

Nobelist denounces fears of radioactivity

Physicist says radiation has medical benefits

By MARIAN GREEN
Of the Emerald

Unfounded fear of low-level radioactive wastes only increases the cost of medical radioactivity and inhibits the development of new cures, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist told a University audience Thursday.

Rosalyn Yalow, winner of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize in physiology and medicine, lectured on the beneficial medical uses of radioactive materials as part of the Henry Failing Distinguished Lecture Series.

Yalow said studies of areas known to have greater-than-normal levels of radiation have failed to show higher incidence of cancer and other undesirable effects.

Yalow is the senior medical investigator at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Bronx, N.Y.

"How much more should we look?" she asked. "This is a time when we don't have an abundance of anything — even scientific talent."

"Each time scientists must do negative experiments, they're not doing research that saves lives."

Yalow won the Nobel Prize for developing a laboratory process known as radioimmunoassay (RIA).

RIA uses radioisotopes and immunologic methods for precise measurements of blood and other body fluids. The process enabled researchers to measure many substances in the body for the first time.

Among its many current applications, RIA is used to identify Neo-Natal Hypothyroid — an underactive thyroid in an unborn child.

Without RIA, "the doctor can't tell until the child is three months old and is sluggish," Yalow said. "As a consequence, there is irreversible severe mental retardation."

But "radiology in medical use almost came to a halt" in 1979, Yalow said, when three nuclear power plants with low-level waste disposal sites were closed.

Yalow participated in one of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's subcommittee hearings after the plant closures.

"Everybody was chicken except me," she said. "I said 'Let's examine the level of the



Rosalyn Yalow

Photo by Steve Dykes

wastes."

But the NRC decided to pack and ship the wastes to medical facilities at a cost of \$15 million for 400,000 gallons. Yalow said the amount of radioactivity in the wastes doesn't warrant expensive packing and shipping procedures.

People who live in Colorado receive twice the amount of

radiation because they live in elevations higher than East and West coast residents, but people aren't afraid to live there, Yalow argued.

"Are they dying like flies from cancer? No, Colorado has one of the lowest cancer rates. It's half that of New York."

"Doubling the radiation exposure has not had an obvious reaction on cancer rates."

Expert says Poles' effort winning freedoms

By JANE DE VIRGILIO
Of the Emerald

Polish workers are "sophisticated and self-confident," qualities that give them a good chance of retaining their newfound freedom, a Radio Free Europe official said Friday.

RFE vice president William Buell said he doubts Polish workers will get everything they

want, specifically a recent demand for a five-day work week.

Buell, a former state department official speaking on "The Workers' Struggle in Poland," said he believes Polish workers didn't want to overthrow the political system during the strikes.

"I do know, however, that they want to work within the Communist system," he added.

"Never once during the resistance did a worker carry a sign saying 'Down with Communism.' Their resistance was non-violent. They understood their limits within the system."

Those limits stretched surprisingly far, Buell said. The results of the workers "national and well-disciplined" efforts won them acceptance of virtually all their demands, he said.

Those demands included the right to establish trade unions independent of the government, to publish their own journal, and the right to strike.

The success of the industrial workers strike has spurred Polish farmers to seek collective bargaining with the state, Buell said.

Described as a "special aberration of the Polish system," Buell said 80- to 85-percent of the country's agriculture is private.

"Most investment goes to state farms and the private farmer would use rural collectivity to get his share."

The workers' unrest has had implications beyond the Polish border, Buell claimed, predicting that repayment of approximately \$8 million a year in debts to the United States will fall behind since yearly export earnings have decreased because of the strikes.

Buell said he doesn't see the possibility of worker unrest spreading to other Eastern Eu-

ropean countries. Poland would likely be more lenient with dissent than other satellite countries, he said.

During the strike, Polish workers received much help from the Committee for the Defense of the Workers, Buell said. The CDW is a group of academics who are skilled in using the media to publicize struggles such as that in Poland.

Buell described a unique "quadrilateral communications system" that evolved between Radio Free Europe and this committee.

"The workers gave their news to CDW who turned it over to the Western press. RFE received the news from Western press and transmitted it back into Poland."

Through this system the Polish citizen was almost immediately aware of the progress of the strikes, Buell said. Listenership increased to 75 percent of the adult population during this time.

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Cable TV rates inflate

Eugene cable television rates would increase by \$1 a month and cable installation rates would double under a rate plan proposed by Teleprompter of Oregon.

To make the rate increase more attractive, Teleprompter said it would make 11 new channels available to cable TV subscribers by June 1.

Teleprompter announced the proposed increase Friday at the Metropolitan Cable Television-Translator Commission. If ap-

proved, the increase would take effect April 1.

Under the plan, monthly service charges would go from \$6.95 to \$7.95, and monthly rates for an additional cable outlet would increase from \$1.50 to \$2, according to Teleprompter General Manager James Robinow.

Outlet installation for houses not yet connected to the cable would increase from \$9.95 to \$20, and reconnection of a home with disconnected service would go from \$5 to \$10.

The commission took no action on the proposal but scheduled a public hearing on the proposal for March 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Eugene City Hall.

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