMI as a "modern marvel," the plant was featured on a television show by that name on the History Channel last October. Lest readers presume the plant was featured because of its failsafe design, the facility was featured on an episode titled "Engineering Disasters."



# Epidemiologist Finds Bias in TMI Health Studies

Epidemiologist Dr. Steve Wing of the University of North Carolina's School of Public Health says that claims of objectivity by scientists don't always ring true and may influence their assumptions and the methodologies they use to produce evidence, and the way they interpret their findings.

Wing, writing in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* (Volume 111, Number 1, November 2003, pp. 1809-1818), cites the experience of those around TMI in his study. He notes that private citizens

who conducted their own research documenting plant and animal abnormalities and disease incidence maps following the accident were ridiculed by the scientific community. "However, when health studies were undertaken through official channels, citizens who believed they had been affected by accident emissions and their supporters were not included in the framing of the questions, study design, analysis, interpretation or communication of results. The studies themselves

were funded by the nuclear industry and conducted under court-ordered constraints, and *a priori* assumptions precluded interpretation of observations as support for the hypotheses under investigation."

According to Wing, pretending that there are no assumptions embedded in scientific methodology conceals and reinforces existing inequalities.

Wing will be speaking at several events in Harrisburg during the observance of the TMI 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## 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.

### TMIA Planning Council

Eric Epstein, Chair  
Bill Cologie, Vice Chair  
Betsy Robinson, Treasurer  
Kay Pickering, Secretary  
Mary Osborn  
Maureen Mulligan

Publisher - Kay Pickering  
Editor - Bill Cologie

On the Internet at:  
<http://www.tmia.com>

Voice: 717/233-7897  
Fax: 717/233-3261

## Please renew your TMIA membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: ☐ \$20 Regular ☒ \$50 Sustaining  
☐ \$25 Non-Profit Org ☐ \$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.

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

You can now renew and pay on-line at:  
<http://www.tmia.com>

You can also register for the banquet on-line, or simply include it with your renewal..

# Attending \_\_\_\_\_ @\$20 each

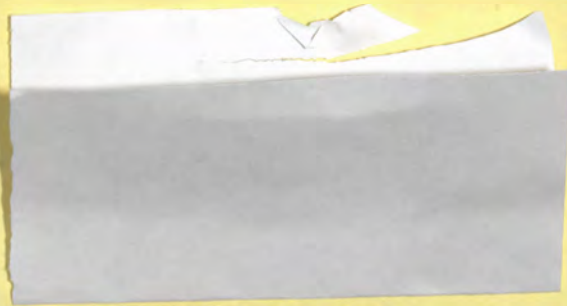
### Please check the appropriate boxes as warranted:

- ☐ I'd like to volunteer to help with the 25th Anniversary activities  
☐ I'd like to speak for 3 minutes during the banquet's "Open Mike" time

The official registration and financial information for Three Mile Island Alert may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



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## MARCH, 1979 - MARCH, 2004 - 25 YEARS

*Don't miss these 25th Anniversary Observances*

♦ Throughout March - Photo display: "The People of TMI" at Harrisburg City Government Center

♦ March 26, Benefit Screening of "The China Syndrome" at Midtown Cinema - \$15.00  
Discussion Featuring: Dr. Steve Wing, University of North Carolina  
David Lochbaum, Union of Concerned Scientist  
Scott Portzline, Security Consultant to TMI

♦ March 27 - Taping of personal experiences by the Dickinson Oral History Project  
EFMR Office - 213 South Union Street, Middletown

♦ March 27 - 25th Anniversary Banquet - \$20.00 w/cash bar  
Open bar at 6PM, followed by dinner and program, including open mike

♦ March 28 - 4AM: Vigil at TMI's North Gate, NoNukes Pennsylvania

♦ April through June - The Art of TMI, Olmstead Building, Penn State Harrisburg

Register online at [www.tmia.com](http://www.tmia.com) to see "China Syndrome" or attend the banquet.  
You can renew your membership online, too.

## CLOUDS OF DOUBT STILL REMAIN

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