

Some say gas leaked years ago

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

George Maculloch, owner of the Lehman service station that is the suspected source of chemicals contaminating 17 Lehman wells, is being blamed for a problem he may not have caused, his neighbors say.

Since the fall of 1991, 17 Lehman Center families have coped with wells contaminated by MTBE, an octane-boosting gasoline additive.

Neighbors say that Maculloch, owner of the Lehman Sunoco station, has been blamed for something that isn't his fault.

Since the contamination was discovered in August, 1991, Maculloch has supplied bottled water and special water filters to the affected families and the Lake-Lehman Middle Level Building at his own expense.

Bill Hagenbaugh, who lives on Firehouse Road, said that when the gasoline contamination was first discovered, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) blamed him.

He once owned the gas station that is now Gunn's garage. When a neighbor complained to DER that her water smelled like gasoline, they checked Gunn's because it was once a gas station.

Hagenbaugh said that he was present when DER checked the underground tanks at Gunn's.

"One was bone-dry and the other contained a small amount of something that smelled like varnish," he said. "The contamination couldn't have possibly come from there because that station only sold leaded gas. DER

says that the contaminants are from unleaded gas."

Hagenbaugh said that DER made him drill a new well for the neighbor who had originally complained about her water.

"I think that DER should reimburse me," he said. "It wasn't my fault."

"It was unfortunate for Maculloch," said Gil Tough, a Mill Street resident whose 450-foot deep well was contaminated.

"I think that a prior owner should have known about it and replaced the leaking tanks before he sold it to Maculloch."

Tough spent \$3,000 to install his own filtration system, which makes the water usable for cleaning and bathing.

"It isn't completely effective," he said. "We still have to use bottled water for cooking. Maculloch was paying for it, but now the government has taken over."

According to results of tests done several times a year, the contamination levels are dropping in his well, Tough said.

His next-door neighbor, Mrs. Joe Ellsworth, said that her 364-foot deep well had been contaminated, but has been all right for "quite some time."

"It was bad at the beginning, but now it's safe to use," she said.

The contamination level of the well supplying the Lake-Lehman Middle Level Building has also dropped below the safe level, but the school is still using special water filters, according to principal Robert Roberts.

Originally the school had used bottled water, but that became too complicated, according to district business manager Ray

Bowersox.

"The Department of Environmental Resources (DER) has told us that the water is safe, but they won't put it in writing," Roberts said. "Until they do, we're keeping our filters on all water fountains."

The school's cafeteria uses filtered water for all food preparation, Roberts said. Signs in all lavatories remind people not to drink water from the taps.

Hagenbaugh's 300-foot deep well is also contaminated. His family relies on bottled water supplied first by Maculloch and now by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Hagenbaugh also blames the contamination on a prior owner of Lehman Sunoco.

"Years ago my brother Ed and I liked to go to the swampy area behind the gas station to catch bugs for fish bait," he said. "One day we noticed that the bugs were dying. We saw all kinds of oil cans and an oily slick on the water. Later it was covered over with dirt and clean fill."

He said the previous owner had had to replace the underground gas tanks because they leaked. The gas station sold unleaded gas at that time, he recalled.

"It isn't fair," he said. "They're hanging Maculloch because he's the present owner. I can't see an innocent person persecuted. Don't hang a person until he's been proven guilty."

Despite several attempts to contact him, Maculloch was unavailable for comment.



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

GOOD-WILL AMBASSADORS - Receiving teddy bears for the "Teddy Bear Patrol" are Back Mountain Policemen's Association members Jackson Township assistant chief Jerry Leedock, Dallas Township patrolman Brian Feeney, VNA representative Mary Ellen Mosca, Dallas Borough patrolman Russ Devens, Kingston Township patrolman Charles Rauschkolb and association president Sergeant Dan Hunsinger.

Teddy bears bring comfort

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Back Mountain police officers have some new partners riding with them in their cruisers.

