

EVERYONE'S BACKYARD

Vol. 20, No. 3 ♦ Fall 2002

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Seattle: No
More
Persistent
Toxics

Local
Elections:
An Opportunity
for Activists



Going Door-to-Door:
A Lesson from Love Canal

Louisiana Fence-Line Community
Wins Relocation

The Journal of the Grassroots Environmental Movement
Center for Health, Environment and Justice

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ABOUT CHEJ

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that provides organizing and technical assistance to grassroots community organizations nationwide. The center was founded in 1981 by Lois Gibbs, who together with her neighbors won the relocation of more than 900 families from their neighborhood after it was contaminated by chemicals leaking from the Love Canal landfill in Niagara Falls, NY. Hundreds of people living near contaminated sites around the country contacted Lois as her efforts and those of her neighbors captured national attention and proved, for the first time, that toxic waste is not an abstract issue but one that's in everyone's backyard.

The center's mission is to help people build democratic, community-based organizations to address public health and environmental threats. We believe strongly that the best way to solve local problems is from the bottom up, when the people directly affected speak for themselves and have a meaningful role, as equals, in any and all decisions that affect their lives, homes and family. Our focus and resources are devoted to helping local community based organizations form, grow, and become effective in achieving their goals. We do this by providing information, advice, training, and support. We also refer callers to other grassroots groups who are working on the same issues or fighting the same polluter.

CHEJ can help your newly formed group:

- ◆ learn how to conduct successful meetings
- ◆ raise funds
- ◆ define a strategic plan to accomplish goals,
- ◆ network with others
- ◆ hold news briefings and press conferences
- ◆ identify experts to assist with technical or scientific issues and questions

For more established groups, CHEJ can provide guidance and assistance on issues such as keeping people involved over the long haul, organizational structure and board development, one- to five-year strategic planning, building working coalitions, developing campaign and issue strategies, media training and assistance, and expanding beyond your existing geographical area.

CHEJ has staff scientists who can answer many of your questions and who can review technical documents and tests results you need help with. The center also has a unique library of books, reports, government documents, subject and corporate files, and videos that may have just the information you need.

Currently, CHEJ is coordinating two national campaigns:

- ◆ *Stop Dioxin Exposure*, which is working to educate the public about the health threat posed by dioxin and to move all levels of government to take steps to eliminate the sources of dioxin
- ◆ *Child Proofing Our Communities*, devoted to protecting children from pesticides and toxic chemicals in schools and day care facilities

We invite local groups to become part of these campaigns. Don't hesitate to contact us.

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CHEJ E-ACTION BULLETIN

Are you receiving CHEJ's monthly E-Action Bulletin? Our e-mail bulletin provides the latest news about community groups we are working with, updates from the Child Proofing and Dioxin campaigns, and suggestions for ways to get involved. If you'd like to receive the CHEJ E-Action Bulletin, please contact us at info@chej.org or sign up online at www.chej.org.

WELCOME!

CHEJ would like to welcome Danielle Asselin, our new scientific research associate. Danielle graduated from Rutgers University last year with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a certificate in Social Strategies for Environmental Protection. Her interests include brownfield redevelopment and urban revitalization. At CHEJ, Danielle is answering requests for technical information and researching environmental health issues. "As a recent graduate," says Danielle, "I feel extremely fortunate to be working on issues that I feel passionate about—environmental health and social justice."



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Members of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) prepare to crash Massey Energy's company picnic this July to protest mountaintop removal. See related Action Line story, page 19. Photo by OVEC's Vivian Stockman.

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SUCCESS IN SEATTLE: CITY TO PHASE OUT PERSISTENT TOXICS

BY BRANDIE SMITH

On July 1, 2002, Seattle became the first city in the country to pass a resolution to phase out the purchase of products contributing to persistent toxic pollution. The resolution starts Seattle down the path to protecting human health and the environment from the devastating impact of exposure to persistent toxic chemicals.

The journey began in 1998 when the Washington Toxics Coalition (WTC) and our local coalition partners approached the Washington State Department of Ecology with the idea of creating a policy to phase out mercury, dioxin, pentachlorophenol, and other persistent toxic chemicals. Two years later, the Department of Ecology released a visionary plan to reduce and eliminate persistent toxic pollution in the state of Washington. The plan was the first in the country to address this class of chemicals.

City purchasing policies will play a critical role in advancing state-wide policy. Since cities and counties have substantial purchasing contracts for products such as paper, building materials, office supplies, and utility poles, they have the power to shift markets by creating demand for cleaner products. Creating such demand lowers the cost of alternative products, making it more affordable for the general public to purchase safe products without persistent toxic chemicals.

With this in mind, we sat down with some of our local coalition partners, including People for Puget Sound, Physicians for Social Responsibility and Healthy Building Network, and developed a strategy for getting the resolution passed by the City of Seattle. We used three primary tools to accomplish this goal: 1) working with city officials and government agencies; 2) showing the film “Blue Vinyl” as a way to educate and mobilize the public and key city officials; and 3) mobilizing grassroots support by sending action alerts and having people send letters to the members of the appropriate city council committees.

Brandie Smith is a toxics campaigner with the Washington Toxics Coalition (WTC). For more information on the Seattle resolution, please contact Brandie at 206-632-1545, ext. 18 or visit the WTC website at www.watoxics.org.

WORKING WITH CITY OFFICIALS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

After developing a joint strategy in January of 2002, WTC and our coalition partners focused on building support for the policy from key members of the Seattle city council and the lead environmental agency in Seattle, the Office of Sustainability (OSE). We worked closely with City Councilmember Heidi Wills, chair of the Energy and Environment Committee and OSE, to develop language for the resolution, educate other council members, and identify the products that the city purchases that result in persistent toxic pollution.

BLUE VINYL SCREENING

In May, we organized a screening of “Blue Vinyl,” Judith Helfand’s toxic comedy about a young woman’s search for alternatives to her parents’ vinyl siding. The “Blue Vinyl” event played a critical role in creating momentum for the passage of the resolution. WTC and other members of the coalition activated our email lists and sent out invitations to our members and key players in the government, hospital associations, and green-building architects and designers. Following the viewing, Councilmember Wills led a discussion on toxic products and publicly committed herself to working on phasing out persistent toxic chemicals from city purchasing.

The screening was an extremely useful tool for educating the public. There was already a buzz about the movie and people were very excited to see it. Over 120 people attended the event and most signed up to receive follow-up information about actions targeting polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and other persistent toxic chemicals.

ACTIVATING GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

Shortly after the showing of “Blue Vinyl,” WTC and our coalition partners sent out an action alert to our members asking them to send letters to the members of the Energy and Environment Committee. We had a great response to the action alert, especially from those people who attended the



Brandie Smith (speaking), Councilmember Heidi Wills, and Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels at press conference to announce resolution phasing out purchasing of products with persistent toxic chemicals. Photo by Tracy Dieckhoner, Office of Sustainability.

event. The timing was very important because people were still excited about the movie and wanted to take action.

PASSING THE POLICY

On July 1, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and City Councilmember Wills hosted a press conference with us to announce the passage of the policy. The resolution instructs the city to purchase products that don't contain persistent chemicals or result in the release of persistent pollution during their manufacture, including products such as nonchlorine-bleached paper, PVC-free building materials and office supplies, and nonmercury auto switches. At the press conference, Wills said, "This is an example of how we can act locally to address serious environmental and health concerns to improve our quality of life today, and that of generations to come. We owe it to future generations."

By passing the resolution, the City of Seattle took the first step in protecting human health and the environment from persistent toxic chemicals. Now, we need to make sure that the words on paper become a reality by continuing to engage our coalition partners, grassroots activists, and the general public in the fight to eliminate persistent toxic pollution. We will have to fight hard to ensure that the government continues to move forward with this policy, especially in this time of budget cuts. We need to work together more than ever to pass similar policies around the country to promote affordable, alternative products for cities and the public. ■

Editor's note: The Washington Toxics Coalition is a member of the Dioxin campaign. As a result of the momentum generated by the work in Seattle and similar initiatives in the Bay Area, the Dioxin campaign has launched an organized effort to get similar purchasing policies passed in other strategic locations. If your organization is interested in launching a purchasing policy initiative, please contact the campaign at dioxin@chej.org.

WHAT ARE PERSISTENT TOXIC CHEMICALS?

Persistent toxic chemicals are highly toxic, long lasting substances that accumulate in people and animals to levels that are harmful. These substances degrade slowly in the environment, can travel long distances, and easily transfer between air, water and soil. They will linger for generations in people and the environment.

Persistent toxic chemicals have chemical and physical properties that make it difficult for them to degrade in the environment. In general, they are stable and do not easily react with other substances or materials. Thus they will remain in the environment for long periods of time and are considered to be "persistent."

The features that make it difficult to degrade these substances also make it difficult for the body to break them down when people or animals are exposed. They also tend to be lipid or fat-soluble. So when the body has difficulty breaking them down, these substances tend to seek fatty tissues where they are stored and will accumulate over time. This process is described as "bioaccumulation."

These chemicals are highly toxic and can cause a wide range of adverse health effects, including damage to the nervous and reproductive systems, developmental problems, cancer, and genetic effects. Young children and the developing fetus are especially at risk from exposure to these substances, as are individuals who eat large amounts of fish from contaminated waters.

Common chemicals that have the highest persistence, bioaccumulation, and toxicity include: aldrin/dieldrin, cadmium, chlordane, DDT, dibutylphthalate, dioxins and furans, hexachlorobenzene, lead, mercury, mirex, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), PCBs, pentachlorophenol, polystyrene, toxaphene, trichlorobenzene, and 2,4,5-trichlorophenol.

These substances are also commonly referred to as "persistent bioaccumulative and toxic" chemicals (PBT). Additional information on persistent toxic chemicals can be found on the following websites:

- ◆ Washington State Department of Ecology: "Questions & Answers on Ecology's Strategy on Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs)" www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/pbt/pbtfqa.html
- ◆ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: "Persistent Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemical Program" www.epa.gov/pbt/
- ◆ Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention: Resource Center: "Guide to PBTs" www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/pbt.html

LESSONS LEARNED FROM 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

GETTING STARTED

BY LOIS MARIE GIBBS

Next year, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the victorious community struggle at Love Canal. This is the first in a series of articles on organizing lessons learned in that struggle that remain relevant today.

