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Newsletter



NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF THE HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

Volume XXXVII No. 3
November 2001

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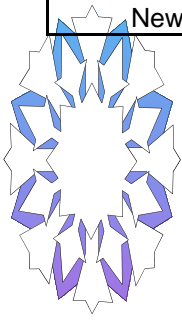
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VENDOR NIGHT AND HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Thursday, December 6, 2001
Albert's Restaurant,
217 Washington Street
Stoughton, Massachusetts

Come meet your chapter Affiliate members and win prizes!!!

Festivities begin at 3:30 pm with vendor displays and cash bar.

Dress casual and bring your business cards.

Stop by each vendor, drop off a business card and be eligible to win prizes.

Buffet at 5:00 pm

Soup & salad; roast sirloin of beef; chicken stir-fry; lasagna; meatballs & sausage; ziti; potato & vegetable; baked stuffed filet of sole; hot fudge sundae.

Vendor raffles will follow dinner

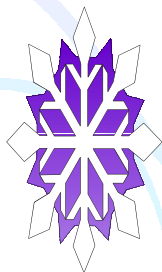
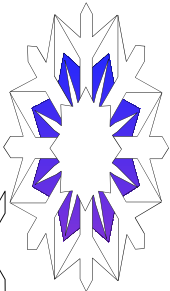
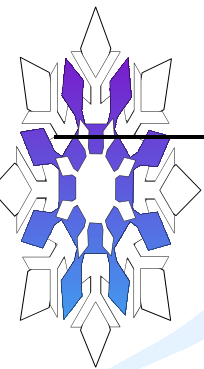
Cost for members is \$20, Students \$15, Guests \$25

Directions: From 128 North or South –
Take route 138 south (Stoughton/Canton exit)
Follow Route 138 for about 4 miles
Albert's Restaurant is on the right side (217 Washington Street)

Registration Deadline is December 3, 2001.

To register: call Ed Maher at (978) 568-2785
email Ed at: efmaher@dukeengineering.com

OR Register online at www.nechps.org and you can pay at the door.



US NRC Approves Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Site

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Nuclear Regulatory Commission Tuesday signed off on a plan to build an underground dump in Nevada's Yucca Mountain to hold radioactive spent fuel from nuclear power plants.

Yet another step in a long approval process, NRC approved a site suitability study submitted by the Department of Energy. The Bush administration must still submit that plan for congressional approval.

The Energy Department in August gave a favorable safety assessment to the proposed project, which would face an uphill battle on Capitol Hill. It is heavily opposed by Democrat Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the new Senate assistant majority leader.

The site in the Nevada desert would store thousands of tons of radioactive materials from nuclear power plants for an estimated 10,000 years.

Low-level radioactive waste board to fold next summer

By Associated Press, 11/8/2001

BOSTON (AP) Massachusetts' Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Board will be history by June 30.

Three of the board's four members met Wednesday, and agreed to the phase-out schedule. It was the first meeting in more than a year of the board, which met twice in 2000.

The agency was established by the state Legislature in 1987 to site a possible disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste, but the state abandoned those plans in 1995.

The board's primary function since has been one of keeping records of waste disposed in Utah and South Carolina by about 460 Massachusetts businesses, hospitals and research facilities. The survey and record-keeping duties most likely will be transferred to the state Department of Public Health.

The board is headed by former state Sen. Thomas C. Norton of Fall River, who was appointed to the \$91,000-a-year executive director's post by then-governor Paul Cellucci. There are two full-time employees who are paid \$51,200 each, and a part-time assistant.

The waste generators pay annual fees which cover the board's \$202,368 budget.

Membership Dues

Members are reminded that they should pay their dues *by December 31* to assure inclusion in the Chapter Year 2001 - 2002 membership handbook. You may check your dues status by looking at the mailing label attached to this newsletter - the label will have a statement in the upper right corner: "Paid thru July 2001", for example.

Remember that the current By-Laws state that dues are \$10.00 per year, however, a payment of \$40.00 will get a member 5 years of Chapter membership.

Please send your payment to Ron Thurlow, NECHPS Treasurer, 21 Myrtle Ave, Newburyport, MA, 01950. Dues are always accepted and payable at the Chapter's technical meetings.

