PENSACLA NEWS, 10/2/70

Women Are Motivators

Group Is Formed To Fight Pollution

By MIKE ALBERTSON
News Staff Writer

Could the discharge of pollution into Escambia Bay be stopped before the present Jan. 1, 1973 deadline? Two determined women believe so strongly that they have formed a new organization to achieve just that.

"United Citizens Against Pollution," a new pollution-battling group begun in an unorthodox way may provide the push in a speedup under a philosophy subscribed to several times during its two-hour meeting Thursday night.

"The ultimate solution to every pollution problem is a political one," an unidentified member of the 60-plus audience interjected during the free-ranging discussion Thursday night.

Thus, a major aim of the guiding executive committee, headed by youthful attorney Paul Magie, will be to find political expedients to return Escambia Bay to at least a less-polluted state.

"We can start right now," Magie told the eager audience in the Gulf Breeze City Hall. "Draw up a proposed ordinance under home rule and present it to the four county commission candidates for Nov. 3 and find out who will support our aims."

Mrs. Jack Bouffard and Mrs. Mae Guice, garden club members frustrated by two years of questions and getting answers that didn't satisfy them, organized the movement and are members of the executive committee.

"God gave us a beautiful sanctuary," Mrs. Guice told the group in an opening statement. "We, as parents, must go to work for a better tomorrow. We want pollution cut off in 1970, other than 1973."

Unlike other citizen meetings, the gathering Thursday night opened with an invocation, a passage from the Book of Isaiah, describing man's desecration of Earth.

"I am disappointed at those who didn't show up for the meeting," Mrs. Bouffard told the audience. "We have got to pull together to get something done. I'm surprised, for instance, there's none here from Pensacola Beach."

The direct approach, a tone set also by Mrs. Guice when she reported that Monsanto Corporation had released a dangerous compound called "PCB" into Escambia Bay, opened the door for frank discussion.

"St. Regis Paper Co. has ruined Eleven Mile Creek," Mrs. Guice told the group.

"As far as we can tell from our investigations, the Florida Department of Air and Water Pollution Control can do something about it and won't," Mrs. Bouffard charged.

Both of the A series of fish kills in bayous around Gulf Breeze spurred the two housewives into more concerted action.

Commerical Fisherman B. J. Davis charged that 5,500 tons of sulphuric acid released two years ago in the Gulf by Escambia Chemical Corp. had caused a fish kill of Louisiana.

"Why have Dr. Hopkins (Thomas, University of West Florida Scientist) and Mrs. Tisdale (Wayne, regional engineer, Division of Health) been shut up?" Davis asked.

"Mr. Tisdale said he had to shut up after he was approached by a very important Congressman," Davis said.

UWF students, Andy Auld and Kyle Barrineau, both assistants to Dr. Hopkins, voiced strong criticism of both representatives and the air curtains now in use at Mulatto and Trout Bayous.

"Out of 19 major conservation bills presented to Congress last year, Rep. Bob Sikes voted for only two of them," Auld charged. "And State Rep. Roy Hess scored about the same on C-70's package of bills."

Fish Camp Operator Horace Peterson drew a laugh when he interjected: "I'd like to run Andy against Ed Fortune (Representative from Pace)."

Answering a charge by Magie that PCB may have killed shrimp in Escambia Bay, David Hansen, a scientist with the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries at Santa Rosa Island, denied the charge:

"We never found PCB in the bay. There was a considerable amount in the mud. I think we believe it was low dissolved oxygen rather than PCB that killed the shrimp."

Ted Ripberger, assistant regional engineer for the Florida Department of Air and Water Pollution Control told the group, "There are only four areas where we can enforce immediately: settleable solids, floating substances, deleterious material and toxic substances.

"What I'm worried about," he said, "is whether 90 per cent treatment (required in 1973) will be enough."

Monsanto Corporation physicist Richard Radford told the group: "Squeeze polluting industries for help to fight the problem. Then, if they don't help, tell the newspaper."

Harry Blanchard, representing the Bayou Texar Improvement Association, praised the group: "I think meetings like this are going to do something about the problems.

"Until our elected representatives take the necessary actions and force these laws into being, we'll have pollution forevermore."

Copies to: Wise
R M Warner
Mike Bierly
John Spruce
J E Manter

MONS 032369