

AEC Releases Details Of Radiation Accident; Seeks Mishap Prevention

By JOSEPH L. MYLER
United Press International
WASHINGTON (UPI)—At 4:35 p.m. on Dec. 30, 1958, Cecil W. Kelley pushed a button.

The button was on a switch at the top of a 225-gallon steel tank, 38 inches in diameter, in Room 218 at the Atomic Energy Commission's Los Alamos scientific laboratory in New Mexico. The switch looks just like the light switches in the ordinary home or apartment.

Kelley, 38, had pushed the button many times before. All it ever did was start a mechanical agitator, a bladed stirring device in the bottom of the tank.

That's all it did this time. But this time, there was an accompanying "blue flash" and a muffled report. Kelley ran from the room crying that he was "burning up."

At 3:15 a.m. Jan. 1, just 35 hours and 25 minutes after he pushed the button, Kelley was dead. By starting the stirring device he had performed the final act in a series of acts which, in sum, created the atomic chain reaction whose radiations killed him.

The accident happened in a plutonium recovery plant which had been operated by Kelley and others for 7 1/2 years with complete safety.

The Atomic Energy Commission in an official report Monday said that "the accident was directly attributable to errors on the part of the deceased operator during a series of transfers of plutonium and organic solutions between containers in a chemical plutonium recovery process."

It also was attributable to a chain of fateful circumstances. It involved safety margins measurable in fractions of an ounce and fractions of an inch. It is literally true that a plus of two-fifths of an inch killed Kelley.

Plutonium is a man-made fissionable material which is a vital part of most nuclear weapons. Bring together enough plutonium in the right geometrical shape and you get a "critical assembly" capable of sustaining a fission chain reaction. Such reactions add up to bombs if uncontrolled or to research or power assemblies if controlled. In either case, they release deadly radiation.

The AEC report says Kelley did a number of things he shouldn't have done. But the circumstances were unusual.

Recovery of plutonium from what otherwise would be waste material is a step-by-step process involving movement of liquids from one vessel to another, a lot of recycling, a lot of filtering, a lot of concentrating of tiny amounts into successively larger amounts.

On the day of Kelley's chain of mistakes, Los Alamos was taking an inventory of plutonium at various stages of the process. It so happened that plutonium-bearing

Grant Aids Counselors

An expanded counseling program for Oregon's secondary schools is the purpose of a \$68,000 grant recently approved for the Oregon state system of higher education by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The money will be used by the University of Oregon and Oregon State College to further train about 60 secondary school counselors.

Oregon's institute will be conducted June 22 through August 14 at the Portland General Extension division headquarters.

Grants of \$75 per week and payments of \$15 per dependent will be made available to enrollees from both public and private schools.

The courses may net applicants up to 12 hours of credit.

The two schools, in requesting the grant from the government, noted that "Oregon is markedly deficient in the supply of qualified counseling or guidance personnel."

Counselors may apply for the fellowships from Dr. Daniel W. Fullmer, associate professor of education for the General Extension division and the University of Oregon.

Fullmer has been named director of the institute.

Build Permits Top 1958

Building permits issued in Klamath Falls during January topped permits issued during January a year ago considerably.

The Bureau of Business Research at the University of Oregon released figures showing that permits worth a total of \$244,000 were issued last month compared to permits worth a total of \$29,022 during the same period last year.

Building is on the upswing everywhere in the state, too. The figures show that permits statewide totaled \$11,432,090 compared to last year's \$9,204,373. January total... a 24.74 per cent increase.

The report was compiled from data collected at 133 centers.

The boom shows construction of residences is again popular. Non-residence construction dropped from \$4,287,190 to \$3,093,409.

The bureau warns that permits issued are a gauge only of planned construction.

Meeting Held By Shasta PTA

Members of the Shasta PTA, during their annual Founders Day meeting held recently, elected members to serve on the nominating committee.

Named to the committee are Ethel Buckingham, Dorothy Beach and Jean Fraley.

During the meeting, members conducted a silver tea to honor the organization's past presidents and special guests. Honorees were presented gifts by Mrs. Norman Fraley, chairman of the afternoon program.

Mrs. Dan McAuliffe presided at a short business meeting. Guest speaker for the afternoon was Everett Perry. His topic was civil defense.

