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Tour kicks off anti-initiative fight

General Electric puts Trojan on parade

By E.G. WHITE-SWIFT
Of the Emerald

Watch out, the pros and cons are coming.

Promising to spend whatever it takes to defeat the nuclear initiative that will appear as Ballot Measure No. 9 in the November election, officials of Portland General Electric (PGE) unofficially opened their campaign against the initiative during an open house for the press at Trojan nuclear plant Friday.

The Trojan's heart was unlocked for the Oregon media to "familiarize" themselves with the operation of Oregon's only nuclear plant. Instead of the soldiers of Troy rushing out of the Trojan horse, as in the Greek myth, the unlocking of Oregon's Trojan revealed the bombardment of favorable facts about nuclear power.

Security at the plant, radiation control, environment safety, and emergency back-up systems were carefully and repeatedly stressed.

The tour conveniently coincided with a plant shut down for the summer (due to favorable supply of water and hydroelectric energy). The press saw first-hand areas that are usually off-limits to the public or unaccessible when the radioactive fuel rods are producing the heat that is converted to steam to power the plants 210-foot generator.

PGE, the major owner of the plant, operates the plant under contract from the other owners, Pacific Power and Light and the Eugene Water and Electric Board. Plant officials state that the nuclear workhorse was built in record time and the occasional start-up problems that made

front-page news all spring were fairly normal for any type of thermal plant.

The officials are convinced that nuclear power is the answer to the electrical energy crisis that is coming down the road. All utilities are confronted by the problem of providing power on line when the public demands it. As they have to plan for maximum use at any given time rather than average consumption, they must build larger plants that drive the cost of energy up.

PGE officials stated they feel the public will reject the nuclear initiative this fall. They intend to point out to the public that if it wants the lights to stay on it will have to support energy, in particular, nuclear development. Energy conservation will not halt the energy growth and demand, they say, and coal requires heavy use

analysis

of fossil fuels and may be environmentally difficult to develop on a large scale.

The fall campaign will probably convince the voters that nuclear development has enough safeguards. It would be hard to prove otherwise after reviewing the endless safeguards built into the \$460 million plant. One official estimated that there is over \$100 million in safeguards built into the radiation control network.

There are separate water systems with filters and monitors to prevent water pollution. There is the 499-foot cooling tower that prevents air contamination along with the steam emissions. Every

inch of the plant appears to be monitored for radiation leaks that automatically light up and sound alarms on the Star-trek control boards in the operations center. It appears to be programmed for any conceivable fail-safe accident.

The larger question is whether or not the voters will vote for the nuclear initiative with their pocketbooks as their reference. The consumer may find the cost of nuclear power prohibitive when it comes time to pay the electric bill.

Although the utility officials promote safety, reliance and environmental control in their publicity materials, they appear to ignore some of the larger economic questions. What the consumer must consider in dollars and cents:

•About one-fourth of the construction costs were in environmental safeguards. Although an alternative generating facility would have environmental quality and pollution safeguards, once they were installed there would not be the continuous yearly expenditures on security checks, labor hours lost while workers dress in radiation preventative clothing and hours lost while workers are scanning themselves at the checkpoints to see if they have picked up any contaminants.

Officials stated that Trojan will need 115 employees full time, about double what they originally estimated, because of tightened federal and state regulations. A coal plant was estimated to require about 150 employees, but many of them would be semi-skilled coal handlers.

