

## D'Amato and Forbes Call for Permanent Shutdown of HFBR; They Push Legislation for Reactor's Decommissioning

As BNLers first learned through Tuesday morning's *Newsday*, U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York and First District Congressman Michael Forbes have publicly announced not only their "unalterable" opposition to the restart of BNL's High Flux Beam Reactor (HFBR), but also their commitment to shut down the HFBR permanently through legislation — which D'Amato introduced to Congress that afternoon (see box).

"We will do whatever it takes to pass [this legislation] sooner rather than later," said D'Amato, who did the majority of talking during an 11:30 a.m. joint press conference on September 2 at the New York State Supreme Court building in Mineola.

There, the two New York Republicans stated that they have three legislative goals: First, said D'Amato, is "to prohibit the HFBR's restart and future operation"; second, to have the HFBR decommissioned; and "third and foremost, the comprehensive, total cleanup" of radioactive contamination associated with the HFBR, "especially as it relates to drinking water."

In pursuing these legislative goals, D'Amato and Forbes promised, according to the Senator, that they will "look for any [legislative] vehicle" to get this action through the Senate and House

in "an expeditious manner," either as an amendment to existing legislation or as an independent bill. After a recess through the three-day Labor Day weekend, Congress was back in session on Tuesday, to attend to 13 appropriations bills, which keep the government, including its national labs, operating.

In addition, the two politicians pledged to speak directly to Energy Secretary Federico Peña, to seek his cooperation in permanently shutting down the HFBR.

DOE's response to the Senator and Congressman was issued by Martha Krebs, who is Director of the Office of Energy Research: "The Department of Energy has not made a decision about whether or not to restart the [HFBR]. Secretary Peña has committed to an open decision-making process that includes the views of the people of Long Island, the scientific community and other interested parties. We also are considering related issues, such as the budget and reactor safety. The decision is scheduled to be made in January 1998."

Krebs continued, "We intend to continue to conduct a full, open and public process, and we welcome Senator D'Amato's and Congressman Forbes' contributions. I want to affirm that

[DOE] will continue to work with the [U.S.] Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] and state and local officials to ensure the safety of local drinking water. The EPA and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services [have] stated that the tritium contamination from the [HFBR] poses no public health threat."

D'Amato and Forbes also spoke of continuing their investigation into the Lab's handling of the tritium leak at the HFBR's spent-fuel pool, including the possibility of examining who is liable for the situation and its remediation.

"The Lab operates with an air of indifference, with no regard for the health and safety of the people of Suffolk County," stated D'Amato. "[I have] an obligation to everyone in the state and can't be indifferent to this situation. . . . We cannot continue to endanger people's health and safety. We have taken a course of action and are committed to it, and it is better now than never. . . . We didn't jump in overnight: We tried to work with the Energy Department . . . ."

"I strongly disagree with the Senator's characterization that we at BNL do not care about the health and safety of people in Suffolk County," said Interim BNL Director Peter Bond.

"We care very much about our neighbors, and I also note that nearly all of us, our families and our friends live in Suffolk County. In addition, the events involving tritium emissions at the HFBR have not endangered anyone's health or safety."

In addition to Bond, BNLers who attended the press conference included: Denis McWhan, Associate Director for Basic Energy Sciences; Dave Rorer, Reactor Division Manager; John Axe, Neutron Science Center Head; Marge Lynch, Public Affairs Office Manager; Bill Gunther, Manager of the Office of Environmental Restoration; Mona Rowe, Media Relations Supervisor; and Kathy Geiger, Community Relations Coordinator.

Also present were Gary Zukas, President of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers (OCAW) Union Local 8-431, and Phil Pizzo, Vice President of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2230, plus some two dozen BNLers from the Physics Department and Reactor Division.

As one of the reasons for their decision, D'Amato and Forbes cited a temporary increase on Wednesday, August 27, in tritium levels in the sanitary wastewater from the building that houses the HFBR, but which is not connected to the reactor vessel or to the spent-fuel pool.

That day, routine sampling of the wastewater from the sinks, toilets and floor drains had shown a tritium concentration of 49,300 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), which is above the 1997 daily average of 10,100 pCi/L. As a precautionary measure in case the spike continued or increased, the wastewater was diverted to a holding tank until it was determined that it was safe to release it. The temporary increase resulted in a tritium concentration of 5,000 pCi/L on August 28 at the Lab's sewage treatment plant, which was well below the EPA's drinking water standard of 20,000 pCi/L.

