

EVERYONE'S BACKYARD

Vol. 25 No. 3 Fall 2007



ETHANOL PLANTS

Good for the
Environment?

PREVENTING POLLUTION

GREENING OUR
COMMUNITIES



The Journal of the Grassroots Environmental Movement

Center for Health, Environment and Justice

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On the Cover:

Ethanol is being touted as a cleaner alternative to gasoline - does it live up to its promises? See story, page 3.

LESSONS FROM KINDERGARTEN

Share, play fair, don't hit, clean up your mess, watch out for strangers, say no to drugs, wash your hands, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. We all learned the basic rules of good behavior early in life. As parents, educators and taxpaying citizens, we have a responsibility not only to teach our children how to behave and stay safe, but to also keep them out of harm's way. This new school year gives us an opportunity to show what we learned back in kindergarten.

How? Many schools and community centers have visible signs declaring the area a "Drug Free Zone." Yet within these same buildings, toxic cleaners and pesticides that are harmful to young children are used. Industrial cleaners used on floors and tables leave behind neurotoxins and endocrine disruptors. The cubbies where students store their lunch bags and coats are often sprayed with toxic pesticides to control insects. Children can ingest these dangerous chemicals by breathing vapors, by skin contact, and by touching contaminated surfaces with their hands and then putting those hands in their mouths, eyes and nose.

Exposure to industrial cleaning chemicals and to toxic pesticides can cause children to be hyperactive and have difficulty maintaining attention. It can also trigger asthma and other health problems. It's hard for children to succeed when they are sick.

As schools open this year, find out what cleaning agents and pesticides are used in your local schools. Many schools have already replaced industrial cleaning products with "green" cleaning products. In the past year, New York and Illinois have made this change in all their public schools and buildings. Not only did schools switching to green cleaning see a reduction in costs, but they did not see an increase in bacteria or viral infections, contrary to rumors from the chemical industry. The same is true of schools that moved from toxic pesticides to non-toxic alternative management for pest control.

Adults tell children don't smoke, stay away from drugs and show them movies about what can happen to their health and their lives if they do. Our responsibility cannot stop at explaining these dangers: we must also protect them from chemical dangers in cleaners and pesticides.

Our children are our future leaders, scientists, lawyers, teachers and so much more. Make this school year safer for everyone. If you're not sure how to begin, remember – find a friend or two, watch out for traffic, hold hands, stick together and just say "No" – you'll be safe in your journey.

For a healthy environment,
Lois Marie Gibbs

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.

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.

BY RON DAVIS, CHEJ ORGANIZER

ETHANOL PLANTS: PANACEA? OR JUST ANOTHER POLLUTION SOURCE?

With unprecedented gas prices, continuing political unrest in the Middle East, and growing fears of global warming, it's easy to jump on the ethanol bandwagon. Not surprisingly, proposals to build ethanol plants are popping up everywhere across the U.S. We are now in the gold rush era of ethanol production, a potential short-term fix for a long term problem, but at what cost to human health and the environment? The flood of ethanol proposals has raised numerous questions for the host communities, including what air emissions are generated, does the plant release contaminated waste water, what chemicals are stored on-site, and what is the risk of an explosion or accident?

The prospect of generating fuel from corn or other agricultural products is exciting, but experience teaches us to view this new fuel alternative with cautious optimism. Many questions remain unanswered about the health and environmental impacts as well as the sustainability of ethanol production.

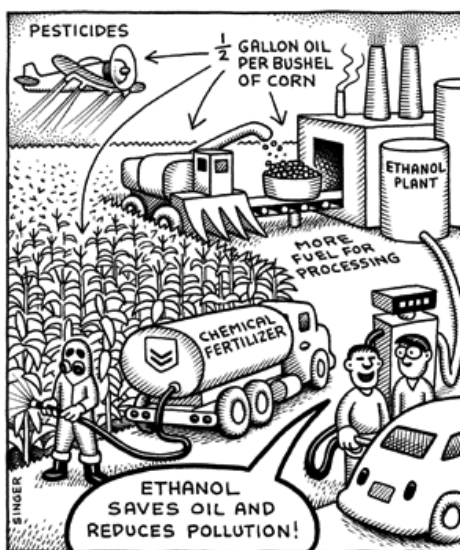
Until these questions have been answered, organizers and decision makers faced with proposed ethanol plants may find more success using a precautionary approach that places the burden of proof on the ethanol companies to show that their plants do not harm people, and that involves the impacted communities in an open, informed, and democratic process that examines a full range of alternatives.

Ethanol Production

Currently, there are 114 operating ethanol bio-refineries located in 19 states, primarily in the upper Midwest. These plants produced approximately 5 billion gallons of ethanol in 2006. Another 80 plants are under construction and an additional seven plants are being expanded.

