

Seabrook symbolizes nuclear "troubles"

Amidst cheers from antinuclear demonstrators camped outside its downtown Washington offices in a 56-hour vigil, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced at 8:20 p.m., June 30, that it would suspend — for the second time in 18 months — construction of the Seabrook, N.H., nuclear plant.

Seabrook's construction approval has been swinging conditionally, back and forth, since its first construction permit was issued in June 1976. And the volley of decisions — primarily over the environmental impacts of cooling the plant with a "once-through" seawater system — has become chaotic. For example, in 1975 the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office approved once-through cooling. By late 1976, the regional adminis-

trator rescinded the approval. Then in May 1977 the EPA headquarters overturned the last regional-office decision. But in February a federal court of appeals ruled that EPA had made procedural errors in that overruling.

NRC will let construction on Seabrook resume if the results of a new EPA hearing support once-through cooling. (Results of that hearing should be available by September, EPA sources say.) If not, the suspension will continue, at least until completion of a review of alternate sites for plants with a cooling tower.

For a long time the U.S. nuclear industry has been complaining that it is "in trouble." And to many, Seabrook symbolizes some of the root causes, particularly the regulatory ones. According to the July 6 NUCLEONICS WEEK, even the three NRC commissioners who ruled on its suspension see Seabrook as "a paradigm of fragmented and uncoordinated government decisionmaking." □

San Francisco gays well-adjusted

Homosexual behavior may be pathological by some moral standards, but its practice appears to have few emotional consequences for gays themselves — at least those in San Francisco. A study of 979 homosexual men and women living in the Bay area finds that most of them are stable, happy and well-adjusted and only a small percentage fit the derogatory stereotypes frequently assigned to gays.

The research, supported by a \$500,000 National Institute of Mental Health grant, compares the results of extensive interviews with gay community members to those of interviews of a 477-person heterosexual control group. The survey — conducted in 1970 and about to be published in book form this summer — represents the most comprehensive look yet at the psychological and social adjustment of homosexuals, according to the study's authors at the Institute for Sex Research (often called the Kinsey Institute) at Indiana University.

The investigators found that homosexual men in general differed little from heterosexuals in feelings of happiness and good physical health. However, the gays did express more feelings of loneliness, depression and lack of self-acceptance. And a significantly larger percentage of the gay men had attempted or had contemplated suicide. Homosexual women reported somewhat less current happiness and self-esteem, but generally paralleled heterosexuals in their overall psychological adjustment.

Researchers Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg report that the happiest and best-adjusted gays were those in a "close coupled" relationship, the equivalent of a healthy heterosexual marriage. Another recent study at the State University of New York at Stony Brook found children of gay

or transsexual couples appear to be well-adjusted (SN: 6/17/78, p. 389).

Those homosexuals also scoring about as highly as most heterosexuals are those in the "functional" (self-assured, unattached "swinging singles") and "opened coupled" (living together but tending to seek fulfillment outside the home) groups. Most emotional disturbances were found among the dysfunctionals — 13 percent of the gay males and 5 percent of the females — who, although sexually active, felt guilty and confused about their homosexuality and had sexual problems; and the asexuals, who regretted their homosexuality, were less sexually active and less exclusively homosexual.

Overall, however, the report says that "relatively large numbers of homosexual men manage their homosexuality with little difficulty, while a homosexual way of life is problematic for only a distinct minority." Just what part, if any, the socially liberal atmosphere of a city like San Francisco plays in the adjustment of gays is not addressed in the first release of the report. □

Critics hit DOE

Two new guns were leveled last month at the Department of Energy. The General Accounting Office and the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy both took pot shots. The OSTP report, prepared by a 14-member committee drawn from industry, universities and government, found a dearth of basic research at DOE, especially in the solar and fossil fuel programs. For example, the report noted that gasification and liquification of coal will take fundamental research advances. Yet "revolutionary" or "innovative" research

that differs from mainline programs is given little support.

Where research does occur, rigid timetables and overmanagement hurt the programs. According to the report, this is especially true at DOE labs, which take 50 percent of DOE's \$2.7 billion R&D budget. "New discoveries upset timetables and therefore cannot be readily incorporated into schedules. Yet a propensity by administrators to manage research programs in detail, in a manner analogous to demonstration projects, results in serious interference," the report noted. In addition, the OSTP report hit the mere 20 percent of DOE research money that goes to universities. Other government agencies on the average sink 46 percent of their research budget into universities.

The GAO report looked at conservation. It was prompted by the recent rise in energy consumption, which had decreased between 1972 and 1976. GAO recommended step-by-step conservation goals. To meet them, GAO said that the DOE should:

- Monitor gasoline and residential fuel consumption and get the authority to raise prices when consumption increases.
- Discontinue the existing industrial energy conservation program and develop a new agency to set, measure and enforce energy conservation goals for industry. □

New meteorite type

Researchers have identified a new member of a group of rare meteorites called achondrites, SCIENCE NEWS has learned. The unique, 482.5-gram achondrite is among the 300-odd batch of Antarctic meteorites recovered recently (SN: 2/11/78, p. 87) by a U.S.-Japanese team led by William A. Cassidy of the University of Pittsburgh. Formal announcement of the find awaits verification by K. Yanai of the National Institute of Polar Research in Japan.

Achondrites comprise only six to seven percent of all meteorites and lack the bead-like inclusions typical of more common chondrites. Because they closely resemble igneous rocks, achondrites are thought to represent early stages of planetary evolution.

According to Brian Mason of the Smithsonian Institution, who analyzed the sample, meteorite 30005 is 55 percent olivine, 35 percent pyroxene, both formed by volcanic processes, and 8 percent maskelynite, a glassy derivative of feldspar formed when a rock receives intense shock waves like those from a cosmic collision. The new specimen may therefore record both the earliest time of planet formation and a much later, highly intense impact. The find also confirms a theory that was "just a gleam in Professor Cassidy's eye," says Mason — that the accumulation of meteorites in the Antarctic would increase the chances of finding undiscovered types. □