It was almost 25 years ago that I began my work on environmental health issues at Love Canal, in Niagara Falls, New York. Like many people who have contacted CHEJ over the past 20 years, I had no idea that my home was located on contaminated land—my house was 3 blocks from a landfill that contained 20,000 tons of chemical wastes. But I did know that my children were constantly sick.

READ YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

It was a local newspaper article I read that clued me in to what was going on. It reported that chemicals were found to be leaking out of the dump and into the surrounding community—including the elementary school attended by my son and 400 other children. It is often the local newspapers that alert communities to dangers that lurk in their towns or cities.

DON'T COUNT ON GOVERNMENT TO COME TO YOUR AID

For me, as for so many others who have contacted CHEJ, it was shocking to find out that when I asked the school board to move my son Michael from the 99th Street school on the perimeter of the dump to a safer public school they refused. I was armed with two doctors' statements encouraging the board to move my son, yet their response was "If we move your child, we would have to move all 407 children, setting a precedent—because of one hysterical mother with a sickly child."

GO DOOR TO DOOR

After talking and meeting with the city, county, and health officials, as well as the school superintendent, it became clear that no one was going to do anything. They were either not convinced there was a public health problem, had no funds, or were unwilling to risk setting a precedent.

Not having a clue about where to go next, I decided to talk with my neighbors. I thought someone smarter or more

skilled than I was could figure out this puzzle. Going door-to-door was frightening. I'd never done anything like that before. I feared that people would slam the door in my face, call me crazy or yell at me to get off their property. Like many of the leaders in our network, I had to summon a great deal of courage to knock on that first door. One leader once told me when she went door-to-door for the first time, she was so distracted by her knees knocking she didn't hear a word of what the person at the door said to her.

I quickly found out the value of knocking on doors when my neighbors began telling me about their health problems. Some were able to talk to me about the history of the site and to show me where chemicals were entering their properties. I found out that my neighbors also didn't know what to do. They too were hoping that someone smarter and more skilled than they were would provide guidance.

It didn't take long to realize that I needed to keep very careful notes because after a while sources of critical information became blurred. I began carrying a composition notebook everywhere. Borrowing credibility from the last person I talked with was also a key lesson. When neighbors answered their doors, I began to tell them how I had just spoken with their neighbor Mr. _____ who signed the petition about _____ and then did my little speech detailing the problem.

The key elements of my "speech" included:

- Who I was—*Hi, I'm Lois Gibbs and I live on 101st Street.*
- Who we were—*I am with the Concerned Parents of 99th Street School.*
- Statement of problem (short!)—*This is a petition to close the school because . . .*
- Request for support—*I was hoping you would sign our petition and come to a meeting with other parents to talk about this . . .*

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LOCAL ELECTIONS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIVISTS

BY LARRY YATES

These days elections don't work the way they are described in our civics textbooks. There is too much money at stake. In the year 2000, the chemical industry alone gave \$11.5 million to political campaigns, and that was a pittance compared to the energy and natural resources sector, which contributed almost \$67 million. With these massive expenditures, industry makes it nearly impossible for the voice of the people to be heard—especially at the national level.

Candidates in local elections, however, have less freedom to ignore the needs and concerns of their constituents. Grassroots groups that have successfully mobilized their communities around environmental issues will find that at election time candidates emerge who support their positions. Sometimes, elections provide groups with opportunities for forming new coalitions, giving them new influence over public policy. Occasionally, elections can break deadlocks and force stubborn politicians to respond to community concerns about environmental issues.

By going out and knocking on doors and getting people excited about an important local issue, you can still win significant change. Here are some ways grassroots groups have used election opportunities.

ELECTING RESPONSIVE PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Tioga County, New York is a quiet, somewhat rural area on the Pennsylvania state line. For a long time, according to a local activist, "the arrogance of the legislature had annoyed people," but they had felt they had no options, that the incumbents couldn't be beaten. Then several environmental battles mobilized people and gave them a sense of power. Citizens Against Pollution and Industrial Tyranny (CAPIT) won a long uphill battle to get cleanup of a local auto wrecking yard. Concerned Citizens of Tioga County opposed two natural gas projects. And, most visibly, Preserve Owego Downtown fought the proposed move of the county's offices out of Owego's business district. In the spring of 2001, county legislators called a press conference on the county office is-

sue but kept it secret from the public. Activists found out and showed up and picketed the event. Although there were less than 20 people there, the demonstration changed politics in the county. Citizens had shown that those in power could be successfully challenged. Recognizing the opportunity created by this citizen energy, four environmentalist candidates ran that fall—three Republicans and one Democrat. Activists from the various community fights eagerly supported them. All four won. One of them, a relative newcomer, defeated a 29-year incumbent who was widely seen as the county's main powerbroker.

About 200 miles south of Tioga County, Frederick County, Virginia, is also still somewhat rural and for many years was the center of Virginia's notorious Byrd family's political machine. But as part of the Washington metropolitan area, the county is changing fast. The pace of that change, and the way a small clique controlled and profited from the change, got residents there outraged about a number of sprawl-related issues. In the spring of 2001, hundreds of angry citizens in the county came out to block a proposed industrial park. Activists also formed Frederick County Voters with Common Concerns (FCVCC), a political action committee. After defeating the industrial park project, activists kept the energy going into the fall, knocking on doors, passing out thousands of flyers, and running radio ads featuring an imaginary duo that made humorous common sense comments about the county elite. In November the voters elected all three candidates that FCVCC had endorsed.

In both counties, the old guard of developers has by no means given up. For one thing, neither community campaign got majority control of the county government. Old-liners still set the agendas and make the committee assignments. Still, there have been some wins. The Tioga County offices will be staying in Owego, following a unanimous vote by the county legislature. The vote followed a series of five hearings around the county that gave citizens the opportunity to send a clear message on the issue. And in Frederick County, another plan that neighborhoods had fought for

decades, a highway route that threatened communities and promoted development, for the first time got a “no” vote from a county board majority.

Electing good candidates with a commitment to the community isn’t enough to change the balance of power—but it can be an important part of the process.

FORMING NEW COALITIONS

In Virginia’s Northumberland County, the racial patterns of the Jim Crow South have not been forgotten. African-American families are concentrated in more rural areas of the county, and many of their homes have shallow wells that make them especially vulnerable to any contaminants at ground level—such as sewage sludge. So it’s hardly surprising that most members of Neighbors Against Sludge are African-American.

Northumberland County is also home to an increasing number of retirees, many from the nearby Washington D.C. area. Drawn to the area by the environment, especially by access to the Chesapeake Bay, a number of them also became active against sludge as part of a longstanding local environmental group, Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship.

However, neither African-Americans nor newly arrived residents dominate the political structure of the county. White men with longtime local connections do. But when a local white resident decided that he wanted to be elected to the board of supervisors because he deeply opposed the spreading of sewage sludge, he recognized he needed coalition support. The candidate was elected and has continued to work closely with African-American and white newcomer opponents of sludge.

Northumberland County is still burdened by its past, but the election has created an opening to a fairer future—and a future that so far does not include sludge.

FORCING AN ISSUE

Politicians are much more open to changing their minds just before elections. In fact, election deadlines can force even the most obstinate politicians to change their minds, if good organizing has built up enough pressure.

Kirkland Lake is a small community in northern Ontario that faced a major environmental threat—a plan to dump the City of Toronto’s trash into a man-made lake known as Adams Mine. Thanks to persistent and creative organizing by folks in the Kirkland Lake area and by their allies in Toronto, the dump became a major issue in the province. However, Toronto’s mayor, who had negotiated the deal, stubbornly stuck to it, while Canada’s federal government refused to carry out or even discuss an environmental assessment that many believed would kill the dump proposal. Eventually the issue divided the ruling Liberal Party, with the majority of Ontario’s Liberal members of Parliament opposing the project. There was also significant opposition by Toronto voters. With elections coming up in November 2000, both nationally and for the Toronto city council, insiders suggested that the Prime Minister and other Liberal Party lead-

ers wanted the divisive issue to die. The Toronto press also suggested that the mayor might see some of his allies on the council defeated because of the dump issue.

Suddenly, in October, the agreement between the Toronto city council and Rail Cycle North, slated to haul and dump the waste, collapsed. The agreement, estimated to have been worth \$1 billion dollars and the result of negotiations that lasted over a year, fell apart at the last moment, supposedly over an inability to agree on liability for environmental damage. While opponents had raised very serious questions about liability for the massive damage the dump could have caused, many activists point to the timing and feel that the prime minister and the mayor acted behind the scenes to kill the agreement. Adams Mine dump opponents, it appears, had made it impossible for government leaders to face the voters while continuing to ignore one of their major concerns.

Creating the democracy we are supposed to have is a long-term struggle. It will take years to limit corporate power and reform the election process. But, we cannot ignore it or leave it to “them.” Creative and well-organized communities can – and do – use the opportunities that elections offer to win struggles for environmental health. By understanding the electoral process and applying our organized power where and when it will be most effective, we can both win immediate victories and build our strength for the long haul. ■

GETTING STARTED

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These one-on-one conversations were the building blocks to a powerful community organization. People are willing to get involved but often need someone to help them think through how they can best contribute.

ASK NEIGHBORS TO SIGN A PETITION

One of the first things our community organization did was ask neighbors to sign a petition demanding that the elementary school be closed. Petitions are a good way to begin conversations. The petition offers another advantage: it will provide you with a list of neighbors and their telephone numbers so that you can remind them of the upcoming meeting. In addition to a petition, develop a simple flyer inviting neighbors to a follow-up meeting with others concerned about the problem.

YOU MUST BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO WIN

The past 20-plus years of talking with thousands of community leaders through CHEJ’s grassroots work has made it very clear that if a group tries to shortcut the door-to-door work, their organization will never become as powerful as it could be. Equally important is that going door to door is *not* a single event. Groups need to continue door-to-door contacts with neighbors to keep them informed and motivated to take action.

