

## Women in politics

Institute teaches Niagara area women about running for office.



plus ...

Improve your relationship with a pet by learning to be a pet whisperer.

Can you make a table? Local artists can help you find hidden talents.

## WOMEN/3D DANCE, DANCE VACATION

Partner up with a dance vacation



# LOCKPORT Union-Sun & Journal SUNDAY

## SOCIETY/11A BIG THINKERS

Odyssey of the Mind winners headed to state competition



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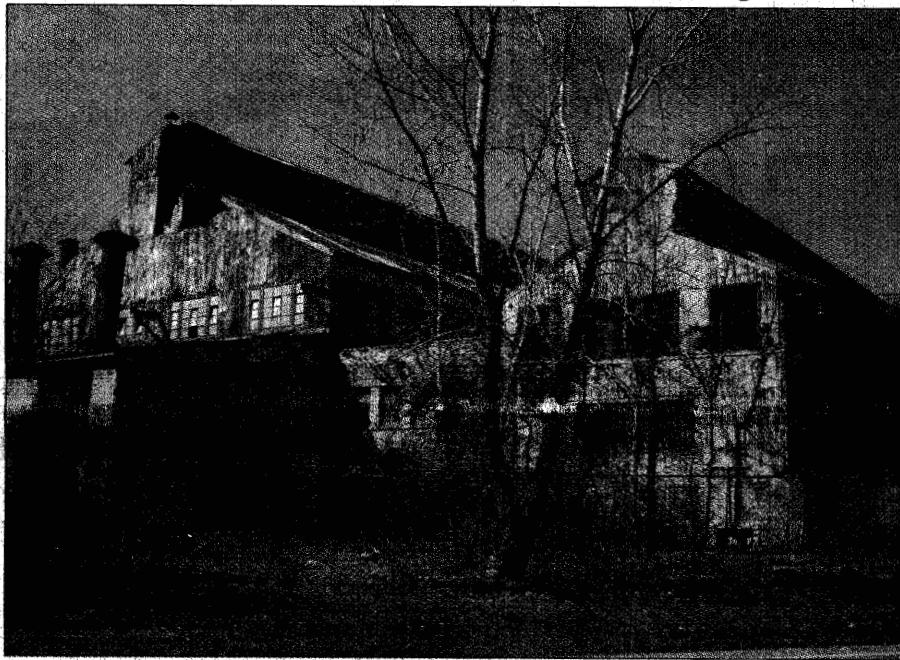


## SABRES FALL

The Toronto Maple Leafs defeated the Buffalo Sabres 4-1 Saturday evening.  
SPORTS, 1B

# STILL WAITING FOR A CLEAN BILL

State, U.S. starting hands-on work at polluted Guterl Steel — but there's a long way to go before developers come calling



DOUG BENZ/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**CLEANING IT UP:** Cleaning up the Guterl Specialty Steel lands along Ohio Street are a two-party process. The state Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible cleaning up for the chemical pollution, while the U.S. Department of Energy will handle the radioactive pollution.

BY JOYCE M. MILES  
milesj@gnewsjournal.com

**T**he very slow process of cleaning up the old Guterl Specialty Steel lands is progressing to a new stage.

Both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are studying the acreage at 601-625 Ohio St. to ferret out contamination and figure out how best to remove or contain it.

The Guterl site is, of course, home to the old Simonds Saw & Steel facto-

ry, where atomic energy components were produced for the U.S. government from 1948 through 1956. It's long been known that the vacant factory is polluted with radioactive dust and that other parts of Simonds' original 70-acre parcel likely have some contamination associated with uranium and thorium processing.

Less familiar, perhaps, is the chemical pollution caused by 72 years of steel manufacturing. Simonds and its successor, Guterl, performed the dirty work of producing specialty metals for industrial and defense

uses — and dumped their production wastes in a self-run landfill on the northwest quadrant of the property.

Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corp. operates in newer quarters between the abandoned factory and the landfill. When Guterl Steel went bankrupt in 1982, Allegheny-Ludlum bought out its assets and owns the newer property at 695 Ohio St. It declined to take possession of the old factory and landfill, however.

For cleanup purposes, these older parcels have no financially viable

SEE GUTERL ON PAGE 7A

# Passing out the power

**POWER AUTHORITY:** Are the state's allocation standards so out of date they're holding up local attempts to deliver cheap electricity?

*Editor's note: This is the first in a two-day series of articles on how the New York Power Authority allocates hydropower from the Niagara Power Project.*

BY AARON BESECKER  
besecker@gnnewsjournal.com

Heavy industry's fall from atop the Niagara region's economy doesn't easily escape consciousness of area residents who watched their hometown's vitality decline each plant shutdown.

