

THE BATTALION

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Nuclear plant emits radioactive steam

United Press International
HARRISBURG, Pa. — A possibly serious cooling system leak in a nuclear reactor at the Three Mile Island plant Wednesday released radiation in the atmosphere, triggered an automatic shutdown and evacuation of workers at the facility. Elaine Fabian, spokesman for Metropolitan Edison Co., part owner of the plant located near Harrisburg, said some radioactive steam escaped and was vented into the atmosphere.



Lay on, Macduff

There are 2,350 dues-paying members of the Society for Creative Anachronisms, the organization that sponsors this odd entertainment. Its members preserve medieval customs in various ways, including dressing in armor and whacking each other with swords and axes. Why? "I like to bash people's heads in," says one Aggie. Not a frequent occurrence — the weapons are made of light wood. See today's Focus.

mal," said Charles Blaisdell, a Civil Defense spokesman.

In Oak Ridge, Tenn., Dr. C.C. Lushbaugh, chairman of the medical and health sciences division of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities, said the off-site release of radiation reported at a possible 10 roentgens an hour "is nothing to worry about."

He said the probability was that "when the measuring device saw this cloud of steam go by it, it probably peaked at 10 rph. That would disperse now as the steam dispersed."

Lushbaugh said "another way to look at it is in even the worst situation and if the cloud had 10 rph, if you took a lungful of the cloud and held it for an hour, you'd get 10 roentgens."

"That would be the equivalent of twice the amount of radiation you'd get in one year if you were a worker at the plant."

Lushbaugh said there also was some good news from the accident.

"The damned safety system must have worked—maybe these nuclear reactors aren't as bad as some people say."

In Washington a Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman said details were sketchy but the accident appeared to have been a very serious one, knocking out the main reactor cooling system and forcing the use of the emergency backup cooling.

"From what we know now, it would sound like one of the most serious accidents we've had," the spokesman said. But he said it was not the first time a reactor's emergency core cooling system had been activated.

Met-Ed officials said there also was a leak of radiation inside the plant. Fabian said only a minimal staff of essential workers was present during the shutdown and those reporting for work Wednesday were kept away from the plant.

Lt. Gov. William Scranton III, who monitors energy matters for the state, told a news conference that "everything is under control. There is and was no danger to public health or safety."

However, William Dornsife, a nuclear

engineer with the state Department of Environmental Resources, pointed out that the state is depending on the company for its information on the accident.

Dornsife said the radioactive material could possibly contaminate the milk of cows that graze in the area.

There is a population of about 15,000 people and about 15 dairy farms within a five-mile radius of the plant.

Dornsife said the state was relying on Metropolitan Edison Co. for its information on the accident until officials from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission arrive later to conduct tests.

In Washington, the commission reported that by 11 a.m. its monitors showed no detectable signs of radiation off-site.

Pennsylvania environmental officials confirmed that some radiation escaped into the atmosphere. They said the amount of the release, which they could not measure specifically, was not enough to cause radiation damage through inhalation, although some radiation on the ground could affect milk supplies in about a week.

A Met-Ed spokesman said the 906-megawatt nuclear reactor No. 2 automatically shut down at 4 a.m. due to leak in the secondary cooling system caused by a valve that broke.

"This resulted in some kind of depressurization within the reactor. Then, according to all the emergency and backup systems we have in the plant, the plant shut down," he said. "It was as simple as that."

In Washington, the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nuclear safety interest group, said it received preliminary reports that indicated the plant would have to be shut down for a period of time for decontamination.

The Union said the accident occurred at 4 a.m., plant officials declared a site emergency at 7 a.m., meaning there was some danger at the plant itself, and at 7:45 a.m. called a general emergency because of a potential danger outside the area.

The plant is located near Harrisburg International Airport 10 miles southeast of Harrisburg along the Susquehanna River in Dauphin County. A spokesman for the Harrisburg airport said it would remain open.

Metropolitan Edison Co. owns 50 percent of Three Mile Island. Twenty-five percent of the shares also are owned by Jersey Central Power and Light Co. and Pennsylvania Electric Co.

Five hundred employees are required to operate the Three Mile Island plant.

It has been in operation for four years. Thomas Lyon, spokesman for the Pennsylvania State Police, said Met-Ed requested state police assistance for the emergency and authorities said the plant site was evacuated.

Lyon said four state troopers were sent to the power plant site to expedite traffic through the area.

