

# Our children are the next shift

By Don Finch

Since retiring in February 1994, I have spent thousands of hours researching mainly the effects of long-term exposure to ionizing radiation. While doing this research, a definite pattern has emerged. This pattern shows when one speaks of cleaning up the areas from Bethlehem Steel to Lewiston.

Developers and politicians want to build along the river area, install paths/trails and otherwise entice the public to not only use these areas for recreation but to also live in some of these areas.

Look through the site maps, reports and directories that are available and see just how much radioactive, toxic, and heavy metal wastes are present in the area mentioned above. This information is available through your local libraries. If it's not on the shelves, it may be ordered in.

• There seems to be a "hands off" attitude by many organizations whether they be environmental, public health, etc. not only at the state level but also the national level. A few examples: Environmental Advocates, Citizens Environmental Coalition, New York

## Guest column

State Department of Health, New York State Attorney General, New York State Public Health Service, National Institute of Safety and Health, Occupational Safety and Health Administration are a few that seem to want no part in the problems at the west end of New York State.

Additionally, Great Lakes United (GLU) is fighting for clean water in the Great Lakes Basin. Even if the toxins and heavy metals were all removed and we would have supposedly "pristine" water, we hear no mention by GLU concerning the radioactive wastes present in the water.

• The Town of Tonawanda has 20% of the Department of Energy (DOE) Formerly Utilized Site Remedial Action Plan (FUSRAP) wastes nationwide. There

are 46 FUSRAP sites in 14 states and the town has one-fifth of the total of all these sites.

Granted, an "interim" partial cleanup is being attempted at the Linde/Praxair facility in the town. I say attempted because it appears the further the DOE subcontractors attempt to decontaminate the buildings, the more radiation shows up. At the rate the \$14 million dollars procured by Congressman LaFalce (to do an "interim" partial cleanup) is being spent to decontaminate these buildings, it's beginning to appear that the funds will be used up in this very labor-intensive operation. Remember, this is only a partial cleanup. And further, this cleanup is not to an unrestricted use scenario. What then? The DOE will require more funding to continue?

• Recently, there was a large demonstration in Washington, D.C., to rally for the rights of our children. This was all very impressive. We note that, at the office, it's easy to say leave it until tomorrow or, in a factory, leave it for the next shift. But, remember, our children are the "next shift."

*(Don Finch is a Kenmore resident.)*