Next issue: Meetings. ■

DIAMOND RESIDENTS WIN RELOCATION FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

BY RON NICOSIA

On June 11, Concerned Citizens of Norco and Shell Chemical made the announcement that Diamond residents had waited years to hear: Shell was reversing its policy and would buy out homes throughout the entire Diamond community, a victory that will help keep Diamond families together.

After the announcement, observers were quick to praise Shell's willingness to listen to the community and offer generous terms to residents who want to move. But getting Shell to the negotiating table took years of community pressure and work documenting Shell's toxic pollution and, finally, a relentless, focused campaign that hit hard at Shell's vulnerable public image.

DIAMOND: FENCE-LINE COMMUNITY

Diamond is an African-American neighborhood of four streets and about 500 residents in the town of Norco, 25 miles north of New Orleans and in the heart of Louisiana's "Cancer Alley." The neighborhood lies between an immense Shell Chemical plant on the west, with some homes as close as 22 feet from the fence-line, and a Motiva oil refinery, partially owned by Shell, on the east. Concerned Citizens of Norco (CCN), led by energetic Margie Richard, has long argued that flaring, toxic emissions, jarring noises, and foul odors from the plants made Diamond unlivable and that the plants were to blame for the high rates of asthma and cancers in the neighborhood.

The decades-long community fight for relocation was reenergized in December 1998 after two large chemical releases on the same day. While Shell stated publicly that no harmful chemicals had been released, air samples taken by Denny Larson of Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) proved that toxics had in fact been released, exposing Shell's false statements to the media and the public.

With support from CBE, the Louisiana Bucket Brigade (LABB) was set up to train residents to take air samples themselves using specially designed buckets for trapping air. The air sampling buckets played a crucial role in getting more of the community involved, empowering residents by allowing them to challenge Shell's claims that the air was safe. CCN

and the LABB ensured that regulators and the media were informed about results, keeping constant pressure on Shell.

Embarrassed by community protests, buckets with toxic air, U.S. EPA and Louisiana DEQ fines, and increasing media coverage of Shell's polluting practices and the community's plight, in September of 2000 Shell announced its "good neighbor initiative"—a limited program to buy houses on Washington and Cathy streets, the section of the neighborhood closest to the Shell Chemical plant.

The offer, however, was more public relations than a serious attempt to address the needs of Diamond's residents. CCN and LABB and other groups—including Earthjustice, the Refinery Reform campaign and the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice—quickly refocused the campaign on getting Shell to pay a just price for Diamond homes and to reverse its public refusal to buy out the entire neighborhood.

SHELL GAMES

CCN's research revealed that as part of its longstanding plan to establish a "greenbelt" between the facility and the town Shell had already bought a third of the lots on Washington and Cathy Streets—and had paid an average of only \$26,000 for the houses. Because of their proximity to the plant, homes in the neighborhood had little market value, allowing the immensely profitable corporation to offer extremely low prices to residents desperate to escape the area. Publicizing this data in their report *Shell Games*, which CCN and LABB released to the press just a month after Shell's offer, the groups succeeded in putting Shell on the defensive again. The company countered by announcing that under its new program the company would offer a minimum of \$50,000 for homes, but CCN made sure that Shell's refusal to negotiate with the group and Shell's history of paying low prices for Diamond homes remained issues throughout the campaign.

DIVIDING THE COMMUNITY

Networks of families and friends extended throughout Diamond's four blocks. Cathy Street resident Mary Hollins had been an active member of CCN and fought hard for

relocation, but she was also the primary caregiver for her mother on Diamond Road, which was not included in Shell's offer. Rebecca Harding also lived on Cathy Street, but most of her family, which relied heavily on her, lived on Diamond and East Streets.

In their flyers, press releases, reports, and websites, CCN and LABB published interviews with the residents, allowing them to tell their own stories. In *Family Divided*, Rebecca Harding told of her bitter disappointment that Shell had reneged on a promise to make exceptions and buy out the homes of families throughout Diamond that needed to be kept together. "Later, when people went down to check into this they said it wasn't in writing. So they lied." That Shell's policies were destroying an historic, close-knit community became a central theme in media coverage of the conflict—a sign of how successful CCN and LABB were at working with the press and getting their message out.

This year, LABB, with help from the Refinery Reform campaign, created a new website with extensive testimony from the community. Anne Rolfes, director of the LABB, described the site as a "first strike" in what was intended to be a global campaign. During the final talks between CCN and Shell, company officials made an issue of the site. "It angered them and they wanted it down," said Anne Rolfes. "Their anger over that site is a great lesson for activists."

TOXIC POLLUTION

CCN and LABB expanded the neighborhood air-monitoring program, documenting time and again that Shell's facilities were releasing high levels of hazardous chemicals. Flaring and odors during June 2001 were particularly bad. CCN and LBB later obtained documents from DEQ—which it released to the press—revealing that during a two-week period in June, Shell had dumped 85,000 pounds of chemicals on the community, including 21,000 pounds of sulfur dioxide and 17,000 pounds of nitrogen dioxide.

RACE

CCN's campaign placed Diamond residents' struggle for relocation in the context of Shell's "ugly pattern of exclusivity." Many Diamond families originally lived on the site where the Shell Chemical plant now is and were forced to move when the plant was built. The community has borne the brunt of Shell's toxic pollution but derived no benefits from the plant. Shell hired few black workers, and during the 1950s and 1960s when Shell operated recreational facilities in the community, a strictly "whites only" policy kept Diamond residents out.

CCN and LABB also linked Shell's treatment of Diamond residents to Shell's operations in Nigeria, where the company has caused widespread environmental devastation and colluded with military governments in the repression of indigenous groups fighting to preserve their land. Shell has extracted billions of dollars worth of oil from Ogoniland in Nigeria, but the region remains impover-



Denny Larson, who helped set up the bucket brigade in Norco, and Margie Richard, the former president of CCN, celebrate after Shell agreed to buy homes throughout Diamond. Photo courtesy of Louisiana Bucket Brigade.

ished. "Exclusion" wrote the authors of *Family Divided*, "appears to be the corporation's global business practice."

IN THE STREETS

CCN turned out large numbers of residents for demonstrations in Diamond as well as at Shell offices in New Orleans and Houston. In April of 2001, Nigerian activist Orono Douglas joined 200 residents in a ceremony affirming solidarity between the two communities fighting Shell. In June, Diamond residents were joined by representatives of groups throughout the country at Shell headquarters in New Orleans. After CCN found out in late August that Shell was buying the wooded strip bordering Diamond on the east—belying the company's claims that it would buy only fence-line property—residents staged an angry protest that attracted media attention. A protest march in May of this year at Shell's headquarters in Houston resulted in a front-section article in the *Houston Chronicle* focusing on residents' concerns about the breakup of their neighborhood. "Shell has divided our community," Diamond resident Toni Rice told the *Chronicle*. "We have always lived with horrible smells and noises, and now this."

NEGOTIATIONS

Shell did upgrade its offers to residents, and by the end of 2001, almost a third of the remaining homeowners on Washington and Cathy Streets had sold to the company. But Shell was discovering that buying out the first two streets didn't take the pressure off, it increased it—forcing the company

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Action Line

CALIFORNIA

◆ This winter, citizens from the five municipalities surrounding the old Palos Verdes landfill formed **South Bay Cares** to oppose a proposal for building a golf course on top of the dump. The landfill, which accepted industrial waste from 1952 to 1980, has no cap and no bottom liner to contain toxic leachate. Millions of gallons of liquid wastes were buried in the landfill, including 55-gallon drums of TCE (trichloroethylene). Groundwater contamination has already been documented, forcing the Los Angeles Sanitation District to build wells and take other steps to try to contain the problem. South Bay Cares has been diligently attending city council and school board meetings and distributing literature to create public awareness of the health risks. The group is especially concerned that the heavy use of water on the golf course (at least 400,000 gallons a day) will cause extensive groundwater contamination. The group was successful in having the usual 30-day comment period on the notice of preparation extended to 60 days. The group has also collected 3,000 signatures on a petition to stop the project. In late August, the Rolling Hills Estates city council officially endorsed residents' efforts to establish a committee to supervise an independent

study of the air emissions, surface-water runoff, wastewater discharge, and health risks from the landfill. Los Angeles County has indicated it might be willing to fund the study. The dump borders a residential area with two elementary schools, a pre-school, and two churches.

◆ Residents from **Mountaingate Action Committee** in Corona organized a strong showing at the county Planning Commission to oppose a housing development planned for a wildlife habitat area, which they believe would promote sprawl and highway congestion. Confronted with an audience of red-shirted opponents to the project (people wore red for "Stop") and with hundreds of petition signatures against the project, the commission referred to the citizen activists as "hostile" before they even spoke and then stated that the commission had no power to decide against the project. A resident leader asked why a hearing had even been advertised and held. The commission stated that if it ruled against the project, it could be sued by developers. The matter will be taken up by the city council in September.

◆ The San Francisco Bay is going to be a lot cleaner and safer thanks to **Communities for a Better Environment** (CBE) and **SFBayKeeper**. The groups have won a state court ruling holding that the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board had violated the Clean Water Act

WHAT IS ACTION LINE?

At CHEJ, we see Action Line as the heart of *Everyone's Backyard*. This is the place where we tell the stories of the grassroots groups we're working with. We strive to call attention to the movement's creative energy and accomplishments. We also see Action Line as a way to share strategies and actions that work and to stay up-to-date on industry trends and tactics.

Although we rarely mention our role, CHEJ is providing organizing support or technical assistance to most of the community groups we report on. For other Action Line stories, we draw on a large network of friends and supporters, developed during twenty years of working with grassroots groups. We encourage contributions from organizations that, like CHEJ, support grassroots organizing and from community groups themselves.

TENANT ASSOCIATION FIGHTS MOLD

The **National Alliance of HUD Tenants** (NAHT), whose member tenant associations include thousands of low-income tenants across the nation, have told HUD officials that they are putting mold high on their advocacy agenda.

NAHT helps tenants to get their grievances met by working together to deal with HUD, and has an eleven-year track record of getting action from HUD. NAHT put three HUD officials on the hot seat at their annual meeting, demanding they address the growing problem of indoor air toxicity, mold, and asthma in HUD housing, and also asking HUD to appoint an advisory task force, with tenant and environmentalist input, to develop mold standards.