More than 90% of the ethanol produced in the U.S. is made from corn, but in Brazil, most ethanol is made from sugar cane. Ethanol can also be made from beets, wheat, barley, potatoes and other feedstocks. Corn ethanol can be made by either a wet or dry milling process. Like making bread, beer, or wine, ethanol production involves a fermentation process that converts sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. In the dry milling process, the corn or other starchy grain is ground into

a powder, mixed with water, "cooked" with enzymes that turn the starch to sugar (glucose), and cooled to convert the sugars to ethanol and carbon dioxide. The ethanol is then concentrated and blended with 5% gasoline making it ready for shipment to gasoline terminals or retailers.



Emissions from Ethanol Production

Although ethanol refineries generate some of the same pollutants associated with petroleum production, they have their own pollutants. Emissions include volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and acrolein, hydrochloric acid, hydrogen fluoride, heavy metals such as manganese, lead, and chromium, and particulate matter. Typical petroleum emissions that are also found in emissions from ethanol plants include methanol, n-hexane, ammonia, sulphuric acid, and benzene. When first built, these plants had few, if any, air pollution controls, but testing conducted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in 2002 found the total emissions from 14 plants to be ten times higher than expected. Air pollution controls

have been added to some of these plants, but not to all of them. Even when added, however, they do not control all of the toxic emissions.

Ethanol plants also use huge amounts of water and produce large amounts of wastewater. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources reported that a single plant producing 100 million gallons of ethanol a year used as much water as a town of 10,000 people. Discharged waste water can contain toxic substances such as heavy metals.

Citizens living near these facilities are complaining about health problems that they believe are caused by the emissions and dust particles from the plants. Odors from these plants can cause headaches, nausea, coughing, congestion, shortness of breath, and eye, nose and throat irritation. In Loudon, Tennessee, Larry Hardison, a member of the Loudon County Air Quality Task Force, was so skeptical about complaints of intolerable odors from an ethanol plant that he pulled out his kayak and paddled upriver of the Tate & Lyle ethanol plant. As he came downriver, the odors got worse, and eventually overwhelmed him. He ended his excursion dry heaving over the side of his boat, convinced that the complaints had merit.

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BE SAFE Campaign

BE SAFE is a nationwide initiative to build support for the precautionary approach to prevent pollution and environmental destruction before it happens.

BE SAFE EVENTS

NORTH CAROLINA MEGA-DUMPS TOUR AUGUST 12-20, 2007

CHEJ and the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League held an innovative tour in North Carolina. CHEJ Executive Director Lois Gibbs and community leaders spoke at over fifteen events in eleven cities highlighting the environmental and social injustice of siting up to six proposed mega-dump landfills to take out-of-state waste. While calling on policymakers to “Stop the Mega-Dumps” and extend a one-year moratorium on such sites, the groups also advocated the passage of precautionary policies to responsibly address landfill problems with zero waste, recycling and other reforms.

SOUTHEAST PRECAUTIONARY ACTION CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 16 – 18, 2007

CHEJ's BE SAFE campaign is organizing a Southeast Precautionary Action Conference for people working on three priority environmental hazards—land application of sewage sludge, proposed industrial and solid waste mega-dumps and nuclear power plants. Groups in NC, SC, TN, VA, GA, PA and FL will come together in Greensboro, NC to share successful strategies, and participate in skills training workshops on media, messaging, health studies and other topics.

The event provides an opportunity for groups working on mega-dumps, sludge issues and nuclear power to strategize collaboratively and develop effective campaign plans for 2008 with an emphasis on prevention and precaution, such as sustainable zero waste programs and clean energy. CHEJ's BE SAFE campaign is working with the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and other community, environmental and health groups to plan the event. For more information, contact anne@besafenet.com or call 518-732-4538.

BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING: Go PVC-FREE

This year when you send the kids off to school, send them off in style and with safer PVC-free products. Children's school products, such as backpacks and binders, are often made out of the poison plastic. Some of these products may contain harmful additives, such as lead and phthalates, that can be toxic to your child's health. Look out for PVC in these products and ask for safer PVC-free products for your children.

PRODUCT	WHAT TO LOOK FOR/PVC-FREE ALTERNATIVES
Backpacks	Steer clear of shiny backpacks with colorful graphics - they are often made out of vinyl. Ask for backpacks that are made out of safer materials such as cotton (organic preferably), nylon, or polyurethane foam.
Lunchboxes	Tests show that some PVC lunchboxes contain lead, which has forced Wal-Mart, Sears, and K-Mart to stop selling all PVC lunchboxes and turn to PVC-free lunchboxes. Additionally, http://www.reusablebags.com sells some PVC-free lunchboxes.
Sneakers	Adidas, ASICS, Nike, and Puma have all agreed to eliminate PVC in their footwear.
Three-Ring Binders	Look for three-ring binders that are labeled “PVC-free” or made out of safer materials such as polypropylene or recycled cardboard.



When It Comes to Her Safety,

TARGET's Aim Is OFF

Don't Let PVC Poison Plastic Toys
Make Your Child A Sitting Duck

On May 24, 2007 as part of a Target Day of Action, CHEJ ran this ad (left) in the Cleveland, OH USA Today, where Target was holding its shareholder meeting.

