

GAINSAYER

NEWSLETTER FOR GEORGIANS AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

WINTER 1990

Another Rate Increase for Vogtle

On September 28, 1989, Georgia Power got less than they asked for and much more than they deserved. That's the day the Public Service Commission voted on the rate case for Plant Vogtle Unit 2. This should be the last rate increase for Vogtle until they start asking us to pay for something like replacing cracked cooling pipes, as in the case of Georgia Power's Plant Hatch, or worse yet, until we're asked to pay for repairs from a major accident. Or to take on the looming costs of radioactive waste disposal.

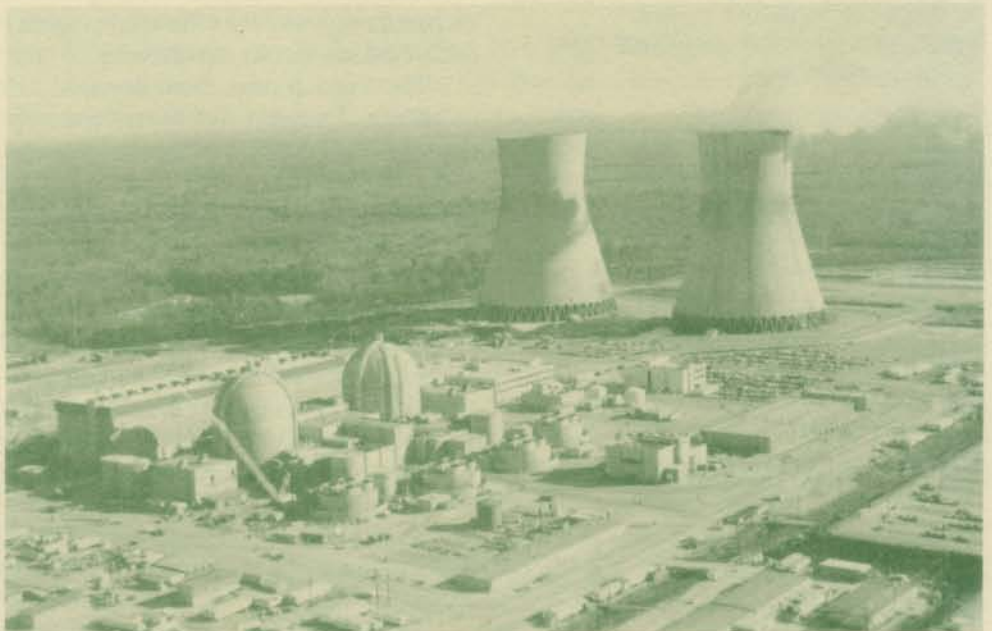
In this rate case, the company asked for the exorbitant amount of \$492 million per year. The Commission granted them \$218 million per year — nearly half of the request. This was to be "phased-in" in three steps — \$75 million now, another \$90 million in 1990, and another \$53 million in 1991, requiring a public hearing for each step.

Since then the PSC staff and Georgia Power officials met and made a deal to proceed with the phase-in plan without future public hearings if Georgia Power promises not to appeal the case. This is being challenged as a violation of the open meetings law.

The official intervenors in this rate case, such as the Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia, were not part of the process of this deal.

The recommendation of the PSC staff to the PSC contains some disturbing language. It eliminates the possibility of tying least cost planning options (such as energy conservation) to future rate discussions. It eliminates the possibility of future rate decreases. But most disturbing of all, it speculates that cancelling the future hearings on Vogtle II may result in a decline in public interest!

To make matters even more complex, it is possible that the remaining phase-in of costs for Vogtle will not result in a rate increase at all! How can this be when the power company will be getting another \$143 million



10 Years & \$10 Billion Later ... Nuclear Plant Vogtle

per year from us for this plant? The reason is growth in number of customers and power usage — a goal that Georgia Power has worked hard to achieve — you've seen the ads. This means that without Plant Vogtle we would have seen an actual rate decrease.

In public hearings this summer, the case was put in perspective by many eloquent and heartfelt citizens' comments. The overwhelming number of public witnesses testified against Plant Vogtle and the proposed rate increase. Most of them supported GANE's position that the power company had not justified any amount of rate increase. A rate decrease may actually have been justified had the power company properly explored energy conservation and other alternatives to nuclear power plant construction.

Issues of public access to the PSC were also raised. Labor representative Gary Washington was especially critical of the exclusion of many working people from the process by

holding only daytime hearings during normal working hours. He was joined by George Howard of the crushed stone industry who warned of the effect of a rate increase on industry.

At one point in the last of three hearings, a large contingent of the audience broke out into a chorus of "Pardon Me Boys ... Is This The Georgia Power Choo Choo?" led by public witness Craig Rafuse.