While the cumulative annual average (continued on back page)

## Prospective Contractor and BNLers Meet

Over 700 BNLers attended a presentation and reception this past Tuesday evening at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, hosted by Brookhaven Science Associates (BSA) — the SUNY-Stony Brook-Battelle Memorial Institute partnership that has announced its intention to submit a proposal to manage BNL for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Representing the BSA partnership at the presentation in Stony Brook's Staller Center that began at 7:30 p.m. were Shirley Strum Kenny, President of SUNY-Stony Brook, a nearby New York State-supported university with an enrollment of 18,000 undergraduate and graduate students in 71 disciplines, and Douglas Olesen, President and Chief Executive Officer of Battelle, a national, nonprofit, research and technology organization.

Two events that were unforeseen when Kenny and Olesen had issued their invitation to BNL staff on August 22 affected the tenor of the evening.

First, the meeting had been scheduled to take place following the original August 28 deadline for submittal of proposals to DOE, but, last week, DOE extended the deadline to next Monday, September 8 (see *Brookhaven Bulletin*, August 29, 1997). Because this phase of the selection process has not yet been completed, Kenny and Olesen were unable to discuss the contents of the proposal in any detail.

Second, the meeting took place at the end of a particularly trying day for BNLers, a day in which U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato and Congressman Michael Forbes demanded the decommissioning of the Lab's High Flux Beam Reactor (HFBR) (see story above).

As one employee said in the question-and-answer session that followed the presentations, "I feel battered."

He spoke of his pride when the discovery of the exotic meson at BNL's Alternating Gradient Synchrotron made this Monday's newspapers, then his distress when he opened *Newsday* Tuesday morning to read about the HFBR. "Can you talk about your ability to get the scientific message over to the politicians in Washington?" he wanted to know.

Olesen emphasized that several of the Battelle staff introduced that evening were from the organization's Washington D.C. office. "We put a lot of energy into Congressional relations," he said, ". . . [to keep them] as informed as possible when they go through the legislation process. . . . As you well know, the political process has a life of its own — you can put input in, but you can't control the outcome."

In Kenny's view, "There are two parts to the problems at BNL: first, the physical problems that are fixable, and, second, the perception of physical problems that are harder to fix — but *both* must be fixed. The politicians respond to the community. In most places in this country, the community recognizes the economic importance of these [national] labs. . . . We have to establish that with Brookhaven, and that's the first step to making headway in D.C. . . ."

"It's the most real problem that we have in protecting Brookhaven," Kenney added. "It takes a lot of candor, a lot of work. . . . It's not easy, but it's got to be done, and if I didn't think it was doable, I wouldn't have submitted a proposal."

In response to a query about how the day's developments would affect the BSA's proposal, Kenny said, "Our commitment to this project remains totally strong. [Even if legislation is introduced to permanently shut down the HFBR], that would not deter us in

our commitment. . . . Our purpose is to protect what you do, and we will work very hard to make that happen."

Later, when another question concerned the HFBR, Kenny said, "If we do not correct the perceptions, I think that there is a very serious chance that the reactor will not be reopened. We are talking about reactions on an island that saw what happened to Shoreham. Logical arguments are not enough. . . . We have to provide the conviction of absolute safety, or there's a very serious problem."

(continued on back page)

### D'Amato Introduces Senate Bill To Prohibit HFBR Reactivation

As promised, on Tuesday, September 2, Alfonse D'Amato, the Republican Senator from New York, introduced Senate Bill 1140 "to prohibit reactivation of the High Flux Beam Reactor [HFBR] at Brookhaven National Laboratory" under an act that he calls the "Long Island Drinking Water Protection Act."

In a single sentence, the bill demands: "The Secretary of Energy shall ensure that the High Flux Beam Reactor at Brookhaven National Laboratory is not reactivated."

In actuality, said Interim BNL Director Peter Bond, "The bill's title and its wording have nothing to do with each other, since the HFBR has not impacted Long Island's drinking water."

After its introduction, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, whose chairman is Republican Frank Murkowski of Alaska and whose ranking minority member is Democrat Dale Bumpers of Arkansas.

