

JAMES WOMACK of Southport tests his ability to generate electric power at a hands-on (feet, too) exhibit at the CP&L Visitors Center.

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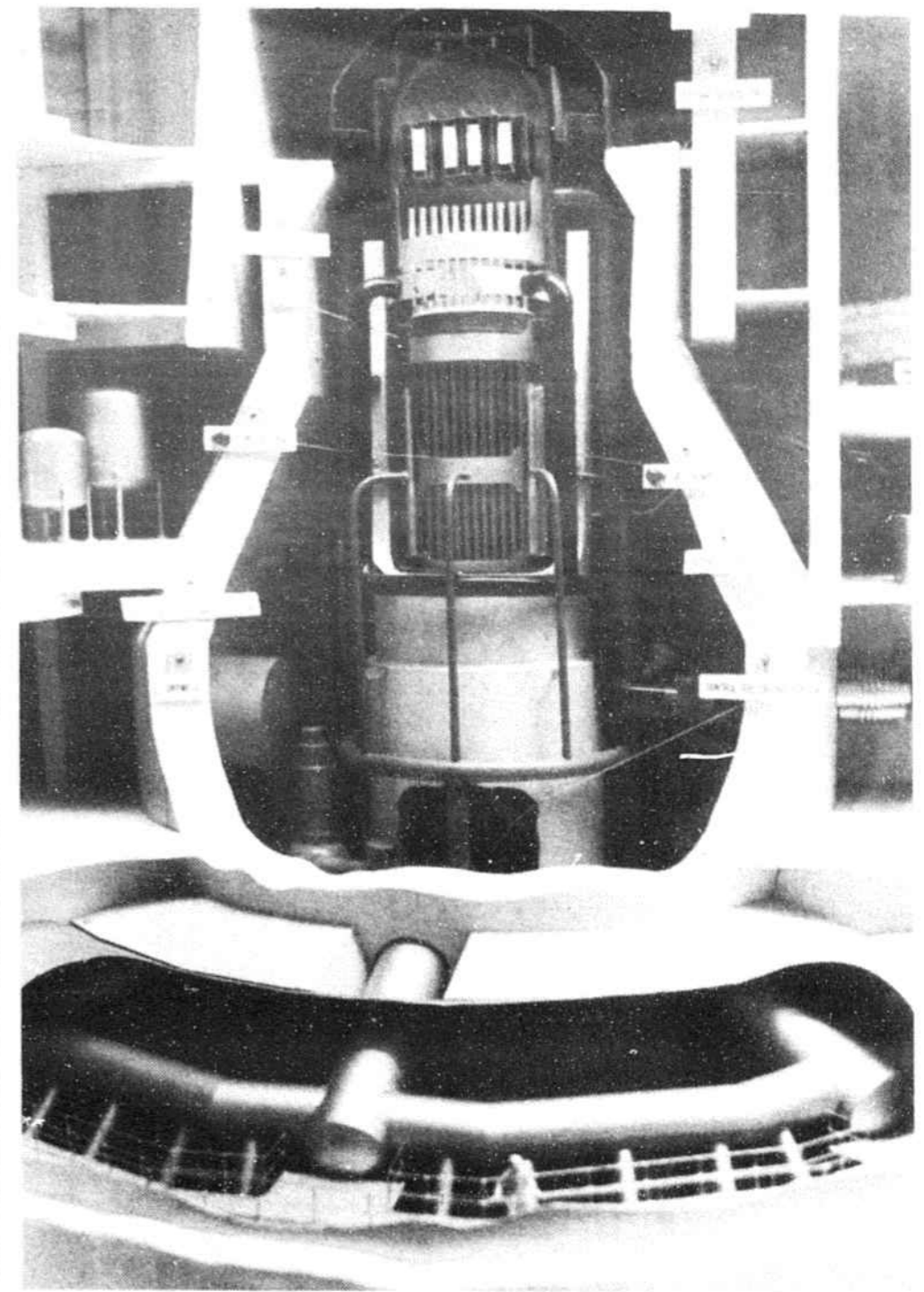
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THE INNARDS of the Brunswick Nuclear Plant's reactor building are displayed in a realistic, animated scale model at the CP&L Visitors Center

This Center is Educational As Well As Very Entertaining

(Continued From Page 49)

the water is heat). What you see along the canal is the same stuff you find on the beach after a storm, when waves agitate the seawater into a windblown foam.

One of the most fascinating exhibits at the center allows a visitor to experiment with a Geiger counter to compare the levels of radiation given off by natural and manmade objects.

Most people are surprised to find that many items commonly encountered in our environment give off emit more radioactivity than a nuclear fuel pellet. Yet these little chunks of Uranium dioxide—no bigger than the end of your little finger—can generate as much electricity as a ton of coal, 126 gallons of oil, 5,000 pounds of wood or 17,000 cubic feet of natural gas!

The CP&L Center is chock full of facts and figure to amaze and intrigue the visitor. One exhibit lets your muscles learn a lesson about energy by testing their ability to create electric power on two bicycle generators.

Peddalling the first bike shows how much power a human can generate in three ways: milliwatts of electricity, the energy value in thousandths of a cent and the amount of time that the generated electricity would illuminate a light bulb.

The second bicycle generator is

attached to several common household appliances. By pedalling rapidly and turning on the switches, a visitor can literally feel how much more power it takes to run a hair dryer than it does a television set.

Later in the tour, you can test what you've learned in a touch-screen video game of tic-tac-toe. Players get to choose a desired square, but can only occupy it by correctly answer an energy-related question.

Younger visitors can watch educational cartoons featuring "Louie the Lightning Bug," who gives children useful safety tips about recognizing high-voltage signs, avoiding downed wires and keeping kites away from power lines.

Homeowners will also find exhibits that demonstrate ways of saving energy by eliminating drafts, installing proper insulation and buying efficient appliances. A display of free brochures gives more detailed advice about these and other energy-related topics.

For young and old, the CP&L Visitors Center is a fun and educational look at something we use every day, but rarely appreciate.

The center is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except holidays. Between June and August, the center also is open on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

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