Mr. Rafuse was, of course, raising the issue of Georgia Power's railroading this case through the commission. The light moment was quickly squelched by Chairman Bobby Pafford who apparently was unfamiliar with the time-honored practice of expressing viewpoint through song.

GANE spokesperson Cate Morrill presented a formal request from GANE for a halt to the hearings until the IRS investigation of Georgia Power's alleged tax fraud is com-

continued on last page

NUKE NOTES

Another Rate Increase for Vogtle ... 1
 Nuke Notes 2
 Nuke Watch 3
 Atomic Primer 4
 Pioneer of the Nuclear Age Now
 Wants It To End 4
 Soviets Nuke Their Own Troops In
 1954 Explosion 4
 An Open Letter From Trident to Life 5
 Chernobyl In the Sky? 5
 Georgians At Risk from Savannah
 River Plant 6
 World Peace Vigil 6
 Dangerous Dirt in Denver 7
 Just Say No to Victor Stello 7
 Another Nuke Closes! 7

GANES Officers

Patricia Giblin, *President*
 Cate Morrill, *Secretary*
 Dennis Hoffarth, *Treasurer*

GAINSAYER WINTER 1990

Editors

Glenn Carroll Dennis Hoffarth

Production

Randy Bundy Glenn Carroll Doug MacKay

Contributors

AP Wire Service
 Atlanta Journal/Constitution
 Glenn Carroll
 Dennis Hoffarth
 Steve Knapp
 John X. Linnehan
 Helen Mills/Plugging In
 NIRS
 Mark Reeve
 Nancy Rice
 Sunny Saunders
 Jan Somers
 Ellen Spears

3,000 WILL LEAVE AREA NEAR CHERNOBYL (AP 8/9/89: MOSCOW) More than 3,000 people are preparing to leave an area of the Russian republic where increased radiation has doubled the amount of illness since the 1986 nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, the Soviet news agency Tass said Tuesday.

"One local manager reported that the gamma level at his home was 10 times higher than permissible levels, despite decontamination and special sanitary measures, hence a sick rate which has doubled in the region over the past three years," the official news agency said. It did not specify the illnesses.

The dispatch came from Bryansk, 210 miles from Chernobyl, the regional center for an area including the 12 villages to be evacuated.

SOVIETS CITE NUCLEAR DEATHS OF SIBERIANS (Los Angeles Times, 8/17/89: MOSCOW) Residents of a northern Siberia peninsula near the Bering Strait live to an average age of only 45 because of decades of radiation contamination as severe as that resulting from the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, a weekly newspaper reported Wednesday.

Moscow News said contamination of the Chukotka Peninsula, where 130,000 people live, was caused by previously secret Soviet testing of nuclear weapons in the 1950s and 1960s.

Authorities knew for perhaps 25 years that radiation there was twice as high as normal, the newspaper said, but the facts were covered up until members of the Congress of People's Deputies returned from a recent fact-finding visit to Chukotka.

KINGS BAY PROTESTER, 73, FINED AND GIVEN PROBATION (AP 9/17/89: BRUNSWICK, GA) A 73-year-old woman

was sentenced to probation, community service and ordered to pay a \$500 fine after she was found guilty of trespassing on the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.

Miriam Hope, arrested during a May 6 anti-nuclear demonstration at the St. Mary's facility, was placed on three years' probation. **STUDY: NUCLEAR WASTE DOUBLED IN '80s** (ATLANTA JOURNAL/CONSTITUTION 9/20/89: WASHINGTON) Nuclear waste has more than doubled in the United States since 1980 and is expected to increase another 50 percent by the year 2000, says a study released Tuesday by a consumer group.

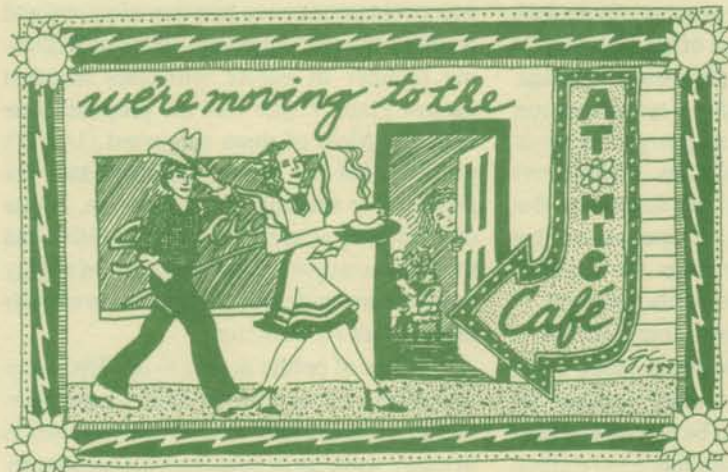
Listed by Public Citizen as "the 10 most radioactive states" were Illinois, South Carolina, New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Connecticut, Michigan, Virginia and North Carolina. Those states were found to contain the greatest amounts of accumulated radioactivity from all sources of nuclear waste. Together, they held 56 percent of the national total.