But the sweeping exit of large manufacturers may have eluded officials from the New York Power Authority who are using obse-

SEE POWER ON PAGE

# Models in the making

**TOWN OF NIAGARA:** Close to 1,000 women show up for reality show auditions.

BY RICK FORGIONE  
forgioner@gnewsjournal.com

Tonawanda resident Jennifer Askey isn't have any special plans for Saturday afternoon until she received a call from a friend.

"She said, 'I got you a job,'" the 21-year-old recalled.

That job was a chance to become "America's Next Top Model." Askey participated in auditions at the Fashion Outlets at Niagara Falls in the hopes of being selected for the popular reality television show's ninth season.

And she wasn't alone. Close to 1,000 women — between ages of 18 and 25 and at least 5-feet-7 — filled the Town of Niagara mall Saturday

SEE MODEL ON PAGE

**1** UCLA defeated Kansas and Ohio State held off Memphis to make it to the Final Four.  
SPORTS, 5B

**2** New heart stents pass key tests, but long-term safety questions still linger.  
NEWS FLASH, 9A

**3** The U.N. Security Council unanimously voted Saturday to impose new sanctions against Iran for its refusal to stop enriching uranium.  
NEWS FLASH, 9A

## TOMORROW SICK PETS

Find out what local health officials say about the recent pet food recall.

## WHERE TO TURN

STATE LOTTERIES  
Please see page 3A

# GUTERL ...

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owner and are the government's problem to tackle.

Cleaning up Guterl is a two-party process. The DEC is taking on chemical pollution while the Army Corps of Engineers, acting for the U.S. Department of Energy, has legal responsibility for the radioactive pollution.

The Department of Energy shirked responsibility for Guterl's atomic legacy in the 1980s, citing a "hold harmless" clause in the government's production contract with Simonds Saw & Steel. Things changed after USA Today exposed the feds' old, secret deals with dozens of private manufacturers nationwide — and the harm that came to unprotected atomic production workers — in 2000. Guterl was admitted to the energy department/Army Corps of Engineers' Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program in 2005.

As parallel study efforts are carried out, DEC and the Army Corps are sharing data but they're not planning a single, overarching cleanup effort, according to Joan Morrissey, community outreach coordinator for the Army Corps' Buffalo office. The Corps can only investigate and clean up radioactive pollution as Congress frees up money for the project, and the same is true of the DEC's chemical correction work and the state.

Both agencies have to follow a process laid out in the 1980 federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, which raised the money to start Super-

## GUTERL'S 'DIRTY' HISTORY

- 1910 — Simonds Brothers Company of Massachusetts builds specialty steel mill on Ohio Street.
- 1922 — Plant name changed to Simonds Saw & Steel; major expansion launched.
- 1942 — Simonds takes first job with Manhattan Engineering District, fabricates iron-boron control rods for Hanford B nuclear reactor — which made plutonium for "fatman" bombs dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945.
- 1948 — Simonds begins rolling uranium for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Shipments went to Hanford, Wash., for plutonium production.
- 1953/54 — Limited decontamination performed at Simonds factory.
- 1956 — Simonds' atomic production ceases. In eight years, about 30 million pounds of uranium and 35,000 pounds of thorium were rolled in Lockport.
- 1958 — Atomic Energy Commission tests and decontaminates Simonds factory. Follow-up testing said plant was clean according to guidelines of the time; production areas showed "slightly above background" radiation levels.
- Late 1960s — Wallace-Murray Company buys Simonds corporation.
- 1974 — Congress OK's Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program to manage cleanup of properties used by Manhattan Engineering District and Atomic Energy Commission.
- 1976-77 — Oak Ridge National Laboratory finds radioactive contamination inside/outside Simonds factory, at levels well above modern-day limits.

- 1978 — Guterl Specialty Steel of Pittsburgh buys out Wallace-Murray Co.
- 1980 — U.S. Department of Energy decides Guterl-Lockport should be considered for government cleanup action.
- 1982-83 — Guterl company goes bankrupt, shuts down Lockport plant.
- 1984 — Energy Department says federal government can't start remediation, because Simonds' owner had agreed to "hold harmless" provision of atomic U.S. for land/labor damage done in course of forging work.
- 1994 — Drummed hazardous wastes, including radioactive wastes, discovered inside vacant factory.
- 1996 — EPA removes drums and notes "significant quantity" of radioactive dust in factory.
- 1997 — NYSDEC orders emergency soil and groundwater testing.
- 1999 — Oak Ridge National Laboratory study reports radiation "negligible" in factory.
- 2000 — USA Today reports extent of federal contracting with private businesses to build U.S. nuclear arsenal in 1940s and 50s. Simonds/Guterl highlighted as example of federal neglect in atomic safety standards and cleanup.
- 2001 — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dispatched to begin early radiation study.
- 2005 — Guterl admitted to federal atomic cleanup program.
- 2006 — NYSDEC starts drawing samples for chemical remediation.
- 2007 — Army Corps of Engineers launching full-scale radiation study.

fund. Before any bulldozers dig into earth or abandoned buildings are dismantled, the agencies go through a rigorous series of pre-steps:

- Historical records review ("preliminary assessment").
- Field studies of earth, water and/or air to uncover the locations and extent of pollution ("remedial investigation").
- Proposal of clean-up alternatives based on the physical evidence ("feasibility studies").
- Public review of proposals.
- Final determination about the method.