A HUD staffer said, "We don't know enough science" to set a new standard, and he said they don't know much about "molds and mildew... some are blue, some are green...." But, faced with a strong push from NAHT, he agreed to take the message back to HUD that this was a serious issue that required action.

by weakening the water quality discharge standard for Tesoro Petroleum Corporation's refinery in Avon. Two years ago, the Regional Water Quality Control Board had allowed the refinery, then owned by Tosco, to increase its dioxin discharge limits into San Francisco Bay nearly five-fold when Tosco threatened to shut the facility down unless pollution limits were weakened. The dioxin discharges pose a serious health threat to low-income families that subsist on fish from the bay. The Water Quality Control Board's decision had resulted in lower discharge limits throughout the state, and CBE and SFBayKeeper hope that the new ruling means that now the higher standards will be applied state-wide.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

◆ Residents of Eastern Avenue have formed a strong community group—**Concerned Citizens of Eastern Avenue**—to press for U.S. EPA testing and immediate action on an underground gasoline leak from a local Chevron station. The leak, which started in 1989, has contaminated the local water table with MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether), benzene and other gasoline components, affecting some 300 residences. Resident Cleo Holmes summed up the seriousness of the situation: “We have had a lot of cancer deaths around here, and the asthma especially around Nicholson and Eastern Avenue is [at] a high rate. We are looking to see if we can find a correlation between when these deaths happened and when the leak started.” In August, Chevron further antagonized residents with its announcement that it was drastically reducing its funding for testing of the gasoline-tainted soil beneath residents’ homes.

GEORGIA

◆ A project proposed for Candler County was sneaked in by an out-of-town business as a supposed “hunting reserve” but then was revealed to be a proposed dump for commercial, household, and medical waste. The site borders a creek that runs into a river and an African-American and Latino residential area dependent on wells for drinking water. Residents formed **Citizens to Save Candler County** to fight the proposal, mobilizing so quickly that a local environmentalist told them that in decades of organizing he had never seen a group come together so fast. Now, virtually everywhere you turn in the county, there are signs saying “Stop the Landfill.” Local residents sent in more than 500 letters to officials with their own comments added to a form letter. At the urging of the group, county commissioners have passed a waste ordinance that would discourage new dumps and are in the process of developing the county’s first zoning ordinance to control undesirable development.

IDAHO

◆ Meeting with U.S. EPA Administrator Whitman during her visit to northwest Idaho, the **Sierra Club**, **The Lands Council**, **Kootenai Environmental Alliance**, and the **Silver Valley People’s Action Coalition** made the case that the EPA needs to retain full authority over the clean up of the Coeur d’Alene and Spokane River basins, which are contaminated with heavy metals from a century of mining. The EPA’s proposed \$350 million cleanup would expand the current 21-square mile Superfund site at Kellogg to include much of the two river basins, an area encompassing almost 1,500 square miles. Mining and tourist industries and state politicians are bitterly opposed to the plan and are seeking to have the EPA transfer authority for the cleanup to an Idaho-led commission. “The mining companies pulled \$4.5 billion in mineral wealth from these hills, and left our communities impoverished and polluted,” said Barbara Miller, director of the People’s Action Coalition. “EPA and the Superfund cleanup are our best hope for family-wage jobs. At the same time, we intend to hold EPA accountable for a cleanup that protects our families from the pollution—something that will never happen if Idaho is in control.” The groups also asked Whitman to reinstate taxes on polluting corporations to pay for Superfund.

INDIANA

◆ **Committee for a Clean Environment (CCE)** continues to fight to prevent an open dump (“confined disposal facility” or CDF) from being sited near two schools in a Latino community in East Chicago. The dump would be used for the contaminated sediment being dredged from the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal. After CCE had collected 3,000 signatures against the proposal, U.S. Representative Visclosky sent out a letter to everyone who had signed the petition, dismissing their concerns. CCE replied to Visclosky and also sent a mailing to all 3,000 signers. At a well-attended public forum on the CDF sponsored by the Indiana University Environmental Justice Partnership, the Army Corps of Engineers took the lead in favor of the CDF, with CCE speaking against the proposal. As a result of the forum, the EPA announced that it would consider amending the project’s original risk assessment. Another positive development is that a CCE member has been appointed to the East Chicago Waterway Management Board, which has oversight of the dredging project. The board now complies with open meeting requirements and has



In Georgia, Citizens to Save Candler County held a “Day in the Park” with music and food, generating a great turnout. Photo courtesy of Citizens to Save Candler County.

Action Line

Action Line

stopped skipping meetings as it did for several months. Concerned about CCE's growing support, the Army Corps of Engineers brought in a Spanish-speaking public relations consultant—who quickly outraged the community with a report containing stereotypical and condescending comments about Latinos and opponents of the dump. Local officials are now distancing themselves from the Corps' plan. Meanwhile, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, which will be hosting a CCE speaker at its November meeting, is also supporting CCE's work.

KANSAS

◆ Residents of a neighborhood in the city of Overland Park took action to stop an auto body shop from coming into their area. The body shop was linked to a local Ford dealer, and a picket line in front of the dealership resulted in withdrawal of the plan. The residents are still concerned about inappropriate use of the site, which has been grandfathered as commercial in a mainly residential neighborhood, and are considering the possibility of creating some kind of covenant or agreement that would restrict unsafe uses of the site.

MAINE

◆ Residents formed **Concerned Citizens of Athens (CCA)** to take action against a biomass facility after noxious smoke from the plant caused asthma attacks, headaches, irritated eyes and lungs, and dizziness. The plant, run by Boralex, was burning demolition debris, including PVC plastic, asbestos, and lead-based paint. CCA demanded the plant sort out PVC and other potentially toxic materials. As the result of community actions—including a large protest and media event outside the facility's gates—and state pressure, the plant has agreed to stop burning demolition waste and has temporarily shut down. Citizen efforts have not stopped there, however. The group is moving forward with a local air quality ordinance to ensure the protection of public health against future toxic threats. *Contributed by Toxics Action Center*



Protest against truck traffic led by the Little Washington Civic Association in Maryland drew 200 residents in September. Photo courtesy of Darryl Harris of the Little Washington Civic Association.

MARYLAND

◆ The **Monocacy Environmental Council (MEC)** has stalled several power plant proposals that threatened an area near the Potomac River. The MEC took a legislative route, seeking to repeal a Maryland law that pre-empts local zoning for power plants. While not successful, the effort mobilized support for the group's work against the power plants. One supportive legislator brought state officials through the area in a bus tour, convincing them to oppose the plants. The general political commitment to "smart growth" in Maryland and the impact of a severe drought have also reduced prospects for power plants. Lisa Baugher, who founded the MEC, is now running for the Maryland House of Delegates on a platform that includes strong positions on environmental issues.

◆ In September, the **Little Washington Civic Association** led 200 community members in a protest for better truck traffic enforcement. This small inner suburban community is surrounded by several private landfills, a county sanitation site, and several construction-related businesses that generate massive amounts of truck traffic. For safety reasons, local children must be bussed even though their school is within walking distance. The protest was held a week before Maryland's primaries and about a dozen candidates and elected officials came out to support the community. As a result of the Association's protests this summer, police have agreed to step up enforcement of truck traffic laws in the community.

Action Line

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MASSACHUSETTS

◆ In June, **Toxics Action Center** (TAC) announced that it planned to file suit under the federal Clean Water Act to stop the spraying of toxic pesticides into Lake Boon in Stow. The suit, if it proceeds, would be the first of its kind in New England and could lead to a moratorium on aquatic pesticide applications at lakes, ponds, and streams throughout Massachusetts. **National Environmental Law Center** (NELC) will be representing TAC, which filed the suit on behalf of Lake Boon's neighbors and beachgoers. "Aquatic pesticides not only pose a threat to public health and the environment but they are ineffective for long-term control of weeds. To top it off, using them without a permit is illegal," said TAC director, Matthew Wilson. The Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters unless the discharger has obtained and complies with a permit from the U.S. EPA specifying the terms and conditions under which

pollutants may be released. *Contributed by Toxics Action Center*

◆ **Housatonic River Initiative** (HRI) reports that General Electric has cleaned up the first half-mile of the Housatonic, as they agreed to do under a consent decree with U.S. EPA. However, GE's responsibilities also include cleaning up contaminated homes and businesses. While GE has "cleaned" most of the homes, many homeowners are unhappy with the work done. According to HRI, "Some are bringing legal action for poor cleanups and bad restoration work (grass dying, foundations cracked, and other problems)." Some of the businesses have been built on contaminated fill, and GE is trying to finesse this tough cleanup task with agreements known as "activity and use limitations" which would leave substantial PCB contamination in place. Some business owners plan to "sue EPA in federal court for the taking of their land via the EPA/GE consent decree ... [since] they had no place at the negotiations."

MICHIGAN

◆ Michigan is set to become the ninth state in the nation to ban the sale of mercury thermometers! The bill banning the sales—which was spearheaded by the **Ecology Center** of Ann Arbor with the help of Senator Flint—was passed by the Michigan Senate in June. The house is expected to pass it easily, and Governor Engler is waiting to sign it. The ban was prompted by the fact that the Michigan Department of Community Health has had to issue fish consumption advisories for every inland lake in the state due to mercury contamination.

MISSOURI

◆ Concerned residents in St. Louis County have contacted the **Stop Dioxin Exposure** campaign about proposed housing developments on two Superfund sites. The proposal for the town of Wildwood involves an area that had 1,500 drums containing 142 toxic chemicals plus dioxin. Four years of

WEEK OF ACTION TO PROTEST MILITARY TOXICS

From June 15 to June 23, over 30 local, regional, and national organizations held marches, rallies, concerts, press conferences, and other events as part of the **Military Toxics Project's** (MTP) second National Week of Action. Groups from Alaska to Puerto Rico joined together to demand military accountability to our laws and our communities, and action to address the human cost of military contamination and pollution. Taking place in the wake of the Department of Defense's (DoD) request for new military exemptions from environmental and public health laws, the week served as a rallying call to remind members of Congress that we need more military accountability to our laws, not less.