Georgia was listed as having accumulated 0.014 percent of the national total. Georgia's waste came from high level waste from commercial power plants.

FRANCE TESTS NUCLEAR BOMB IN PACIFIC (AP 10/25/89: WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND) The government reported that France exploded a 25-kiloton nuclear device today at its test site on Mururoa Atoll. New Zealand condemned the action as an affront to residents of the South Pacific.

Warwick Smith, head of the Seismological Observatory at the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, said it was the 108th test at Mururoa since France abandoned [sic] atmospheric testing there in 1975.

GANES
cited by Creative Loafing/Best of Atlanta Edition as
"Environmental Group with the Most Partying Spirit!"
 If you were with us Halloween at the Highland Bakery you know it's true! Thanks to Woody Jones, Patty Kunkle, John Rick (it's really their party), Euclid Avenue Yacht Club, Nancy Lewis & Rob Pegel & the GANES volunteers!



JOIN GANES
AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THE ATOMIC CAFE!
 1st Thursdays
 7:30 PM
 1655 McLendon
 (near Little 5 Pts)



NUKEWATCH



RADIATION ACCIDENT IN DEKALB COUNTY

Cleanup efforts at Radiation Sterilizers, Inc. (RSI) — already 16 months old — will likely stretch into 1991 due to snags in removing the remainder of the southeast DeKalb plant's radioactive cesium-137 capsules.

Shipments of the capsules back to the Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford facility near Richland, Washington slowed sharply when seven of the nine heavily shielded shipping casks showed signs of leakage.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Governor Joe Frank Harris have expressed concern over the length of time this radiation accident has been going on and will go on before it is resolved.

Jim Setser, the state Environmental Protection Division governor appointee to monitor the cleanup, has said that at least \$15 million in tax money has been spent by government agencies since the June 16, 1988, discovery that a faulty cesium capsule had leaked into the water of a storage pool at RSI.

The radiation source capsules at RSI began as a waste storage concept at DOE's Hanford facility which needed a way to deal with radioactive waste created in the production of nuclear weapons material. As soon as the cesium capsules are removed and decontamination can be attempted in earnest, Alan Chin, RSI's owner, says he plans to reopen the plant using cobalt-60, another radioactive isotope he can obtain from a Canadian supplier.

Source: *DeKalb News/Sun 10/4/89* article by Kirk Martin
RESCUING DEFUNCT NUKES

On June 6, 1989, California citizens voted to shut down the Rancho Seco Nuclear Plant. The

directors of Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) had agreed to abide by the voters' decision. However, they later decided to put the nuclear plant up for sale and conducted exclusive negotiations with the one bidder who proposed to operate Rancho Seco as a nuclear plant, Quadrex. In mid-September, SMUD rejected Quadrex's offer, questioning the fiscal ability of Quadrex and its partners to restart, operate and finally decommission the unit.

Quadrex has now turned its sights to our region and the unfinished TVA nuclear plant, Bellefonte. Bellefonte is 20 miles from the Georgia border in the northeast corner of Alabama. Quadrex will require more financed capital for the Bellefonte project than for Rancho Seco casting serious doubt on the proposal.

Several national citizens' groups are watching the situation in a state of readiness, challenging Quadrex on the basis that they are not technically nor financially qualified to get into the nuclear business.

Local opposition to the plant is reported to be building, fueled by the fact that power from the plant will service other states.
SHOREHAM AND SEABROOK

Although the DOE is not particularly happy about it, the proceedings to transfer ownership of the Shoreham Nuclear Plant from Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) to the State of New York are underway.

As previously reported, Shoreham was denied licensing by the NRC due to the lack of an adequate emergency plan to evacuate two million citizens from Long Island in the event of a nuclear accident.

DOE's efforts to stop the utility from decommissioning the plant on the basis that there is

nowhere to put the waste (!) was met with the NRC's permitting LILCO to dismantle up to a point. (The plant became radioactive in its low-power test, and the contaminated parts will have to be disposed of as radioactive waste.)

As a state entity has never owned a nuclear plant before, the NRC is developing a new type of license to provide for this special case.

In the meantime, New England anti-nuclear activists are waging an energetic non-violent effort against the Seabrook Nuclear Plant which threatens Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts beach resorts.

After failing the low-power test this summer, the plant's owners, the Public Service Company of New Hampshire have applied to the NRC for a license that would allow them to fulfill the low-power test as they take the plant to full power. The Clam-

shell Alliance, who has been leading thousands of citizens in protests of the plant, fears that the NRC will consider this request favorably.

