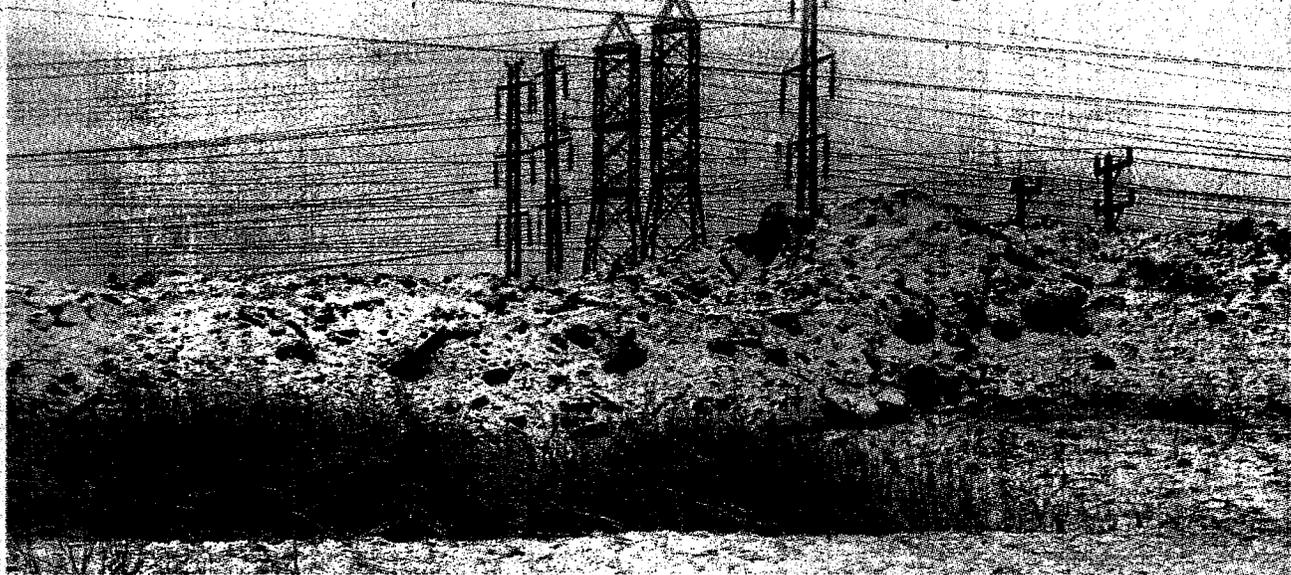


A TALE OF TWO LANDFILLS

The U.S. Army Corps and the state DEC say that the landfill near Hackett Drive in Tonawanda is safe, but residents around the site do not agree



DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HEALTH HAZARD?: The Town of Tonawanda landfill lies under snow near Hackett Street in the City of Tonawanda. The Riverview School is located nearby.

BY DAN MINER

minerd@gnewspring.com

Who do you believe?

State and federal agencies say toxicity levels at the Town of Tonawanda landfill fall within federal guidelines and are not a health hazard.

But concerned citizens in the City of Tonawanda who have lived near the landfill for years tell a different story, one in which they witnessed toxic dumping decades ago and abnormally high rates of cancer and other health problems among their neighbors.

"It's like a dog chasing its tail," City of Tonawanda Mayor Ron Pillozzi said of trying to figure out who's right.

The landfill sits directly adjacent to homes on Hackett Drive in the City of Tonawanda.

The Town of Tonawanda is currently under orders from the state Department of Conservation to cap the landfill, which means building the high hills typically associated with closed landfills.

But both are waiting for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete their final report on the investigation of whether there are unhealthy levels of uranium left over from the Manhattan Project. Uranium has been found, but the levels fall just below U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines which require a cleanup, said Stephen

MORE INFO

Those interested in more information on testing at the landfill can call Joan Morrissey, community outreach specialist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

■ PHONE: 879-4396

■ E-MAIL: fusrap@usace.army.mil

Buechi, an environmental engineer and project manager for the Corps at the landfill.

Meanwhile, a group of activists have called for a more comprehensive

SEE SITE ON PAGE 5A

HS
\$1
ce
Ca

BY JILL
terreri@gr

SANB
will cost
and em
being pla
HSBC
division
with b
region,
275,000-
cost \$70

With i
15 years,
expected

The ce
be \$4.3
about \$7

The p
350 cons
pay \$11.

Another
estimates
lion will

The c
\$85 milli
breaks f

Industri
over 15 y

NEW

31

Site
pro
HSI
ce

**SATURDAY
PEOPLE
PROFILE**

Reverend looks back on life

NORTH TONAWANDA: Moldenhauer born in Detroit to poor farmers.

BY DAN MINER



realize how he got his start.

Moldenhauer born to unedu Michigan farmers in

TON_00165

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

investigation of possible health risks coming from the landfill, joining citizens who say they've been directly affected by it.

A public meeting has been scheduled Feb. 8 at Tonawanda High School to discuss the landfill. Representatives from all agencies and elected bodies involved will be present.

Anecdotal evidence

MaryLin Munschauer, 66, said when she used to live on Hackett Drive, she witnessed trucks from the former Linde site dump at the landfill. One of Munschauer's sons, who used to play in the landfill, has since developed asthma severe enough to keep him from working. Munschauer, who once had endometrial cancer, now has lymphoma. She said many of her neighbors had the same problems.

"My kids shoes used to melt in that stuff," she said.

Eugene Parks, 50, has been one of the most outspoken critics of activities at the landfill, claiming its eventual height will affect nearby property values and that his family has been personally affected by it.

