



A/C Pipe
Producers Association

Internal Correspondence

to Public Affairs Committee

FROM: J. F. Welch, Director, Public Affairs

DATE: February 19, 1981

SUBJECT: Public Education Program

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for approval

Enclosed for your immediate review are a number of materials relating to the kick-off of AACPP's Public Education Program. These include:

1. A press information package ("press kit") for distribution to daily newspapers in the U.S. and Canada.
2. A proposed study to pretest the impact of advocacy and product-safety oriented ads.

Additional materials will be presented at the Public Affairs Committee meeting on February 25, 1981 including the following:

3. A product advocacy ad (for use in print media in field problem situations).
4. Proposed copy for "tip-ons" (for specific target audiences) for the "A/C Pipe and Drinking Water" booklet.
5. A product safety ad (for trade journals; pending action on (2) above).
6. Product promotion ad(s).

If you have any question prior to the 25th, please give me a call.

JFW/ajb

Enclosures

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.

copies to: Public Affairs Committee

REP/1
Chrono



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A/C PIPE INDUSTRY TO
ADDRESS PUBLIC MEETINGS

The A/C Pipe Producers Association (ACPPA) will respond to questions at two Ocean County, New Jersey public meetings concerning the safety of asbestos-cement pipe use in area water supply systems. Local concern was reportedly prompted by erroneous reports in an area weekly newspaper concerning high asbestos fiber levels in the Toms River water supply. The paper has since reported that its original information from an interview with a medical authority was in error.

John F. Welch, ACPPA Public Affairs Director, will address meetings in Dover and Berkley Townships on Monday, January 26. According to Welch, "The industry is concerned that misleading articles in one newspaper may have caused undue alarm among area residents. We are prepared to discuss the available research conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other institutions and independent scientists, all of which have failed to show a cause-and-effect relationship between the use of A/C pipe and the incidence of cancer."

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The industry position is supported by local water supply officials and representatives of the EPA. Dr. William Nicholson of Mount Sinai Hospital, quoted in recent articles, has stated there is no danger in the asbestos content of the Toms River water supply.

In a letter of response to the Ocean County Reporter, a representative of the EPA began, "I am writing to correct a few items that were wrong in your newspaper's extensive series of articles on asbestos in drinking water." It continued, "You discussed the study of Duluth, Minnesota residents who had ingested a lot of asbestos and wrote, 'Duluth for years had asbestos water pipes which were torn up and replaced a few years ago'. Duluth never had asbestos pipes in the distribution systems. Stating that Duluth tore up and replaced A/C pipes is incorrect and might cause New Jersey citizens to have their water utilities do the same thing because of a mistaken belief that pipe replacement was the corrective action taken. . .".

Among other recent studies and findings regarding A/C pipe and ingested asbestos are the following:

- A National Cancer Institute spokesman recently stated, "The only form in which asbestos is harmful to man is as dust in the air. You have to breathe it in order for it to cause a problem, and not everyone who does so gets sick."
- An extensive study conducted by the EPA in Connecticut showed no correlation between the incidence of gastrointestinal cancer and the use of A/C water pipe. The study's principal investigator has also stated that the findings do not support a need for

- more -

changing water distribution practices in the state, which has approximately 150 water systems containing A/C pipe.

- Studies conducted in areas where asbestos occurs naturally in water, such as Duluth, Minnesota, the Puget Sound Region of Washington, and Quebec, all show no increased risk of cancer from asbestos ingested in drinking water.
- Animal feeding studies have shown no cause-and-effect relationship between ingested asbestos and cancer. (Assuming the highest fiber levels naturally occurring in drinking water, a human would have to drink nearly four million quarts of water a day to consume a quantity of asbestos equal to the percentage that failed to cause cancer in mice.)

Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral in many parts of the world. Asbestos-cement pipe is a water pipe that is made of about 80 per cent cement and 20 per cent asbestos fibers. The fibers, size for size, are stronger than steel and serve as tiny reinforcing rods to give A/C pipe the strength necessary to serve for decades without leaks or breaks.

A/C pipe came into general use in the U.S. in the 1930's in response to the need for pipe that could withstand high pressures and resist corrosion. Today, millions of miles of A/C pipe are in use around the world. The industry estimates there are approximately 300,000 miles of A/C water pipe in use in the U.S. During the years of rapidly increasing A/C pipe usage in the United States, gastrointestinal cancer rates for the 1949-1976 period declined 39 per cent.

- more -

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This and other information based on documented independent sources is available in a booklet entitled, "A/C Pipe and Drinking Water." For a copy of the booklet, write: A/C Pipe Producers Association, 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1308, Arlington, Virginia, 22209.

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NLB/jm
1/23/81

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OCEAN CO. TIMES
OBSERVER
TOMAS RIVER, N.J.
D. 20,000

JAN 26 1981

Editorial

EDITORIAL

The Great Asbestos Scare

5728 C
Relax. The water probably is not giving you cancer. The Great Asbestos Scare about Toms River Water Co. pipes turns out to have been based entirely on false statistics. In fact, if the most specific test results are accurate, then Toms River water contains an unusually low amount of asbestos fibers. We're not too sure that we believe that one, either, but the facts now available suggest that our water's comparatively pure.

Scientists over the past 20 years have come to realize that asbestos is quite a dangerous substance to inhale, but they have found no reliable proof that it's particularly dangerous to ingest minute amounts of asbestos. The Environmental Protection Agency is now investigating the possibility of a correlation between cancer rates and high levels of asbestos fibers in drinking water, but so far EPA has found nothing significant to report.

It is important to note that the frenzy over asbestos fibers was not an intentional hoax, but merely the result of human error at the semi-weekly paper which has been whipping up a furor about the Great Asbestos Danger since November. Everybody in the business, from the New York Times down to throwaway shoppers, makes mistakes and has to eat some words sooner or later, although it's not customary to wait two months. We've had to swallow our share of stories and it is not fun. For that reason, we empathize with the people at the Reporter who had to reveal this week that they based their entire campaign on false statistics, because of a misunderstanding in a telephone conversation.

We empathize, also, with the thousands of mothers and fathers who have been led to believe that they will be killing their children if they let them drink the tap water.

We empathize with the men at the water company who may have been maligned unjustly and with the officials of local government who have been under fire for not picking up shovels and digging up all the water pipes immediately.

We do not empathize with the sellers of bottled water, who have enjoyed a small bonanza, nor do we empathize with other business enterprises which have used this unfounded and unfortunate hysteria to line their pockets.

The scare has had one positive result: it has led us to examine closely the possibility that asbestos fibers in drinking water may pose a health risk. Toms River and several other communities are already running tests to determine the amount of fibers in their water. Dover Township Mayor Tom Renkin, who has demonstrated an admirable mixture of humane concern and cool-headed restraint during this hysteria, quite correctly suggests that we not all just forget about it now. Because the original tests were rather vague, the government is paying for a high-caliber series of tests, and the Toms River Water Co. itself is sending samples to the top test lab in the country. If the EPA research does show any health hazards connected with high levels of fibers, and if accurate tests show high levels here, then our local water companies and utility authorities can act swiftly to minimize or eradicate any dangers, knowing exactly what the facts are.

Until that time, we advise our readers to go ahead and enjoy the water. Just be careful about what you swallow.

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OCEAN CO. TIMES
ORSEWER
TOMAS RIVER, N.J.
b. 20,000

JAN 22 1981

Water Co. Official Relieved.

Asbestos Danger in Water Supply Overrated

By BART JONES

TOMAS RIVER — An official of the Tomas River Water Co. says he is relieved that a re-examination of test results about the company's water does not contain dangerous amounts of asbestos.

"We suspected a mistake from the very beginning," said Edward Hughmanic, vice president of the Tomas River Water Co. which supplies the Dover Township area.

A local weekly newspaper reported yesterday that there was a disparity in its reports of test results thought to show that the water is dangerously contaminated with asbestos.

An article in The Ocean County Reporter said one of their reporters misunderstood the figures a scientist gave her indicating the level of asbestos in the water.

The scientist said this week that there is no danger in the asbestos content in the water in Tomas River, the newspaper reported. The Reporter has run a lengthy investigative series on the subject since November, causing widespread concern throughout Ocean County.

Officials in Dover, which and Beachwood are now testing their water supplies for asbestos.

Tomas River Water Co. uses asbestos-cement pipes in 90 percent of its service area.

An official of the Asbestos Cement Pipe Producers Association called the articles "erroneous" and "misleading" in a letter published in the Reporter yesterday.

Dr. William Nicholson of Mount Sinai Hospital in New

York said the asbestos count in the Tomas River water supply is 200,000 asbestos fibers per liter and not 600,000 as the Reporter had previously quoted him as saying, the article said.

Nicholson reportedly said that the estimated 200,000 level presents no health risk and that he would not hesitate to drink the water.