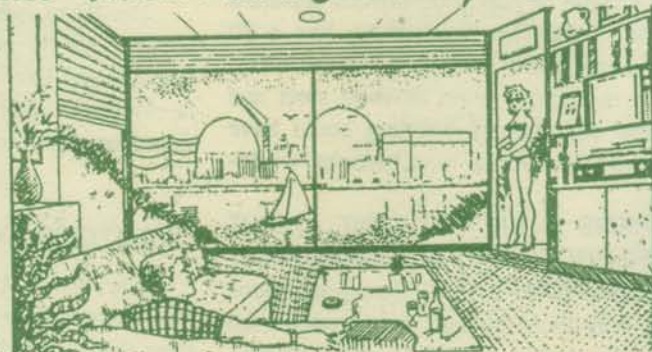
In January, 1989, the utility went bankrupt in the fourth largest bankruptcy in our nation's history. This is the first time since the great depression that a public utility has bankrupted. Unit I drained \$6 billion in capital to complete and Unit II has been cancelled with \$1 billion invested.

The main point anti-Seabrook activists are focused on is the lack of adequate emergency plans to evacuate a 50-mile stretch of resorts served by a two-lane highway. Shoreham on Long Island in New York was shut down on the same basis.

GANE recently sent a statement of support to a Clamshell Alliance protest at President Bush's home in Kennebunkport, Maine.
— Glenn Carroll

WHY EVACUATE?

NRC Realty Presents The World's First
NRC Nuclear Resort Community at Seabrook



Our Seaside Radiation "Cottages" offer yet unspoiled panoramic vistas of the SEABROOK NUCLEAR STATION across HAMPTON HARBOR. A spectacular radiation-proof condominium residence designed with your future in mind — free of anxiety over meltdowns, fall out, and evacuation.

Be Prepared For The Worst In The Best Of Comfort.

- Pre-destruction prices in the \$300's
 - Passive solar design
 - Jacuzzi/Gym
 - Introducing Louver Lead® window treatments
- Inquiries NRC REALTY N.E. OFFICE
P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, Mass. 02657
Jay Critchely — Exclusive Marketing Agent

"You can't put a price on safety"

ATOMIC PRIMER



CAN A CHERNOBYL-STYLE ACCIDENT HAPPEN IN THE U.S.? Yes. An accident with similar consequences — or even worse — could occur in the U.S. Although the Chernobyl reactor was of a different design than most U.S. models, the basic causes of the accident — operator error, inadequate design, complacent management — are evident at our nuclear plants as well. Indeed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the federal agency which oversees the nuclear industry, admitted in April 1985 that the odds of a nuclear meltdown in the next 20 years are about 45 percent.

The Chernobyl accident caused the release of only about seven percent of its radioactive materials. According to the NRC, a U.S. reactor could release as much as 70 percent of its radioactivity. Yet the NRC, instead of stopping to look at the possible lessons of Chernobyl, continues to license new reactors.

BUT DON'T U.S. REACTORS HAVE "CONTAINMENTS" TO KEEP THE RADIOACTIVITY INSIDE? They do, but Chernobyl had a containment-type system too. In fact, the Chernobyl reactor used a design similar to one used in almost half of the U.S. reactors. A top NRC official admitted that the design has "something like a 90 percent probability" of failure in an accident. And it is unlikely even the best steel and concrete containment building could have withstood the force of the Chernobyl explosion.

IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT, WON'T WE BE PROTECTED BY EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS? Emergency plans cover only those citizens living within ten miles of a reactor, and under many circumstances will only reduce, rather than prevent, radiation exposure. After Chernobyl, people were evacuated from an 1.6 mile radius, and as far as 50 miles away where radioactive deposits were found. Even though ten-mile zones are inadequate, the nuclear industry wants to reduce evacuation zones to as little as one or two miles.

Source: Nuclear Information and Resource Service, 1424 16th Street NW, Suite 601, Washington D.C. 20036 (202)328-0002



EARTH DAY 1990

April 22, 1990

As a kick-off for our Earth Day 1990 activities GANE will hold a benefit dinner at Eat Your Vegetables in Little Five Points on April 1, 1990. For ticket info or to volunteer for entertainment, "waitrons" or possible environmental art show, call 404/525-7306.

Pioneer of the Nuclear Age Now Wants It to End

When Dr. Edward C. Riley and his wife, Marjorie, first traveled to the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, they were proud and excited.

That was in late 1945, not long after the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, ending World War II.

Dr. Riley was taking a post as Y-12's medical director. The couple looked forward to being a part of harnessing the awesome new form of energy for peaceful purposes.

The Rileys' initial enthusiasm for nuclear power was typical of many Americans. "At the time, it was a very exciting thing," Dr. Riley recalled. "Here was a whole new source of energy which could be used for good as well as bad things."

Dr. Riley, who holds degrees in engineering, public health and medicine from Harvard and Cornell Universities, now says he does not believe nuclear fission has produced any good to outweigh the evils it has

created.

