

dump

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one after another testifying against the dump proposal and calling for the permit revocation. A dozen local fire companies had abetted the effort by announcing the meeting through their communities on public address systems.

MAD and OUCH set the stage for the meeting with a 24-hour prayer vigil, culminating with a speaker from the Love Canal area. The DER fact-finding session began shortly after the Love Canal guest had told her story.

Stacy Marsh drove the speaker to the airport and returned toward Spring Grove for the evening meeting. Approaching the small rural town, she found herself caught in a jam of traffic headed toward the school.

"I just sat there in the car and cried when I saw all those people," she smiles. "This was what we know we had to do - get out the people - and they had come."

Since that public hearing, no DER decision on Stabatrol's right to the waste disposal permit has yet been announced. MAD and OUCH have continued their efforts to oppose the plans, and recently obtained lists of the tentative customers and quantities of waste expected in the vaulting sites.

While the companies planning to vault the wastes insist that local industry needs the disposal system in order to keep the York manufacturing economy strong, the list of customers includes large quantities of waste scheduled to be hauled in from distant points in New York and New Jersey.

The Lecrones, the Marshs and the Brennemens admit that the battle is far from over.

And one of the foremost concerns for these farm mothers, they say, is not for themselves, but for their children. For if the stress has been difficult for the adults, who understand politics and bureaucrats, it's been even worse for the children. For many of them, normal family life has been turned upside down by the time consumed in the anti-dump activities.

"The kids play 'the dump' complete with someone sneaking into the dump while the others spy on them, sort of a version of 'cowboys and Indians,'" Stacy Marsh says. "Our youngest, who's three, even pleaded with me to get off the phone for just a while."

The Lecrone family has been similarly affected, Donna agrees. She relates that her youngsters go running to the window every time they hear a truck changing gears. And, they don't come bounding in from school, eager to share the day's news, like they once did.

"It's gotten to the point where we can't visualize what it was like before 'the dump,'" frowns Donna. "The kids have even wondered why we can't just sell out and move. I really think they're questioning what we've always taught them about respecting authority, because it seems like the authorities are harassing us now. What are they supposed to believe in?"

Judy Brenneman believes that her youngsters understand even better than she does what the long-range implications of the toxic chemical problem means for the future, through their studies at school.

"They just don't like it. Our son would like to someday take over the farm; he already does most of the dairy herd care. What will he have left if someone else's wastes run the water or the land," she ponders, motherly concern showing in her eyes and raising a touch of anger in her voice.

It's doubtful that any of the farm families of these peaceful valleys will ever look at things quite the same as they did in "pre-dump" days. Their brush with bureaucratic and regulatory red tape has left them highly sensitive to controversial political issues.

"I'll never be lax in participating in my local government," Stacy Marsh insists. "I've met an awful lot of people through this, and I feel like I'm getting to know state government real well."

But while this political awareness is now part of life for women like Judy Brenneman, Stacy Marsh and Donna Lecrone, at the same time, it's robbed them of a casualness and positive feeling about the future security of their right to farm. Sociologists label this mushrooming problem of outside pressures on the farm community as "farm stress".

Stacy Marsh recalled that this emotional wearing surfaced briefly during the day when MAD picketed City Hall. She and Donna, watching women casually strolling the streets of York, looked at each other and asked: "Do you think we'll ever be able to just simply go shopping again?"

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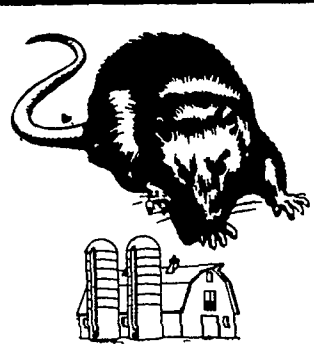
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