"I think Dr. Nicholson has set the record straight," said Hughmanic.

But Kenneth Moore, editor of the Ocean County Reporter, said he feels it is still unclear how much asbestos is in the water.

Moore said the Reporter plans to take four more water samples to another laboratory for testing.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency currently

does not impose limits on the amount of asbestos fibers allowed in drinking water. The agency hopes to establish a 200,000 fiber per liter maximum within three years, according to the Reporter article.

London in asbestos-cement water pipes can result in asbestos entering the water supply, scientists say.

The possible effect of inhaling or drinking asbestos is disputed though.

"Ingesting asbestos fiber has not been proven harmful to health," said Hughmanic.

Whether asbestos can cause cancer or lung disease is not known but may be suspected, according to Dr. E. Spencer Paisley of the American Lung Association of Southern New Jersey in a Rembrandt article.

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OCEAN CO. TIMES
OCEANVIEW
TOWNSHIP, N.J.
D. 08040

JAN 27 1981

Industry Spokesman Says

Drinking Asbestos Doesn't Hurt

By JOHN SIMSEN
Staff Writer

BERKELEY — About 60 township residents, most of them based in from Holiday City, last night listened to a spokesman for the asbestos pipe industry say their water pipes are not a health hazard.

While the Toms River Water Co., which arranged the meeting with township officials, said little about their own tests for asbestos, the industry spokesman said the health risk from ingesting asbestos in drinking water is minimal. Committee member Gary Casperson, who watched part of a slide presentation by the Asbestos Concrete Pipe Producers Association from the back of the town hall meeting room, said after the show that it was premature.

"Toms River Water Co. hasn't even completed its tests, and here we are listening to the industry telling us how safe

their pipes are," he said. "I think it is premature."

The Township Committee last week decided not to have Berkeley's water tested because Dover Township had authorized its own tests for asbestos content.

The Toms River Water Co. serves Dover, South Toms River and portions of Berkeley, including Holiday City and Silver Ridge Park.

About 3,000 other township residents are served by the Berkeley Water Co., while the remaining residents have their own well water.

Recent news articles in a local semi-weekly newspaper have generated widespread concern in Ocean County over the potential dangers of drinking water that is carried through asbestos concrete pipes.

John Welch, spokesman for the asbestos-concrete pipe producers, said the industry does not like its 50-year record

of service injured by "unsubstantiated claims." He said the industry appointed a blue-ribbon panel of experts in 1973 to study the effects of ingesting water-borne asbestos.

The \$36,000 study, completed the following year, concluded there was no evidence that asbestos in drinking water is a health hazard, Welch said.

He said reports to the contrary are an insult to the integrity of the study panel, which was comprised of "experts who can't be purchased at any price."

Asbestos is known to cause cancer when it is inhaled, but there is no evidence to suggest it is cancerous when it is ingested, Welch said.

The slide show pointed out the fact that the world is full of risks that are as "philosophical as they are scientific."

"Nothing is absolutely free of risks," the moderator for the presentation said, "so nothing is absolutely safe."

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OCEAN CO. TIMES
OBSERVER
TOM'S RIVER, N.J.
D. 30,023

JAN 27 1981

State Discounts Asbestos Fears

5728
By JOE GREGORY
Staff Writer

TOMS RIVER — The head of the state's Division of Potable Water said last night he doesn't think water supplied by the Toms River Water Company contains a "significant" level of asbestos fiber.

But he and other environmental and health officials told an audience of approximately 125 Dover Township residents yesterday that scientists do not really know to what extent the presence of asbestos fibers in drinking water is hazardous to human health.

Officials from the state Health Department, Department of Environmental Protection, Toms River Water Company and the A/C Pipe Producers Association emphasized that the latest available research fails to link asbestos fibers with cancer.

They also noted that the use of asbestos piping is common throughout the country.

"I personally feel there is no problem with the water you are drinking," Ray Barg, head of the DEP's Division of Potable water told the audience, gathered in the public meeting room of the municipal building last night.

But he added that the DEP is evaluating the problem to decide whether it will continue to approve the use of asbestos cement piping in water systems like the one operated by the Toms River Water Company.

The "informational meeting," which was called by township officials following reports by a local semi-weekly newspaper that area water supplies may contain a dangerously high level of asbestos, began and ended on an uncertain note.

However, some residents indicated that they were dissatisfied with assurances by the water company that their drinking water is safe.

Stephen Rockord, of Weston Drive, said that other countries have banned the use of asbestos piping because of potential health hazards.

Sam and Caroline Ivens, of Hilltop Road said after the meeting that they

Industry Spokesman
Denies Danger
Story, Page A3

and other residents distrusted the producers association's assurances that use of asbestos cement piping has not been proven a health hazard.

Meanwhile, state health and environmental officials agreed that tests designed to detect the presence of asbestos fibers in water are not always accurate.

"Techniques are just not sensitive enough to give exact levels (of the presence of asbestos fibers.) There are

★ Asbestos Fears Soothed

Continued from Page A1

a great number of unknown factors," said Dhun Patel, of the state Department of Health.

"We're still waiting for the (federal Environmental Protection Agency) to set standards," he added.

Mayor Thomas Renkin and Township Health Officer Herbert Roeschke noted that the officials will not be sure exactly how many asbestos fibers are present in local water supplies until

tests commissioned by the township and the water company are completed.

Renkin said the results of the township's tests will be made public once they are received from the Franklin Institute, in Philadelphia, sometime in the next three weeks.

"I'm not even sure if this meeting should be held because we don't even know if we have a problem. We're just battling the smoke around," one resident said.

This Investigation Holds No Water

Look, I know there are investigative journalists and other idealistic types out there who want to save me from the greed of corporate systems over which I have no control. I do a little of that kind of journalism myself from time to time and I've seen where such campaigns can forge great

Dad: "Son, ya got to eat lots of eggs because they have protein. Davey Cuckett and Wyatt Earp used to eat 'em all."

support and write their warnings fully with accuracy and restraint. If they don't, we may get the idea that their cry of alarm is just one more wolf howling in a wilderness of misreported facts, imprecisely drawn conclusions, and sensation seeking baloney.

frontiers of understanding

You do some thing you always have to remember when you do investigative journalism. It is traditional and even practical to first wait for the bad thing to happen, or at least begin to happen before exposing what the heck it is.

The other night I was at a meeting where 125 people expressed concern about a series of articles -- by a competitor -- on asbestos particles that could conceivably be swimming around in the Toms River Water Company water delivery system. These particles may or may not be harmful.

Nobody, I repeat, nobody, has conducted conclusive or even extensive studies about the ingestion of minute bits of

ASBURY PARK PRESS

PRESS PLAZA, ASBURY PARK, N.J. 07712

DEP officials studying limits on use of asbestos water pipes

By LYNDIA LA ROCCA
Press Staff Writer

TOMS RIVER — Although studies have not linked the ingestion of asbestos to any type of illness, state environmental officials are evaluating whether restrictions should be placed on the use of water pipes made with asbestos cement.

"The fact of the matter is asbestos in the environment is a matter of concern," said Raymond Barg, chief of the state Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Potable Water.

Barg made his comment last night during a panel discussion on possible effects of asbestos fibers in drinking water supplies.

About 200 people attended the hearing, scheduled by the Dover Township Committee after stories appeared in the Ocean County Reporter saying that asbestos fibers were found in drinking water samples drawn from

the Toms River public water system.

The bi-weekly newspaper reported it had the samples tested at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

Asbestos is a mineral made of crystallized iron, magnesium and silica, which separates into threadlike fibers.

It is considered to be a carcinogen (cancer-causing material) when inhaled, but studies have not indicated a health risk from ingesting (swallowing or absorbing) the substance.

There is no justification for claims that there is a link between it (ingesting asbestos) and any disease — cancer or any other disease," said John F. Welch, director of public affairs for the Asbestos Pipe Producers Association, Arlington, Va.

Welch, who presented a slide show on asbestos pipes and drinking water, also spoke later to about 50 Berkeley Township residents who had expressed similar con-

cerns about drinking water supplies.

Neither the DEP nor the federal Environmental Protection Agency has established any standards for safe levels of asbestos ingestion, Barg said.

There is insufficient evidence to determine the risks of ingestion, according to Dhru Patel, chief of environmental health and hazard evaluation with the state Department of Health.

Studies based on evaluations of animals who had eaten asbestos did not show a relationship between asbestos and cancer of the gastrointestinal tract, Patel said.

There is "presumptive evidence" of a higher incidence of gastrointestinal cancer among workers who inhale large amounts of asbestos and consequently ingest some of the substance, he said.