Washington, DC—MTP held a press conference on Capitol Hill on June 19 to protest DoD's proposal

for new environmental exemptions from major environmental laws and to announce the release of a new report—*Communities in the Line of Fire: The Environmental, Cultural, and Human Health Impacts of Military Munitions and Firing Ranges* [see Resources, p. 22]. MTP board member Joel Feigenbaum, who has been fighting contamination at the Massachusetts Military Reservation, explained that the soil, groundwater, and surface water of Cape Cod has been contaminated by the military since 1940. Flavio Cumpiano, the DC representative for the **Rescue and Development of Vieques**, described the Navy's bombing on Vieques and the high rates of serious illnesses, including cancer, respiratory ailments, and liver, digestive and reproductive problems.

San Diego, CA—On June 21, the **Environmental Health Coalition** hosted a 12-hour bi-national peace concert that drew a crowd of about 500.

Plainfield, NJ—On June 15, **New Jersey Military Toxic Project** and **New Jersey Peace Action** sponsored a march and rally supporting building a culture of peace, an end to the Navy presence in Vieques, and MTP's National Week of Action.

Salinas, CA—**Life 2000, Save Our Air Resources**, and **Say No to Fort Ord Toxic Burnings**—all working for the safe cleanup of Fort Ord, a former Army training center that is now a federal Superfund site—organized a protest in front of U.S. Representative Farr's local office and the U.S. Post Office in Salinas to demand that Farr act to protect Fort Ord's neighbors from toxic contamination and unsafe cleanup practices.

Memphis, TN—**Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee Con-**

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quarterly testing data from monitoring wells has not been released to the public—according to the EPA, because of “quality assurance/quality control” issues. The LeMar site in Ellisville was sprayed with dioxin-contaminated oil containing 1,173 ppb dioxin. (These are 2 of 30 eastern Missouri sites, including Times Beach, that were sprayed with contaminated oil by the Bliss Waste Oil Company.) Both sites were remediated by the EPA in the late 1990s. The EPA cleaned them to 10 ppb, capped them with one foot of clean soil and now considers them suitable for development. The agency has made personal appearances to reassure residents and promote their brownfields program. EPA officials claim that development will mix the dioxin with enough clean soil to reduce the concentration below the standard of 1 ppb. Residents question how dilution can provide protection. Activists are especially concerned about the Ellisville site and are working on applying pressure to this year’s senate candidates.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

◆ In Claremont, **Citizens Leading for Environmental Action and Responsibility** (CLEAR) is fighting to shut down the Wheelabrator electricity-generating incinerator. This summer, the group made its presence felt at the state’s Public Utility Commission. Active flyering plus a skit and roundtable discussion on local cable access TV led to a turnout of 200 people at a PUC hearing in Claremont. CLEAR was supporting a PUC ruling that would require Wheelabrator to pay back millions to area ratepayers and was opposing plans to gag any further discussion. At the hearing, the group collected names and addresses of supporters of their work.

NEW YORK

◆ Residents of Brockport celebrated this summer as both 3M and General Electric continued to clean up their former industrial sites and began work on residential areas as well. According to **Residents Environmentally Acting for Change** (REACH), 40,000 gallons of PCB-contami-

nated water and sediment and 2,000 tons of soil have been removed from the site of the former General Electric/Black & Decker plant. Approximately 2,200 tons of contaminated soil will have to be removed from residential areas. GE is also ready to start cleaning over 3,000 storm sewer systems contaminated with PCBs. REACH is closely monitoring the cleanup as well as the replacement of lawns and trees.

◆ In response to reports of elevated rates of breast cancer in seven zip codes on Long Island, **Cancer Action NY** has sent a letter to the commissioner of the New York Department of Health (NYDOH) to alert him to the links between dioxin and breast cancer. In its letter, Cancer Action NY challenges the NYDOH to “immediately begin to educate the residents... as to the cancer preventive value of reducing their consumption of dairy products containing milk fat, beef and fresh-water fish.” Cancer Action NY also held a press conference in June

WEEK OF ACTION

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cerned Citizens Coalition held a toxic tour of the Defense Depot, a site that provided supplies, electronic equipment, petroleum products, and industrial chemicals to all U.S. military services. Shallow ground water is contaminated with arsenic, lead, chromium, nickel, tetrachloroethene, and trichloroethene. An estimated 154,300 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within four miles of the site.

Minneapolis, MN—**Alliant Action** and other local groups sponsored a talk by Dr. Christine Ziebold on military contamina-



Outside Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio last year. Photo courtesy of Military Toxics Project.

tion. Alliant Action monitors the cleanup of depleted uranium and other toxic wastes at the Twin City Army Ammunition Plant, a current Superfund Site. The group holds a vigil every

Wednesday at the plant, where Alliant Techsystems produced 16 million depleted uranium shells. *Contributed by Military Toxics Project*

Action Line

DOW—RESPONSIBLE FOR BHOPAL

In an impressive display of solidarity, activists throughout the world held protests this summer demanding justice for the survivors of the 1984 Union Carbide gas disaster at Bhopal, India. The explosion of a tank at Union Carbide's pesticide manufacturing facility killed 8,000 people within days. Since then, over 20,000 have died from the disaster. More than 100,000 people continue to suffer serious health problems related to the gas leak.

The Dow Chemical Company now owns Union Carbide but insists that it owes nothing to the survivors of the disaster.

In June, survivors Tara Bai and Rashida Bee and Satinath Sarangi, a founding member of the **Bhopal Group for Information and Action** began a hunger strike outside the Indian Parliament in Delhi to protest recent actions by the Indian government that would let Dow-Carbide escape responsibility for the disaster. The Indian government proposed reducing the charge against former Union Carbide CEO Warren Anderson from culpable homicide, the Indian equivalent of manslaughter, to "causing injuries," allowing him to escape extradition to India to stand trial. The government also announced its intention to use compensation funds—intended for survivors—to clean up contamination from the disaster instead of compelling Dow to pay for the cleanup.

In mid-July, 400 survivors and their supporters demonstrated outside of Parliament in New Delhi to demand that the U.S. extradite Anderson. By then, activists in at least eight other countries had organized hunger strikes and solidarity protests to support the Indian fasters.

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to promote the education of the public concerning dioxin and animal fat and to promote bans on open waste burning in New York.

◆ Demonstrators holding signs saying "Get the lead out" and "Stop putting children at risk" livened up a press conference on the steps of Albany City Hall called by **Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens Neighborhood Association** (AHCCNA). On August 7, the group announced that it had filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Albany for hiring unqualified contractors to do lead-abatement work in low-income housing projects. Under EPA regulations, all lead contractors, risk assessors, and inspectors must be certified according to EPA standards. The unusual suit asks for neither personal nor property damages. "Our priority is the health and well-being of the families who may be standing in harm's way," stated AHCCNA president, Aaron Mair. "And that is why we are asking the court to order the city to stop violating the law and to ensure that the improperly abated homes are safe for the people living there."

◆ **Hickory Woods Residents for a Clean Environment** reacted warily when the City of Buffalo announced in July that it had reached an agreement with LTV Steel for \$16.5 million to clean up the 219-acre Superfund site. Under the program, the former industrial site is to be redeveloped and one million dollars is to be set aside for a "property protection program" which will compensate residents if they sell their homes for less than the assessed value. The program falls short of the full relocation plan that the mayor promised the community last year and does not include a cleanup of the residential area.

◆ **UNCAGED** is fighting for a cleanup of the massive Dewey-Loeffel landfill, which has contaminated nearby waters, including Lake Nassau. While the official position of the State of New York is that no fish or any other wildlife from the lake should be consumed, no warning signs have been posted. When UNCAGED prepared 100 warning signs, lakeshore property owners reacted with anger, charging that the signs will decrease property values. UNCAGED members pointed out that people are fishing in the lake and consuming the fish and they deserve to be warned. UNCAGED hopes to make it

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more difficult for those who use or own property on the lake to ignore the issue and to generate more pressure for a cleanup.

◆ In Pelham Manor on Long Island, residents have formed the **Westchester Health and Environment Action Team** to push for a cleanup of a park that was a dump for incinerator ash and sludge. Even though the park served as a shooting range and then as an uncontrolled dump and waste material still surfaces, local and state officials have denied there is any risk. At least one public worker's job is at risk for whistle-blowing. Local citizens have raised concerns on a website, which discusses the likely presence of dioxin.

NORTH CAROLINA

◆ **Citizens Against the Landfill Expansion** (CALE) in Troy are gearing up for a vote this fall by the county council to decide whether to expand the landfill in their community. Last fall, the group turned out 500 people who opposed the expansion, forcing the county commissioners to put off voting on the measure. Now the question is back before the commissioners, and the group has every intention of sending the same message to their elected officials: "We don't want to expand the landfill!" Good luck to CALE.

OHIO

◆ The large, new Girard Intermediate School reopened in September after 18 months of renovation work that cost a half million dollars. The school had been plagued with fungi and mold after opening in the fall of 2000—the result of problems in the school's construction. One teacher's students became so sick that she persuaded her colleagues to teach their classes outside to avoid the stench, but the superintendent quickly forced them back indoors. After significant pressure from the **Girard Concerned Parents Group**, extensive testing was done in the building, revealing that there were high levels of fungi in the carpeting, airborne particulates, VOCs, pathogenic bacteria, and high levels of carbon dioxide. The Girard Concerned Parent's Group pushed for removing the carpet

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and replacing it with tiling and replacing the fiberglass-insulated ductwork, which the Girard Board of Health has said should not be used in hospitals and schools. Concerned Parents has been working on removing the Girard Board of Education, which withheld information on the problems at the school for six months, including information on student illnesses. The group quickly collected over 2,000 signatures supporting the board's removal and asked a state court to remove the board. The school board challenged the court's authority to hear the case, but, this summer, in a victory for Girard Concerned Parents, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled against the school board and sent the case back to the lower court. The court will hear the case in October.

◆ Fifteen tons of hazardous waste that were mistakenly dumped in the American Landfill are causing concern in Sandy Township. The **Citizens against American Landfill Expansion** (CALE) have sent letters to the Ohio EPA asking about the mistake and the possible consequences. They are demanding to know what sort of chemicals the waste contains, what sort of health risk it may pose, how much of the waste will be removed, and what measures are being taken to ensure that the mistake does not happen again. CALE's Jill Van Voorhis considers the accident "simply unacceptable."