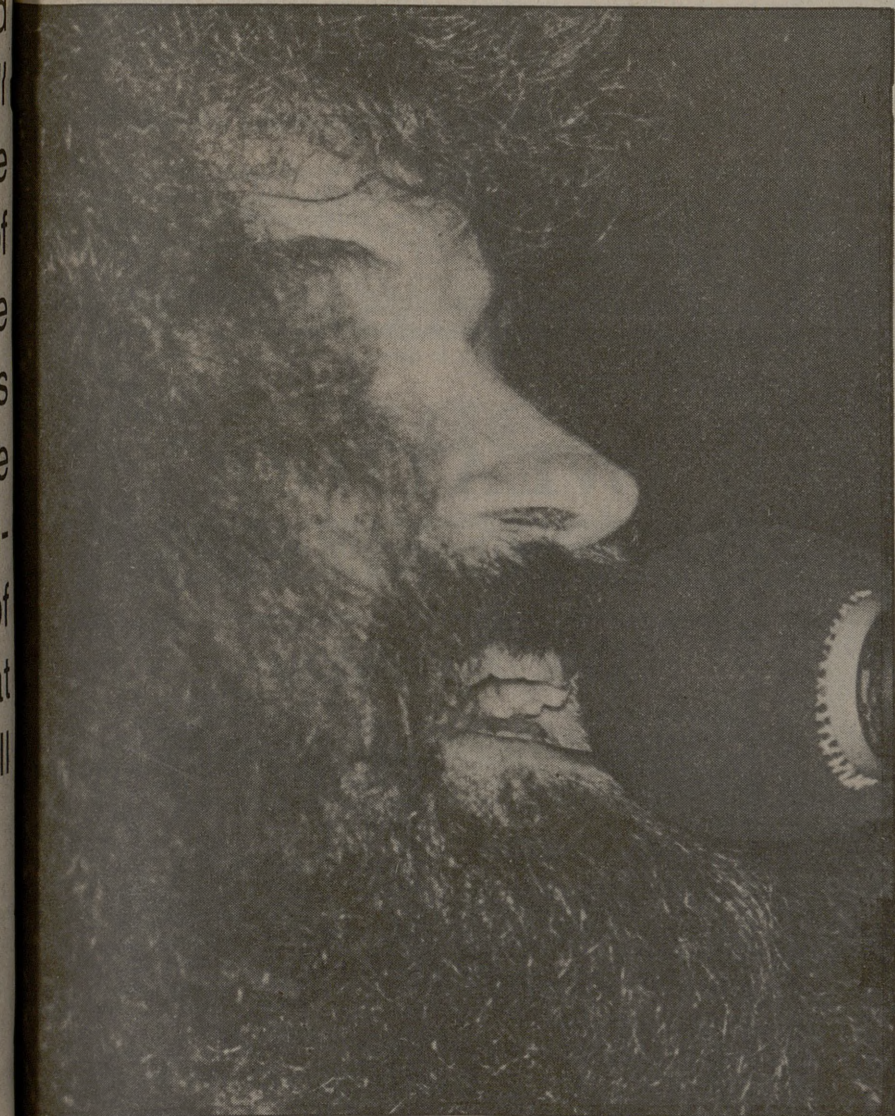
He said a state police helicopter was provided to Met-Ed for use by a "monitoring team." Nuclear Regulatory Commission representatives were on the way to the scene from Philadelphia.

Texas tops in new field: size, number of potholes

From staff and wire reports
A group of Texas A&M University professors has added another element to the state brag list — the state leads the nation in the number of highway potholes. According to Robert Gallaway, head of the Texas Transportation Institute's highway materials division, Texas has 8.2 million potholes, give or take a few. He said California, with 4 million, isn't even close. Gallaway says that, based on sampling estimates, the Texas pothole's average diameter is 16 inches in diameter and 5 inches deep.

And Gallaway says 35 years of study of asphalt and other highway surfaces has led him to conclude the prime cause of potholes is — you guessed it — cars.

"The continuous hydraulic ram effect of car tires running over the asphalt loosens the material underneath the road and causes pavement over and around the crack to fragment away," he said. "If the right steps are taken in advance, we won't go into winter with streets we know will develop potholes. Then we won't have to do expensive hand repairs."



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.
Fire!
Keith Grimwood of "St. Elmo's Fire" throws himself into a song. The "jazz-rock" band performed for a very appreciative capacity audience in the Basement Coffeehouse Wednesday night. For Campus Editor Steve Lee's review of the performance, see page 5.

Deadline for candidate pix 7-9 tonight

Today from 7-9 p.m. is the last chance for candidates for campus offices to be photographed for The Battalion's special election tabloid, "For the Voters."

Candidates should come to Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building and bring their completed questionnaires.

The tabloid, which will appear next Wednesday, will also contain information about city council and school board races.