A report, Way Off Target, detailing Target's poor record on PVC as compared to other retailers, was also released.

To learn more about the hazards of PVC products and safer alternatives, and to read more about the Target campaign, visit <http://www.besafenet.com/pvc>.

BY ANNE RABE, CHEJ BE SAFE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

PREVENTING POLLUTION: GREENING OUR COMMUNITIES

Across the country, communities, local and state governments and businesses are setting up pollution prevention programs to reduce the use and generation of toxic chemicals and hazardous waste.

For instance, communities are setting up green cleaning and pesticide use reduction programs in schools. A growing number of local and state governments are providing technical assistance to help small businesses reduce pollution, and setting up green purchasing programs. Some industries are responding to consumer pressure and redesigning products to eliminate the use of toxic materials, like polyvinyl chloride (PVC, known as the poison plastic), mercury and lead.

Pollution prevention is based on the precautionary approach to prevent harm where threats to health or the environment exist from toxic substances. Besides reducing toxic exposures, it can result in major cost savings. Reducing pollutants at their source—during the manufacturing process instead of at the end of the pipe—reduces the costs of managing hazardous materials and disposing of toxic waste. Due to inaction on the federal level, a growing number of local and state governments are stepping in to fill the void by setting up pollution prevention programs.

New York Pollution Prevention Institute Victory

A prime example of this is New York, where several local groups successfully convinced the Governor and State Legislature to provide \$2 million for a new Pollution Prevention Institute. The Institute will promote pollution prevention (commonly called P2) through research and development projects on priority pollution problems, and then demonstrate the effectiveness of pollution prevention technologies and practices in laboratory and business demonstration projects. It will also provide education and training programs for businesses to make manufacturing operations more sustainable for workers, the public and the environment. A primary focus of the Institute is green chemistry (see box) which is the design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances.

The Citizens' Environmental Coalition and the Alliance for a Toxic-Free Future (ATFF) working with CHEJ's BE SAFE Campaign



advocated that this new institute should be modeled after the best pollution prevention program in the country — the Toxic Use Reduction Institute (TURI) based at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. This state-funded Institute was set up in 1989 by a pioneering state law, the Toxic Use Reduction Act, which requires businesses to file Toxic Use Reduction Plans. According to TURI, toxic use reduction is a fundamental form of P2 that focuses on the use of chemicals and the generation of wastes in the manufacturing process—not on managing waste after it is produced.

Massachusetts's Success Story: 65% Toxic Waste Reduction

In the NY campaign, the groups highlighted TURI's amazing successes. From 1990 to 2004, Massachusetts achieved:

- a 41% reduction in the use of hazardous substances (per unit of production);
- a 65% reduction in the generation of hazardous waste (per unit of production); and
- \$14 million in overall cost savings for the entire state over a 7 year period.

TURI recently completed a Five Chemicals Alternatives Assessment

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ACTION LINE

Action Line is the heart of Everyone's Backyard. This is where we tell the stories of grassroots groups that reflect their creative energy and accomplishments. It is also a way to share strategies, actions, and industry trends. Although we do not always mention our role, CHEJ is providing organizing and technical assistance to many of these groups. For other stories, we draw on a large network of contacts and organizations that we have developed during our 25 years of operation. We welcome and encourage contributions.

ALASKA

The Pebble Mineral Prospect is seeking to expand its mining operation in Homer and several nearby residents have been organizing in response. Currently, Pebble mines solely for gold, but the company wants to begin mining for silver and copper. While this area of Southwestern Alaska is no stranger to mining, it would be the first time that this land would be exposed to mixed mining, which is known for having the worst environmental consequences. Residents are especially concerned about potential impacts on nearby Lake Iliamna and the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. The group's latest effort is a state ballot initiative that would bar mining in ecologically sensitive areas throughout Alaska. If the initial application is approved, they would begin collecting signatures of support this summer. CHEJ has been providing organizing assistance and will continue to work with them to protect the valuable ecological resources in their community.

CALIFORNIA

People for Clean Air and Water, Green Action for Health and Environmental Justice, and the **Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment** and more than 120 organizations from across the country including CHEJ are joining together to fight environmental racism and injustice in Kettleman City. They all signed a letter to the USEPA denouncing the agency's claim that living next to the giant Chem-Waste toxic and solid waste landfill does not have negative impacts on the community. The residents of the low-income, primarily Spanish-speaking community living around the landfill have complained for years and report many cases of cancer, reproductive illnesses, and asthma among other health problems. The residents and environmental activists are demanding an end to EPA's environmental racism, and have called on the agency to begin complying with its mandate to uphold environmental justice and protect the health of all communities, regardless of race or income.

The **Environmental Health Coalition (EHC)** and its volunteers are celebrating a success as the Chula Vista Mayor and City Council members voted unanimously to oppose construction of a new power plant on the Chula Vista Bayfront. Active participation by the Chula Vista residents, along with help from EHC, made this success possible. Residents have been working with EHC to

oppose the power plant and to develop a report that explains how the plant would produce an increased amount of pollution over the Chula Vista area. The Chula Vista residents were committed to protecting their community and succeeded in their goal.