They provide their own uniforms and insurance, follow orders, don't carry weapons or take breaks and work for free.

The Teddy Bear Patrol has come to the Back Mountain.

Started elsewhere in the northeast in late 1992, the Teddy Bear Patrol provides police officers with plush stuffed bears to give to children who are victims of accidents, fires, child abuse or domestic disputes, and to adult assault or domestic violence victims, at the officers' discretion.

"For some reason it works," said Kingston Township police chief James Balavage. "The bears bring comfort and security to victims who are often extremely upset, helping them to open up

"The (teddy) bears bring comfort and security to victims who are often extremely upset."

James Balavage
Kingston Twp. police chief

and talk with police officers about what has happened to them. These people are victims looking for comfort."

The bears are funded by Pennsylvania Millers Insurance, which provided the initial \$10,000 grant, and other organizations, including WBRE-TV and the Visiting Nurses' Association/League for Home Health Services, whose members package and distribute them.

Balavage said that Back Mountain Police Association president

Dan Hunsinger, a sergeant in the Kingston police department, told him that he had given teddy bears to two victims last week.

"One was a female rape victim and the other an abused child," Balavage said. "Sergeant Hunsinger was surprised how quickly their hysteria was calmed down as they held the bears. It's like holding a security blanket."

Of the 20 West Side and Back Mountain police forces in the Back Mountain Police Association, half received their first issue of teddy bears March 10.

Back Mountain police departments are Dallas and Harveys Lake boroughs and Dallas, Jackson, Kingston and Lake townships, Balavage said.

Community organizations and residents interested in supporting the ongoing program may contact JoAnn Hall at the Visiting Nurses' Association at 283-0681.

EPA takes over Lehman well cleanup

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Federal Superfund money has been designated for a \$1.9 million cleanup project in Lehman Center, where gasoline additives have contaminated 17 wells.

According to on-scene coordinator Rich Fetzer of the Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA is surveying the extent of the contamination and has provided bottled water and home well filtration systems for the affected homes and the Lake-Lehman Middle Level Building.

Until the EPA stepped in, George Maculloch, owner of the Lehman Sunoco station, had paid for the bottled water and filtration systems for the affected homes, and for two new wells drilled at Bryant's Trailer Park.

"He has been very conscientious," Fetzer said. "Mr. Maculloch has consistently tried to do the right thing. Many people whom we deal with aren't this environmentally conscientious."

Benzene, a cancer-causing gasoline component, and MTBE, an octane-boosting gasoline additive, had been found in wells on Market Street, Outlet Road and Bryant's Trailer Park in August and September, 1991.

Fetzer and the supervisors have discussed three possible ways to replace the contaminated wells:

- Have the Army Corps of Engineers install a municipal water system for the affected families and the school.

- Provide individual treatment systems for each affected well.

- Tie into an existing water system within five miles of Lehman Center, possibly Huntsville or Ceasertown reservoirs or the water line recently installed at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas.

Fetzer plans to report the findings of his study of the contaminated area to the Lehman Township supervisors at their May meeting.

His final choice of the best option will be made after discussions with the supervisors, who have already gone on record that Lehman Township can't afford the first option, a municipal water system which the township would have to operate and maintain at its own expense.

An EPA crew is presently surveying the extent of the contamination and plans to drill several monitoring wells as part of the study, Fetzer said.

Although Superfund money is being used for the cleanup, Lehman Center has not been officially designated as a Superfund site, according to Mark Carmon of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER).

"Superfund money is used for cleaning up chemical spills," he said. "Since most of the contamination is from MTBE and not gasoline components, we're treating this as a chemical spill. Lehman is not on Superfund's national priorities list."

If more wells become contaminated after the EPA finishes its work, the agency will return, Fetzer said.

Steven's Town & Country Cleaners
Country Club Shopping Ctr. • 675-0468

Get Set For Wet!