It is considered presumptive because no

See DEP OFFICIALS, page D1

ASBURY PARK PRESS

PRESS PLAZA, ASBURY PARK, N.J. 07712



Asbury Park Press
John F. Welch (left), Asbestos Cement Pipe Producers Association public affairs director, and Edward Hughmanic, vice president of the Toms River Water Co., look over sections of water pipe installed in 1961 and 1971. A piece of new pipe sits on the table at the forum last night in Dover Township.

DEP officials studying limit on asbestos pipes

From page D1

direct cause-and-effect relationship has been established, Patel said.

About 68 percent of all the water supplies in the country show some level of asbestos and 11 percent have readings of 10 million fibers per liter, he said.

An individual ingests about two liters (a liter is slightly more than a quart) of water daily, Patel said.

"That's why we have to be concerned over what level is in the water," Patel explained.

Although current analytical techniques cannot pinpoint safe ingestion levels, studies and testing are necessary to compile a data base from which to establish standards, he said.

A 1974 study by the American Water Works Association concluded that "no firm evidence shows that the proper use of asbestos-cement pipe poses a hazard to health by reason of ingestion of asbestos," Welch said.

The study, funded by the pipe producers association, did not define what constitutes proper or improper use, he said.

No harmful effects have been demonstrated from ingesting any quantity of asbestos, Welch said.

He cited animal studies in which rats were fed asbestos as 4 percent of their total dietary intake without any indication of disease.

Municipal drinking water is considered "moderately aggressive," according to Robert E. Johnstone, assistant vice president of General Waterworks, Newtown, Conn. parent company of the Toms River Water Co.

This is a gauge used to indicate the likelihood of water components causing the cement pipes to break down, releasing asbestos into the water, he said.

Iron in the water is apparently preventing any breakdown, he said.

There is no evidence that the water is causing the pipes to break down, he said.

Mayor W. Thomas Renkin said the township has sent drinking water samples taken from five areas of the township to the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, for analysis.

Samples were taken from the downtown area, Silverton, Pleasant Plains, Georgetown and Brookside Heights.

Results are expected in about four weeks, he said.

Because asbestos cement pipes are in use, it is likely that test results will show some asbestos fibers in the water, Barg said.

"I feel there's no problem with respect to the water you're drinking," he added.

After the meeting, Barg said he received the impression from speaking with EPA officials that the federal agency does not see a need to establish standards for ingestion levels of asbestos.

The DEP may consider establishing standards and restrictions because its "general philosophy is to try to get asbestos out of the environment," he said.

Both Barg and Patel publicly praised the Ocean County Reporter for its stories calling attention to the use of asbestos cement pipes.

The newspaper "did a fine job of presenting a potential problem," Barg said.

Some members of the audience appeared skeptical about reports that no apparent health hazard existed.

"Mice don't live 15 to 20 years — they can't get cancer," one man said in response to information on the animal studies.

Stephen Reckford, Weston Drive, suggested that the water company replace water pipes with pipes made from other materials.

"My reaction is they're just covering up the reality of the asbestos problem," he said.

Last week, members of the Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority said they would consider replacing asbestos cement pipes in that township if it could be proved that any health hazard existed.

Research so far finds no disease link in ingesting asbestos

By LYNN LA RUCCA
Press Staff Writer

STUDIES have not proven that ingesting asbestos increases cancer rates, although the material has been discovered in cigarettes (cancer-causing agents) when inhaled.

Researchers and asbestos officials in Orono County expressed confidence recently about possible harmful effects from drinking water carried by water pipe made of asbestos cement.

One scientist of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency said microscopic fibers of asbestos found in natural water are 10 percent of all that water in the system.

Asbestos is a natural component of crystalline rock, magnesium and silica, which separates into thread-like fibers. Under certain conditions the fibers repeatedly shed scale from pipe surfaces and enter drinking water.

But state and federal environmental officials agree there is no hard evidence proving a relationship between asbestos ingestion and development of gastrointestinal cancer or any other disease.

HOWEVER, research is continuing to try to determine whether, and to what extent, ingestion of asbestos may be a health hazard.

"In the past 20 years that studies have been done, nobody's been able to prove a link between cancer and the use of asbestos cement pipe," according to Barker Hannell, an environmental engineer with the state Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Potable Water.

But the final verdict is still out, he continued.

"It doesn't make much sense to me that if asbestos takes this position (that) we should promote the use of asbestos pipe in drinking water," Hannell said during a meeting with Orono Township officials and residents last week.

That meeting was one of several after articles in Orono County Reporter, a bi-weekly newspaper, raised questions about the safety of asbestos cement water pipes.

The asbestos problem is that there is no evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between ingesting asbestos and cancer or any disease and John F. West, director of public affairs for the Asbestos Cement Pipe Producers Association, Arlington, Va.

IN 1974 the industry funded a study by the American Water Works Association which concluded that proper use of asbestos cement pipe did not pose a health hazard from their ingestion, he said.

The industry funded the \$250,000 study because it was concerned over reports of leaks about using the pipes, he said.

"We've been providing what we felt was a safe product for 50 years. Should the industry say, 'Take a little' when concrete dries?" he said.

There are no state or federal standards governing the use of asbestos cement pipe or setting maximum safe levels for asbestos ingestion.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency is currently researching effects of asbestos ingestion to determine whether standards are needed, according to Marjorie Randall, acting director of public affairs for EPA Region 1.

"We really don't know if it's a health hazard... (that) there may be some danger or no hazard in doing a study," she said.

IN ANTICIPATION of possible federal action, the DEP has begun compiling statewide data on water utilities using asbestos cement pipe and taking water samples to determine the "asbestos-release index" of the water, Hannell said.

"Aggressive" or soft water has low pH and calcium levels and is more likely to corrode water pipes, causing asbestos fibers to shed into the water.

Corrosion, Kennedy and Wernick, Milford said.

A level of one million microscopic fibers per liter is a small amount for water throughout the country, he said.

Levels as high as 20 million fibers per liter were discovered in Washington state in an area where water running into a reservoir flows over rocks containing asbestos, Milford said.

Results on the effect of fiber ingestion there are expected by the summer, he said.

RESULTS are also expected there on a five-year study of rats and humans that had been fed asbestos at one percent of their total diet, he said.

The study, conducted with the federal

Food and Drug Administration and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, will try to determine if the asbestos diet increased the rodents' cancer risk, Milford said.

Although data on human risks is not yet available, he refused to say whether to have shorter-than-average lifespans, he said.

The EPA also hopes to begin obtaining results in 1982 on a study to determine whether prolonged asbestos ingestion increases cancer rates of residents in Duluth, Minn., Milford said. Preliminary results indicate no increase, he said.

In that study, exposure begins in the early 1950s when a mining company started discharging asbestos into Lake Superior, the source of the city's water supply, Milford said.

old. The practice has since been stopped, he added.

There is a history period of 20 to 25 years after exposure before gastrointestinal cancer develops, Milford said.

ANOTHER STUDY the EPA collaborates on involved a comparison of cancer rates among residents in 12 Connecticut communities where asbestos cement pipes were used as opposed to 17 using other pipe material.

Results published last January showed

no evidence of an increase in any form of cancer in areas with asbestos cement pipes, Milford said.

Nevertheless, on Oct. 1, the state of Connecticut imposed a statewide ban on installation of additional asbestos cement pipe pending a ruling by the state health commissioner on whether he was "convinced" a public health hazard.

A ruling is expected within a month, according to Raymond Jurek, principal sanitary engineer with the Connecticut Department of Health Services.

Asbestos Threat 'A Mess'

By JOE GREGORY
Staff Writer

TOMS RIVER — "The whole thing is a confused mess."

That's how Dover Township Mayor Thomas Renkin characterized attempts to get to the bottom of a local semi-weekly newspaper's reports that area water supplies may contain a potentially dangerous level of asbestos fibers.

Renkin said yesterday that Dover Health officials and Toms River Water Company representatives won't know to what extent asbestos fibers are present in local drinking water until a battery of tests is completed sometime within the next three weeks.

Meanwhile, water company, township, and state Department of Environmental Protection officials plan to hold public meetings tonight in Dover and Berkeley townships to answer widespread concern over the possible contamination of local water with asbestos fibers.

The meetings are at 7:00 p.m. in Dover and 8:30 p.m. in Berkeley at the municipal buildings.

"Until the tests come back we won't be able to say whether or not there is a definite health hazard. Right now there are so many reports being thrown around that it's impossible to say," Renkin said.

The editor of the local weekly newspaper which first commissioned the testing said last week that the results of the original tests are still clouded with some confusion.

Kenneth Moore of the Ocean County Reporter said his newspaper is taking four more samples of water to a different laboratory for testing to clarify the findings of its earlier tests.

The Toms River Water Company is also currently conducting its own tests, which should be completed with three to four weeks, a spokesman said.

