

Wall St. Bldg.
Spartan, Pa. 16778
July 9, 1979

(614) 635-3492

Mr. Robert Goldsmith
US NRC
5650 Nicholson Lane
Rockville, Md. 20852

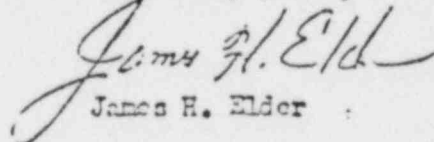
Enclosed is a copy of the newspaper article which you requested
in our telephone conversation today.

Over the weekend, I learned of two more cases of leukemia, bringing
the total of 10 in 14 years, with 6 being in the last four years. I also
know of one case of one case of Multiple Myeloma which is closely related
to leukemia and a 3 year old girl with a disease which might turn into
leukemia.

I am still working on trying to get someone to do a study of our area
but so far I've had no success.

Thank you for your interest.

Very truly yours,


James H. Elder

Enc.

JE/je

Bedford

ESTABLISHED 1805—VOL 174 NO. 172

FIFTEEN CENTS

Saxton Man Looks For

By Matthew MacIorkoski

"I hope you don't think I'm a kook," said Jim Elder of Saxton. He was stuffing a two-inch stack of letters that he has sent to doctors, health officials and officials of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission back into a folder.

The bespectacled, 42-year-old Elder, who teaches vocational building construction at Northern Bedford County High School, has been trying for more than two years to link what he sees as an abnormally high cancer rate in the Saxton area and the Saxton Nuclear Experiment Corporation

(SNEC) that operated a small nuclear plant in Saxton from 1962 to 1972.

"I was a supporter of nuclear power up until about two years ago," Elder said. "In fact, I was pretty apathetic about the whole deal."

In March 1976, Elder's 13-year-old son, James, died of leukemia.

"Anybody whose had any dealings with the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital knows that they ask you every question that they can think of," Elder said, "but at that time I didn't even think of telling them that we lived in a town that had a nuclear

reactor."

A year later, Elder's wife came home from working at the polls with the information that an engineer at the nuclear plant who later moved to New Jersey, had contracted Wagner's Disease, a form of cancer.

"At that time I thought back and remembered that about the same time our son died our dog had to be put to sleep because he had lymph cancer," Elder said. "It was those three things that got me thinking. From that point on it seemed that so many people in the Saxton area was dying of cancer."

Responding to a query from

Jon Baughman, editor of Broad Top Bulletin, Abraham, a spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, indicated in a letter that no large amounts of radiation ever released from the Saxton plant, with "one minor exception."

"There was one event which the instantaneous release limit specified in technical specifications Saxton's operating license was exceeded, but release lasted for less than half a day," said Abraham in the letter.

"It occurred on May 1965, because of an equipment

Inquirer —Met Ed Cut Corners

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Metropolitan Edison Co., in its haste to get a now-crippled reactor into commercial operation at Three Mile Island, deliberately cut corners on vital repairs, the Philadelphia Inquirer quoted former and present company employees as saying.

The newspaper reported Monday that the workers also said Met Ed had employees in sensitive jobs work to the point of exhaustion and skimped on important maintenance work while the reactor was being readied for commercial use.

Asked to comment on the story, a Met Ed spokesman said,

Utility: Customers Pay For

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Federal officials, methodically nursing Three Mile Island's crippled reactor to cold shutdown, found higher levels of iodine 131 Monday but said the readings are nowhere near cause for concern.

Meanwhile, utility officials said some 1.5 million customers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey must pay part of the revised \$800,000-a-day tab of replacing power normally generated by the disabled plant.

Samples taken on a river bank near the plant ranged from 60 to 94 picocuries per cubic meter of air, well within federal regulations for normal operation of a nuclear plant.

No detectable radiation was

ham said the iodine release apparently is being caused by a change in charcoal filters used to trap deposits in a ventilation system.

Ken Clark, another spokesman, said the temperature in the primary cooling system is 245 degrees, a four-degree improvement from Sunday but still far from the 220-degree target temperature.

The hottest spot in the core also fell by four to 344 degrees.

"The cooldown is going rather slowly," Clark said.

General Public Utilities, the three-company consortium that owns the plant, has been replacing Three Mile Island's power by buying from other sources. One reactor was crippled. And the other, shut-down for refueling at the time,

regulatory agencies determine who pays for the months ahead.

Originally, GPU estimated replacement costs at \$1.1 billion a day.

If the undamaged reactors return to service, replacement costs will drop to about \$120,000 a day. However, it is not known when and if either of the reactors will operate again.

Replacement costs vary among the three companies based on differences in ownership and the need to pay more expensive oil-fired electricity.

Jersey Central Power & Light, which serves 4.7 million customers and owns a fourth of the plant, bears the largest burden. But replacement costs are high



Gazette

(USPS 017648)

BEDFORD, PA., TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 1979

Cancer, Nuclear Plant Link

malfunction. There was no prolonged period (on the order of months) when the average release rate was greater than 33 percent of the technical specification limit," Abraham continued. "We do not believe that these release levels threatened the health and safety of the community."

Later in the letter, the NRC official said NRC records indicate that neither workers in the nuclear plant nor workers in the adjacent Pennsylvania Electric Co. generating plant were ever overexposed to any dangerous amounts of radiation.

SNEC was the first ex-

perimental nuclear facility belonging to General Public Utilities, overall owner of Three Mile Island. Saxton was a training facility and model for Westinghouse to show off its nuclear equipment to potential buyers worldwide. SNEC's small kilowatt output was fed to Penelec, a sister company of GPU.

All that remains now of SNEC is a white dome on the outskirts of Saxton. The NRC routinely checks the facility every three months according to a plan which includes "provisions for controlling all remaining radioactivity" and "extensive provisions for securing the plant against

unauthorized entry."