"The whole nuclear business has been a disaster from an environmental point of view from the start, because they have never found a way to dispose of the byproducts, especially plutonium," he said. "And it's ridiculous to keep producing bombs when there are so many on the planet."

Riley observed that the scientists at Oak Ridge have no safe way to store the lethal byproducts of their work. And, as tensions have cooled between the United States and the Soviet Union over the last few years, the Rileys have grown increasingly concerned about the environmental effects of continuing nuclear arms production. "Philosophically, we figure we can escape the thermonuclear war, but I'm not sure we can escape the effect of the modern world on the environment," Dr. Riley said.

Source: an article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution 8/6/89 by Deborah Scroggins

Soviets Nuke Their Own in 1954 Explosion

The Soviet Union dropped an atomic bomb near its own soldiers 35 years ago to test their ability to fight on ground contaminated by radiation, the Defense Ministry newspaper disclosed Friday.

Although the official Tass news agency reported at the time that an atomic test had been carried out, there was no mention that soldiers were involved, said the daily Red Star.

A real atomic bomb was detonated during a Soviet military exercise on September 14, 1954, in order to "study the effects of the explosion and test troops' ability to negotiate

contaminated terrain," it said.

Red Star said there were no casualties at the time, but it did not address possible long-term health problems caused by radiation. All Soviet and U.S. nuclear tests have been underground since 1963, when the countries signed a treaty banning atomic explosions in the atmosphere.

Before the treaty, the United States conducted 100 tests above ground, and scores of soldiers assigned to the Nevada Test Site near Las Vegas later sought compensation from Congress for illnesses they said were caused by the tests.

AN OPEN LETTER: FROM TRIDENT TO LIFE

The sea testing of the Trident II, D-5 missile is experiencing serious problems. Two of the three sea tests have failed, and the Navy has postponed subsequent tests until a solution is found.

The Trident weapons system, at an estimated cost of \$155 billion, is the most expensive war instrument ever developed by this country.

Such a huge expenditure from the public treasury has sailed through Congress with hardly any questioning of it and subject to no public scrutiny or debate. It has been called "the Teflon weapons system."

Ask these questions of our congressional representatives:

Even if the design flaw of the D-5 missile can be corrected, do we need or want the missile anyway?

Isn't it true that the D-5 missile adds nothing strategically to the Trident I, C-4 missile except billions of dollars into the coffers of Lockheed, General Electric, Westinghouse, and the like?

Why do we have this compulsion to develop bigger and more expensive missiles?

We have nine Tridents now, why do we need 10 more at two billion dollars each?

Couldn't cancellation of a few Tridents be a way to fund President Bush's war on drugs campaign?

Is anyone in Congress doing any rational thinking about the changing geopolitical scene

MARLETTE © 1989
THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION



by Doug Marlette

Reprinted with permission of the Atlanta Journal & Constitution

and how this should affect military expenditures?

The Trident weapons system is the result of the Cold War. Do we need it any more and isn't it a very dangerous, destabilizing, first strike system?

Reports are that the Pentagon has heard very little rumblings from the public about Trident. Now is the time for us to make the noise of dissent. Truth and sanity must have their say.

We suggest letters to the members of the Armed Services Committees, especially the chairpersons: Senator Sam Nunn (D, GA) and Representative Les Aspin (D, WI). Please give this request high priority on your "to do today" list.

Together we can make a difference. Peace, love, joy and hope to you all.

— Nancy Rice (*Jubilee Partners*)
John X. Linnehan (*Metanoiz Community*)
Mark Reeve (*Clergy and Laity Concerned*)

Chernobyl In The Sky?

When the shuttle Atlantis rocketed through space this fall it carried several astronauts, the usual assortment of top-secret experiments, a space probe, and according to the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, enough plutonium-238 to wipe out every living thing on the planet.

Cradled in the Atlantis' cargo bay was the much-delayed Galileo space probe, which is destined to explore Jupiter and its moons. Powering Galileo's instruments is a small nuclear reactor fueled by 50 pounds of plutonium-238 — a substance so toxic that one-millionth of a gram is a carcinogenic dose. The main concern was that Atlantis would experience a Challenger-type accident during liftoff and spill its deadly cargo into Earth's atmosphere.

The potential for an Earth catastrophe will be present again when the Galileo makes

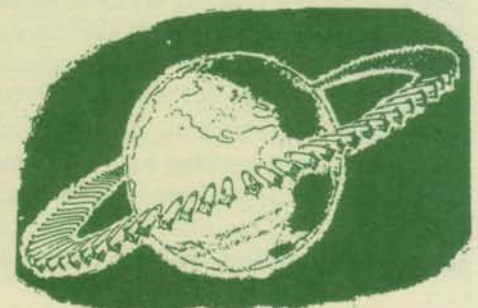
its two planned flybys in December 1990 and again in December 1992. These gravity assist loops will bring the nuclear-powered spacecraft within a few hundred miles of Earth.