Profiles will be included of candidates for yell leader, student body president, the five student government vice presidents, Residence Hall Association president, and Off-Campus Student Association president.

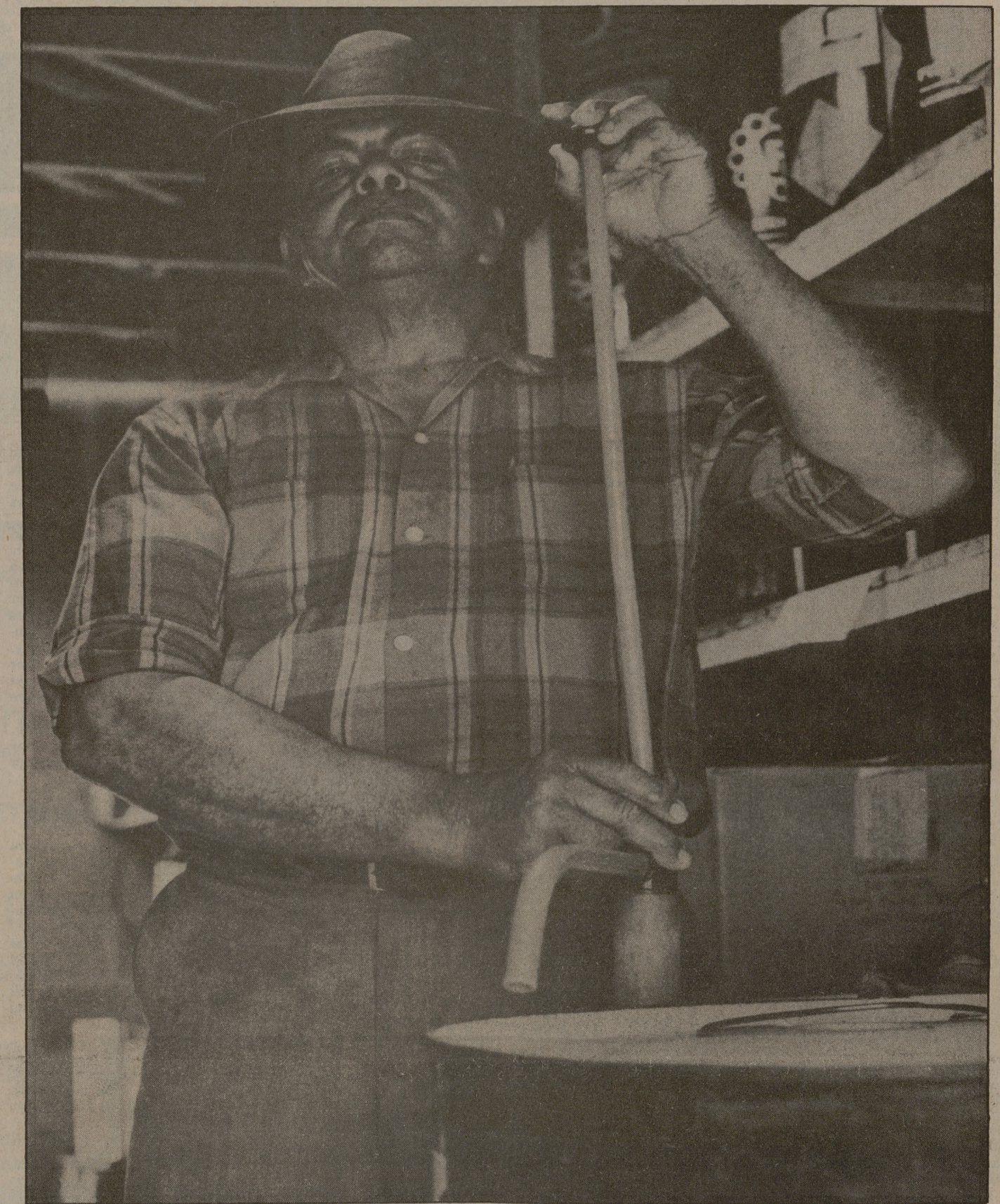
In the interest of allowing replies to accusations, The Battalion will not accept letters that raise questions about a candidate after Wednesday.

AggieCon brings strange sights

By RUSTY McDONALD
Battalion Reporter

If anyone sees extraterrestrials wandering around campus this weekend, the Martians have not landed. AggieCon X starts today at 2 p.m. and will have a costume party Saturday night, so the possibility of seeing some strange sights is probable.

AggieCon is the annual science fiction convention sponsored by the Cepheid Variable Science Fiction-Fantasy Committee. Cepheid Variable is a student-run organization and is a member of the Texas A&M University Memorial Student Center Council and Directorate.



