



# ARIZONA NEWSLETTER

## DOCTORS FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Jan. 1985 (Vol. 1, no. 2) 1601 N. Tucson Blvd. #9, Tucson AZ 85716 © 1985 by J. Orient

### MISINFORMATION AT MARICOPA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

Though billed as "noncontroversial" and "informative," the presentation on nuclear war at the December meeting of the Maricopa County Medical Society was highly political and full of errors.

Representing Physicians for Social Responsibility, Dr. Lockwood of the University of Texas Health Sciences Center discussed the effects of nuclear weapons and proposed defensive systems. In what was possibly a slip of the tongue, this prominent neurologist referred to the central nervous system effects of intense radiation as the "cardiovascular syndrome."

More misleading even than the actual errors were the omissions. Although he detailed the well-known difficulties in treating extensive burns, Dr. Lockwood did not mention that simple protective measures could drastically reduce the number of burns. In describing the "zones of destruction" around the detonation of a warhead, he ignored the increasing numbers of survivors in the outer zones. His response to questions about the extensive and costly Soviet civil defense system, which involves all citizens from second grade through retirement, was, as usual, ridicule and half truths.

To "prove" that the strategic defense initiative would be insupportably expensive as well as futile, Dr. Lockwood cited figures from the Union of Concerned Scientists. This group has itself admitted to errors in these calculations, though in a roundabout way that doesn't quite get across the idea that one little mistake turned a 25 ton satellite into a 40,000 ton satellite. The report is analyzed in detail by Robert Jastrow in the December issue of Commentary.

On public health issues this important, the medical society has the responsibility to provide its members with reliable information. Will they give equal time to DDP?

\*\*\*\*\*

### TUCSON MEETING

NEED A SPEAKER?

CALL DDP SPEAKERS  
BUREAU

325-2689

STAR WARS: CREATIVE ALTERNATIVE TO A GENOCIDAL DEFENSE POLICY is the subject of a slide presentation by Bill Anderson of the Optical Sciences Dept., University of Arizona. The talk will be held in Dining Room D at Arizona Health Sciences Center on Thursday, January 31, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The room opens from the cafeteria of University Hospital.

We'd like to present both sides.

But so far, we haven't found anybody willing to be the Negative.

Volunteers?

\*\*\*\*\*

## TUCSON OPEN UNIVERSITY LISTS DDP COURSE

The course Is There Survival in the Nuclear Age? has been listed again by Tucson Open University.

The class will meet two Thursday evenings, Feb. 14 and 21, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Pima County Medical Society Building, 5199 E. Farness. (From Grant Rd., turn south on Rosemont, and left on Farness.) The registration fee is \$10.

The curriculum will include an introduction to radiation physics; nuclear weapons effects and protective measures; the aftermath of nuclear war, including "nuclear winter." Dr. Orient will be the instructor.

To sign up, call TOU at 622-0179 or 884-5055 or write 1041 E. 6th St., Tucson 85719.

## 27 KILLED IN COAL MINE

Christmas brought bad news to a number of Utah families.

Underground coal mining remains one of the most dangerous occupations. One life is lost for every \$5.2 million of coal produced, in contrast to \$200 million worth of cars or \$62 million worth of chemicals (calculated before the Bhopal tragedy).

But improved mine safety is very expensive. To save a single life by tightening safety regulations costs about \$22 million. A much cheaper way is to substitute uranium for coal whenever possible. Uranium mining is also dangerous, but much less must be mined to provide equivalent amounts of energy.

For comparison, sulfur scrubbers in power plants cost only \$320,000 per life saved, as did auto safety improvements between 1966 and 1969. Mobile cardiac emergency units cost \$30,000 per life saved, as do cancer screening programs. Vaccines for children in poor countries are cheap: \$25 per life saved. Food for overseas relief costs \$5300 per life saved.

Is civil defense too expensive? A space in a blast shelter costs about \$1000.

## GOVERNMENT RENOUNCES CIVIL DEFENSE

The federal government now recognizes that our technologically dependent society is subject to disasters that could cause unprecedented mass casualties. Thus, the new National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) has been developed. Thomas P. Reutershan of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) visited Tucson on January 10 to explain the system and solicit support.

The federal government does not plan to provide much funding to the venture. Most of the budget is being funneled from the Public Health Service. Supplies and equipment are to be salvaged from the packaged disaster hospitals of the 1960's (an idea proposed by DDP a few years ago--as a start). About 8000 temporary 200-bed hospitals were initially planned. About 2500 were distributed before the program was abandoned due to high cost. In a recent inventory, the government managed to find some 400 (16%) of them, in various states of preservation.

NDMS intends to shield participants from liability claims, to organize disaster exercises, and to provide education and training. Its main contribution appears to be its expertise in management. Otherwise, the program is to be a showcase of private volunteer effort.

What about civil defense? Although to be coordinated through military and Veterans Administration hospitals, NDMS doesn't have much to do with the constitutionally mandated function of providing for the common defense. In the event of a nuclear war, the citizens are on their own. NDMS claims to have nothing to offer.

If California has an earthquake, NDMS might send the Rural-Metro Fire Department to help out.

DDP has posed the question: who in the federal government is responsible for civil defense? Reutershan only knows that it's not NDMS.