Parks, who lives on Bellinger Drive several blocks away from the landfill, said his 21-year-old daughter has had four lumps removed from her breast since she was 14 years old, and that he's had to have half his thyroid removed. All the problems have occurred since he moved to the area 15 years ago.

Rosario Falletta, 73, has lived on Hackett Drive for many years. His wife, Eleanor, died in 1989 of lymphoma. She was 54 years old.

"Do I feel like my wife was made sick and died from cancer because of the dump?" he asked.

HSBC ...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

deviation from the agency's standard industrial payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement.

If the IDA board approves the project, the greatest tax break will be a sales tax exemption that will save HSBC \$74 million.

But the project, which will provide information technology services for HSBC's operations in North America, will also add new revenue to the tax rolls. While the company stands to save \$21.8 million over 15

land somewhere in Pendleton, but documents filed with the IDA show the company has settled on the northeast corner of Lockport and Comstock roads, which is a clean 77-acre patch of vacant land. The company expects to purchase 51 acres and have first rights to purchase the remaining 26 acres.

The initial building will be 200,000 square feet with a 75,000-square-foot exterior equipment yard. The project could be expanded up to 350,000 square feet.

The land is in the Starpoint School District

MEETING

A public meeting will be held on the landfill with all interested parties.

■ **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Feb. 8

■ **WHERE:** Auditorium, Tonawanda Senior High School, 150 Hinds St.

"I think it contributed to it.

"There is definitely a connection."

The town

Town officials say no official records exist of toxic dumping in the landfill, but also acknowledge such a thing would not likely be documented if it were to happen.

"Let's be honest, in the '50s, '60s and '70s, you just charged a fee and went ahead," said Robert Morris, director of technical support for the Town of Tonawanda. "Nobody really monitored dumping or anything going on."

Town Superintendent Ron Moline said the town is waiting for the U.S. Army Corps' record of decision before it proceeds with capping the landfill.

The city

Pilozzi said the city is depending on the U.S. Army Corps for its expertise. He is waiting along with the town and DEC for their final decision.

"That being said, No. 1, how do we trust that report?" He asked. "Is there a way people on Hackett Drive can go to sleep at night and not have an issue with their safety and welfare?"

"That's my job to ensure that. But I don't have the resources to really take care of that problem, and that's why I keep going back to the Army Corps as a higher governmental authority."

Pilozzi said he would welcome any input on the landfill.

Town of Tonawanda activist Phillip Sweet, Judi Mokhiber of the state Advisory Council on Children's Environmental Health and Safety and Vincent Agnello, a professor at Niagara University and member of the citizen's group, Residents for Responsible Government, have joined the cause of concerned residents.

"I don't think the city or town should take any risk whatsoever," Agnello said. "You can't assume that anything is safe anymore."

Agnello suggested the city get the results of the tests from the DEC and U.S. Army Corps and submit them to an outside expert to analyze.

Mokhiber also advocated an aggressive approach toward the agencies.

"They will not do anything unless you aggressively ask questions and get proof," she said. "We have enough experts in this area to find out the answers."

The U.S. Army Corps

The U.S. Army Corps began investigating the site as part of its federally funded FUSRAP program. It has tested spots around the landfill for radioactive materials specifically related to the nation's early atomic energy program, said Stephen Buechi, an environmental engineer and U.S. Army Corps' landfill project manager.

Levels of uranium have been found in higher amounts than what should naturally occur, Buechi said. But they fall just under federal Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for risk assessment, meaning they require no clean-up.

And while other sites in the town have been cleaned up, there is no documented evidence anything was dumped there, said Joan Morrissey, a U.S.

Army Corps community outreach specialist. The U.S. Army Corps is not responsible for other kinds of hazardous waste in the landfill and hasn't tested for them.

The landfill is different from other FUSRAP sites in that there was never any documentation which prompted the investigation, Morrissey said. The investigation came directly from concern in the community.

Morrissey also pointed out that the DEC and town are under no legal obligation to wait for the U.S. Army Corps' official decision before they cap the landfill.

The U.S. Army Corps will release its proposed plan on whether or not to clean the landfill around March, Buechi said. After a public comment session, its final record of decision should come in December.

The state DEC

The state DEC, a state regulatory agency working with the town to close the landfill, says it's never encountered hazardous wastes at its ground water monitoring wells.

"All landfills have stuff that you wouldn't want to be handling, or wouldn't want in your water," said Dan David, the DEC's regional environmental quality engineer. "We believe the best way to handle this landfill is to make sure it's properly closed."

David said tests done on americium put in the landfill by E.A.D. Metallurgical Inc., a company which manufactured smoke detectors, have shown no groundwater infiltration and are not a health concern as long as they are covered properly.

Contact Dan Miner at 693-1000, Ext. 115.

Cambria building inspector Clifford Burch said he had not received any plans yet but had fielded general inquiries about zoning from the company.

The land is zoned for general business and will not need to be rezoned.

The news was a surprise to Councilwoman Debra Kroening,

who said she had heard rumors about the project but knew nothing officially.

"We've been encouraging businesses to come to town," she said.

Contact Jill Terreri at 282-2311, Ext. 2250.

1-888-
Toni
poin
Dela
was

PA
CON

Du
Mold
farm
itor
spenc
as a
churc
"I
churc
hauer
atmos
to be
and se
Mol
father.
brothe
Sunda
He
Sunda
when
Pearl F
"The
the mo
ple anc
able to
the mir
In
entered
at Fort
enrolle
gram i
ministe
four ye
graduat
He w
1943, w
in Det
playing
Detroit.
Isle Bri
back th
saw a bl
crowd in



WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN YOUR SUNDAY
COMMING