In addition, Renkin said that the Dover Township Health Department has sent five samples of local water to the Franklin Institute, in Philadelphia, for testing.

Renkin also noted that Dr. William Nicholson, of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, has said the weekly newspaper was inaccurate in reporting the test results conducted by his laboratory.

Reading from a report which he said was written by Nicholson after the Reporter published the test results, Renkin quoted the scientist as stating that his tests "indicate that high levels of asbestos previously reported (in the Ocean County Reporter) in the Toms River water are not present in any of the samples. In the one sample

analyzed with greater sensitivity, the concentration present cannot differ significantly from most other U.S. water systems."

Renkin also noted that the sample where the highest levels of asbestos fibers were found was taken from an Ocean Beach home, an area which is not serviced by the Toms River water company.

Asbestos enters the water supply when asbestos-cement pipes carrying water corrode, scientists say.

About 90 percent of the pipes the Toms River Water Co. uses are made of asbestos-cement.

Meanwhile, a scientist with the federal Environmental Protection Agency said he would advise water companies to try to remove all asbestos fibers from their water.

"My feeling is that there is enough of a concern" about potential health hazards to have all the fibers removed, said James Mulette of the EPA.

He noted that breathing asbestos causes lung cancer and gastrointestinal cancer in cases of prolonged occupational exposure.

Results of a study in California, which were tainted by other possible causes, showed a high incidence of stomach and pancreatic cancer in people who drank water with high levels of asbestos fibers, he said.

The federal government currently does not have any regulations limiting the amount of asbestos fibers in drinking water and officials emphasize that the latest scientific studies have not determined what level of consumption would harm an individual's health.

TOMMY RIVER, N.J.
REPORTER
W. 53.4/8

JAN 28 1981

Not 60 million

State health officer says count was wrong

By BRIAN
McDERMOTT
Confusion and concern about reports of the potential health hazards posed by asbestos-cement pipes used by many water companies in Ocean County and throughout the nation, has spread to the N.J. Department of Health in Trenton.

In response to a telegram from State Sen. John F. Russo, D-Ocean, Acting State Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen N. Koplin wrote, "We understand that the Mount Sinai Medical School has analyzed samples from Ocean County which showed an asbestos level of 60 million (fibers) per liter and that figure is up from the usual 4 million which occurs almost regularly in all asbestos-cement pipe systems."

The letter continues: "As you perhaps anticipated, there is no standard on which enforcement can be based and no regulations regarding use of these pipes. However, we, in concert with the (N.J.) Department of Environmental Protection and other state agencies have been working through a subcommittee of the Governor's Cabinet on Cancer Control to address all aspects of asbestos exposure."

When contacted for details about the 60 million asbestos fibers a liter count he reported to Sen. Russo, the acting health commissioner referred The Ocean County Reporter to Dr. Dhun Patel, acting director of occupational health services, who Dr. Koplin said was his source for that information.

Dr. Patel says the only tests to determine asbestos content in Ocean County drinking water supplies thus far are those commissioned by The Reporter.

For several weeks, The Reporter published asbestos fiber counts reports of 600,000 to 4.5 million a liter. Those figures were disputed by Dover Township officials who contacted Mount Sinai for a detailed written analysis of those tests. No report has been provided for Dover officials yet, but researchers at Mount Sinai told The Reporter when it rechecked tests results that the 600,000 to 4.5 million fiber count was incorrectly reported.

Dr. Patel said the letter to Sen. Russo, sent as a quick response to the senator's telegram, contained incomplete and misunderstood information.

Dr. Patel, also a member of the state Task Force on

Asbestos, said detailed information is being prepared to send to Sen. Russo.

As for the involvement of the departments of health and environmental protection with the potential problem of asbestos in drinking water, Dr. Patel said the state has talked about it since last spring, but only briefly.

Essentially the discussions about asbestos in drinking water were just part of the whole asbestos problem that the task force is looking at.

"I'm not sure, but I believe the task force is considering taking some samples to determine the extent of the potential problem. If so, those tests would be another in a series. Besides the tests initially commissioned by The Reporter, tests are being conducted by Brink Township, Beachwood and Dover Township, as well as another set of tests which The Reporter will take."

Dr. Patel said consideration was once given to

taking water samples from throughout the state.

"Now, because of the special concern, the task force will probably specifically look at Ocean County first."

According to Dr. Patel, the task force has not met recently and he is uncertain when it will meet next.

One of its primary goals now though, Dr. Patel said, is to report on the group's activities of last year.

The task force's primary area of concern and accomplishment last year, according to Dr. Patel, was with a new regulation for the safe removal of asbestos ceilings.

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LAKEHURST, N.J.
ADVANCE NICKEL NEWS
W. 9.000

JAN 28 1981

Asbestos Problem Probed in Dover Twp.

^{5728C}
BERKELEY TOWNSHIP - Township officials are planning to meet with Dover Township and Toms River Water Company officials to discuss the problem of asbestos water pipes.

asbestos in water leads to the same medical problems as asbestos fibers in the at-

mosphere. Symptoms, however, usually do not appear for 15 to 20 years.

Holiday City at Berkeley residents are served by the Toms River Water Company, which said recently that between 80 and 90 percent of its pipes are of asbestos-lined cement. The company has been ordered by the Dover Committee to make tests of its water.

Berkeley Committeemen Harry D. Morey and Gary Casperson reported last week that they had received calls from several Holiday City residents who were worried about the asbestos.

Area residents have been concerned about the possibility of asbestos fibers in municipal water supplies since links were discovered between asbestos and cancer. There is no evidence, however, that

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LAKEHURST, N.J.
ADVANCE NICKEL NEWS
W. 9.000

JAN 28 1981

Lakehurst Borough Checking Pipes With Asbestos Lining

LAKEHURST - The borough engineer is checking records to locate asbestos water pipes in Lakehurst, according to Mayor Michael Fuccile.

"We know pretty much where they are," he said, "but we're having the engineer check just to make sure."

Boro Superintendent John Carr said recently that roughly half Lakehurst's pipes are asbestos-lined.

Fuccile said that the borough is planning to have water tested for asbestos content but that a delay is expected in getting the results.

"The only place we're sure of that does the testing is Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York and they're swamped right now," the mayor said last week. "I imagine that most of the tests are from New Jersey. It takes at least

several weeks to get the results."

Fuccile said that the engineer is checking to see if there is another laboratory which does asbestos testing, perhaps in Philadelphia, but "if Mt. Sinai is the only place and we have to wait for the results, we have to wait for the results."

The mayor said he planned to attend a meeting in Dover Township this week concerning the asbestos problem.

The issue has been a major concern for municipalities since the possible danger of asbestos in water became apparent. Asbestos in dust form has been proven to cause cancer and authorities are concerned that asbestos in water pipes may lead to the same problem.

Asbestos is generally used as a fire retardant but is also used in water pipes to lengthen their life span.

Asbestos fibers are found in many manufactured goods, according to the American Lung Assoc., and are relatively safe until the fibers are released to the atmosphere. Researchers are not sure how much asbestos can cause lung or other damage and are still studying the problem of asbestos in water supplies.

The effects of asbestos are not detectable for roughly 10 to 15 years after exposure.

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TUCKERTON N.J.
SEASON
1980

JAN 29 1981

Pinelands asbestos probe asked

LITTLE EGG HARBOR TWP. — For the fourth time in two years, the Pinelands Regional High School Board of Education has requested the state Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to test its water system for asbestos fiber content.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen when it is inhaled, but it is not known to cause cancer when it is ingested, according to EPA officials.

DESPITE THE lack of solid evidence against the use of asbestos-cement water pipes, township residents, led by activist George Crurianis, have voiced concern about the concentration of asbestos fibers and the amount of corrosion in the water pipes leading to the high school.

"We do not want our children to drink the water at the Pinelands High School," Crurianis said. "It is as simple as that."

However, Superintendent Paul Snyder told the Board of Education: "There is no known danger in swallowing microscopic amounts of asbestos."

SNYDER CONCEDED that the EPA did find 270 million fibers per liter on Nov. 1, 1979. School officials attributed the high count to the fact the school water system needed to be flushed out.

A later test made on Jan. 1, 1980, showed 3.1 million fibers per liter, Snyder told the board.

The superintendent also said that he had confirmed the safety of the asbestos pipes with the state Department of Education before the school opened.

BOARD MEMBERS Harry DeVerter and Donald Mickens, however, said a fourth test should be undertaken by the EPA to ensure that the levels of asbestos in the drinking water have not increased significantly. >

Many queries, few answers at water meetings

By BRIAN McDERMOTT
and GENE GATENS

While Toms River resident Rodney S. Martin attended a special Dover Township meeting Monday night to discuss public concerns about the potential health hazards of

asbestos - cement water pipes, his two sons lay at home with stomach cramps, just one of the perennial health problems he says that nag the two boys. And just as he did prior to the meeting, Martin admitted afterward that he still wondered if perhaps their health problems aren't

somehow linked to asbestos fibers in the drinking water.

