

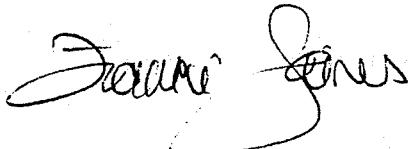
March 15, 1995

Mr. Laurence J. O'Neill
Director, Public Affairs
Monsanto Chemical
Bldg. G--4th floor
800 North Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63167

Dear Larry,

Here are the newspaper articles I thought would be helpful to you. Please let me know if you need any further background information. I've also enclosed additional videos and brochures describing PHH Homequity's Environmental Action Services.

Looking forward to talking with you soon,



Francie Gaines
Regional Project Manager

enclosures

DSW 133438

Pompton Lakes Journal

Du Pont and Residents Try to Resolve Contamination Issue

By LYN MAUTNER

ACID BROOK, which runs from E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company's explosives plant on Cannonball Road through residential areas down to the lake, carried a bitter message to this community last year when high levels of lead and mercury were found along its banks. Du Pont made the discovery while monitoring the area as part of its program to bring past disposal practices under current state regulations. Borough officials had also urged testing for hazardous wastes off the plant site in conjunction with the closing of Du Pont's Shooting Pond, long used for underwater detonation of blasting caps.

More than 500 soil samples were taken along the brook. Du Pont found that 20.5 percent of the samples were above the acceptable lead level for children and that 21.7 percent were above acceptable mercury levels. The rest, measured in parts per million, fell within Federal health-risk standards, Du Pont said.

Although Du Pont and environmental experts hired by the company emphasized that these substances were not cancer causing, were not present in the air or water and could be harmful only if the contaminated soil was ingested over many years, they were bombarded with questions from worried citizens. Researchers have linked lead and mercury to neurological disorders like learning disabilities, anemia, kidney disease and reproductive problems in adults.

"The first casualty was not health but peace of mind," said Ed Merrill, who is on a 12-member citizens' advisory committee set up by Du Pont to discuss the situation.

Planning to Replace Soil

He said it was unusual for such a large company to involve the community right from the start. "Du Pont has been very cooperative," he said. "Instead of making excuses, they are working with the Department of Environmental Protection and the borough to define, evaluate, then remove the contamination with plans to replace the polluted soil in a massive cleanup effort next spring."

Leander Woods, the Du Pont plant manager, said: "We have tried to deal with the situation fairly, openly, responsibly. We want to show that it doesn't take the worst case of pollution for industry to respond, to go to work for the community, that good results are possible."

Mr. Woods said that "for a number of years, Du Pont has tested quarterly the water in Acid Brook as it leaves our plant" and that it had continued to be within Department of Environmental Protection guidelines. He said the contamination found in the soil was not a result of a "continuous outfall" from the plant, like a pipe, but of periodic gathering of soil by the brook whenever it flooded.

Janet Hackbarth, who has lived in Pom-



Ed Merrill, a member of citizens' advisory committee set up by Du Pont to discuss concerns about contaminated soil near Acid Brook, background, speaking with Paul and Vivian Dow, property owners.

ton Lakes for 22 years and is a member of the advisory committee, said: "If I did not think Du Pont was dealing fair and square with us, I'd be the first in the lawyer's office. My attitude is, 'I'm from Missouri!'"

But undercurrents of mistrust and fear continue to run through the community, erupting in emotional outbursts and rumbles of possible lawsuits against the company.

The most troubled area is where much of the contamination was found — Du Pont Village, named for its proximity to the plant. (The company had built these homes for its workers, but then sold them to members of the community.) Employing thousands during the World Wars, the Pompton Lakes plant now has a work force of 100, manufacturing explosive products for surface mining, the oil and space industries and the military.

Many residents said the still unanswered question for them was whether long exposure to the soil could be harmful to health.

Shirley Koppelman, whose house is near the plant, lives in what she describes as a "cluster of sicknesses."

"The main concern up and down the block

is health," she said. "In the two houses on either side of me, three have had cancer; two have died. I want proof that mercury, lead and other substances found in my yard do not cause cancer. In one spot they discovered soil with 20,000 parts of mercury per million — one of the highest found. I want Du Pont to make a door-to-door study along Acid Brook to see if kidney problems, anemia, etc., run in these families."

Henry Ramer is the lawyer for a number of families in the borough considering individual lawsuits against Du Pont. "They have thoroughly tested the soil and water," he said, "but have not gone to the people about health problems. Residents are left in doubt about this important and emotional aspect of the situation."