Then cleanup/containment. The DEC is doing field studies to measure chemical pollution now, while the Army Corps of Engineers is still drafting its formal written plan to hunt down radioactive contamination.

Each step in the federal process can take months or years, according to spokesmen from each agency. That suggests actual physical cleanup of Guterl is still a long way off.

It's already been a long wait for the City of Lockport, which surely would love to see a deal

struck for a nice, big plot on the city's west edge, conveniently near Routes 93 and 31. Until it's certified contaminant-free, there's no point even imagining, according to William Evert, director of Community Development.

"Nobody's going to even look at it until it's cleaned up," he said.

### The nuclear issues

The Army Corps of Engineers plans to begin Guterl field studies this summer, project manager Ray Pilon said. The agency last week got permission from the City of Lockport to take soil samples from Outwater Park, so that it can compare "average" local soil to the contents dug from miscellaneous points around the Guterl site.

The comparison should provide "some idea of what needs to be cleaned up," he said.

Several studies have been done at Guterl over the years but they're of relatively little use to the Corps, according to Pilon. A 1976 survey by Oak Ridge National Laboratory identified radioactive contamination, primarily Uranium-238, inside and immediately outside the parts of the vacant factory where atomic production was done. Another Oak Ridge study in 1999 suggested radiation levels were negligible, that is, the same as occur in untainted soil. The 1999 study said the facto-

ry interior was covered in dust and debris; the majority of the equipment used to roll uranium and thorium in the 1940s and 1950s was still present; and the factory's nine buildings were deteriorating but fenced and isolated.

No studies have ever pinpointed all the places on the original Simonds tract where radiation might be found, however, or to what extent. Pilon said the Corps' field study will include samples from the factory plus a variety of other places where uranium, thorium and their leftovers are thought to have been handled: the landfill, the rail corridor used to ship the elements in and steel products out; Allegheny Ludlum property (although the buildings were constructed after Simonds ceased atomic production); an Erie Canal pump house on Ohio Street; and adjacent land on Richfield Street where Lombardi Overhead Door does business. Part of the property used to house a Simonds castings plant, according to owner John Lombardi III.

Once it begins, the field study will likely take about a year, Pilon said. Real estate agents are lining up the various property owners' consent to take samples now.

The health risks of radiation exposure are difficult to state, according to Paul Dickey, supervising public health engineer with the Niagara County Health Department. Humans are exposed to low levels from normal activities including flying and having X-rays, and so long as the exposures are brief they are not considered dangerous. Standard acceptable limits consider total exposure over a year's period.

The question at the Guterl site is whether there are areas where radioactive residue is sufficient to create unsafe levels of exposure over time. "There could be elevated areas, and brief exposures wouldn't hurt you, but a person working 40 to 50 hours a week there could accumulate an exposure level that's above the acceptable maximum dose," Dickey said. "The (value of remediating the site) is getting it cleaned up to avoid restrictions on the amount of time that can be spent there."

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### The chemical issues

The DEC became involved with the Guterl site in 1988, after Guterl went out of business. A bankruptcy court found there were not enough private assets to cover the cost of cleanup and kicked the case over to the state

Superfund. In 1997, DEC took field samples around the Guterl property to get a preliminary idea of the types and locations of arduous wastes throughout. The data showed soil and groundwater is contaminated with volatile organic (carbon-based) compounds, metals, phenols, "all pretty typical contaminants at these kind (industrial) sites," Merle Boice-Green, DEC spokesman said.

More extensive sampling began in the fall of 2006. Results are in from those samples; another round has been ordered for this summer, Boice-Green said. The project manager is not available to discuss specific findings.

"A lot of times the initial samples will turn up the need for more," Boice-Green said.

Whatever chemical pollution exists at Guterl, it poses an immediate risk to people from the factory and the land around it, said Matt Forcucci, a public health specialist with the New York State Department of Health.

Groundwater is known to be polluted to some extent and drawn to one of two places: a stone quarry or the Erie Canal. In either case, Forcucci said, testing suggested contamination is low-level and so dilute by water volume that it's barely measurable.