Martin was among more than 200 mostly Dover Township residents who turned out Monday night to hear representatives from the state Department of Environmental Protection, the state Health Department, Dover Township Board of Health, the Dover Township governing body, the pri-

vately - owned Toms River Water Co., and the Asbestos - Cement Pipe Producers Association.

Speakers tried to explain uncertain and controversial "facts" about asbestos - cement pipes before rushing off from a 7 p.m. meeting in Toms River to make a similar presentation at 8:30 in Berkeley Township, which is also served by Toms River Water Co.

At both sessions, there were more public questions than official answers.

More than 50 residents attended the Berkeley Township Committee meeting to view the same 22-minute slide presentation on asbestos - cement pipe, listened to comments from a representative of the Asbestos - Cement Pipe Producer's Association (APPA) and the water company and left the meeting apparently satisfied—unlike residents of Toms River—that there is no danger in drinking water conveyed through the pipe.

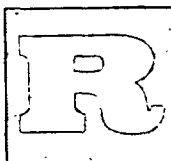
John Welsh, public affairs director for the APPA, said the pipe producing industry is concerned about the consumer.

"The industry has an obligation to review data and draw conclusions based on that data on whether asbestos - cement pipe constitutes a potential health hazard," Welsh said.

He said it would be irresponsible of the industry to not continue studying possibilities that ingestion of asbestos particles is a health risk.

(Continued on Page 6)

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OCEAN COUNTY

REPORTER

VOL. 26, NO. 74

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1981

Many queries, few answers at water meetings

(Continued from Page 1)

Reading from a 1974 study of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Welsh said, "There is no reason to assume that there is a correlation between high cancer rates and asbestos in drinking water."

Welsh said further studies of human and animal populations which had ingested asbestos fibers indicate that there is no danger in ingesting fibers.

At the Toms River meeting, Raymond Barg, chief of the Potable Water Division of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), said that it is immaterial if asbestos tests commissioned by Dover Township and the Toms River Water Co., reveal any fibers in the drinking water, or if indeed any tests are done at all.

"The fact of the matter is," Barg said, "that asbestos in the whole environment is in question and is being looked at with a very great measure of uncertainty."

"It just doesn't make sense to me that if asbestos is presenting these questions, these uncertainties, that we should promote the use of asbestos - cement pipes to convey drinking water."

However, it would be difficult for New Jersey to ban the use of the pipes, Barg said, without having some scientific basis for the decision. And as Barg and several other speakers pointed out, as of yet there is no conclusive proof that asbestos fibers in drinking water cause cancer.

In response to questions about the safety of the drinking water in Dover Township, Barg said, "Personally, I feel there is no problem. If you have an asbestos - cement water system, then you are going to find some asbestos fibers in the water. But the concentration is not that great as to create a problem."

Despite those feelings, however, Barg said that the entire water industry has a greater need to test not only for asbestos but for other chemicals and bacteria as well.

Dover Mayor Thomas Renkin said the Township Committee is awaiting results of its tests being examined by the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia before taking action to regulate or control the use of asbestos - cement pipes. He did say, however, that township officials have already discussed some possible ordinances which might include periodic asbestos tests by the water company.

When results are returned, Renkin said, the committee will make necessary decisions. If there appears to be a serious problem, a prime consideration will be whether the township should move to have the asbestos - cement pipes replaced.

Other questions were raised by citizens who questioned the reliability of a written report sent to Dover Township on water tests conducted at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York for The Ocean County Reporter.

Originally, The Reporter published reports that the tests showed between 600,000 and 4.5 million asbestos fibers per liter. More than a month later, researchers at the hospital said the findings had been inaccurately reported. According to Mount Sinai associate professor Dr. William J. Nicholson, tests showed less than 600,000 fibers per liter. Dr. Nicholson a week ago estimated the fiber count at 200,000. In a written report to Dover Township, Nicholson said he had found no fibers of asbestos in the water samples.

One resident questioned how much people can ever expect to know about the danger of asbestos because of the financial power of the industry.

But Mayor Renkin said anyone who wants to know more or keep checks on the industry can contact the U.S. EPA, the state DEP or the county and local health boards.

Perhaps the most sought - after answers of the evening— what level of asbestos in the water is dangerous and what can be done if the asbestos counts in the water supplies here are high—for the most part were not provided by any officials.

"If we had the information as to what levels of asbestos in water are dangerous, we would give it to you," said Richard Gimello, DEP chief of public participation.

"But this is not a simple problem. It's not a matter of coming up with a simple number...."

"The scientific levels of asbestos in water will be provided for you. Then

you, the community will have to decide what to do from there."

He suggested that residents can set lower asbestos standards for their own community than the DEP will set for the state, or the EPA for the nation.

One resident in the lobby of the Dover Municipal Building after the meeting said, "If we were worried coming in...we're just as worried going out."

Rodney Martin, concerned for his own health as well as that of his wife and two sons, summed his reaction to the meeting as "questionable."

"I feel like we're all still in the dark."

There was somewhat similar confusion in Berkeley Township.

One member of the Berkeley audience said studies on laboratory rats are invalid because the subjects' lifespans— about three years, according to Welsh—do not provide enough time to study the potential health effects.

Doctors have said that it takes several years— some say 20 or more years—to determine the effect of air-borne asbestos, a proven carcinogen.

Edward Hughmanic, vice president of the Toms River Water Co., said no lined asbestos - cement pipe was used in water

main construction in areas of Berkeley Township served by his company.

Welsh said Connecticut is the only state in the U.S. with restrictions on the use of asbestos - cement pipe.

Township Committeeman Gary Casperson said state and local boards of health are monitoring the potential

problem of asbestos ingestion but added, "We could sit here for a year and still not have answers to the question."

Casperson said a request to place a moratorium on the use of the pipe until studies are completed is unjustified because, "There is no conclusive evidence that there is a problem."

TOMS RIVER, N. J.
REPORTER
W. 53,428

JAN 31 1981

Editorial

**The truth
about water
with asbestos**

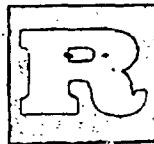
57-9C
By KEN MOORE
Editor

IT APPEARS The Ocean County Reporter's series of news stories about asbestos-cement pipes has opened a proverbial hornet's nest.

As a newspaper, The Reporter has sought truth as accurately as it could find it, and that truth hasn't always been pleasant. A case in point is the use of asbestos-cement pipes by municipal utilities as well as privately-owned water companies. Frankly, we— as residents of Ocean County and as journalists —were appalled when we learned that drinking water flows through pipes made of asbestos— a known carcinogen.

We presented that news on our pages, along with whatever scientific proof we could learn about asbestos.

(Continued on Page 4)



OCEAN COUNTY REPORTER

VOL. 26, NO. 75

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1981

Asbestos danger in drinking water?

The truth, and nothing but the truth...please

(Continued from Page 1)

Being more than just an observer, we didn't let the situation lie dormant. We dug deeper, determining that the only proof of the safety and purity of public water lies in tests. The Reporter then commissioned two water samples for preliminary testing, which show the water supply has the aggressive nature—or potential—to "erode" pipes and thus release potentially hazardous asbestos fibers into water that eventually flows from your kitchen faucet.

Health hazard?

We were concerned about the health of area residents—and we count our newspaper and its employees among residents. Six more water samples were hand delivered to Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, for tests more expensive than most residents could afford, to determine if there is asbestos in the water. A written report was requested, naturally.

It was 18 days later we got the now-controversial Mount Sinai report—by telephone. A news staffer copied the information and wrote an article about tests showing between 600,000 and 4.5 million asbestos fibers in each quart of water. A dangerous situation, about which we informed the public immediately.

Therein lurked controversy. Copies of that Dec. 10 edition of The Reporter were mailed to the researcher at Mount Sinai. And as more information about asbestos in general came to our attention, repeated contacts were made with Mount Sinai. Requests were repeated for a written report. It was 34 days after the telephoned water report we learned of a possible discrepancy. We were told this, not by Mount Sinai, but by Dover Township Mayor W. Thomas Renkin, who informed The Reporter that in his telephone contact, Mount Sinai reported no asbestos content in the water. We telephoned Mount Sinai and were told by the researcher there is some asbestos content—about 200,000 fibers a quart, which is safe, no threat to health. With three different versions of the same water report, we made a trip back to New York for clarification and a written report. The 200,000 fiber figure was affirmed as an approximation.