The committee's Republican members include: Pete Domenici of New Mexico, Don Nickles of Oklahoma, Larry Craig of Idaho, Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado, Craig Thomas of Wyoming, Jon Kyl of Arizona, Rod Grams of Minnesota, Gordon Smith of Oregon, Slade Gorton of Washington, and Conrad Burns of Montana.

The Democratic members of that committee are: Wendell Ford of Kentucky, Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, Bob Graham of Florida, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Tim Johnson of South Dakota, and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana.

To track the committee's and its subcommittee's actions on the bill or to send e-mail to committee members via the World Wide Web, go to <http://www.senate.gov/~energy>.

## D'Amato and Forbes (cont'd.)

age of the daily tritium concentration of wastewater from the HFBR building is below the EPA drinking water standard, occasional spikes above the average and the drinking water standard have occurred since the reactor began operating in 1965.

While the politicians labeled this as another tritium plume, the tritiated wastewater is confined to sewage piping and the sewage treatment plant, where BNL is permitted by DOE to discharge it to the Peconic River as long as its tritium concentration is 10,000 pCi/L or less. Because the holding tank was used, wastewater concentration from the sewage treatment plant never exceeded 10,000 pCi/L on August 27, or subsequently.

"This has happened repeatedly . . . no action is taken, and on and on it goes," commented D'Amato, pointing to a poster charting findings of tritium in groundwater at BNL dating from 1986. With hindsight, the elevations of the tritium concentration in groundwater discussed on that chart may have been related to a leak in the HFBR's spent-fuel pool.

Forbes called the HFBR "damaged and aging." He claimed, "To think that a 31-year-old reactor can safely be repaired and go on to full operation . . . is placing the full Lab itself . . . in jeopardy [with] the community."

Reactor Division Head Dave Rorer disagreed with Forbes's characterization of the HFBR.

"The HFBR vessel is constructed of an aluminum alloy that is not subject to the same type of life-limiting embrittlement experienced by the steel used in most other reactor vessels," Rorer explained. "We are carefully monitoring the condition of our vessel, and metallurgists predict at least another decade of safe operation for the HFBR. Meanwhile, we are putting a liner in the spent-fuel pool and continuing our program of constantly replacing other components as needed to keep the HFBR competently fit for safe operation and in compliance with the latest standards. To close the HFBR now would be like discarding a Rolls Royce that has been pampered by a top-notch crew of mechanics during its entire existence."

Regarding gathering community opinion about the HFBR, D'Amato held up to the press "The Future of the High Flux Beam Reactor" community handbook produced for the August 14 meeting that DOE and BNL held at the Mastic-Moriches-Shirley Community Library as a forum in which information on the HFBR could be shared and community opinion regarding the HFBR's restart could be solicited.

D'Amato claimed that the booklet was part of a public relations ploy to sell the restart of the reactor to the public, instead of written information on how the public may affect the Energy Secretary's decision (this information is now posted on the Employee Information Center outside of the cafeteria in Berkner Hall).

When Peña came to the Lab last May 1, he announced that he would decide in January 1998, whether or

not to pursue restarting the HFBR. His decision would come only after his considering the cost of environment, safety and health upgrades to the reactor, the value of the HFBR to the U.S. scientific community and the local community's input — which is being sought through these meetings.

But the Senator concluded from his reading of the community handbook, "When we were promised that this reactor would remain idle, they are going full steam ahead" on efforts to restart it.

D'Amato also disparaged the research that had taken place at the HFBR before it was shut down for routine maintenance just prior to the discovery of the tritium leak from its spent-fuel pool.

According to the Senator, "There isn't a great body of work that has gone on there that is worth jeopardizing the [other] work of the Lab. As a matter of fact, [the HFBR's] very presence undermines the totality of [the Lab]. The High Flux Beam Reactor is in no way essential to the body of research at Brookhaven National Laboratory."

Disagreeing with D'Amato following the press conference were several BNL scientists, including John Tranquada of the Physics Department. "Apparently, Senator D'Amato neither reads such major scientific journals such as *Science*, *Nature* and *Physical Review Letters*, nor talks to anyone who does. Otherwise, he would realize the error of his statement," said Tranquada.

D'Amato did, however, praise the rest of the Lab's research, calling it "world-class" and "wonderful work."