Du Pont has retained Dr. Michael Gochfeld of the department of environmental and community medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry/Robert Wood Johnson Medical Center, who was present at a public meeting Du Pont held last summer. The company offered to pay for doctors' visits and laboratory tests (at an independent com-

pany) for all residents who wished them.

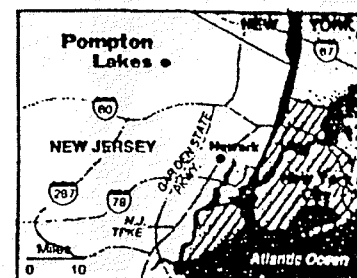
About 10 families took up Du Pont on its offer. Initial test results showed that two people had mercury levels above normal limits, Mr. Woods said.

"I suggest," Mr. Woods said, "that a person with positive findings go to their personal physician, who has the most knowledge of that individual, to have these results confirmed and, by appropriate questioning, to also confirm the source of these findings — the way the substances were ingested."

"We sent all contaminated soil samples out to toxicologists for evaluation. The findings did not establish a connection between the levels found and a potential health hazard. It is my understanding that the levels have to be higher for a population risk assessment to be warranted."

But Mrs. Koppelman said, "I would like to have a doctor not retained by Du Pont come and speak to us, to reassure us, together with a representative from the State Health Department."

Brian Hinchman grew up on Howard Street near the plant. His mother and sister



still live there. Mr. Hinchman, who is a member of the citizens' advisory committee, said: "I water-skied in the delta, ate vegetables from the garden. We have high levels of lead and mercury in yard soil that will be replaced, but I am worried. What about dirt trapped under the foundation? In one or two spots, cement in our basement is worn away and dirt has come through. Du Pont is still burning hazardous wastes — rags, cardboard. Seems to me they're taking the pollution from ground into air."

Vivian Dow's house on Howard Street also borders Acid Brook. "Many medical problems can be caused by a variety of things," she said. "Because of the contamination in our yard, they will have to uproot bushes and trees that have been in the family for years — but is that sufficient reason to sue?"

Another concern among residents is the possible loss in the value of their houses and property because of the contamination.

"Du Pont caused this stigma; they should protect us," said Eileen Watson, who lives on Collax Avenue. "I grew up in this house. Am I now going to lose it?"

'What Happens if We Want to Sell?'

Mrs. Koppelman added: "What happens if we want to sell our home in the future? After the cleanup, will the stigma still remain, or will property be restored to its full value?"

In reply, Mr. Woods outlined a planned value-protection program for residents at a meeting of the committee last month. The program, which was drawn up with the help of a real-estate consulting company, seeks to answer the fears of property owners. Du Pont plans to hold a public meeting on the plan in the near future.

In addition, Du Pont is completing plans to minimize inconvenience to families who must temporarily move during the cleanup.

Jill Gundersman has lived near the brook for 18 years. "I wonder about the level of knowledge of this whole subject," she said. "I am not convinced that state and Federal standards are based on hard scientific evidence. Do they know, for example, details of how plants and vegetables absorb these substances? I don't know. I called the U.S.D.A., but didn't get an answer. I think Du Pont is acting in good faith, but still I'm nervous."

P.L. blames timing for tax appeals

By DARREN La PADULA
STAFF WRITER

POMPTON LAKES — The tax department has just completed a review of more than 700 tax appeals filed by local homeowners this year and officials are blaming a 1987 property revaluation for the unrest that could issue a devastating blow on the municipal budget.

Pompton Lakes perhaps received the most tax appeals of any Passaic County municipality, most of which saw huge increases in the number of appeals filed in this dark bowel of economic recession. Officials here blame bad timing, a revaluation performed when housing values had peaked right before plummeting into the red.

"When they did the revaluation several years ago, before I was elected, housing values were highly inflated," said Mayor John Sinsimer. "People have been appealing consistently over the last couple of years."

Housing values have dropped about 25 percent since the 1987 revaluation in town and the Borough Council has authorized a study on conducting another assessment soon so property values can be brought more into line with current realities. Nonetheless, the number of appeals filed this year, up about 200 from last year, could traumatize the municipal budget if the majority are granted by the county. Borough Tax Assessor Frank Giovatti said successful appellants will see an immediate tax relief that may, however, be cancelled out in the long run.

Successful appeals strip funds from the municipal budget, funds that will have to be compensated for in additional taxes perhaps if

town services are not cut. The long term savings for appellant homeowners may in fact be nil, Giovatti said.