Careful cleaning and finishing will restore the freshness and good looks of your rainwear. We can also restore your coat's water repellency.

Let us take care of you in fair weather or foul!

Steven's Town & Country Cleaners

Check Out Our New Store Hours
Mon. - Fri. 7 A.M. - 7 P.M. • Sat. 8 A.M. - 6 P.M.
The Professional Edge, The Personal Touch

A member of the International Fabricare Institute, the association of professional drycleaners and laundriers.

at the **SHIP'S PUB**
701 N. Washington Ave.
346-6883

COOPER'S Seafood

CARIBBEAN BEACH PARTIES

Wednesday 3/30
LENNY & THE SOUL SENDERS
Philly's Hottest Reggae Band (9-1 No Cover)

Thursday 3/31
CLARENCE SPADY & THE ALL STARS
(9-1 No Cover)

Limbo Contest in our Gigantic Sand Box
Great Caribbean Food & Drink

DARLINGS GREENHOUSES

Large Selection of **Easter Flowers** from \$1.99 up

Easter Lilies • Hyacinths • Tulips • Daffodils
Colored Lilies • Chrysanthemums • Hydranges

1/2 mile off 309 on Hildebrandt Road - 200 yds. north from Dallas Elementary School

MORE FOR '94!
CUSTOM BUILT ON YOUR LOT!

Come and See the ALL New & Remodeled **CHELSEA I & CAMBRIDGE IV**

Standard Features Now Include:
Anderson Skylight • GE Dishwasher • Built-in GE Vented Microwave • GE Self Cleaning Free Standing Electric Range • Upgraded Tiles for Hall & Master Baths (including Tile Ceilings in Tub Areas) • Vanities for 1/2 Baths • Wood Edging for Kitchen Counter Tops • Base Lazy Susan for Kitchens • Tri-View Mirror for Master Baths • and Much More!

Lock In Current Prices & Mortgage Rates Now for Sp '94 Construction

The Chelsea I - \$82,900

Model On Display
70' X 32' • All Brick • 2 Car Garage • Covered Rear Porch • 1505 Sq. Ft. Living Area

The Cambridge IV - \$74,400

Model On Display
56' X 28' Bi-Level • Oversized 2 Car Garage • 2000 Sq. Ft. Living Area

Call for a FREE Brochure & Price Sheet - 825-4077

HANOVER HOMES
BETTER HOMES FOR BETTER LIVING

MODEL HOMES ON DISPLAY
MODEL HOME HOURS:
Mon. - Thurs.; 12 - 8 p.m.;
Sat. & Sun.; 12 - 5 pm;
Closed Friday

DIRECTIONS TO THE MODEL HOME CENTER: Rt. 315 Wilkes-Barre, PA, Approx. 2 Mi. North of the Wyoming Valley Mall, just past entrance to Pocono Downs Racetrack

ALL NEW '94 AQUATIC SPAS

Highest Quality — Lowest Price
Mahogany Cabinetry

• Maximum Therapy Jets 9-45 Jets per Spa

Shop all the big guys with the even bigger overhead. Then come see the little guy with little overhead for the lowest prices around.

ALL SEASONS POOL & SPAS
242 Memorial Hwy., Shavertown (Across From The Ranch Wagon)
675-0388
Mon.- Fri. 10-6 • Sat. 10-5 • Sun. 12-4

West Side Custom Upholstery

863 Shoemaker Ave.
West Wyoming, PA 693-1808

Expert Craftsmanship - Specializing in Antique Furniture Upholstering, Modern Furniture, Custom Designing, Cutting & Sewing. See our Selection of Fabrics. FREE Estimates! Pick-up and Delivery!

- SPRING SPECIAL -
Painting that Special Room?

Custom cover your special pieces & have that New Look for Spring & the Easter Holiday!!

CHECK OUT OUR EVERY DAY LOW PRICES

10% OFF w/this Coupon
(Offer Expires 3/31/94)