NASA has downplayed the potential for disaster and proceeded with the launch as scheduled. Program manager Bob Murray noted in a recent Orlando Sentinel article that "if you look at the data, the probabilities are such there is a very low risk of an accident." Dr. John Gofman, professor emeritus of medical physics at the University of California at Berkeley, gave this assessment if the worst happened — "Kiss Florida goodbye."

The larger question is why such a power supply is being used — and why other plutonium-power probes are planned — when safe, conventional alternatives are available, according to experts like Dr. Michio Kaku, professor of nuclear physics at City Univer-

sity of New York. Critics, such as Citizens for Peace in Space, have charged that a subtle campaign is underway to break the ice for later deployment of plutonium reactors as the power source for space weapons."

Despite the potential for catastrophe, Galileo has generated surprisingly little public concern. What is frightening is that the public may remain indifferent until the improbable happens and more than sunshine fills Florida's skies. — Steve Knapp



GEORGIANS AT RISK FROM SAVANNAH RIVER PLANT

A report released recently by Public Citizen and distributed to the governors of all fifty states indicates that the nuclear waste problem in the United States may be much more severe than previously recognized, and Georgians may be at a particularly high risk as a result of their proximity to the Savannah River Plant.

The report indicates that Georgians face problems not only from inadequate waste storage practices at SRP, but also relating to proposed shipments of wastes through Georgia.

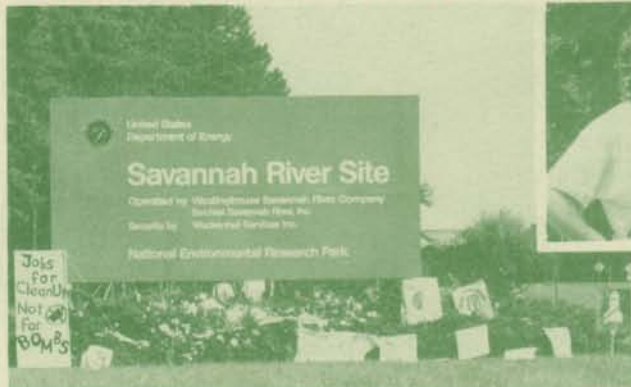
The report's findings state that the tanks for storage of high-level wastes at SRP are susceptible to explosion as a result of the buildup of hydrogen and other combustible gases. Such an explosion would cause immediate deaths of workers at the plant, as well as tens of thousands of deaths among the general population over time as a result of cancer. The report cites a recently-confirmed explosion of a Soviet storage tank in 1957 which forced the evacuation of over ten thousand citizens, now considered the worst nuclear catastrophe in history. Extensive failures of systems designed to prevent such explosions have already occurred at SRP.

The report also indicates that the threat to these same tanks at SRP from an earthquake could be equally catastrophic. Scientists have indicated that the probability of a major earthquake which could cause failures of the SRP storage tanks in the next 20 years is as high as 95 percent.

Further findings of the report indicate that wastes from SRP would be more safely shipped to a permanent underground repository via rail, but that DOE has elected to ship them via truck, at greater risk of accident and subsequent radioactive release. These road shipments would travel through Georgia along I-20. The report also notes that DOE's worst-case estimates for shipping accidents do not allow for human error, and that DOE may not have adequately prepared emergency response teams to handle accidents. Furthermore, DOE has awarded a contract for shipping these wastes to a small trucking firm which has never handled hazardous wastes in commerce.

Public Citizen has urged the governors of all states to consider the problems identified

World Peace Vigil Remembers Hiroshima -- August 6, 1989 GANE joins 300 Peace Activists from Southeast at Savannah River Plant in South Carolina



Participants festooned Westinghouse's ironic sign with flowers and peace slogans.



GANE volunteer Danny Felg-Sandoval is interviewed after sharing his thoughts and the song "From A Distance" with the group.



Amanda (L-top) & Sabadra Hughes (L-bottom) laugh the gathering how to fold origami paper cranes, a tradition begun by a young girl who died of leukemia as a result of fallout from the Hiroshima bomb. Glenn Carroll (R) presented the cranes at days's end to the group which voted for them to be sent to President Bush as a plea for peace.

Photos by Sunny Saunders.

in the report. The candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor have received copies of the report from the Savannah River Plant Working Group.

—Jan Somers and Ellen Spears

* * *

The future of the SRP continues to be unclear. Just when will Westinghouse and the DOE be able to restart the reactors?

November 20, 1989, a summer 1991 restart date was projected. By then, maybe everyone will know the cold war is over.