"They may end up paying the same," Giovatti said. "It's only a temporary form of relief. I really sympathize with the ordinary taxpayer."

The assessor could not give an exact amount of money at stake with the tax appeals but acknowledged that "it is a lot of money. It could effect the overall tax rate."

When news was first released about the huge number of appeals being filed, residents began to wonder about possible catalysts. Many fingers pointed to Cannonball Road, where the DuPont corporation is digging up whole yards of soil in more than 100 homes where chemicals have tainted the earth. Plastic sheets cover the windows and doors of homes evacuated by their owners until cleanup is completed, shedding a morose aura on home sweet home.

But Giovatto, Sinsimer and sales representatives with Murphy Realty in Wayne said that suspicion is unfounded.

"The appeals are across the board," said Ken Tarlo of Murphy.

Tarlo and Martha Thompson of Murphy Realty have been given the responsibility of selling about one dozen homes handed over to DuPont to sell by private homeowners who wanted out when the remediation first began. Residents affected by the cleanup were offered a wonderful deal. They could either temporarily relocate into another home until their property was cleaned or DuPont would buy their homes at April, 1990's fair market values. Other incentives, including

free cash for home restorations and guaranteed home refinancing at three percent below current mortgage rates.

Nancy Schulz, project manager for the home value protection program for DuPont, operates a family counseling center on the DuPont site. Thus far, 16 families have decided to sell their homes altogether, while more than 80 others have taken advantage of the other refinancing and restoration options. A number of the latter homeowners live across the street or beside homes directly effected by the restoration who are also provided compensation for their inconvenience.

The result of this value protection has been significant. Homes managed by Murphy for sale are actually being purchased at rates dictated by the current market because of upgraded land quality and a general increase in home improvement and aesthetics in the neighborhoods.

Indeed, the DuPont remediation project has helped stabilize local home values.

"DuPont is committed to restoring the area," Schulz said. "Most of the homes are selling above those in Ringwood and other areas."

Three "DuPont" homes, as they are termed, have already been sold and contracts are pending on three others. Potential homebuyers also receive incentives to move in: three percent below current mortgage interest rates.

"It's an attractive incentive to homebuyers," Schulz added. "And they'll get clean soil."

Schulz, an agent of PHH Home Equity, a home value protection agency, said this program is the first in New Jersey.

DSM 133440

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Families return to clean-up area

By DARREN La PADULA
STAFF WRITER

POMPTON LAKES — "I'm a pretty happy camper," said George Courter Thursday afternoon, looking at his backyard from the side deck of his Barbara Drive home. "It's nice to be back."

Courter, who returned home with his wife Teri Nov. 1 after a six week stay in a Hamburg Turnpike house, casually pointed out the sapling Japanese Red Maples and the cherry trees still bound and awaiting their own home in the new, soft earth. Tomorrow, he said, the sod would be laid and home would return to its sweet self.

Just weeks before, the windows and doors to his home were covered with plastic drapes and the backyard had earth movers and dump trucks crawling around it like Japanese beetles. DuPont was completing the first phase of a massive remediation project to remove and replace soil contaminated with mercury and lead from years of black powder manufacturing in the nearby plant. Courter and about seven of his neighbors were the first tended to, and the first to return home, literally to a new earth.

Courter and his wife spent six weeks living on Hamburg Turnpike, in a home now reserved to one of about 110 other families whose land will be remediated. And while the experience was certainly inconvenient, Courter said, it was necessary and managed well.

When the first eight families were relocated, visions of criminals busting into their vacant homes and an imminent return to less favorable conditions followed many to bed at night. Often, Courter and neighbors were seen standing by their homes or patrolling the area during the day and night to keep an eye out.

"Everybody, in the beginning, was a little concerned about security. After all, you're packing up and leaving your home with all your valuables still in there," Courter said. "But we didn't have any problems. They (DuPont) were very cooperative, they really tried to accommodate everyone. Even the workers were friendly. They took good care of us."

Clean soil replaced the tainted soil which was shipped out to appropriate disposal facilities. The trees and other vegetation ripped out with the earth was resupplied. Crews even built a cedar fence around Courter's property in an attempt to restore privacy that was lost when the tall standing trees were cut down.

Cleanup crews have begun to move down the line, along the periphery of Acid Brook, blamed for originally delivering the contaminants into the area when it flooded.