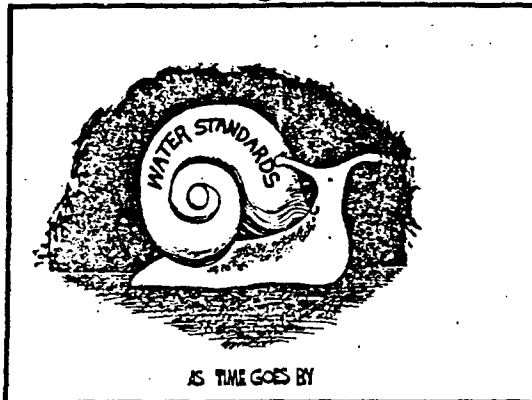
Discrepancy

We reported this discrepancy to readers immediately, along with the researcher's comments that he would drink the water he tested.

There is a discrepancy, but the truth is only days, no more than a few weeks away. To suggest at this point in time that there is no danger, no potential danger even—state and federal health officials won't state that—its reckless and ignorant.

WE ARE admittedly concerned. The researcher at Mount Sinai was sent newspapers containing published reports of his tests, but never contacted us about an error. He thinks he may have received the newspapers, but didn't read them. He confirmed that in 1978, he told an American Cancer Society symposium, "The only safe level of asbestos is zero," but said that pertained to air-borne asbestos. He admitted a personal feeling that asbestos-cement pipe should not be used for water but as a scientist would not go on record because of a lack of proof about ingested (drinking or eating) asbestos, even though proof exists for inhaled (breathed) asbestos hazards. And there was still no written report.

The written report was finally received at The Reporter on Jan. 26, some 67 days after water samples were delivered, 47 days after a telephoned report on water tests. A copy was sent to Dover Township, apparently simultaneously. The report says, in essence, that one Reporter sample tested would have an asbestos fiber content ranging between zero and 600,000.



Confusion?

Was our news staffer confused or did a misunderstanding occur during the initial telephone report?

Dr. Allen N. Koplin, acting commissioner of the state department of health, was apparently confused by a similar report when he wrote to State Sen. John F. Russo, D-Ocean, that Mount Sinai's analysis "showed an asbestos level of 60 million (fibers) per liter" from Ocean County, adding, "That figure is up from the usual 4 million which occurs almost regularly in all asbestos-cement pipe systems." We checked: Dr. Koplin's numbers were the result of a misunderstanding of a state report by Dhun Patel, N.J. Department of Health chief of environmental health and hazard evaluation and a member of the governor's task force on asbestos.

APPARENTLY, an error appeared in The Reporter. It is still too soon to say, but apparently the asbestos fiber count in Toms River is closer to 300,000 a quart than the 600,000 to 4.5 million count which The Reporter published. For that we can only apologize, but even an apology is premature.

Dover Township has now commissioned five water samples for asbestos analysis at a lab different than Mount Sinai, with results due any day now.

That may end the confusion. Another series of tests The Reporter is sending to a still-different lab will be back after that, for confirmation of township tests.

At that point, an intelligent decision can be made.

Recommendations

WE RECOMMEND several steps the governing bodies of Ocean County should take, no matter what the results. An outright ban of future use of asbestos-cement pipe might be one step, a step already taken in the state of Connecticut, a few cities in the U.S. and some European nations.

Then we have to address the problem of existing pipes. Water utilities presently take no asbestos tests—in fact, never have. That must change.

Annual asbestos testing should be a routine, with a report to the governing body of each municipality served. So, too, should water tests be taken for toxic contamination. Few are now required. Present state law requires water tests mainly for bacteria and a few chemicals—a requirement the state imposed years ago, but is hardly sufficient for knowledge in this day and age.

We can only point to the asbestos-cement pipe manufacturers for a need for this. When manufacturers were concerned about water eroding pipe walls and releasing asbestos fibers, they built a pipe with a lining—a

lining that dissolved into the water system and was itself poisonous.

Water utilities with asbestos-cement pipe should report to a governing agency within a limited amount of time, any breakdown of equipment and especially the equipment which injects purifiers and lime into the water system. That lime treatment is a major preventative of pipe wall failure—a failure that could release asbestos fibers into the water. Nuclear power plants must report mishaps within prescribed hours; so too should water utilities report filter and purifier mishaps so officials can be alerted to a potential hazard, and public notice issued.

And finally, Ocean County ought to have its own standard of allowable asbestos fiber in the water supply. Unless asbestos pipes are removed, a zero level is impossible or impractical. The ramifications are many. Replacement of pipe is expensive—\$50 million to \$80 million perhaps in Toms River alone. Water treatment to positively protect the lining of asbestos pipe would so "harden" the water as to present a different health hazard—heart attacks—also borne out by statistics.

SO A CRITERIA is needed. It appears the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, based on existing scientific data, will promulgate a 300,000 fiber a liter (a liter is slightly more than a quart) standard unless continuing research dictates otherwise. It may take three years for the federal government to impose a standard. It may take 20 or 30 or 40 years for science to determine the health hazard of asbestos fibers in water. It took more than 50 years to determine the health effect of inhaled asbestos on industry workers, and still takes upwards of 20 years after exposure to determine the ill effects of inhaled asbestos. We shouldn't have to wait that long to see what may happen.

Even at the 300,000 fiber level the EPA seems to be heading toward, based on estimates, researchers predict, or guess, that there will be one additional cancer death a year for a 70-year period for every 100,000 people drinking asbestos-contaminated water.

That means between one and two deaths annually in Ocean County due to asbestos in the water, according to the best scientific guesses.

Perhaps Ocean County should consider as a criteria, half of the EPA guess—150,000 fibers a quart. Perhaps we should consider even less. Perhaps filtering devices could be mandated.

Even if the final analyses of water samples are in the "safe" range, there should be some control of water utilities other than the good conscience and citizenship of utilities' management.

Blissful ignorance

THIS IS NO TIME to be taking cheap pot-shots or pointing fingers, or arbitrarily and ignorantly stating that there is no problem with our drinking water. Experts won't assure us of the safety of our water supply now or in the future. They can't. They admit they don't know.

The state health department's Raymond Barg, chief of the potable water division, told a Toms River meeting Monday night that, "Asbestos in the whole environment is being looked into... It just doesn't make sense to me that if asbestos is presenting these questions, we should promote the use of asbestos-cement pipe to convey water."

The DEP's Mr. Patel admits health experts "don't have all the evidence to make all the decisions."

He adds, "The Ocean County Reporter did a good job. It even mentioned that 68 percent of the nation is served water through asbestos-cement pipe, and cited the other (asbestos) studies."

The DEP's Mr. Barg goes on to say water utility testing of water samples is "totally inadequate."

Mr. Patel adds new information. The federal government is about to reduce its criteria for air-borne asbestos content from 2 fibers per milliliter to 0.1 fibers a milliliter, a 2,000 percent reduction. This is based on scientific evidence since the original standard was set.

Asbestos danger

So asbestos is a health hazard. It causes cancer and a multitude of other ailments—some fatal. Without scientific minds we can only be amazed when a pipe manufacturer's representative tells us that breathing asbestos is harmful, but drinking asbestos is not a hazard because no proof exists.

No proof does exist.

BUT IT SEEMS to be common sense that if we're already breathing a government prescribed limit of asbestos, and we add additional amounts of government prescribed limits for asbestos in drinking water, we are then imbibing more asbestos contamination than we have time to study. And 20 years from now will be too late to do much about it, especially for children growing up on it. And their children?

About the writer

KENNETH J. MOORE is editor of The Ocean County Reporter for the past 11 years.

A resident of Toms River, he is a native of New York City. A former wire service legislative correspondent with Gannett News Service, he covered state government and politics for The Courier-News of Bridgewater and The Courier-Post of Camden before being promoted and transferred upstate New York.

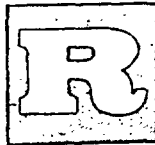
He worked on the old New York Journal-American and six other daily newspapers with circulations ranging from 32,000 to 700,000, and came to Toms River from The Star-Gazette and Telegram in Elmira, N.Y., where he was Sunday editor.



KEN MOORE



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OCEAN COUNTY REPORTER

VOL. 26, NO. 76

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1981

Asbestos in water

Who should prove that A/C pipes are safe?

By BRIAN
McDERMOTT
Opinion

There seem to be two schools of thought in Ocean County about the use of asbestos - cement pipes for the conveyance of drinking water. For the sake of convenience, and because they seem appropriate metaphors, we'll call the two schools Hot and Cold.

Those who form the Hot school seem most bothered by the thought of asbestos fibers, suspected of being hazardous to health, being delivered to kitchens for daily use, no matter how many or how few fibers there may truly be.

We of the Hot school tend to be emotional in our discussion of this controversial issue. Though there is no conclusive evidence that asbestos in drinking water is linked to cancer, or any other disease, we are fearful of what scientists will one day discover. And that, based on what we know are the dangers of breathing asbestos fibers, seems to us a legitimate fear.