CONNECTICUT

More than 40 activists from around the U.S. joined with the **Concerned Citizens for Environmental Justice (CCEJ)** to tour the Connecticut Resources Recovery Agency's (CRRA) trash-to-energy plant in Hartford. The activists made clear their intent to fight any plan to increase the amount of garbage burned at the plant. CCEJ is concerned that the state agency might close a smaller regional incinerator to increase the plant's capacity. The event was billed as a "non-protest" in response to CRRA's "non-proposal" to expand the incinerator. The protest coincided with a strategy meeting organized by the **Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives** that brought together more than 30 activists from around the U.S. to share strategies and information.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Agent Orange Diabetic Victims group along with Agent Orange Victims & Widows Support Network/Home of the Agent Orange Quilt of Tears Project laid a wreath in memory of all who died from exposure to Agent Orange illnesses at the In Memory Plaque at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC on Sunday May 27th.

FLORIDA

Residents of Taylor County celebrated the decision by Taylor Energy Partners to suspend plans to build a coal-fired power plant in the county while they participate in a state dialog on Florida's energy future. The Florida chapter of the **Sierra Club**, the **Florida Alliance for a Clean Environment** and others opposed the proposed coal burner for more than two

years. Local, regional, and statewide opposition had steadily increased over this time. Sierra Club Energy Chair Joy Towles said, "When only 4 people (aside from those who were paid to represent the power companies) spoke in favor of the plant at the recent land use hearing, with over 60 voicing their firm objections, along with serious objections raised at the public service commission hearings, it became very obvious that a filthy coal plant is not acceptable in Taylor County."

Residents in the town of Lakeland are getting sick from odors from the local waste water treatment facility. CHEJ is providing organizing assistance to the residents helping them form a group to address the problem. The water treatment plant was already there when developers built the homes around the facility. The facility is hidden away but the noise and smell are now a concern for the neighbors.

ILLINOIS

River Rescue and area residents celebrated a major victory when the Illinois Pollution Control Board (PCB) voted 4 to 0 to uphold the decision by the Peoria County Board to deny the Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) a permit to expand its hazardous waste landfill. The PCB agreed that the County Board had made a fair decision that was consistent with the evidence presented. PDC claimed that the public hearings and post-hearings procedures were unfair; that various members of the Board were biased against the expansion; and that the Board's decision was based on "matters outside the record." Further angering PDC was the excellent organizing efforts by the community to lobby its elected representatives to follow the will of the people. PDC vows to appeal again, so the group has just a short time to catch its breath before resuming its organizing efforts. Over 230 written comments were submitted in support of the County's original decision.

INDIANA

Pike-Gibson Citizens for a Quality Environment (PGCQE) in Oakland City has been working since March to prevent an ethanol plant from being built in Petersburg. The plant would abut a national wildlife refuge, which has heightened concerns about the impact of the emissions from the facility. Uncertain who will permit the plant (the town has no zoning board), PGCQE is pressuring the county council and the city commission. The group has organized great turnout to local meetings and has created a petition in opposition to the plant. While the town affected only has 3,000 residents, the proposed site is at the border of two counties, prompting involvement from a wider range of participants. PGCQE found CHEJ's 10 Organizing Steps posted on www.chej.org and then contacted us for further support. We provided them with factual materials to aid their efforts and will continue to help them with their

An excellent new book on community organizing is available - *Building Powerful Community Organizations, A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world* by Michael Jacoby Brown. This book provides a broad range of practical advice about organizing that will educate both experienced organizers and those just getting started. A wonderful resource. For more information, visit: <http://www.BuildingPowerfulCommunityOrganizations.com>

ACTION LINE

organizing work.

LOUISIANA

Concerned Citizens Around Murphy (CCAM) are teaming up with the **Louisiana Bucket Brigade** to question the proposed expansion of the Murphy Oil refinery. Murphy Oil has drawn the ire of nearby residents following a million-gallon oil spill during Hurricane Katrina, and a more recent request to expand their operations. CCAM won an important victory by prompting the state to hold a public hearing that was attended by nearly two dozen concerned residents. Neighbors complain of oil odors in their yards, and several homes have been waiting for over a month for Murphy to bring them clean soil after the company's so-called "clean up" of their property. The refinery agreed to pay \$330 million to settle a federal class-action lawsuit involving an estimated 6,500 property owners and renters affected by the spill. So far, the company has bought 356 homes within four blocks of the plant and is tearing them down.

MAINE

The **Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Maine** celebrated a major win when the state legislature voted to phase out a flame retardant chemical called "deca BDE" that is used in televisions and other common household products. The bill, which is expected to be signed into law by Governor John Baldacci, would make Maine one of the first states in the nation to restrict the use of deca BDE. Washington State passed a similar bill earlier this spring. Deca BDE is sprayed on the casings of electronics equipment to prevent fires. Health studies in animals have shown that deca BDE can cause developmental delays, hyperactivity, and alter thyroid function.