The Senator specifically cited facilities operated by the Lab for out-

side users, such as the National Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS) and the soon-to-be-completed Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider. Ironically, at the NSLS, physicists do research complementary to that done at the HFBR, and the fact that the HFBR and the NSLS are practically next door to each other at BNL has made the Lab a center for materials science research.

As well, D'Amato mentioned projects such as boron neutron capture therapy for a deadly type of brain cancer, which, again ironically, employs BNL's other reactor, the Brookhaven Medical Research Reactor.

The Senator concluded, "Will [closing the HFBR] endanger BNL? — absolutely not. What we are talking about closing affects only 5 percent of the Lab's budget and . . . represents only 4 percent of its work force, employees whom we hope can be utilized in the cleanup and decommissioning."

He continued, "If anything, [closing the HFBR] will allow the Lab to concentrate on its major scientific research, instead of operating the reactor." This too was ironic, as the Lab's primary mission is to operate large research facilities, such as the HFBR, so scientists from around the world may perform their research there.

Forbes added, "We want to save the entire Lab, so to do that, this action is necessary."

Despite those assurances, OACW President Gary Zukas said, "The Senator and Congressman are obviously misinformed of any actual or perceived hazard that the HFBR presents to the drinking water on Long Island. The EPA, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Suffolk County Water Authority have all repeatedly stated that the

tritium presents no hazard to the health of the people of Long Island. I frankly cannot help but conclude that this action by Senator D'Amato and Congressman Forbes is motivated by personal political gain. Senator D'Amato's flippant statement that only 4 percent of the work force at BNL would lose their jobs is far more arrogant than the attitude that he claims the people of BNL have. I can assure both the Senator and the Congressman that this Local Union President will work to see that both of them are among the percentage of the Congress that is not reelected."

And Peter Bond concluded, "I appreciate our elected officials' voice of strong support for the other programs at the Laboratory, but the loss of the HFBR would be a significant blow to the science capabilities of BNL and the nation. While there is no guarantee of an HFBR restart through Secretary Peña's process, it does provide a mechanism to evaluate the science impact, community concerns and cost before a final decision would be made. I do not understand why one would want to short-circuit that process."

— Marsha Belford

## Classified Advertisements

### Placement Notices

The Laboratory's placement policy is to select the best-qualified candidate for an available position. Candidates are considered in the following order: (1) present employees within the department/division and/or appropriate bargaining unit, with preference for those within the immediate work group; (2) present employees within the Laboratory; and (3) outside applicants. In keeping with the Affirmative Action Plan, selections are made without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or veteran status.

Each week, the Human Resources Division lists new placement notices, first, so employees may request consideration for themselves, and, second, for open recruitment. Because of the priority policy stated above, each listing does not necessarily represent an opportunity for all people.

Except when operational needs require otherwise, positions will be open for one week after publication.

For more information, contact the Employment Manager, Ext. 2882; call the JOBLINE, Ext. 7744 (344-7744), for a complete list of all job openings; use a TDD system to access job information by calling (516) 344-6018; or access current job openings on the World Wide Web at <http://www.bnl.gov/JOBS/jobs.html>.

**SCIENTIFIC RECRUITMENT** - Doctorate usually required. Candidates may apply directly to the department representative named.

**SCIENTIST/ENGINEER** - (two positions) Trained in physics and/or computer science with at least five years' experience in computing activities associated with high-energy or nuclear physics detectors and their data processing. Knowledge and experience required with UNIX systems support and administration, including networked-file system, and other tools and utilities. Substantial programming experience preferred, using modern programming techniques and languages, including C++, JAVA, C and FORTRAN. Knowledge and experience with object-oriented databases, object brokers, hierarchal storage managers (particularly HPSS), robotic tape systems and Windows NT highly desirable. Contact: Bruce Gibbard, RHIC Project.

**LABORATORY RECRUITMENT** - Opportunities for Laboratory employees.

DD 4095. ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION - Requires a bachelor's degree in business administration, accounting or computer science, or the equivalent. Familiarity with Lab financial/budget systems, and labor-cost distribution required; familiarity with PeopleSoft accounting system, Windows 95 and MS Office Suite (Excel/Access/MSWord) desired. Responsibilities include overall development, submission coordination and monitoring of all Division budgets and rates. Will prepare financial reports as required. Central Shops Division.