In the summer of 1977, Elder started an informal gathering of names and instances of persons who had died of cancer or were treated for cancer in the Saxton area. Elder cited 35 persons who had died in recent years of cancer, including three SNEC employees and the daughter of a SNEC engineer who fell ill to leukemia while living in Saxton.

In an apologetic manner, Elder stresses that he is not a "medical person." For that reason, he decided to seek help from members of the medical or health community. His first inquiry to the Cancer

Research Department of the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md. fell on deaf ears and was referred to the NRC.

The NRC responded, saying it had neither the money nor the time to undertake such a study of the area. "Although they recommended me to the state Department of Health," Elder said, "they basically told me to mind my own business."

In the November 22, 1977, edition of the Bedford Gazette, Elder noticed a story on a Dr. Glynn Caldwell of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's

—Continued on Page 12



Saxton Nuclear Plant, Cancer Rate Looked At . . .

— Continued from Page 1
Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga.

In the article, the possibility of abnormally high rates of cancer among enlisted men who witnessed nuclear tests in 1957 in the deserts of Nevada was being studied by Dr. Caldwell.

One sentence in the story grabbed Elder's attention: "According to Dr. Glynn Caldwell, a cancer epidemiologist at the CDC who is leading the search, one would normally expect only about two incidences of leukemias over 20 years in an average of 2,200 people such as were at Smoky" (the nickname of the atomic blast).

In his first reply to Elder's letters, Dr. Caldwell said, "I find your ideas interesting and if adequate data can be obtained they ought to be pursued." Dr. Caldwell en-

couraged Elder to send the information he gathered on cancer-related deaths in the Saxton area, but said he did not have the time or money to conduct a study of the incidents.

Elder sent lists of Saxton area residents who died of cancer or had been treated for cancer, their doctors, what type of cancer when he could get the information and the ages of the people.

But Dr. Caldwell's second letter cooled many of Elder's hopes for a professional study of the area. Using the figure of 2,000 for the area's population, at least "84 cancers of all types would be expected by chance alone," Dr. Caldwell said. "One must remember that cancer will affect nearly one out of four persons during their lifetime and the incidence of cancer increases with age."

"At the present time," Dr.

Caldwell continued, "I do not feel that the current data justifies committing our resources to a more extensive investigation."

Elder freely admits to not having near 84 instances of cancer deaths in the Saxton area, but argues that the 35 or so cases he has found are only what he, a teacher with no medical experience, has uncovered.

Elder wonders about the seven cases of leukemia he says have shown up in the area in 14 years, when a comparable area should have only two cases in 20 years.

The scenario repeated itself with the state Department of Health with officials expressing interest in Elder's claims, but claiming there is no money to support any study of cancer-related deaths in the Saxton area.

"I was just about to give up the whole thing when I got this," Elder said holding a letter from the University of Pittsburgh. In the letter, dated March 23, 1978, Dr. Thomas Mancuso of the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Health wrote, "Regardless of what anyone else has told you, I do consider clues that you are attempting to look into are sufficient to warrant further investigation."

Again, though, lack of funds was used to explain why a study couldn't be done.

Elder continues looking for instances of cancer in the area that occurred in the past 18 years. A news story in the

original intent of the attack.

married to Grace C. Black

Broad Top Bulletin asked local residents to send him. Information on cancer deaths was run but produced only two answers.

It's lonely work. "I've had doors slammed in my face," Elder said. "A lot of people don't like to talk about death and I can understand that."

At his home, Elder shows another letter he is finishing to send to the NRC asking for more exact details on the release of gases in May of 1968, the amount of radiation released, the direction it travelled and any high measurement of radiation after that date.

"My son was five and one-half years old when the release occurred," Elder noted, "a pre-schooler."

Elder said that he was quite sure that anything released from the plant could travel in a westerly direction towards his house. "When the plant was operating," he said, "we'd wake up in the mornings and have to sweep fly ash off of our patio."

Elder produced a map of the Saxton area showing where he thinks the incidents of cancer were especially high. An oval is drawn on the map encompassing Saxton, Hiddlesburg and north along Rte. 26 to Marklesburg. He cites where he found leukemia victims in the oval.

"I'm not accusing anyone in the death of my son," Elder said, "but because there is so little industry and industrial pollution in the area, I wonder what caused the cases of

leukemia."

"I'm not convinced that the reactor wasn't the cause of the high cancer rate," he said, "I'm saying there's reason for some organization to come in and do a study."

Outside of Elder's spacious home that sits on a hill overlooking Saxton, Elder tried pointing out where the reactor stood in relation to the other sparkling lights of Saxton.

"It's right over there," said Elder pointing out into the night. "There's nothing there to stop anything that could have been released. Nothing."

FUNERAL SERVICES

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Wednesday, April 18, at 10 a. m. at St. Peter & Paul's Catholic Church, Cumberland, for Marie S. Donahoe, who died Saturday, April 14. Burial will be in Sunset Memorial Park, Cumberland.

A Christian Wake Service will be held this evening at 7:30 p. m. in the funeral home.

Hospital Notes

(There were 69 patients and three newborn babies in the hospital Monday.)

Discharges:

Ella Whetstone, Everett; Evelyn Coughenour, Hyndman; Gayle Grace, Hopewell; and Judith Merkel, Hyndman.

Births:

A daughter to Judith and Cecil Merkel, Hyndman.



Free Mounting
Free Balancing
Free Rotation



Let Us SAFTEE
Your Tires For 1
Traction Year

651 E. Pitt St., B

Phone
623-
6114

TIMOTHY A. BERKEBILE
Funeral Home
214 S. Juliana 422-4317