The factory's dilapidated buildings probably poses more risk to people than soil, dust or airborne chemical pollutants, he added. Drums of hazardous wastes left behind at Guterl were taken out of the site in 1996.

"The immediate hazard is gone except for the buildings themselves — and the radiation," Forcucci said. "Bottom line, if people stay off the property and don't trespass, there's no exposure, and no likely harm from nearby (neighborhoods)."

Guterl's chemical cleanup likely won't ever be 100 percent, according to Forcucci. State fund aims, theoretically, to return lands to pre-pollution release conditions but contaminants have seeped into rock by now and can't be removed.

"With the old steel mill almost never clean the land to virgin conditions, you manage the waste that's there to prevent further environmental impact," he said. "It's not the worst place I've ever seen."

Contact reporter Joyce Miles at 439-9222, ext. 6245.

# OBITUARIES

## CARRIE E. MOXLEY

Carrie E. Moxley, died March 22, 2007, after a brief illness. Born October 19, 1916 in Salisbury, MD, where she grew up and attended local schools prior to becoming a domestic worker.

She moved to Niagara Falls in 1953. In 1955 she met and married Edgar E. Moxley. Together they shared an enjoyable peaceful life in the city that included occasional travel, social events and church attendance.

Carrie's sincere appreciation for life was shown in her through her adoration for beautiful flowers. Her personal love included collecting and caring for beautiful potted plants and flowers she placed within her home and shared with others. Throughout her life she consistently demonstrated her love and concern for family and friends, by visiting, sending greeting cards and keeping in touch by phone.

Up until her illness, she remained active attending church services at St. Johns AME, where she was a long time member. She actively participated in the Chat and Chew program held at the St. John AME location for several years.

She is survived by a son, Eugene R. Johnson, Sr. of Augusta, Georgia; a grandson, Eugene R. Johnson, Jr. and wife, Adair; and great grandchildren, Najja, Jaja, Taji and Zuri; a granddaughter, Sheila E. Ross; and great grandchildren, Marcus and Kimberly; a grandson, James P. Johnson and wife, Stephanie; and great grandchildren, Patrick and Victoria; and two step-grandsons, Norris C. Sullivan and Felton P. Sullivan, all of Atlanta; a great granddaughter, Keyona S. Johnson; and two great great grandchildren, Roderick and Kamariah Miller of Niagara Falls; a very dear friend and caretaker, Ms. Bertha Webb.

A viewing will be held on Tuesday, March 27th from 11 AM to 12 PM, followed by the funeral service at 12:00 PM at Williamson Funeral Home, 635 Main St. Burial in Acacia Park Cemetery.

## MEMORIAMS

### BURTCHE Bettyjane

In loving memory of our mother and grandmother after one year, March 25, 2006.

In my heart your memory lingers, Always tender, fond and true; There's not a day, dear mother, I do not think of you.

What we would give her hand to clasp, Her patient face to see, To hear her voice, see her smile, As in the days that used to be. But someday we'll meet again, Beyond the toil and strife, And clasp each other's hand again In heaven, that happy life.

Love, Children and Grandchildren.

## CICCONE Priscilla



Happy Birthday "Pris"

The moment that you died my heart was torn in two, one side filled with heartache, the other died with you. I often lie awake at night, when the world is fast asleep, and take a walk down memory lane with tears upon my cheeks.

Remembering you is easy, I do it every day, but missing you is heartache that never goes away. I hold you tightly within my heart and there you will always remain.

## MEMORIAMS

### BASS Will Jr.



## MEMORIAMS



# MODEL ...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

afternoon to strut their stuff for the cameras and audience for a chance of a lifetime. Created by supermodel Tyra Banks, "America's Next Top Model," airs on the CW23 and is considered one of the channel's most watched shows.

About a dozen participants nationwide are selected for the show and are tested as they strive to master the runway and fashion photo shoots, perfect publicity skills and learn the business aspects of becoming a supermodel, all under 24-hour-a-day surveillance of the show's cameras.

A panel of judges evaluate their progress to narrow the field each week until a "top



RICK FORGIONE/STAFF

**FUTURE MODEL?** Niagara Falls resident Amanda Arbatosky, 21, talks about why she

Amanda Arbatosky, a 21-year-old from Niagara Falls, is becoming a model has been her dream. Luckily, she's 5-foot-10, she's taller than the average woman, she added.

"I really think I have what it takes, I think I can pull it off," she said after her audition. Arbatosky was dressed in a black shirt with straps, jeans and knee-high leather boots.

"I just wore something simple," she said. "I didn't try to over do it and make it like I was trying too hard."

The line of participants stretched several hundred through the mall's corner Market Director Julie said the early arrivals were at 8 a.m. for the noon auditions.

"This is beyond our expectations," Clark said, adding that she and other participants