**OPEN RECRUITMENT** - Opportunities for Laboratory employees and outside candidates.

DD 4062. REFRIGERATION & AIR CONDITIONING ENGINEER - Under minimum supervision, constructs, installs, repairs, maintains and operates refrigeration, air conditioning, ventilating, and auxiliary and related equipment. Will perform the same work on air compressors and vacuum pumps, whether or not associated with the above equipment. Plant Engineering Division.

DD 0497. EXPERIMENTAL MACHINIST POSITIONS - Work on various materials from prints, sketches or verbal instructions. Set up and operate machine tools, and also perform benchwork on jobs where standards of operation may require unique application. Perform layout, preparation, measurement, setup, assembly and installation. Make own tools, and perform maintenance incidental to the operation of machines. May specialize. Central Shops Division.

DD 3733. SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATE POSITION - Requires a BS or MS in microbiology or equivalent, and experience in the techniques of microbiology, and the selection and typing of microorganisms, particularly extremophilic species. Will join an R&D team working on oil and geothermal brines biochemistry/microbiology. Department of Applied Science.

*Due to space limitations, there are no classified ads this week. Ads left out of this issue need not be resubmitted to appear in the next issue.*

## Contractor & BNLeers (cont'd.)

Olesen concurred, saying, "Each [of the national laboratories] has had problems with perception, but there are ways to work through them."

As best they could under the restrictions imposed by the proposal process, Kenny and Olesen also answered questions on subjects ranging from tenure to the selection of the Lab's next permanent director. They also discussed how the BSA would operate BNL in a 50-50 partnership, headed by a Board of Trustees consisting of five members from each partner and one each from six other universities whose scientists are major users of BNL facilities: Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton and Yale. The affiliation of the Board's Chair would alternate every two years between Battelle and Stony Brook.

Kenny, who would be the Board's first Chair if BSA gets the nod in November when DOE's Source Selection Officer Franklin Peters makes his decision about a new contractor for BNL, called the university-corporation partnership of BSA "something quite extraordinary. We really have put together a deal that is stronger than what has been the usual model in the past: It's a hybrid, and it has the strength of a hybrid." — Anita Cohen

## Arrivals & Departures

### Arrivals

**Craig R. Consiglio** ..... Physics  
**Achim Franz** ..... Physics  
**Brett L. Parker** ..... RHIC  
**Razvan Popescu** ..... RHIC  
**Kathleen R. Turner** ..... Physics  
**Matthew B. Wingate** ..... Physics

### Departures

This list includes all employees who have terminated from the Lab, including retirees:

**Walter W. Becker** ..... Adv. Technology  
**Neal R. Carciello** ..... App. Science  
**David J. Knoernschild** ..... AGS  
**Walter Kunnmann** ..... Chemistry  
**Laura M. Le Brun** ..... NSLS  
**Michael F. Wenzek** ..... Cent. Shops  
**Jeffrey N. Yablon** ..... App. Science

## Coming Up

**As part of the BNL 50th Anniversary Distinguished Lecture Series, Gösta Ekspong, Stockholm University, Sweden, will talk on "Alfred Nobel's Will" The talk will be held on Tuesday, September 16, at 4 p.m. in Berkner Hall.**

## Rifle & Pistol Club

The Rifle & Pistol Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month, so the next meeting is September 10, in Room 202, Bldg. 911B, at noon. For more information, call Otto Jacobi, club president, Ext. 3471.

## Fall Water Aerobics

Eight weeks of water stretching and exercise classes will be offered again at the Lab pool, Bldg. 478, 5:20-6:10 p.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning September 9 and 11.

Sponsored by the Health Promotion Program of the Occupational Medicine Division, classes are free, but participants must pay the pool fee of \$2 a session or show their season pool pass. Employees and their spouses may sign up for one or both classes by calling Mary Wood, Ext. 5923.

## Play Volleyball!

Last year's BERA Volleyball team captains were sent roster forms, but if you'd like to start a new team, you can get roster forms from Rick Wagener, Volleyball League president, Ext. 5886, or [wagener@bnl.gov](mailto:wagener@bnl.gov). Next, bring the completed form to the first captains' meeting on Wednesday, September 17, at noon, in Berkner Hall auditorium.

Those interested in playing but who are not on a team may contact Wagener to be included in a players' pool. Players at all levels are encouraged to join, as there is a league for every skill level.

Also on the agenda for the captains' meeting is the confirmation of new officers.

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