◆ **Our Lives Count** (OLC) is the name of a new group in the Leavittsburg area opposing the building of a school near a dumpsite. The group has elected a board and set up five committees—fundraising, action, young adult, research, and health and environment. The group is going door to door in what they call the "stink zone." The group managed to get monitoring equipment into schools and other sites in the area to keep track of air emissions from the dump, but when "evacuation alarms" went off in two schools, the schools were not evacuated and no emergency responders came. Outraged parents contacted OLC from dawn until after midnight, and were out in front of the school picketing at the end of May.

OREGON

◆ A rapidly growing group in Eugene, **Community Against Railroad Pollution** (CARP), is addressing toxic contamination along the railroad lines and facilities that border several neighborhoods. Recently, four impacted neighborhoods held a joint meeting on the railroad contamination issue. In addition, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has gotten testing results for 50 chemicals in the soil or groundwater near the railroad. Thanks to 400 signatures in support of the idea and CARP's good organizing, the group has gotten members of Eugene's city council to support making a legal agreement with the railroad on herbicide spraying.

PENNSYLVANIA

◆ Congratulations to Pottstown's **Alliance for a Clean Environment** (ACE)! After five years, Waste Management-owned Toro Energy has announced that it is withdrawing from its proposed landfill gas pipeline project. ACE, with the support of Mayor Anne Jones, helped persuade the Pottstown Borough Council to pass a resolution in opposition to the project. The pipeline would have sent landfill gas five miles to the Occidental Chemical PVC plant to be burned as fuel. "The end of the Pottstown Landfill gas pipeline marks a major victory for thousands of children who attend 25 schools and day-care centers within 2 miles of Occidental," the ACE board said in a public announcement after Toro Energy pulled out. "The 31,000 residents within two miles and tens of thousands more living downwind, those who work nearby, and the Oxy workers, will now not be forced to breathe huge increased hazardous emissions from Oxy, already one of the worst polluters in the state."

◆ In Harrisburg, **Coalition Against the Incinerator** (CAI) is mobilizing community opposition to the mayor's plan to borrow \$92 million to rebuild the Harrisburg solid waste incinerator, one of the largest sources of dioxin in the country. The U.S. EPA shut down the Harrisburg incinerator in December 2000 because it was so polluting that it could not meet the new air pollution standards. Without making it cleaner, the city fired it back up the very next month, using a loophole to avoid the new laws. Even more alarming, the U.S.

BHOPAL

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When the Bhopal activists ended their hunger strike later in July, Diane Wilson in Seadrift, Texas and other activists in the U.S. took it over. Diane has long battled chemical companies dumping toxic waste into San Antonio Bay, and her protest was directed not only at Dow's evasion of responsibility for Bhopal but at the Dow-Carbide facility in Seadrift, which has polluted sensitive wetlands.

In mid-August, **Greenpeace** tracked down former-CEO Anderson at his beach house on Long Island, New York and served the startled fugitive with a copy of the Indian warrant for his arrest.

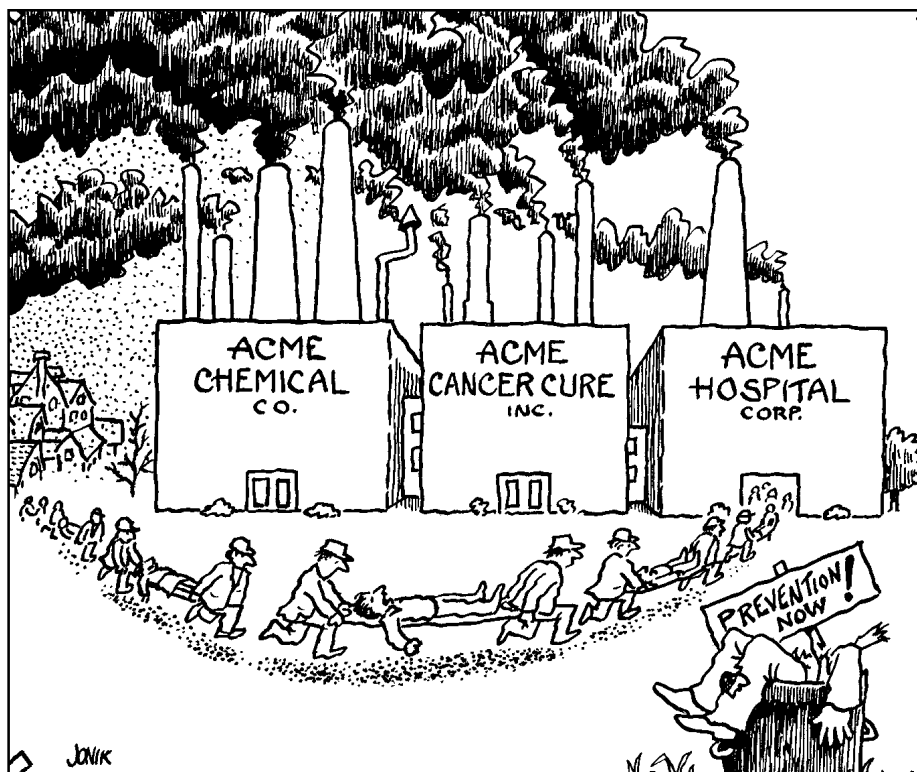
A week later, on August 26, Diane Wilson, back in action after finishing her 30-day hunger strike, climbed a 70-foot tower at the Seadrift plant, chained herself to a pole, and hung down a 12-foot banner with the words "DOW - RESPONSIBLE FOR BHOPAL." County police forcibly removed her from the tower and arrested her.

On August 28, in an important court victory for Bhopal survivors, an Indian judge rejected the government's request to reduce the charges against Anderson and directed the prosecutor to expedite Anderson's extradition from the U.S. to stand trial.

Protests against Dow's toxic pollution continue. On the eve of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, South African representatives from Greenpeace, **GroundWork**, **Corpwatch** and the **National Campaign for Justice in Bhopal** staged a protest at the Dow plant near Johannesburg, fencing off a discharge pipe that has been pumping toxic wastewater into local communities and putting up a banner that read, "Dow: Do Not Repeat Bhopal. Clean Up Africa Now!"

Action Line

Action Line



EPA and state Department of Environmental Protection allowed the Harrisburg incinerator to have a limit 25 times higher than the federal standard for incinerators of that size. CAI wants to close the Harrisburg incinerator permanently and begin recycling. CAI argues there are alternatives to incineration that are safer, less expensive, generate revenues, and create jobs. The vote on whether to borrow money to rebuild the incinerator will come up in the early fall. If the money is not borrowed, the incinerator will shut down permanently next year.

SOUTH CAROLINA

◆ **Allendale County Citizens Opposed to Landfills** appears to have headed off an attempt by the Hugo Neu Proler company to build an auto fluff facility in their community. (Auto fluff is what's left of cars after the metal parts are recycled and includes plastics, PCBs, mercury, and lead.) Hugo Neu worked hard to influence local decision-makers, and the group took a blow on June 20 when the county council voted 3-1 to override its own landfill ordinance and support the new facility. However, Citizens Opposed worked with other groups around the

state to call attention to the environmental racism of the project; the group charges the state with colluding with the company to locate the facility in a community of color. The facility needs approval from the Three Rivers Solid Waste Board and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), both of which have reacted negatively to the project. DHEC has denied brownfield status to the site and promised local activists public hearings and careful attention to the project if it moves forward. For the present, the project is dormant, and Citizens Opposed is cautiously optimistic.

VERMONT

◆ Activists and officials from France and Canada joined Vermonters at the "Global Summit on OMYA," organized by **Vermonters for a Clean Environment**. OMYA, a privately owned company with 130 plants in 30 countries, is the world's largest producer of calcium carbonate and talc, a mineral used in the paint, paper, plastics, chemical and rubber industries. More than 200 people came together at the Tinmouth Community Center, near the site of OMYA's planned marble quarry in Danby. The group shared stories about how the multinational corporation bullies local communities and rav-

ages local resources. Former residents of Vingrau, a village of 400 in southern France, described a losing 10-year battle to stop OMYA. Vingrau's deputy mayor noted that he had been fined for "defamation" of OMYA and noted OMYA's support from the French government. He also said, "OMYA is pretending to create jobs, but I can tell you this is not the truth." A former Vingrau resident told the audience, "Your battle is our battle. We are all Vermonters." In Vermont, OMYA already operates a quarry in Middlebury, where it is trying to increase allowable truck traffic.

VIRGINIA

◆ Members of the **Blue Ridge Coalition** (BRC) have been actively opposing two proposed natural gas pipelines in the rural hills and valleys of Southwest Virginia. The pipelines would devastate farms, homes, tourist facilities, and scenic landscapes in mountainous southwest Virginia and threaten the headwaters of several rivers. This summer, some members carried out a weeklong "Walk the Line" action, going from town to town along the proposed Duke Energy/Tennessee Gas natural gas pipeline route. In one town, police band radio monitoring by supporters indicated that the local government wanted to arrest them, but couldn't come up with a reason to. An article on the pipeline ran in the *Roanoke Times*—the largest circulation newspaper in southwestern Virginia—as a result of the action, and the group was also covered by local press and TV.

Soon afterwards about 150 people, many of them members of the BRC, attended a Virginia hearing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to oppose the other gas pipeline plan, this one from Dominion Transmission. FERC was using a "pre-filing process" that speeds up the application process by allowing the company to get public comment before the application is filed. One citizen speaker said, "Something seems wrong to me when a company comes through and it looks like it's already been given the green light."

Duke Power/Tennessee Gas also requested an expedited decision, but the FERC denied Duke's request. FERC stated that this was because of

Action Line

Action Line

the "controversy" over the proposed pipeline—in other words, community activism.

◆ Residents in Rayon Park, located next to the U.S. Army's Defense Supply Center in Richmond, were pleasantly surprised when they learned that they had been given \$150,000 to be used for "environmental enhancement." The funds come from Horne Engineering, which has been in charge of most of the cleanup operations at the military facility. Horne was indicted last March by a Chesterfield County grand jury on six counts of leaking contaminated water in No Name Creek, which runs behind the facility and through the community, and failing to report the leaks to state officials. Horne agreed to give the funds to the community in exchange for being cleared of all charges. The residents are forming a group to address the use of the money and cleanup of the community. Lonnie McCoy, a resident who represents the community as a member of the Army's Restoration Advisory Board, was quoted in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* as saying that "the first thing we have to do is stand together as a community." CHEJ has been asked to help the community address its many issues.