* * *

In the meantime, missing tritium continues to make the news. The U.S. has been selling much of our supply, giving lie to the argument that the nation's nuclear arsenal is going begging for tritium and we should manufacture it in South Carolina no matter what the risk. After six months, the DOE is still not sure where the tritium went and hopes that it wasn't stolen to make a bomb.



YES! I'd rather be active than radioactive!

I am a "Georgian Against Nuclear Energy."

I support the goals of phasing out the use of nuclear energy as soon as possible, optimizing the use of energy conservation and renewable energy, and opposing the use of nuclear weapons.

Signature _____

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Call me about actions!

- \$10 Active!*
- \$25 Active!
- \$50 Active!
- \$_____ Active!
- I can't afford to send money but I want to receive newsletter.



Fill out and return today before it's too hot! **Georgians Against Nuclear Energy**
P.O. Box 8574 • Station F • Atlanta, GA 30306 • 404/525-7306

*minimum membership donation
to receive newsletter

Dangerous Dirt In Denver

CHAIN REACTION AT PLANT CALLED UNLIKELY (AP 8/12/89: WASHINGTON) The Energy Department said Friday that a special team of investigators could find no evidence that an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction ever occurred at the Rocky Flats weapons plant near Denver.

The question of a chain reaction at the plant arose after the discovery of strontium and cesium, in radioactive isotopes that do not occur in nature, in groundwater near the plant. But officials from the Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies said the strontium and cesium radioactivity might have been the result of fallout from atmospheric nuclear tests of the 1950s and 1960s.

EX-WORKER: FIRM IGNORED DANGER AT ARMS PLANT (AP 10/10/89: WASHINGTON) The operator of the Rocky Flats nuclear arms plant knew as early as 1984 that dangerous amounts of radioactive plutonium may have accumulated in building air ducts, but failed to act on the information, a former employee said Monday.

James Stone, a utility design engineer at the site from 1980 to 1986, said he raised the probability of such plutonium deposits, and the safety hazard they would pose, with Rockwell International Corp., which operates the plant near Denver under an energy department contract. "They said we cannot afford to clean it," Mr. Stone said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Stone's suspicion of a buildup of plutonium residue in the ventilation system at Rocky Flats was borne out by a team of independent investigators who disclosed in a report in the Energy Department last week that such plutonium deposits raised "a real possibility" of an accidental nuclear chain reaction at Rocky Flats.

Rockwell had insisted prior to the investigation that no plutonium was accumulating in air ducts, the investigators said.

LAWYER BLAMES RADIATION IN DEATHS AT NUCLEAR PLANT (AP 11/19/89: DENVER) Medical records of 14 Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant employees who contracted cancer indicate there is a "consistent pattern of exposure to radioactive materials, an attorney said Saturday.

Thirteen of the 14 men have died of cancer-related illnesses, and the 14th underwent surgery for bladder cancer, said attorney Bruce Deboskey, who is handling their workers' compensation cases.

AP (Associated Press) notes were found in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

* * *

NEWS FLASH!!!

Late last year at Colorado Governor Remar's insistence, DOE closed Rocky Flats until such time as they can "manufacture plutonium safely."

JUST SAY

NO 

TO VICTOR STELLO

President Bush has recommended former Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chief of Staff Victor Stello to head nuclear waste cleanup operations at the nation's military nuclear facilities. Stello's record has raised concern throughout the country from those familiar with his work at the NRC.

Former NRC employee Bob Pollard commented, "He is the individual most responsible for the American people being anti-nuclear. He consistently blocked safety moves by the staff, he blocked criminal investigations, there is no individual more unsuited for this assignment."

Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-CT), a member of the house interior oversight committee says, "Stello was consistently on the wrong side of every issue. He stifled independent inquiry and he was such a believer that he didn't have the temperament necessary to be a watchdog of the industry."

As head of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, Georgia Senator Sam Nunn will play a critical role in this nomination. Contact Senator Nunn and Senator Fowler to express your concerns today.

—Helen Mills, *Plugging In*, newsletter of the Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia

Another Nuke Plant Shuts Down Amidst Problems

Public Service Company of Colorado has shut down the nation's only gas-cooled nuclear power reactor. It will decommission the troubled Fort St. Vrain unit.

The 330-Mw unit, 35 miles northeast of Denver, produced its first electricity in December 1976. Since then it has been plagued with equipment and management problems. Last December, Public Service decided to shut the plant down after its fuel supply runs out — around June 1990.

But in mid-August trouble developed with a control rod, halting operation. While replacing the faulty rod, crews discovered 37 hairline cracks in tubes carrying steam to the turbine generator. Utility officials decided that the cost and time needed to make repairs and fire the plant up again was not worth the

effort.

Fort St. Vrain is cooled by helium rather than water, common to all other nuclear power units in the U.S. Last year the Nuclear Regulatory Commission labeled the plant one of the nation's 10 worst.