MICHIGAN

A U.S. District Court dismissed a lawsuit filed against Ann Arbor's **Ecology Center** and two Michigan pediatricians by Morton Grove Pharmaceuticals. The company had originally filed its lawsuit following the public support by the Ecology Center and the pediatricians of a state bill that would ban pharmaceutical products containing the pesticide lindane. The use of lindane is banned in 52 countries and the state of California. In the U.S., it is banned from use on pets and in the military. The state bill, spurred by the recent decision by the USEPA to withdraw its use in agriculture, would phase out the remaining pharmaceutical uses of lindane in Michigan. The lawsuit was viewed by the Ecology Center and advocates as a ploy to stifle public discussion and silence supporters of the bill. This is a major victory for the Ecology Center and its members.

Members of the **Lone Tree Council** praised the USEPA's announcement that Dow Chemical "must immediately start cleanup of three dioxin-contaminated hot spots downstream of its Midland, MI facility on the Tittabawassee River." Dow has failed to take action to clean up the river since a corrective order was issued in 2003. Last November, testing conducted by Dow found dioxin levels as high as 87 parts per billion (ppb) in hot spots along the first six miles of the river. These areas are subject to flooding and erosion that could further spread the contamination. Local residents are hopeful that the EPA's involvement will end Dow's stalling and result in at least the removal of the three hot spots.

MONTANA

Since, 2005, **Women's Voices for the Earth** from Missoula, along with **Oceana** and the **Mercury Policy Project**, have worked to pressure food providers to post mercury advisories on fish cases. As part of this effort, these groups purchased swordfish and tuna steaks from two grocery stores in Missoula to test them for mercury. The results from these tests were alarming and became a major public health



Participants at the environmental justice forum in Athens, OH (see story, right).

concern. WVE launched a campaign and organized four public demonstrations in Missoula and Boise to demand that Albertsons, a major grocery chain in the West, and other stores post advisories on their fish cases. So far, Safeway, Albertsons, Whole Foods, Wild Oats, and Trader Joe's have all agreed to post visible mercury advisories.

NEVADA

Congratulations to **The Stop Divine Strake Coalition** which included **HEAL Utah**, the **Downwinders**, the **Western Shoshoni** and other groups who mobilized citizen opposition forcing the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency to cancel its proposed "Divine Strake non-nuclear test" blast at the Nevada Test Site, 85 miles northwest of Las

Vegas. The quick mobilization, dedication, and active participation of the citizens of Nevada and its neighbors in Utah and Idaho played a decisive role in this decision. The test had been originally scheduled for June 2nd but growing concern about the test led to organized opposition that pressured local and state officials to take action. Opposition groups were able to quickly gain media attention and with overwhelming public opposition (more than 11,000 comments were submitted) and the strong resolve of state and federal officials, the proposed blast was cancelled.

NEW YORK

Residents of Volney are getting organized to stop the expansion of the Bristol Hill Landfill. After 23 years, residents near the Bristol Hill Congregational United Church of Christ are tired of the smell and rising cancer rates in their neighborhood. They have asked the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to deny a permit for Oswego County to raise the landfill another 56 feet. Community members have demonstrated outside DEC offices, have had the church declared a historical site, and have spoken against the expansion at town meetings. Organizers have also argued that tourism will be adversely impacted by the expansion. CHEJ is providing organizing assistance to help them preserve this historic site for the sake of their community's health.

OHIO

A growing collaboration is emerging between environmental and civil rights groups due to work between CHEJ and the **Ohioans for Health, Environment and Justice**. In June, the fourth environmental justice forum was held in the town of Athens. Over sixty participants from impacted, civil rights and environmental communities came to help shape an environmental justice policy for the state. One additional forum is planned for early fall. Once the forms are completed, a statewide meeting will be held to consolidate the community input into a draft document leading to an environmental justice policy for state consideration.

PENNSYLVANIA

The Alliance for a Clean Environment (ACE) in Pottstown continues its efforts to force Oxychem to clean up open sludge lagoons on the site of the former Occidental Petroleum PVC fabricating plant in nearby Lower Pottsgrove. The lagoons contain waste water contaminated with trichloroethylene, PVC, dioxins, and other chemicals that could be washed out into the community if heavy rains cause the Schuylkill River to flood. The site was ordered clean in 1993 by the USEPA, but Oxychem has been dragging its feet. ACE wants complete removal of the waste lagoons.

Residents in Erie are getting organized to stop a proposed tire derived fuel power plant. After a quick success that appeared to stop the proposal, orga-

ACTION LINE

nizers realized that the plan was back and they are now looking to re-energize their efforts to stop the planned construction. CHEJ is providing organizing assistance.