WASHINGTON

◆ The **Columbia Deepening Opposition Group** (C-DOG) was key to the defeat of an earlier proposal to deepen the Columbia River. The opposition of the National Marine Fisheries Service also played a big role in derailing the plan, which was pushed by the Port of Portland and the Army Corps of Engineers. The proposal is back, and this time around, the Fisheries Service has withdrawn its objections, apparently as a result of political pressure. But C-DOG and other groups will continue to fight the massive dredging project.

WEST VIRGINIA

◆ Mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) is one of the most horrifying environmental atrocities going on anywhere—total annihilation of huge swaths of forested mountains and mountain streams. One of the worst offenders is Massey Energy. Massey is

responsible for a massive 306 million gallon coal waste sludge "spill" that devastated 100 miles of streams in 2000 and for repeated water and dust violations at several subsidiaries. It also takes an aggressive anti-union stance. Last year, the **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition** (OVEC) protested at the Massey Energy annual stockholder meeting in Charleston. This year, Massey thought it could escape the embarrassment by moving the meeting to its corporate headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. Sorry, Massey. In the early morning hours of April 16, environmentalists joined miners, retired miners and their families aboard United Mine Workers of America busses leaving Charleston for Richmond. About 300 folks made the trip, staying up all night, talking about ways to bring our movements together. OVEC got proxies into the meeting who gave the shareholders an earful. The message to Massey: "As long as you destroy our state, we'll be there to hold you accountable." *Contributed by Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition*

WISCONSIN

◆ **Menomonie Area Concerned Citizens About Ethanol** is opposing an ethanol plant planned within the city limits, mainly because of the potential odor. The group succeeded in getting the city to hire an outside consultant whose report described potential problems with the plant. In addition, the city attorney, a key figure supporting the plant, was forced to withdraw from involvement after Concerned Citizens pointed out that the city attorney's law partner had represented the proposed plant's operator.

◆ South Milwaukee's wastewater treatment plant has been accepting hauled industrial waste for many years and getting paid substantial sums for it. Though local activists blamed this practice for toxic waste in Lake Milwaukee that closed beaches most summers, the practice continued. Then a truck dumped a load right next to a playground close to the home of a local activist, and "we took it upon ourselves to not only call the DNR but our good friends at EPA." After some investigation and fines, eventually the wastewater treatment plant stopped taking any industrial waste. "So," a local activist writes CHEJ, "the sun shines brightly in South Milwaukee and with continued effort we will keep it that way."

MEXICO

◆ **Proyecto Paz y Dignidad** (Peace and Dignity Project), in Tecate, near the U.S. border, reports that the permit for the landfill they are opposing has been delayed for ten months on a technicality. Meanwhile, the group has stirred up emotional vocal opposition in Tecate, which includes the *ejitarios* (communal land owners) at the site. A meeting of the Tecate Waste Management Project, a community-based, local organization, was held to bring the environmental organizations in Tecate into united opposition.

◆ The community organizing and advocacy efforts of Colonia Chilpancingo residents paid off in May as an official from the Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA), the enforcement arm of Mexico's environmental protection agency, ordered the toxic Metales y Derivados site cordoned off and installed signs warning passersby to keep out. Alejandro Alvarez Cárdenas, the Tijuana head of PROFEPA, also issued a statement to the press asserting that Mexico's border region will not be used as an "environmental dumping ground." Metales y Derivados is an abandoned lead smelter contaminated with more than 7,000 metric tons of toxic waste that stands just 150 yards from Colonia Chilpancingo, home to more than 10,000 people. On April 10, members of **Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental** and members of **Environmental Health Coalition** held a 24-hour vigil in front of the PROFEPA office in Tijuana demanding that the Mexican government clean up the toxic site. The Colectivo and EHC welcomed PROFEPA's actions. Residents emphasized, however, that they will not be satisfied until the Metales site is cleaned following plans approved by the community and no longer poses a "grave risk to human health", as the February 2002 official NAFTA report asserts. *Contributed by Environmental Health Coalition*

Action Line

CHILD PROOFING OUR COMMUNITIES

C A M P A I G N P A G E

Child Proofing Our Communities is a locally-based, nationally connected campaign aimed at protecting children from environmental health hazards in schools and child care settings by raising awareness, empowering community members, and encouraging concerned adults to take action at the local levels. The campaign currently has three committees: Healthy Buildings, School Siting, and Pesticides. For information on the campaign, publications, and updates on our activities, visit our website at www.childproofing.org.

CAMPAIGN RELEASES *ABC'S OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS*

On August 19, the campaign's Healthy Buildings committee released *Creating Safe Learning Zones: The ABC's of Healthy Schools*.

The *ABC's of Healthy Schools* is a primer or reference guide for parents, community groups, PTA/PTOs school boards, and others involved in building, maintaining, or renovating schools who are committed to creating a healthy environment for learning. Committee members intend the primer to facilitate the campaign's work with communities seeking to promote environmental health in their school buildings. The Healthy Buildings committee is comprised of experts and activists whose fields include architecture, pediatric medicine, industrial hygiene, alternative building materials, and indoor and outdoor air quality.

The committee released the primer as a pilot in July, eliciting comments from groups who reviewed it that helped us tie up loose ends and enhanced our understanding of some issues. The final version of the primer included 14 community stories from parents, teachers, and activists around the country who shared their experiences. Some are cautionary tales of inadequate remediation or abatement efforts. Others are uplifting accounts of "healthy" schools that can serve as examples of the kinds of action and innovation needed to protect our children.

Community activists who contributed stories to the primer have helped

promote the new publication in national and local media. Thus far, campaign contacts have spoken to journalists from the Today Show, Fox Television, Reuters, and local outlets. Through this coverage, the word is getting out about potential health hazards in our children's schools and what we can do to help eliminate them.

For copies of the report, please contact Campaign Coordinator Paul Ruther at 703-237-2249, ext. 21 or childproofing@chej.com. The report is available online at www.childproofing.org.



SITING COMMITTEE SETS ITS SIGHTS ON FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

The School Siting committee included model school siting guidelines in its January report, *Creating Safe Learning Zones*. These guidelines were the major focus of a Children's Environmental Health Symposium convened in Baltimore on June 13-14. Three working groups (cleverly named groups 1, 2, and 3) were formed to review and improve the guidelines. This work will support

the campaign's efforts to shape state and national legislation on school siting.

◆ **Group 1** has the task of improving a table indicating the levels of chemicals in soil that are safe for children. The table, which will be used in the model school siting guidelines, is being revised to take into account the special vulnerability of children.

◆ **Group 2** will establish a first level of site screening criteria for school boards proposing to build schools on or near contaminated land. The goal is to encourage decision-makers to consider alternatives rather building on contaminated land.

◆ **Group 3** will be revising the existing model school siting guidelines and refining the process for evaluating, investigating, and cleaning up contaminated sites.

One state—Massachusetts—has already passed a school siting law, and committee members there are working with state agencies to improve regulatory language on school siting. We have put committee members from Massachusetts in contact with the Buckeye Environmental Network and the Ohio Environmental Council to assist them in introducing school siting legislation in Ohio. To launch the Ohio effort, the groups are creating a map, similar to the maps produced for *Creating Safe Learning Zones*, indicating schools within a half-mile of Superfund sites and other contaminated sites as identified by the state of Ohio. The map will be a critical tool in the Ohio legislative effort.

PESTICIDES COMMITTEE DEVELOPS AWARD PROGRAM

The Pesticides committee is developing a certification, recognition, and award program for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and parental notification policies in schools. In 2001, the committee produced a Gold Standard School IPM model policy for the campaign's *Poisoned Schools: Invisible Threats, Visible Actions* report, which will serve as a guide for the steps individual schools could take to improve their pesticide

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STOP DIOXIN EXPOSURE

C A M P A I G N P A G E

The Stop Dioxin Exposure campaign is a national grassroots effort to eliminate dioxin and initiate a public debate on the role of government in protecting the health of the American people. Dioxin is the highly toxic by-product of industrial processes involving chlorine. The campaign works with hundreds of community organizations to modify or shut down dioxin-emitting facilities, such as waste incinerators, chemical manufacturing plants, and paper mills. For more information on the campaign, publications, and updates on our activities, please visit our website at www.chej.org.

DIOXIN REASSESSMENT

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Even as the administration continues to stall the release of the Reassessment, we should all congratulate ourselves for how effective our work has been in moving this document through the U.S. EPA's review process and in spreading the word about the many dangers of dioxin. We need to recognize that the larger scientific community has repeatedly reaffirmed the basic conclusions of the Reassessment, despite repeated challenges from industry. The EPA's Science Advisory Board, an independent Peer Review Committee convened by EPA's Office of Research and Development, several committees of the World Health Organization, the National Toxicology Program of the National Institute of Health, the Veterans and Agent Orange committee of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine, the U.S. Government Accounting Office, an environmental commission to the European Union, and others have either adopted or used many of the key scientific assumptions and methods used by EPA or come to the same conclusions. The WHO and EPA, for example, both agree that dioxin can adversely affect human health at lower exposure levels than previously thought and that some adverse noncancer effects such as reproductive and developmental impairment can occur at or near levels to which the general population is now being exposed.

The Bush administration is stalling because they're afraid of what the re-

port says and how the American public will react to the fact that one of the most toxic chemicals ever tested is in most of our food—and in most of us! The chemical industry, the pulp and paper industry, the vinyl industry, the meat and dairy industry, and others are all scared by what the report says: dioxin causes cancer in 1 in 1,000 people and is linked to numerous health problems including birth defects, learning disabilities, diabetes, and endometriosis.