Deputies Leave With Prisoners

Murray Britton, Klamath County sheriff, and deputies left Monday afternoon for Salem with three prisoners earmarked for terms in state prison. The prisoners are Edmund M. Arterburn, 31, of Eugene, found guilty of forging a check for \$20 at the Pines Tavern in January; Robert McCulloch, 23, of Klamath Falls, found guilty of obtaining money by false pretenses when he paid for clothes with a worthless check January 23 in Drews Manshore, and Gilbert Raymond Marshall, 27, of Klamath Falls, charged with stealing a rifle from the residence of a local couple.

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Porky Bounty Deemed Empty

Klamath County's porcine bounty is gone for the year.

Mrs. Eva Cook, county treasurer, said the fund was depleted last week when two hunters collected \$10 and \$20 bounties. That used up the \$6,000 fund that began last July.

The \$6,000 represented 12,000 porcines killed by bounty hunters. Last year the same amount of money expired in December. Whether the bounty will be re-summed again next July is to be determined by the county court.

STEALS PONIES' TAILS

CHESSINGTON, England (UPI)—A prowler slipped into the pasture of three circus ponies Monday night and carefully clipped off and stole the tails and manes of each animal.

CITY BRIEFS

Keno—The Keno Home Extension will meet Wednesday, March 11, at 10 a.m. in the home of Mrs. Lane Smith of 3800 Green Springs Drive. A potluck luncheon will be served. The project concerns civil defense.

Square Dance—The Junior B and D square dancing group will meet Wednesday, March 11, at 7 p.m. in the city library auditorium. Members should bring 75 cents for badges.

Rummage Sale—Women of St. Mary's Altar Society will hold a rummage sale Friday and Saturday, March 13 and 14, at Sacred Heart Parish Hall. Donors are asked to bring articles to the hall March 12.

Great Books—Great Books Discussion Group will meet at 8 p.m. March 16 in the city library to discuss Newton's "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy."

PTA Election—Officers for 1959-60 will be elected at a meeting of the Pelican PTA Wednesday night at 7:30 in the Pelican School auditorium.

Juniper Garden Club—invites members of all garden clubs to a program to be held at the Henley Grange Hall on Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m. Claude Mills will speak and show slides on modern planting. There will be prizes and refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

OTI—Faculty wives and Women's Club of OTI will hold their regular monthly meeting Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the student lounge on the campus. All members urged to attend.

Fathers Night—at Fremont PTA Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 p.m. Paul Angsted will talk on occupational studies and explain some of the courses available at KUHS. Fremont band will play. Refreshments will be served.

ML Mazama—Toastmistress Club will meet Thursday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the Willard Hotel. There will be a teen-age panel. Virginia Fuller will be moderator. Doris Abernathy will give a three-minute speech with props. Eve Morley will give a three-minute impromptu speech. Ingabard Pex will preside. Guests are welcome.

Naomi Shrine—No. 4, WSOJ, will hold a stated meeting Saturday, March 14, at 8 p.m. in the Masonic Temple. This is the annual meeting and there will be election of officers. All members are asked to attend.

Sojourners—will hold a regular no-host luncheon on Wednesday, March 11, at 12:30 p.m. in the Pine Grove Room of the Willard Hotel. Business meeting at 1:30 will be followed by an afternoon of bridge, canasta and pinocle. All newcomers welcome. For further information please call Mrs. Al Siga at TU 4-4248.

Police Probe Local Thefts

Walter Loucks, of 1748 Menlo Way, reported to Klamath Falls police the theft of four doors from the back of a truck parked at 300 Eldorado Street Friday night or Saturday morning.

Officers are investigating the reported theft of a bicycle belonging to Duane Singleton of Klamath Falls as it was parked in the lot of a local theater Saturday afternoon.

Ralph E. Wills of Klamath Falls told officers two spinner hubcaps were taken from his car as it was parked at Fifth and Oak streets Friday night.

A Klamath Falls man, Don Lacedell, told officers an expensive watch was stolen from his car which was parked at 1937 Wantland Avenue early Sunday morning.

DIVORCE UNCONTROLED
HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Film producer Otto Preminger will not oppose his wife's divorce suit when it comes up for trial today, his attorney said. An agreement was reached allowing Mary Preminger to obtain a default decree with Preminger withdrawing his charges of misconduct against her involving English actor Michael Rennie.

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