TENNESSEE

Over 100 Appalachian coalfield residents and citizens from 18 states organized with **Save Our Cumberland Mountains** in Washington, DC this past May to urge members of Congress to co-sponsor the Clean Water Protection Act, H.R. 2169. The goal of the bill is to end the destruction of headwater streams and put a stop to mountain top removal coal mining. Citizen lobbyists traveled from as far away as Alabama, Maine and California to gain support from their Congressional representatives. This event was a major success and resulted in 16 new co-sponsors for the bill, totaling 79 co-sponsors and counting.

highest levels of arsenic pollution in North America. Furthermore, Asarco declared bankruptcy in 2005, raising questions about their long term solvency. CHEJ will continue providing organizing and technical support to these concerned citizens.

Citizens Organizing for Resources and Environment (CORE) in the town of Texoma couldn't be happier about the news that as a result of the leveraged buyout of Texas Utilities, the permit application for 8 (of 11) coal-fired power plants – including the plant proposed for the Valley Stream Station in nearby Savoy – were withdrawn. CORE had organized quickly following the announcement to build the power plant in their community. They contacted CHEJ who helped in this effort by providing resources and encouraging them to educate and organize their community. CORE leaders were pleasantly surprised

the bad effects toxic chemical exposure can have on children's health. This past June, DPR agreed to immediately halt the use of pesticides and traditional chemical cleaners on public lands and in public buildings. Working with FACTS, the Board and DPR developed and adopted IPM and green cleaning policies. CHEJ's CPOC campaign has been a partner in this work since the beginning, and has provided organizing assistance, connected FACTS with allies and experts in the children's health movement, and developed a network for emerging grassroots leaders.

Residents in Mecklenburg County are organizing to block the sale and re-zoning of 500 acres of agricultural land to industrial zoning for the purpose of building an ethanol plant. The plant is being proposed as part of a jobs program supported by the Economic Development Authority. CHEJ is providing organizing support.



Environmental Justice Groups Converge at the First-Ever U.S. Social Forum

A dozen environmental justice networks, representing hundreds of African American, Latino, Asian, Pacific Island, and Native American grassroots organizations from Alaska to Puerto Rico, held a press conference at the first-ever U.S. Social Forum, held in Atlanta, GA. They called on U.S. officials, including Congressional leaders, Presidential candidates, and the Bush Administration, to take immediate action to address environmental health emergencies in low-income and people of color communities. The U.S. Social Forum

brought together more than 10,000 social, environmental, economic, and peace justice activists from across the country for more than 900 workshops over six days. There were numerous workshops and strategy discussions on environmental health and justice. CHEJ staff led workshops on water safety and chemical contamination and on campaigning around big box retailers, such as Wal-Mart and Target.

Also at the forum, **Mossville Environmental Action Now** and **Advocates for Environmental Human Rights** organized protests outside the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and Georgia Gulf corporate headquarters, highlighting health and environmental concerns from dioxin pollution from Georgia Gulf and other PVC and petrochemical plants in Mossville, LA.

TEXAS

CHEJ is working with citizens in El Paso who are concerned about the proposed reopening of a copper smelter owned by the company Asarco. The plant was closed in the late 1990s when copper prices were low. Now that prices have risen again, Asarco is requesting a permit to reopen the plant. With CHEJ's help, the group found that Asarco's environmental and financial track records are dismal: the federal government ordered a \$28 million cleanup of Asarco's site in Tacoma, WA, which was responsible for some of the

by the quick resolution of this fight, but they plan to stay together and take on other environmental threats to their community.

VIRGINIA

For two years, **Friends and Advocates for Children, Teachers and Schools (FACTS)** have effectively organized their community and worked with the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to educate them on

to release levels of vinyl chloride, a cancer-causing chemical, up to 30 times greater than the current health-based standard! The company's own studies reveal that the level of vinyl chloride at the closest residence at Aamjiwnaang already violates the current health-based standards by as much as 20%. CHEJ has provided scientific data as well as organizing guidance to members of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, and will continue to assist them in their fight for a cleaner, safer living environment.

WEST VIRGINIA

Citizens of the local communities of Lick Creek, Rawl, Merrimac and Sprigg have been working to get clean municipal drinking water for over two years. These citizens have battled with the effects of contaminated well water and both children and adults have faced various health problems. Finally, clean municipal water is beginning to flow into these communities. Community leaders working together with the **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition** to demand clean water showed that people have the right to clean water and can get the public services they deserve if they organize their efforts.

Congratulations to the **Southern Appalachian Labor School** who celebrated 30 years of service in Fayette and surrounding communities.