Everett Johnson, who will retire Monday after working for Texas A&M 23 years, has seen a lot of

changes here. He likes the increased number of students but admits, "I got more rest back then."

Retiring after 23 years, employee wants no fanfare

By LOUIE ARTHUR
Battalion Reporter

Coffee-drinkers in the chemistry department will have to make their own brew Monday morning for the first time in 10 years. Everett Johnson is retiring after 23 years here.

Johnson has been at Texas A&M University since 1950 when he started as a supervisor of the housecleaning staff at 84 cents an hour. He remained at that position until 1964, when he quit to work at the Ramada Inn for four years. He then returned to Texas A&M and has worked there ever since.

In addition to the nine hours he works at Texas A&M every day, Johnson puts in eight hours every evening at the phone company.

"I like to work," Johnson said with a slow grin. "My daughter thinks I'm crazy but I really love to work."

Johnson is retiring because he makes too much money to collect Social Security payments. "I asked them if I could just work a couple of hours a day here but they said no," Johnson said.

At 62, Johnson has seven grown children and a wife who stayed at home raising them while Johnson worked his 17-hour workdays. "I don't really know how long I've been married," Johnson said. "You'll

have to ask my wife about that."

He speaks proudly of putting all the children through school. "It's just the same as raising two or three, except it takes a little longer," Johnson said. He describes his children as "some married, some divorced, some good, some bad" and shrugs his shoulders as if to say he had done his best and that was all he could do.

Johnson was born and raised in this area. And he lives in the same house he paid cash for in 1935. "You can't buy anything for cash these days," he said. "When I bought my house you could get one for \$3,500 or \$4,000. Money just doesn't go anywhere any more."

Although Johnson has never been out of the state and has rarely traveled out of this area, he is well aware of what is going on in the rest of the world.

"Things could be worse. We still have peace," he said. "We don't need to be involved in war."

Johnson's desire for peace carries over into his home life. He is happy with his little house in the country, he said, where he has "fresh eggs, chickens and hogs." Every Sunday he spends most of the day in church and he and his wife have a traditional Sunday dinner with family and friends.

Johnson has seen a lot of changes here

since 1950. He likes the increased number of students but admits, "I got more rest back then."

He is well-liked by those who work with him. Every Christmas he gets more than 20 cards from "Old Ags" all over the country. He and his wife answer all of them, Johnson said.

"It really makes me feel good to know all those people still care about how I'm doing."

Johnson feels that the campus is much improved with the addition of women. "There are a lot of women bosses around here these days. There is one woman who is the head of keeping the grounds nice. She keeps the campus a lot cleaner than the men ever did."

Johnson, who has been known to hide behind doors in his efforts to avoid reporters, wants no going-away parties. "I just couldn't take it," he said. "I'm afraid I'd have a heart attack or something, saying goodbye to all my friends. It already hurts too much right now."

Monday morning Everett Johnson can sleep as late as he wants to, but he will probably get up early as usual. After he does all the work he can find around the house, he will think of his friends at Texas A&M and remember the "good old days" when someone who loved to work could work as much as he wanted.

AggieCon features many attractions for science fiction-fantasy buffs, not the least of which will be the dealers' room which will be open today.

The dealers' room is a place where a person can buy science fiction and fantasy related books, posters, and other paraphernalia, and to quote the definition in the AggieCon program, it is a "roomful of maniacs fully intent upon selling you anything and everything."

Other attractions are art displays, both professional and amateur, and two NASA exhibits. Science fiction movies will also be shown throughout the four days, either in the Basement Coffeehouse or Rudder

Auditorium. Some of the movies to be shown are "Exorcist," "The Stepford Wives," "Barbarella" and "Flesh Gordon."

Guest of Honor will be Theodore Sturgeon, who has won numerous awards including the Hugo, the Nebula, the International Fantasy Award and the Golden Scroll Award. He has contributed to the "National Review," "The Rolling Stone," "Sports Illustrated" and "Playboy." Sturgeon will speak at the guests of honor address Saturday afternoon.

Another part of AggieCon will be a starship design contest, an amateur art contest and a costume contest. Entries in the art and starship design contests must be in by

4 p.m. Friday, and the winners will be announced at the banquet Saturday night. The costume contest will be held during the costume party Saturday night and winners will be announced there.

Tickets for non-Texas A&M students cost \$5 for the full Con if purchased before March 1, and thereafter will cost \$6. Students, faculty, and staff may purchase full Con tickets for \$4. These tickets may be purchased at the MSC Box Office. One day tickets will be \$2 and may be purchased at the door.

All of the events will take place in the MSC where programs will be distributed. The programs will contain the times and exact locations of all the events.