Bike, auto collide

WAYNE — Police reported a collision of a Honda motorcycle

Fax to F. Gaine
203-756-6774

SUNDAY,
JANUARY 27, 1991

from Wayne. The accident occurred on Saturday afternoon at 3:25.

Police said the motorcycle was apparently heading north on Valley Road when Bailey attempted to make a left turn onto Valley Road at the intersection of Hall Court. Police said there is a stop sign at that location and there is no indication that Bailey failed to come to a full stop.

Arrest nets stolen car

WAYNE — Police arrested two men, including a Detroit, Michigan man, for possession of a stolen car and drugs on Jan. 19.

Police arrested Alfred A. Rose, 43, of Ft. Lee and Horten Peoples III, 41, of Detroit, at Willowbrook Mall. The two men were allegedly observed, by Det. James Clarke, conducting themselves in a suspicious manner in the mall parking lot.

Clarke arrested the two men for possession of a stolen 1990 Oldsmobile and for possession of marijuana under 50 grams and possession of cocaine.

Index

SECTION ONE

DuPont to distribute packet to soil-impacted homeowners

By LORRISO STAFF WRITER

POMPTON LAKES — Keeping its commitment to address the needs of the community responsibly, DuPont will introduce a value-protection program for homeowners with property directly impacted by lead and mercury contaminated soil.

The program was drawn up with the help of a real estate consulting company and seeks to answer the fears and questions of affected property owners. According to plant manager Lee Woods, it was the concern of these homeowners that prompted the company to research and initiate the program.

"After we announced the soil contamination last spring, we began to get feedback that banks in the local area would not write mortgages for people who had contaminated soil near their property. People felt trapped and thought they wouldn't be able to secure a mortgage to sell or re-finance their homes. As a result, we began to gather information from the homeowners and have hired a contractor to draw up a program responsive to the needs of these property owners. We also needed a mortgage lender to participate in the program and have commitments from two national lenders who say they will support

it," Woods said.

DuPont hired PHH Home Equity as its contractor to design the program and counsel homeowners on real estate questions. Beginning tomorrow, according to Woods, packages explaining the program in detail will be delivered door-to-door to homeowners who are eligible.

"The program will assist people with refinancing or selling their homes. We are treating this as a people program for homeowners directly impacted by the cleanup activities that will begin in the spring of this year and continue until all the contamination is removed," Woods said.

Lowering boro water rates is not unanimously hailed

By LINDA BALDWIN STAFF WRITER

RINGWOOD — Water rates could be reduced in the near future by a majority vote of the borough council, but the vote to introduce the ordinance Tuesday night was not unanimous, as two councilmen feel the action is premature.

During last week's council business meeting, a 4-2 vote was taken to introduce the amended ordinance, designed to reduce the rates by approximately 15 percent. Borough officials say there is a \$259,000 surplus in the water account and that

the borough can afford the rate reduction.

However, Councilmen Ernest Schwesinger and William Busino feel that rates could very well go up again in the future.

Schwesinger said he was opposed to the proposed reduction.

"We should be doing other things to improve our water system," he said, "such as in the Hilltop Clubhouse area. This money could be better spent."

Busino concurred.

"Many things are up in the air with our water system. We're lower-

ing our water rates now, but we have to upgrade our system and may have to increase the rates. This is not a good idea right now," he said.

Borough Manager Charles De Deyn pointed out that there could be enough money in the surplus to help pay for the upgrade.

"We could possibly do both, cut the rates and fund the upgrade," he said.

The ordinance is scheduled to be advertised on Feb. 3 and the council will vote on it during its March 26 business meeting.

has an outstanding order has a big pair of shoes I am sure she will fill the

Bunting received a degree in business from Rutgers University master's in school business administration, also from Rutgers been employed as the administrator in Mendham. Prior to that, she was a principal in Middlesex Borough school and assistant business administrator from 1984 to 1989.

"I am thrilled to be Butler. One of the major will be that the Mendham

Drilled fire unit

By VITO De LARO JR. STAFF WRITER

LINCOLN PARK — A borough fire department to several fires in a couple of don't have to battle: over a month, the department sharp and ready to roll.

According to Borough official Bruce Smith, the company holds approximately simulated fire drills a year in the borough at various locations. Smith also said the department one combined drill each well.

"During the drills we're taking from going over the simulating a rescue of an in a burning building," Smith said. "We also go over the proper equipment."

On Tuesday night School, both engine companies scheduled to hold a special fire safety. Several

Detour will open briefly then close