CANADA

The Aamjiwnaang First Nation, a Chippewa community near Sarnia, Ontario, recently contacted CHEJ with concerns about a nearby Royal Polymers PVC plant. The company is requesting that the Canadian government allow them



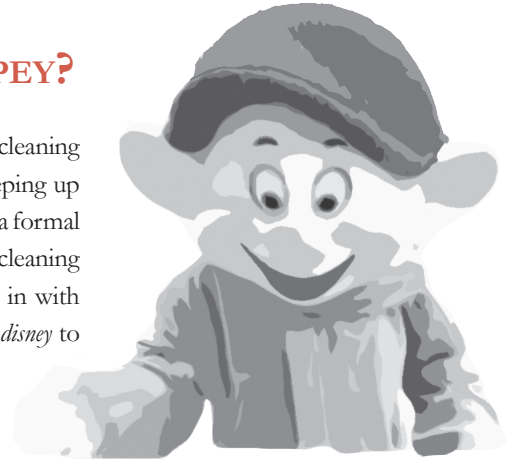
A CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE THREATS TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Child Proofing Our Communities

WHY IS DOPEY SO DOPEY?

As of this printing, CPOC is still negotiating with Walt Disney World, Inc. to encourage them to move to green cleaning products in their parks, hotels and restaurants. Disney's Vice President for Corporate Environmental Sustainability has verbally committed to explore green cleaners and their availability, and to look to the leadership at the three Disney

hotels that are already using green cleaning products. With your help, we're keeping up the pressure to move Disney to make a formal commitment to use the least toxic cleaning products in all their resorts. Check in with our campaign at: <http://www.chej.org/disney> to take action.



FIVE REASONS TO CHECK OUT THE NEW CPOC CAMPAIGN WEBSITE AT

[HTTP://WWW.CHILDPROOFING.ORG](http://www.childproofing.org)

1. Sign up to be listed as a partner of the campaign through our new web form.
2. Check out how many of our top ten ways to take action your group has acted on.
3. Access our extensive resources to help propel health protective actions in your community.
4. As the 2007- 2008 school year begins, find out about children's environmental health issues in schools, and what you can do to help make schools healthier places.
5. Get involved with the campaign by signing up as a partner, joining our list serve, or giving us a call!

HEALTHY SCHOOLS SUMMIT

If you live in the Maryland area, join leaders and activists in environmental health, green building design, and the school community this fall for a Healthy Schools Summit. Designed to share important information on how to prevent harm to children's health in the school environment, participants will learn about the newest research and trends in healthy schools and have an opportunity to collaborate with other participants. Speakers will include Lois Marie Gibbs, Executive Director of CHEJ, Barbara Sattler of the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and experts on children's environmental health. To learn more about this event, contact CPOC at childproofing@chej.org, or (703) 237-2249 ext.21.

GREEN FLAG/GREENFAITH PROGRAM A SUCCESS

Are you working with communities of faith to take action for human health and the environment? If so, give CPOC a call! Our tremendously successful pilot program, which featured six diverse faith-based schools in New Jersey (Islamic, Catholic and Jewish), taught us a great deal about these unique communities, and afforded us the opportunity to create faith-based environmental health resources. Contact us for a copy of the program DVD, power point presentations for faith-based schools (on Integrated Pest Management, Green Cleaning, Indoor Air Quality, Recycling and Energy Conservation), and for school activities created and tested by the pilot schools. For more information or to nominate a faith-based school in New Jersey for the 2007-2008 school year, check out www.greenflagschools.org, or call: (703) 237-2249 ext. 21.

PREVENTION, continued from page 5

Study to look for safer substitutes for five highly toxic chemicals. In every case, TURI identified at least one safer alternative. They also found that the cost to do this study was less than half what it costs to do a typical chemical risk assessment, showing that it can be cheaper to identify alternatives than to estimate harm from exposure to a single toxic chemical.

Pollution Prevention reduces or eliminates the use or generation of toxic materials and waste through safer substitutes, manufacturing or product redesign, improved operation and maintenance, recycling, reuse, reduction, and green chemistry.

Green Chemistry includes the following principles and activities: (a) prevent or minimize waste; (b) Design safer chemicals and products to be fully effective, with little or no toxicity; (c) Design less hazardous chemicals; (d) Use renewable raw materials; (e) Avoid using solvents or other auxiliary chemicals; (f) Increase energy efficiency; (g) Design chemical products to break down to safe substances; and (h) Design chemicals to minimize the potential for chemical accidents.

Governor Spitzer had a strong environmental record as the state's former Attorney General and was responsive to the coalition's proposal and their efforts. He decided to set up the Institute using a \$2 million budget amendment. The funds were approved and a law was passed permanently establishing the Institute in April 2007.

The New York groups also used the results of a national survey to make the case that P2 saves money and avoids pollution. The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable survey documented the following benefits:

- From 1990 to 2000, 60 pollution prevention state programs reduced more than 167 billion pounds of pollution.
- From 2001 to 2003, 29 pollution prevention programs saved more than \$500 million and reduced over 6 billion pounds of pollution.

Greening Communities

On the local level, communities around the country are launching programs to tackle a range of environmental hazards with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of toxic materials. New York City, Buffalo, San Francisco and Portland are just a few of the cities that have set up green purchasing policies. Washington State's King County has a green purchasing program which saved an estimated \$580,000 in one year by buying remanufactured toner cartridges, retread tires, re-refined motor oil and recycled antifreeze. In Indiana, the Monroe County Integrated Pest Management (IPM) model school program focuses on reducing and eliminating the use of toxic pesticides through an "inspect, detect and correct" preventative approach to pest control. In California, the Emery School District and the city of San Francisco adopted the precautionary principle as the foundation for their policies to promote environmentally sustainable communities and schools.