•PGE officials also stated that

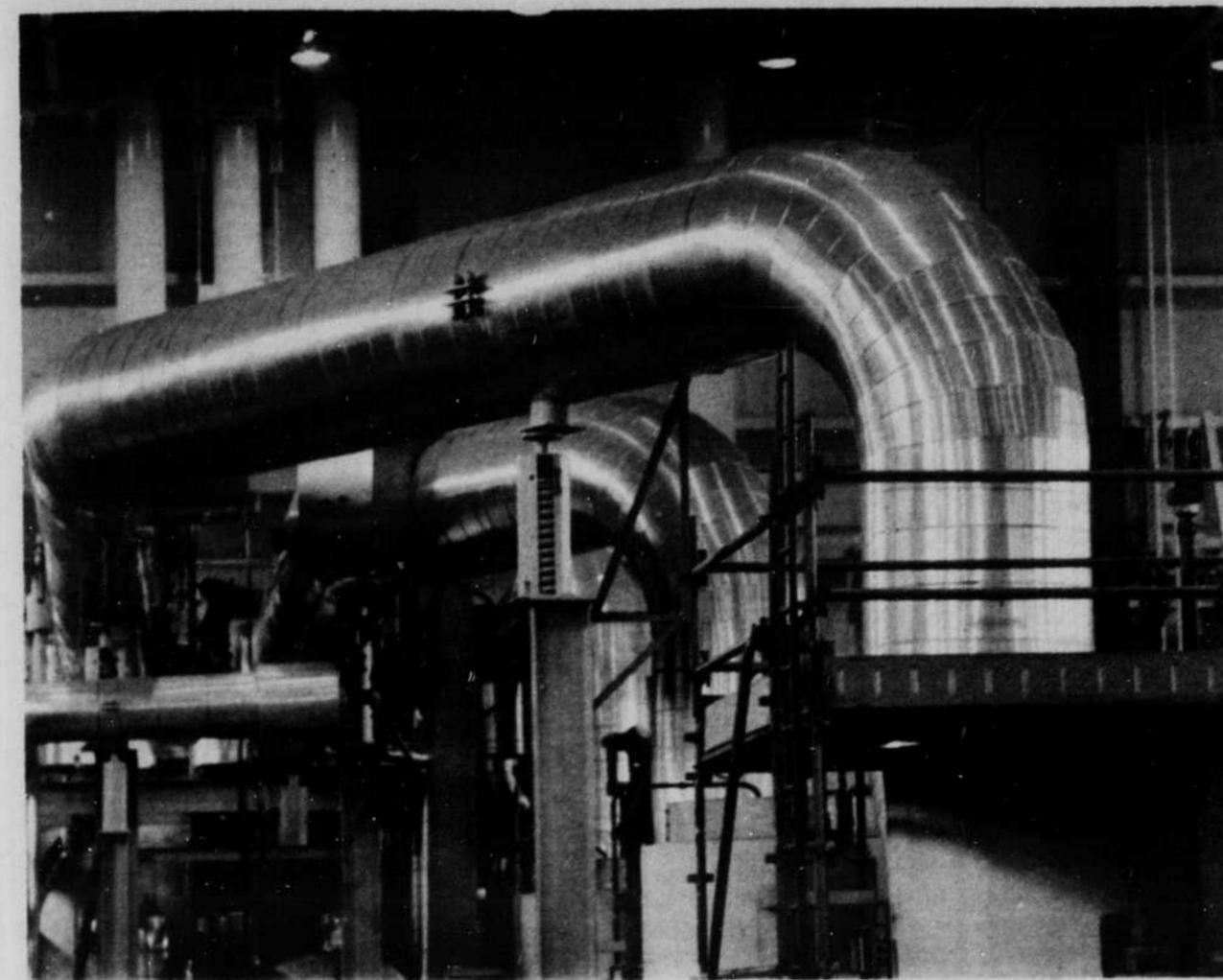


Photo by Greg Wasson
This series of stainless steel pipes feeds steam into Trojan's 210 foot-long generator. The generator is the largest single-shafted model in the world, and at full speed will produce 1,100 mega watts, twice the power generated at Bonneville dam.

the annual refueling cost would be about \$10 million. Although they dismiss rumored uranium shortages as unfounded (comparing the art of uranium exploration with the early explorations for oil reserves in the 1890s), they do view the cost of uranium as unpredictable but most likely increasing.

•The consumer should also be

concerned with the statement that the life of Trojan is only 40-50 years. The implication is that after expending all those dollars for the initial capital-intensive construction, we will have to face more capital outlays in the relatively near future. PGE officials were not sure whether Trojan was recyclable, and had no idea what

would be done with the site when it was no longer operable.

In November, the voter's will have to weed through the barrage of pros and cons interrupting their conceptions of energy and economics. The ballot measure will offer each Oregon voter a chance to indicate priorities of our energy development.

Dangers of pills, IUD turn more women to diaphragms

By KATHY CRAFT
Of the Emerald

Remember the diaphragm? Your mother probably used it. You, no doubt, first encountered the dome-shaped, rubber device while rummaging through her dresser drawers as a curious kindergartener.

But if you're like many "modern" college students, that was, perhaps the extent of your experience with this pre-pill method of contraception. After all, nobody uses those old-fashioned things today, right?

Wrong. Throughout the nation, more and more women are abandoning their pills and forsaking their IUDs in favor of the older, safer diaphragm. Eugene women are no exception. Spokespersons for Planned Parenthood, Lane County Family Planning and the University and Lane Community College (LCC) student health centers all agree: after disappearing from the limelight for over a decade, the diaphragm is staging a definite comeback.