Cold War Research Baby Teeth Found

ST. LOUIS (AP) - About 85,000 baby teeth collected from 1959 to 1970 and only discovered recently could help pinpoint whether fallout from Cold War nuclear bomb tests caused cancer and other health problems years later, researchers say.

The teeth from the St. Louis Baby Tooth Survey determined that children were absorbing radioactive fallout from nuclear bomb tests by the United States and the Soviet Union. The study received international attention and helped persuade the nation to adopt a 1963 treaty banning atmospheric bomb tests.

The teeth were found in May in hundreds of boxes by Washington University officials cleaning out a school bunker where they'd been stored since the 1970s. They were in small envelopes fastened by rusty paper clips to cards with details about the children who gave the teeth to science instead of the tooth fairy.

"We flipped out when we heard about the 85,000 teeth," Joseph Mangano, national coordinator with the independent, nonprofit Radiation and Public Health Project research group, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for a story Friday. "It was like an early Christmas present."

Now, researchers in New York are hoping to find the owners of the teeth and determine whether they've experienced health problems, such as thyroid cancer, in the decades since.

Mangano wants anyone born and living in St. Louis from the late 1940s through the 1960s - especially if they believe they submitted teeth - to contact his group. If matched with any of the baby teeth, the person would be mailed a health questionnaire.

"I see no reason not to join in a study like that, to be part of history," said Eric Pickles, given that his is include among the baby teeth. Pickles, 43, said he hasn't had health problems.

After World War II, the U.S. government set off about 100 nuclear bombs in aboveground tests in the West. Public concern about radioactive fallout rose as scientists began to find it in the environment and milk supply downwind from the explosions.

The survey, which began in late 1958, became so well-known that letters addressed simply "Tooth Fairy, St. Louis" got to the committee's office. By the time it ended in 1970, the project had collected nearly 300,000 baby teeth, mostly within a 150-mile radius of St. Louis.

All seemed forgotten until this spring, when the teeth were found.

The new study has no funding. The study's results will be published in peer-reviewed medical journals, Mangano said.

NECHPS Meeting Calendar 2002

January 31, 2002 - Joint meeting with NEAAPM?

Location TBA

March 14, 2002 - Joint meeting with AIHA on Laser Safety

Sheraton Tara - Lexington, MA

April 25, 2002 - Joint meeting with CCHPS with the HPS President-Elect

Providence Marriott

June 6, 2002 - NECHPS Annual meeting
Westford Regency

Radiation Safety Without Borders

By Ninni Jacob

As you all are aware, one of the initiatives of George Anastas, President of the Health Physics Society, is Radiation Safety without Borders. He would like the society to make a meaningful impact on radiation safety in both the United States and other countries. He states that our colleagues in other countries often struggle as they work to reduce relatively large doses to real people.

The radiation safety infrastructures and programs in developing countries need to be upgraded and the radiation safety personnel in these countries need help to do the job. To this end George has proposed that health physics society chapters adopt a country. Chapters could provide mentoring and assistance to emerging radiation safety persons and groups in adopted countries.

E-mail could provide an easy mechanism to effect communication, cooperation and assistance. Chapters might also sponsor individuals from adopted countries to attend Annual and Mid-Year Society meetings and to meet with colleagues in the United States. One of the many benefits, George says, is that "the Chapter will have fulfilled important societal, humanitarian and professional goals and will have contributed to the further beneficial use of ionizing radiation."

The Executive Council of NECHPS voted to join George in this effort. We decided to partner with the Greater New York Chapter and sponsor Portugal. When we receive more information from George, we will share it with the membership. If any of you are interested in volunteering for this effort, please contact Ninni Jacob at 401 863 1738.

(See related article in the October 2001 HPS Newsletter Editorial by Andrew Karam).

Oddities

Thief gets dose of radiation at break-in

(Reuters) A determined thief who broke into a Canadian weather station made off with more than \$188 worth of tools, as well as a dose of radiation.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police issued an unusual warning on November 9 urging the thief to seek medical treatment immediately, reminding him or her that the visit can remain secret because of doctor-patient confidentiality rules.

Police said the thief was exposed to radiation when entering and leaving the unmanned station at Mount Sicker on southern Vancouver Island through a Doppler Radar dome near the top of the facility.

"The radar dome is bathed in radiation. Human exposure to this type of radiation could result in permanent damage to soft tissue, i.e. eyes and testicles," police said in a statement.