TURI has a unique community grants program to help fund such initiatives. For instance, a diverse coalition of 23 congregations and labor unions showcased an affordable home made from green building materials when redeveloping abandoned homes in Springfield. The Independent Laundry Workers Union educated workers and communities about the need to reduce toxics at drycleaners and switch to safer alternatives, such as water-based "wet cleaning" to replace the use of perchloroethylene, a highly toxic chemical. In Worcester, groups launched a green cleaning project providing trainings for safer janitorial cleaning practices.

The pollution prevention approach is gaining ground as more communities, governments and businesses realize its substantial health, environmental and economic benefits. For sample pollution prevention policies and assistance in organizing a P2 campaign, visit <http://www.besafenet.com> and contact anne@besafenet.com. For information on TURI, visit <http://www.turi.org> and for information on state P2 programs, visit <http://www.p2.org/>. ♦

Sources: An Ounce of Pollution Prevention is Worth Over 167 Billion Pounds of Cure: A Decade of Pollution Prevention Results 1990 – 2000 (National Pollution Prevention Roundtable [NPPR], 2003); Pollution Prevention Produces Results: Waste Reductions, Resource Conservation and Cost Savings (NPPR, 2006); Interview with Ken Geiser, former TURI Director, October, 2006; Five Chemicals Alternatives Assessment Study, TURI, June 2006.

With Special Thanks

CHEJ would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations that made critically important donations to support our work between April 17, 2007 and June 29, 2007. We wish we had the space to acknowledge each and every one of CHEJ's donors in these pages because all gifts, regardless of size, are very much appreciated.

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(Gifts of \$1,000 or more)

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City of Monticello, UT
Clean Schools Initiative
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Isaac M. Wise Temple
Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives
Patapsco Riverkeepers, Inc.
Putnam County Landfill Protectors
Save Our County, Inc.

Matching Gifts

Fannie Mae Foundation

ETHANOL, continued from page 3

The Response in Communities

In Clovis, New Mexico an appeal was filed with the state environmental board by Concerned Citizens for Curry County, the Clovis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and a local council of the League of United Latin American Citizens Organizations. The groups oppose the approval of an air quality permit for a proposed ethanol plant on the grounds that the plant's location is too close to mostly Hispanic and black neighborhoods, subjecting them to the plant's emissions. The groups contend that the state wrongly granted the permit because the plant's location is inconsistent with an environmental justice executive order signed by Gov. Bill Richardson in 2005 which is supposed to ensure poor people and minorities aren't subject to disproportionate pollution and environmental dangers.

In the Northeast, community resistance has spoiled plans to build ethanol plants in numerous states including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Maine. Issues raised by community leaders include increased truck traffic and expenses for road repairs, odors, water usage, the rise of corporate mega farms, increased noise levels, possible plant explosions, loss of property values, and the uncertainty of the health impacts from emissions. Citizens of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, argued that toxic emissions from a chemical spill or accident would require the immediate evacuation of residents within a 27-mile radius of the proposed plant. Residents in Milford, Indiana used the slogan "Ethanol may be the right fuel ... but Milford is the

WRONG location" to organize their efforts to stop an ethanol refinery in their community.

What do Communities Gain or Lose?

As more ethanol is produced and more cars use ethanol, who benefits and who loses? Ethanol producers want us to believe that America wins because we lessen our dependency on foreign oil; because ethanol produces less gas contributing to global warming; and that farmers and investors benefit as the demand for corn increases. But a recent report by the United Nations concluded that bio-fuels such as ethanol can both help and hurt the world's poor and that the benefits may be offset by higher food prices and greater environmental problems that include the use of more pesticides and fertilizers to grow corn or other feedstocks.

The jury is still out on ethanol production as the benefits and risks are identified and considered. While there may be benefits to making fuel from ethanol, communities need answers to the hard questions about the health and environment impact of ethanol production and use. Until that time, communities organizing should challenge ethanol producers and other decision makers to use a precautionary approach that involves the impacted communities and tell them, "How little harm is possible? "How much harm can we avoid?" ♦

For information on ethanol, see CHEJ's Fact Pack on Ethanol as Bio-Fuel.

Help us make communities across the country safer and healthier

Designate CHEJ as the recipient of your workplace giving this fall!



CHEJ is a proud member of Earth Share, a federation of 400 of the world's leading environmental charities. If you're a federal employee, you can designate your Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) pledge to CHEJ. Please note that our CFC number has changed to #10633.

Earth Share participates in a number of state, municipal and private workplace campaigns as well. For details about adding environmental choices to your employer's payroll contribution program, call CHEJ at (703) 237-2249 ext. 14.



Earth Share

Thank you for your support!

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