General Atomics, San Diego, was the design-constructor that built the reactor. It reached a financial settlement with the utility 10 years ago. General Atomics also developed the only other gas-cooled power reactor to operate in this country, an experimental 40-Mw unit that shut down five years ago after tests. The company now holds a major contract with the U.S. Department of Energy to develop a modular high-temperature gas-cooled reactor.

Source: Engineering News Record 9/7/89



VOGTLE INCREASE

continued from page one

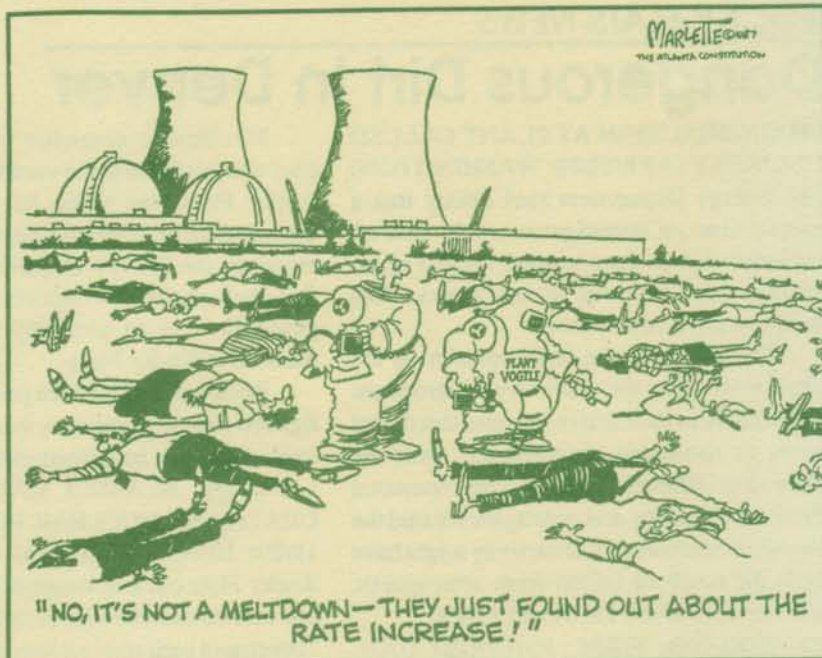
plete, and pending a valid analysis of energy conservation and other alternatives to Vogtle's construction. Chairman Pafford ignored the request and began to call the next witness, at which time GANE representative Dennis Hoffarth interrupted the hearing and demanded a response. Mr. Hoffarth's request was ignored as well.

In taking their vote before these questions are resolved, the PSC ignored key facts affecting the case, facts that could cause drastic reductions in the rate request.

Still, continued public pressure can be credited with limiting even this overly generous award. Public skepticism of nuclear power contributed to precedent-setting conditions being imposed on Plant Vogtle and Plant Hatch (Georgia's other nuclear plant). These conditions are called performance standards. They require that the Georgia nuclear plants perform up to the national average in power output. If they fall short, the power company must pay a penalty. Above average performance nets Georgia Power a bonus award. So far the plants have been below average despite the fact that the standard of comparison is not a very tough one. U.S. nuclear plants generally have a poor level of reliable operation.

In a revealing moment during testimony a Georgia Power spokesperson resisted the performance standard suggesting it would cause a safety problem if, in a "trickle-down" effect, an operator would decide to give power company financial concerns priority over public safety concerns.

The issue of decommissioning Plant Vogtle and Plant Hatch was also dealt with in



The more things change . . . reprinted with permission from the Atlanta Journal & Constitution

September 28. This is a long-standing nationwide nuclear issue — ensuring the money is there to safely decommission these nuclear plants after their "useful life." What the commission decided was to provide for "external funding" for decommissioning.

This means that the power company collects money with its bills to us to provide for decommissioning but this money is set aside outside the company's other funds. They can't spend it for something else. This should mean that the money will be there for decommissioning when needed except that the Commission disallowed much of the estimated cost of decommissioning and no one really knows what it will cost — a fact reiterated by expert testimony in this case.

In summary, our efforts have made a difference, but did not result in stopping the operation of a dangerous power plant or in keeping it out of our rate base. The power company was rewarded with billions of dollars for an unneeded project, but not as much as they wanted. Maybe the best measure of the issue is that they seem pretty happy about it and we don't. The issue of Plant Vogtle has not gone away. GANE will continue to be involved as issues of money and safety arise.

— Dennis Hoffarth

Write and call the Public Service Commission: 244 Washington Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30334. 404/656-4501. 1/800/282-5813.

GAINSAYER
GEORGIANS AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY
P.O. BOX 8574 • STATION F
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30306 • 404/525-7306

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ATLANTA, GA
PERMIT NO. 2493