While EPA's lack of action is frustrating, we can still use the draft Dioxin Reassessment in our local and statewide fights to eliminate dioxin exposure. The document can be used to move elected officials and decision makers on policy, cleanups, and health monitoring. The data in the document also provides compelling information for public education campaigns. The Dioxin campaign will continue to work to ensure the Dioxin Reassessment is publicly released. Until that time, we should celebrate the progress we have all made in ensuring this document is a useful and credible tool! (The current document is available to the public on the EPA's web site at cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/dioxin.cfm.)

CONTINUED DELAYS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

EPA officials that CHEJ staff spoke with over the summer indicated they were "optimistic" the Reassessment would be sent to the Interagency Work-

ing Group (IWG) on Dioxin by the end of summer. (The IWG is comprised of federal agencies that would be affected by regulations based on the Reassessment.) As of the middle of September, this still hasn't happened. Even if the IWG receives the document in the next few months and completes its work by the end of the year, there is still no guarantee that the Reassessment will be ready for public release. Last spring, Congressman James Walsh (R-NY) made a request to the EPA that the Dioxin Reassessment be subject to a full scientific review by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) prior to its release to the public. This would delay the release of the Reassessment at least another two years.

If the IWG determines there are problems with the science in the report, then the report will be sent to the NAS. Yet the EPA has provided no criteria for what would constitute a "problem" with the science. The lack of clear criteria for determining whether the Reassessment should be sent to the NAS can be viewed as yet another strategy to stall the release of the document.

Enough is enough! The document has already been reviewed by two panels of scientific experts. In fact, in May of 2001, the EPA's Science Advisory Board, which provides peer review of EPA documents, sent a letter to Administrator Whitman urging that the agency "proceed expeditiously to complete and release" the report. It is time for this administration to stop the delays and make this important public health document available to the American people.

CONGRESS SPEAKS OUT

On August 1, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and 65 members of the House of Representatives signed and delivered a letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman requesting the immediate release of the Dioxin Reassessment. The letter was co-sponsored by three House members: Democratic Whip Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA), and Congressman Mike Ferguson (R-NJ). The letter found bipar-

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RESOURCES

◆ What happens to the computers and other electronic equipment we turn in to be recycled? An extraordinary investigation by the Basel Action Network (BAN) and Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC) found that as much as 80% of this waste winds up in poor communities in China and other places in Asia, where untrained and unprotected workers use crude methods to disassemble the equipment, discarding or burning much of it. In the process, these workers, many of them women and children, are exposing themselves to extremely hazardous substances and turning their communities into toxic dumps. *Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia* places much of the blame on the U.S. for its consistent opposition to reducing exports of hazardous waste. BAN and SVTC have produced a powerful, 20-minute film to accompany the report focusing on Guiyu, an agricultural community in China that has been transformed into an e-waste processing center employing tens of thousands in scattered operations. (February 2002, 51 pp.; available from BAN at www.ban.org or 206-652-5555 and from SVTC at www.svtc.org or 408-287-6707. BAN is asking for a \$50 donation for the film.)

◆ New technologies being promoted as alternatives to incineration are often not much better, but genuine alternatives do exist. In their timely report, *Learning Not To Burn: A Primer for Citizens on Alternatives to Burning Hazardous Waste*, the Chemical Weapons Working Group (CWWG) and New York's Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC) provide organizing guidance for community groups fighting to shut down incinerators or opposing new incineration projects. The authors have developed criteria for evaluating alternative technologies based on such factors as technical efficiency, worker safety, vendor accountability, and costs, and they include a useful chart summarizing safer technology options. As illustrations of the potential for implementing alternative technologies, the authors look at CWWG's success at getting the U.S. military to consider safer disposal methods for chemical weapons and the campaign by CEC and the Kandidate Coalition to get Kodak to stop incineration and adopt cleaner production methods. (June 2002, 35 pp.; available from CWWG at www.cwwg.org or 859-986-0868 and from CEC at www.cectoxic.org or 716-885-6848.)

◆ The case for drastically restricting pesticide use becomes stronger all the time. In *Do Pesticides Cause Lymphoma?* researcher Susan Osborn provides summaries of more than 100 studies that examine the relationship between lymphoma and phenoxy herbicides such as 2,4-D: three-quarters found an increase in lymphoma in populations with higher exposures to these pesticides. Osborn provides clear definitions

of key terms and discusses how research methods and funding can affect the outcome of studies. (Lymphoma Foundation, 2001, 50 pp.; 202-223-6181; www.lymphomahelp.org)

◆ At the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia led the attack on proposals for rapidly expanding

the use of renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar power. The consequences of perpetuating our dependence on petroleum are systematically laid out in *Oil: A Life Cycle Analysis of Its Health and Environmental Impacts*. Researchers at Harvard's Center for Health and the Global Environment take the reader through each stage of oil production and use, summarizing the hazards to humans, wildlife and ecosystems. The report offers clear and succinct explanations of a broad range of topics, including what happens to oil in the environment after a spill, the occupational hazards of oil extraction and refining, the pollutants generated by gasoline combustion, the formation of acid rain, and the role of fossil fuels in global warming. (Center for Health and the Global Environment, Harvard Medical School, 2002, 73 pp.; 617-432-0493; www.med.harvard.edu/chge/oil.html)

◆ As the U.S. military budget grows with no end in sight and the Department of Defense seeks to expand its exemptions from environmental regulations, monitoring the military's polluting practices becomes more important than ever. In their latest report, the Military Toxics Project (MTP) examines the pollution and health effects caused by the military's production, testing, firing, and disposal of munitions. *Communities in the Line of Fire: The Environmental, Cultural, and Human Health Impacts of Military Munitions and Firing Ranges* details the health impacts of common contaminants and provides an overview of the thoroughly inadequate federal regulation of military munitions and ranges. A third of this excellent report is devoted to case studies of communities with environmental and health damage caused by U.S. military practices. (MTP, June 2002, 54 pp.; 1-877-783-5091; www.miltoxproj.org)

◆ In *Life Support: The Environment and Human Health*, public health professionals address the impact of pervasive environmental degradation and collapsing ecosystems on human health. Edited by Michael McCally, a professor of public health and preventative medicine, the 17 essays in this volume offer clearly written, well-documented summaries of current research on a broad range of topics, including the health effects of air and water pollution, the toxicity of heavy metals, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, the environmental causes of cancer, and the potential health impact of climate change and ozone depletion. (MIT Press, 2002, 312 pp., \$19.95) ■



WITH SPECIAL THANKS

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice remains an advocate, educator, organizer and leader in the grassroots environmental movement through the generous support of our members, Partners, Guardians, and key foundations and institutions. CHEJ would like to acknowledge the following individuals and institutions who made critically important donations to support our work between June 18, 2002 and September 13, 2002. Our members number in the hundreds, and are therefore too many to name. However, each gift, no matter what the size, is very much appreciated.

INDIVIDUALS

PARTNERS' CIRCLE

(gifts of \$100-999)

...partners in a movement of people and communities committed to protecting public health and the environment.

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INSTITUTIONS

EJECT-NJ, Inc.

DIAMOND COMMUNITY WINS

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this spring into direct negotiations with CCN, a move the company had long resisted. Before negotiations began, CCN set a firm deadline. According to Anne Rolfes, "They knew that if there was no resolution by mid June, we would take our fight to Johannesburg. Eight weeks to do business; after that, escalation."

At the end of the first week in June, Shell notified CCN of its decision to buy out residents on the two remaining Diamond Streets. Shell is now offering a minimum of \$80,000 for a house, plus up to \$20,000 in moving and miscellaneous expenses.

From Johannesburg, where she was attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Margie Richard, former president of CCN, said, "This victory has got to be greater than just our community, just Norco. This has to matter for the whole nation, for the people in Nigeria, and all over the world." ■

Editor's note: For more on the history of the Diamond community and its struggle for relocation, see Anne Rolfes' article in the fall, 2001 issue of EBY, "Shell Games in the Diamond Community—Norco, Louisiana" and visit the website of the Louisiana Bucket Brigade at www.labucketbrigade.org.

CHILD PROOFING OUR COMMUNITIES

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practices. This IPM program would be integrated into a larger award program, tentatively called the "Green Flag" program, currently being developed by a campaign subcommittee. The award program, which was inspired by the Eco-Schools programs currently used in 20 European countries, would present green flags to schools whose students, working with parents, teachers and staff, have brought about positive environmental change in their schools. ■

STOP DIOXIN

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tisan support in the House due to the administration's continued reluctance to complete and release this important document. (Visit our web site at www.chej.org/dioxinharm.html to view the letter and see if your representative signed on.)

This letter was a follow up to a similar letter sent by Congresswoman Pelosi and 40 other representatives to Whitman last August. At that time, the EPA responded by stating that the document would be sent to the Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Dioxin for final review in the fall of 2001. Now—one year later—the report still has not gone to this group for review.

The Dioxin campaign will continue to work with key members of Congress to keep the necessary pressure on this administration. ■

Support the Center for Health, Environment and Justice

Communities have more power to protect themselves today from toxic chemicals in their air, water and soil than they did 25 years ago, when residents of Love Canal, New York first organized to fight for relocation. That historic struggle gave birth to a movement that has successfully challenged polluting practices in thousands of cities and towns throughout the country.

Today, the polluters we face have even more experts, money, and political clout. But the people power of communities has grown, too—thanks in part to the inspiration, resources, and organizing assistance provided by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

Make a difference for CHEJ...

... *At your office*

Please consider a gift this fall as you make your charitable contribution through the employee giving program at your workplace.

- Our number in the Combined Federal Campaign is #0929
- We are also listed in over 200 corporate and municipal workplaces nationwide.



Earth Share

... *Through your long distance and credit card services*



Working Assets services help build a better world—and help CHEJ too. Just by using Working Assets long distance, wireless, credit card, or internet services, last year Working Assets customers helped raise nearly \$6 million for progressive causes.

If you're a Working Assets customer, please nominate CHEJ for funding from Working Assets' 2002 donations pool! Beginning in October, Working Assets will include ballots in their bills for selecting recipients of these donations.

However, you can vote on-line anytime! To vote, you must be a current long distance, wireless, credit card, GiveForChange.com, or ShopForChange.com customer. If you use all five Working Assets services, your vote will be weighted accordingly.

If you're not a Working Assets customer but would like to find out more about this program and how your long distance or credit card services can help CHEJ, visit www.workingassets.com.

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