Those in the Cold school look at the lack of scientific proof, however, as assurance there is no danger from asbestos in drinking water.

Indeed, those in the Cold school can cite a bathful of studies to reassure themselves that those of us in the Hot school are overreacting to premature and unfounded reports.

Perhaps we are overreacting. But those of us in the Hot school know that America is a nation which tends to progress at breakneck speed, with business most often leading the way. We do what seems best, sometimes that means most profitable, and at times we ignore or overlook possible detrimental side effects. When problems crop up, we look for solutions to remove the symptoms of our ailments.

There's an old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It's a saying with which few people would probably argue. But it's a philosophy few people, few industries and few governments have time to put into practical use.

Asbestos - cement pipe producers, they're of the Cold school, admit no fear of their product. And they sell it, brightly wrapped and ribboned with slick slide shows and booklets highlighting science's failure to prove the product

harmful, touting that asbestos exists in abundance.

But scientists, representatives of our own state Department of Environmental Protection, admit that research into problems which might result due to asbestos in drinking water is years behind what is already known about asbestos in the air.

Scientists admit that the electron microscope, a key instrument in locating almost - invisible asbestos fibers in water, is new and not totally accurate. Improved research techniques may make new scientific investigations—now inconceivable to undertake—commonplace in the near future. New discoveries

may give credence to our greatest fears about asbestos in drinking water, whether it's there by natural means or because of corrosion in asbestos - cement pipes.

Cold school thinkers want to wait until then before getting excited. There

are already enough things to worry about, they say.

But we of the Hot school wonder how many friends and relatives would still be alive if an ounce of prevention had been used by cigarette smokers before the U.S. surgeon general finally found a link be-

tween tobacco and cancer. And we wonder how many will die needlessly if we ignore our fears now and continue to drink our water

through questionable asbestos - cement pipes.

As Barry I. Castleman and Albert J. Frittsch (Continued on Page 8)

Who should prove asbestos pipe safety?

(Continued from Page 7)

write in a report for the Center for Science in the Public Interest: "We Americans have shown far more skill in using asbestos in our consumer products than we have in safeguarding ourselves from this toxic material."

In the conclusion of the report, *Asbestos and You*, the authors conclude and recommend: While many of the individual applications of asbestos products cannot be judged at this moment due to the lack of sufficient evidence of hazard, still we should exercise prudence; we

should remove a suspected product until the manufacturer proves that the item is not harmful. It is not the responsibility of the citizen to prove whether each and every item is harmful or safe. The public has the right to demand this scientific evidence from the manufacturers of consumer products, products which will otherwise simply be means to further profits at the expense and safety of the American people."

We who are Hot against the use of asbestos - cement pipe in Ocean County agree.

Though there is no conclusive evidence that asbestos in drinking water is harmful, there is sufficient reason to believe the evidence may one day be found. We feel we need to act now, not 10, 20, or 30 years from now, when for some of us it may be too late.

MEETING

The Ocean County Advisory Commission on the Status of Women will meet on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7:30 in Room 119 of the County Administration Building on Hooper Avenue.

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OCEAN CO. TIMES
OBSERVER
TOMS RIVER, N.J.
D. 30,000

FEB 8 1981

Asbestos Danger Is Real

5728C

Editor:

If the Times-Observer would spend more time doing its homework and less time taking cheap shots at the competition perhaps, we, the residents of Dover Township would benefit. Your editorial of January 26, slamming the Ocean County Reporter for trying to get the facts on the potential hazard of asbestos in our drinking water, was nothing more than a slam. By what documentation can you tell the people of Dover Township their water is, in fact, safe when large government agencies equipped to test the water have not yet produced evidence that documents that statement?

Had you followed the coverage of asbestos in The Reporter you would have read of the ignorance of the people employed in the asbestos plant thirty years ago — of their deaths because of their ignorance.

I am not a scientist but I do know some facts. When it was discovered that asbestos is a proven carcinogen if inhaled over long periods of time, our people took pains to eliminate it from public places. Schools were closed while ceilings were repaired or replaced.

It seems to me that imbibing and ingesting asbestos in any amount can't be good for you. Since the reports from the so-called medical experts vary — they tell the newspaper one thing, then say it isn't so — I think I'd still opt for drinking my water straight. Hold the asbestos, please. Supposedly 200,000 fibers per liter are safe. Personally, I prefer zero. I didn't ask for it and I resent paying for it. If that low count causes only two deaths per 100,000 people, that is still two unnecessary deaths. I don't want it to be me or anyone I love.

Your empathy is well taken though misplaced. You should feel empathy not for those of us who remain concerned but rather for those who are unconcerned who may wind up in a hospital 30 years from now with a belly

full of cancer and wonder where it came from.

I commend the Reporter for bringing these facts, as they learn them, to the public eye. They spend their time investigating instead of taking shots at the competition. Maybe the Times-Observer should follow their example.

Shella Meyer
Toms River

We thought we exercised a considerable amount of restraint, rather than a propensity for cheap shots, in discussing the so-far unfounded hysteria over asbestos lining in water pipes. First, there is no scientific proof whatsoever that fibers from this lining will have serious adverse effects on the health of those who drink the water. Second, the only test results on Dover Township water that have been revealed indicate that asbestos fiber levels are unusually LOW here. The federal expert on this question told our reporter that those test figures would place Dover in the 10% of the country with the least fiber content. Due to an unfortunate misunderstanding, those test results were misinterpreted and for several months were used to suggest an alarming threat to local residents. Third, those tests were not highly accurate or useful (and that's putting it mildly). So we have no assurance that our water is as pure as the results suggest.

When Dover Township's own results are released this week, we'll have our first reliable report on the fiber level here. When the EPA reports later this year on the effects of asbestos in drinking water, we'll have our first accurate analysis of the health question. In the meantime, we will wait for facts, which have been rather scarce up to this point. If you want something to worry about, talk to the people in the Legler section of Jackson — and then ask what's seeping into the drinking water here from other landfills.

— The Editor

350
OCEAN CO. TIMES
OCEANVIEW
TOMIS RIVER, N.J.
D. 09,000

FEB 3 1981

Upset by the Water, A 'Still' Might Help

5728C
By JOHN SIMSEN
Staff Writer

BEACHWOOD — In the basement of Bob Glennon's home is a stainless steel machine that looks like a cross between an ice bucket and a filing cabinet.

Flip the switch on the front of the machine and it starts to hum and gurgle. In a matter of minutes, it will have produced some of the purest water money can buy.

Water purifiers are nothing new. But this machine — basically a glorified distiller — is unlike all the rest, Glennon and his Bayville associate Jim Karlson say.

This purifier removes more than 99 percent of the asbestos fibers from tap water, they say, which may or may not make it a worthwhile investment for the average homeowner or business.

Residents of many Ocean County communities have

grown concerned over the past few months about drinking water that flows through concrete pipes made with asbestos.

Latest reports indicate that the levels of asbestos are not as high as originally indicated and that there is no reason to believe they present a danger.

The material can cause cancer in humans if inhaled but state and federal officials have yet to determine whether asbestos is harmful if ingested.

Concern over asbestos may be unfounded, but the "Midi-Still," manufactured by Pure Water Inc. of Lincoln, Neb., gives people the opportunity to remove almost all of the material from their water, Karlson said.

In April 1979, Pure Water Inc. spiked a sample of ultrapure water with asbestos fibers and then added the water to the Midi-Still.

The distilled water produced by the machine was tested for asbestos content by a Nebraska laboratory which found that 99.9 percent of the material was removed from the sample.

"Conventional filters don't do the full job," Karlson said. "We feel that it is important for people to drink pure water."

The two distributors ran an advertisement in the Times-Observer last week offering a free record and literature that details the uncleanness of America's water supplies.

At one point the moderator on the record says many Americans are merely drinking "processed sewer water."

Be it asbestos or some other allegedly evil contaminant, Karlson and Glennon say their machine can remove it from drinking water for 10 cents to 15 cents per gallon.

Pure Water makes several different models of the distiller that range in price from \$175 to \$1,300.

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Our Readers' Views

Asbestos shock

To The Editor:

I am a student who followed your reporters around last year at Toms River High School South.

Presently, I am in Columbia University in New York City, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. When I came home in November to visit my family, I sat down and read The Reporter. Well, I was very shocked to read about the asbestos-cement pipes. After reading a couple of your articles, my dad refused to drink the water and found information about bottled water.

I give you a lot of credit for having the guts to expose such happenings.

The newspapers need more reporters like yours to inform the people of exactly what is taking place. After all, it is the people who are used as pawns for the capitalists profit-makers.

I am sure this cement pipe business has been going on for a long time, but was conveniently shut up.

I am also concerned about what the water company recently stated. They have pipes of this asbestos material and will continue to install them in new homes or water mains.

