

Nuke danger exaggerated, researcher says

By DOUG FICK
Of the Emerald

Nuclear power is dangerous, but its danger has been exaggerated by the media and anti-nuclear groups, said Jerry Cohen, a Lawrence Livermore Laboratories nuclear researcher, during a Thursday night speech in the EMU Ballroom.

Cohen told a crowd of about 75 people that energy shortages will propel America back into the primitive "good old days" if it refuses to turn to nuclear power.

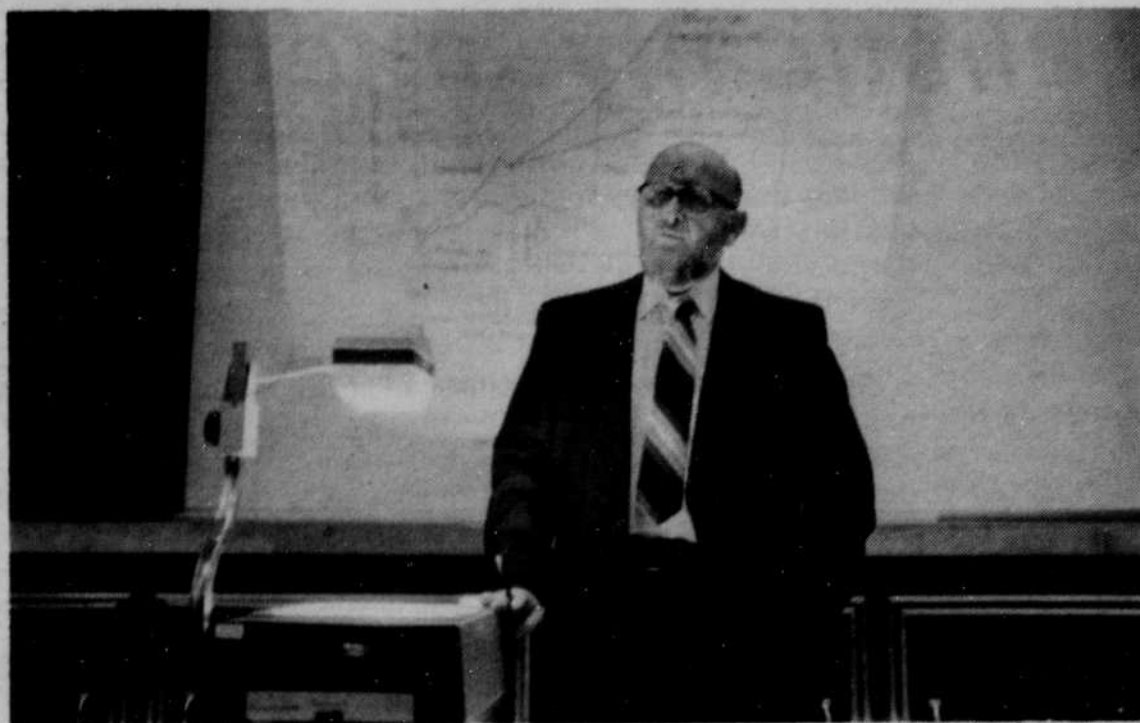
"The good old days weren't very good," he said.

The researcher contested claims that nuclear power is too dangerous for practical application. Fossil fuels present more long-range environmental hazards, he said.

Pointing to the controversial Three Mile Island accident, Cohen said that despite claims by anti-nuclear activists, the accident did not shatter the nuclear industry's safety image.

"The single fact remains — nobody was hurt and that was the worst thing that could happen."

Nuclear power does not present as many long-term hazards as lead waste or many other toxic chemicals, he said. Nuclear waste retains its toxic danger, but not for as long as lead waste, he said.



Nuclear power supporter Jerry Cohen

Photo by Steve Dykes

In fact, after 100,000 years the nuclear waste products are not as hazardous as the original radioactive fuel. "In the long run, nuclear power is a way to cleanse the earth," Cohen said.

Nuclear fuels have been condemned too hastily in this country, he said. There are dangers associated with nuclear fuels like plutonium, but their danger has been blown out of proportion, Cohen said.

"Plutonium is the only element that has been labeled by the National Council of Churches to be intrinsically evil. That's a pretty heavy rap for an element."

The average nuclear power plant produces enough toxic waste to kill the entire world population, and to cause long-range damage like mutation and cancer, but Cohen said that nuclear wastes are no more dangerous than automobile exhaust. Many of the toxic

wastes produced in nuclear power plants are naturally present in the earth's crust, he said.

"The earth has a lot of toxic goodies in it. If God had been required to file an environmental impact statement before creating earth, it would have never gotten past the Environmental Protection Agency."

The high cost of nuclear power is due, in part, to the increased safety demands of the federal government, he said. Government agencies responsible for regulating the industry are increasing their safety demands out of self-interest. Without regulations to enforce they wouldn't have jobs, he said.

The federal government spends more money to fight radiation pollution than to combat any other source of pollution. That practice is inconsistent, Cohen said, pointing to statistics which show the government spends \$10 million per human life lost for nuclear safety, compared to a much smaller figure per life lost for traffic safety.

"If we spent that amount of money on traffic safety, we could have saved fifty lives. By using that money on nuclear power, we are squandering it."

Cohen's speech was sponsored by the Cultural Forum and Trojan Nuclear Power Plant, and was funded by the Edison Electric Institute.

Release of dormitory interest money nears

By MARK MATASSA
Of the Emerald

Purchasing saunas, pool tables or weight rooms may become available budget options to University housing residents in January.

Some \$16,000 in housing deposit interest income will be returned to residents of dormitories, Amazon, Westmoreland and miscellaneous housing if resident representatives reach an agreement with the University administration and the ASUO.

Scott Bassett, ASUO president, says an agreement should be reached "easily within the next month."

The obstacle is not whether the money will be available to housing residents, but how it will be dispersed, Bassett says.

A proposal to channel the money to housing residents through the Incidental Fee Committee met with opposition this week from the Dorm Gover-

nance Committee, according to Bassett.

He says the DGC wants its share of the money without the approval of the IFC. But under the current proposal, the IFC would act only as a structure to allocate the funds.

"The IFC would be responsible for recognizing the group requesting the money and allocating money for special uses in lump sums," Bassett says.

For example, Bassett says, Walton dormitory complex might request \$200 for a social fund and \$800 for recreational improvement, and the IFC would make allocations in large lump sums, leaving the expen-

diture of that money to the discretion of the dorm president's council.

Ralph Sunderland, University budget director, says the allocation process would be supplemental to IFC guidelines. Under the proposal, the IFC would be a review body, making sure requests for the money are appropriate, he says.

The proposal is good because it allocates student money through the framework for allocating student money — the IFC, Sunderland says.

"Every dime spent at the University is subject to the budgetary process. Running it through the IFC provides safeguards against arbitrary changes in how the money is

spent," Sunderland says.

If an agreement is reached on the current proposal, the University administration will determine the exact amount of money available to each housing group.

Unused money would be held over for use by the same group the following year.

Correction

In Wednesday's Emerald the name of the Better Biking Committee chairer was misspelled. The correct spelling is Steve Brye.

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