"Although there are still a lot of girls utilizing pills and IUDs, I think use of diaphragms is increasing," says Kathy Wunderlick, nurse-clinician at the University Health Center's Family Planning Clinic (see related story on Page 12). Other nurses at the center concur, adding that the number of women asking for diaphragms has particularly risen during the last year.

Staff persons at the other birth control clinics are more emphatic concerning the renewed popularity of the "old standby."

"There's been an incredible increase in the number of women requesting diaphragms," explains Linda Paseman, family planning nurse-practitioner at the LCC clinic. "This spring, in fact, we saw more women for diaphragms than for pills."

Linda Reynolds, a nurse-

popularity is generally attributed to two basic factors — increased publicity concerning the dangers involved with oral contraceptive and IUD use, and a desire on the part of many women to practice a more "natural" form of birth control. (The only physical side effect associated with the diaphragm is possible irritation from the contraceptive jelly used with the device; this problem can be remedied, however, simply by choosing a different brand of jelly.)

'I'd gotten pregnant with IUDs, and pills were turning my face brown.'

specialist at the Lane County Family Planning Clinic, echoes Paseman's statements. "We're fitting more diaphragms these days than we're prescribing pills," she says.

And at Planned Parenthood, the situation is much the same. Two years ago, according to director, Kaye Turner, approximately five out of every 10 patients requested diaphragm. "Now 20 per cent or more are using them," she explains. "The trend is definitely away from pills."

The diaphragm's sudden boost in

Another factor involved with the increased use of the diaphragm is recent evidence indicating it is approximately 98 per cent effective when used properly, comparable with rates for pills and IUDs. Basically, using a diaphragm properly simply means using it period — it is generally agreed most "diaphragm babies" are the result of the device being left on the bathroom shelf or at the bottom of a purse during intercourse. As Wunderlick points out, "You have to use the diaphragm every single time — you've got to be really motivated."

Frequently, that motivation is associated with women who are more mature with their sexuality, especially those who, after using pills or IUDs, found it necessary to choose a different contraceptive. "Success with the diaphragm depends completely on one's state of mind," explains Paseman. "Women who've had bad experiences with pills or IUDs are really gung-ho about the diaphragm and anxious to use it correctly." Younger women, seeking a contraceptive for the first time, may "turn their noses up at it," she observes.

Wunderlick agrees that "older women" are generally better candidates for the diaphragm, and Turner concurs. "A certain frame of mind is definitely necessary for using the diaphragm," she believes. "You must be at ease with your body, and I

think it helps if you're in a more stable sexual relationship."

Their statements are illustrated by the experience of several University women.

"I'd gotten pregnant with an IUD, and pills were turning my face brown," explains a 21-year-old health major. "Besides I was just sick of taking them. The more I read about them, the less I wanted to expose my body to the side effects. So I got a diaphragm, and now I think it's really neat."

Another woman followed a different path. "For me, the diaphragm was a last resort," says a senior who stopped using pills because of blood pressure problems and who later expelled an IUD. "I had to make it work. And now I really like it; I like knowing I'm not messing up my body. But using one at 22 is a lot different from using one at 15. I was so ignorant about my body then, I don't think I'd have known what to do with it."

"Diaphragms are fine if you're married or something like that," explains another young woman, "but they're harder if you're being more, well, promiscuous. It's one thing to get up in the middle of things to go to the bathroom when you're with your husband, but it's harder with someone you don't know so well. You wonder if the guy's offended."

According to most birth control experts, however, the "getting up to go to the bathroom" syndrome

doesn't need to be a part of diaphragm use. Recent studies have shown it is safe to insert the diaphragm as much as six hours before intercourse, (although more conservative sources recommend two hours). Another alternative, in Wunderlick's words, is for insertion "to be part of the lovemaking process." One University student for example, says her lover "always" inserts her diaphragm for her.

And although some women complain about the diaphragm's interference with so-called spontaneity, others see a certain advantage imbedded in that very drawback. As one pointed out, "It makes me have to think about what I'm doing — I have to really choose each time. ... I like the feeling of control over my actions," adds another.

Attitude change among women is not the only factor involved with renewed diaphragm use, according to some; the fact that the medical establishment is paying more attention to women's health concerns is also playing a part, they believe. "In the past, most doctors didn't want to take time to teach a woman how to use the diaphragm. It was easier for doctors to just write out a prescription for pills," explains Paseman, just as it was easier for women to take them. But now it appears many women and their physicians are viewing contraception under a different light — and that ease is no longer their primary consideration.

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