Well, I said what I would like to say. Keep the good reporting up. We need you!

Avrum Glasoff
New York

Asbestos

To The Editor:

The concerned, but not hysterical, tone of your article on asbestos hazards impressed me as unusual because of the absence of the kind of irresponsible, fear-generating statements I have come to expect to find in newspapers.

Congratulations on your attention to facts rather than sensationalism!

My work as a health physicist (specialist in the measurement and control of radioactive materials such as dusts, gases, powders and solids in the environment vis-a-vis the exposure of people in those environments to the consequent radiation) before I retired, taught me a little about the human plumbing system which I think may answer the question you raise under the section headed "Asbestos danger," viz., the difference between inhalation and drinking (ingestion) hazards.

In order to remove ordinary dust from the lung surfaces, nature has provided us with an "escalator" in the form of a film of mucous, propelled upward by cilia, in and on which the dust particles are brought back up into the mouth and dumped into the stomach. This means that any and all debris which we happen to swallow — whether in liquid or solid form — will be excreted intact or will be partly digested and the useless remainder excreted. So far as our lungs are concerned, the passage from our mouths to our stomachs is a very handy sewer line. This may seem aesthetically offensive, but it is eminently practical because the lung surfaces must stay clean to fulfill their function and the body's digestive and immune systems are highly efficient in discriminating between food and waste.

So much for generalities — now let's turn to asbestos. (I speak only as a layman, not an expert). The basic structure of the asbestos molecule is long and thread-like, giving it admirable qualities as a "textile" — but it is nevertheless a kind of rock. Short, small pieces of asbestos can become airborne and, therefore, be inhaled and deposited in the lungs. Such particles apparently can and do tend to act as needles which become trapped in the lung, defy the normal removal process, and because of the motion of lung tissue in breathing, serve as a constant source of irritation. Such prolonged mechanical irritation has been long recognized as one cause of cancer — and I would speculate that this could be the

mechanism, or one of the mechanisms, involved in asbestos cancer. Maximum permissible concentrations of asbestos in the breathing air of human occupants will presumably take particle size into account as well as the number of particles per unit volume, but this number would obviously be much smaller than that for concentrations of asbestos particles in drinking water. The asbestos particles in the drinking water are bound (100 percent?) for fecal elimination.

In your final paragraph, you discuss inhaling "government prescribed limits" and then imbibing additional amounts of asbestos. To conclude that anybody is, therefore, being grossly, but legally over-exposed is erroneous. The two limits apply to two different situations and there are probably, nowadays, very few individuals ever knowingly exposed to airborne asbestos. Also, the limits are expressed as maximum permissible — where radioactivity was involved, concentrations were ordinarily maintained at the lowest possible level — and some small percentage of MPC (Maximum Permissible Concentration).

Fred N. Brandkamp
Brick Town
Feb. 7, 1981

READERS' LETTERS are welcomed by The Reporter from responsible persons on matters pertinent to the community at large. The reader must sign his name and give his complete address as well as a telephone number through which authorship can be verified.

FEB 6 1981



THOMAS RENKIN

Asbestos Water Tests on Way

By JOE GREGORY
Staff Writer

TOWNSHIP — Dover Township officials expect to announce the results of tests to determine the content of asbestos fibers in area water supplies early next week.

The results of the tests, which were performed at the township's request by the Franklin Institute, of Philadelphia, were reportedly mailed early yesterday and officials expect to receive them late

today or early Monday.

Mayor Thomas Renkin said yesterday he has not yet been informed of the test results and added they will not be made public until Township Health Department officials "get the chance to look them over."

"We want to examine them thoroughly before we come out with any statement," Renkin said.

He said a press conference detailing the test results will be held either Monday or

Tuesday and published results will be made available to the public at that time.

The tests were commissioned by the township health department more than three weeks ago after the Reporter, a twice-weekly newspaper, published a series of stories alleging that asbestos fiber levels in area water supplies are dangerously high.

Although the Reporter later admitted it erred in interpreting test results

performed by Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, which actually indicated low levels of asbestos, the newspaper's reports raised widespread public concern.

Subsequently, the township government and the Toms River Water Company commissioned a number of different laboratories to take samples of local water supplies and test for the presence of asbestos fibers.

Toms River Water Com-

pany Manager Charles Lecuyer said yesterday that the privately-owned firm which supplies drinking water to parts of Berkeley and Dover Townships has not yet received test results from samples it sent to a Connecticut laboratory.

"We sent samples out a little over two weeks ago. It could take anywhere from two to four weeks to be completed but the results could be coming back any day now," he said.

Officials of the Brick Municipal Utilities Authority are also awaiting results of tests they commissioned to determine the asbestos-fiber content in water supplies in the township.

The MUA commissioned the tests following a Jan. 21 meeting at which residents in several developments which receive water through asbestos-cement piping expressed concern about potential health hazards.

The MUA sent 10 samples

of local water supplies to the Franklin Institute and expects the results sometime within the next three weeks, according to authority Executive Director Andrew Ciesla.

Although the tests should reveal the level of asbestos fiber concentration, local and state health officials have repeatedly stressed that scientists have never positively linked cancer or other diseases to the ingestion of asbestos.

Mayor: Asbestos tests show no action needed

By BRIAN McDERMOTT

Dover Township officials say they have the cooperation of owners of Holiday on the Bay — a Silverton garden apartment complex where water tests show the highest concentration of asbestos fibers in drinking water — in flushing the water system.

The flushing would be an effort to lower the 3 million fiber per liter count

recorded there—the highest count of five areas tested as a result of news articles in The Ocean County Reporter about the widespread use of asbestos-cement pipes to carry drinking water.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen, but scientists so far say they lack proof that asbestos in drinking water is harmful to health, a point that township officials stressed in re-

porting results of the tests conducted by the Franklin Institute Research Laboratory in Philadelphia.

Dover Mayor W. Thomas Renkin and township health officer Herbert Roeschke both describe tests results as "very encouraging" and expressed feeling that the findings would set the minds of many residents at ease.

The average asbestos fiber count of the remaining four samples was about 340,000 per liter, according to Renkin, with the highest concentration, 530,000 fibers per liter, found in water samples taken at the Dover Municipal Building on Washington Street in downtown Toms River. The lowest

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Mayor: Asbestos tests show no action needed

(Continued from Page 1)

count, 160,000 fibers per liter, was found in samples taken in the Pleasant Plains area of the township.

The high concentration of asbestos fibers found in Holiday on the Bay water samples, township officials speculated, could have accumulated because the pipes were not periodically flushed. Also, Renkin said, the water sample was so dirty that by the time the necessary filtering processes were completed there was very little water left to be tested for asbestos content, a circumstance which may have lessened the accuracy of the count.

The water system at Holiday on the Bay is privately maintained by Hovsons, Inc., owner of the complex. The privately-owned Toms River Water Co., therefore has no right or obligation to flush water pipes there as it does in most other parts of its service area.

That, Roeschke said at a Tuesday press conference to announce the results of the water tests, may mean the pipes at Holiday on the Bay have not been flushed since 1968.

The usual procedure, according to Wayne Hill, a Toms River Water Co. engineer, is to flush the main water transmission lines and their capillaries twice a year. That involves opening a large nozzle on various fire hydrants and letting water flow for hours.

On Wednesday, Roeschke said, a representative of Hovsons, Inc., indicated the pipes may have been

flushed about October last year, but there was some confusion about exactly when the flushing might have taken place or who was responsible.

According to Roeschke, Holiday on the Bay owners are willing to cooperate with the township and the water company to flush the water system there.

No definite schedule has been set yet, Roeschke said. But the flushing and then retesting of water can be expected to be done soon.

The Dover Township Committee is expected to discuss a potential ordinance to require regular flushing of privately maintained water systems at its next meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 8

p.m., at the Dover Township Municipal Building.

In addition, Renkin said, the committee will discuss whether the Toms River Water Co., should conduct annual tests for asbestos content in the water, either in cooperation with the township or through ordinance.

As for future monitoring of the water company, Renkin said he does not feel that the township should or could scrutinize its activities any more than they already are by the state Board of Public Utilities and other government agencies.

Renkin also said in light of test results, which he believes compare favorably to other cities in the na-

tion, there probably would be no action taken to control future use of asbestos-cement pipe, suspected of being the source of asbestos in drinking water supplies.

A ban on future use of the controversial pipe, Renkin said, would involve the township passing an ordinance. If that resulted in higher costs for the water company, he said, it would be passed directly to consumers.

Renkin also questioned whether banning the use of asbestos-cement pipe would help prevent the spread of cancer, which is at the heart of the controversy.

If deaths caused by cancer are to be controlled, Renkin said, the answer

will have to come in the form of a cure rather than in prevention because of all

the things in the environment which contribute to its continued spread.