Gas spill

(continued from page 1)

ments when ingested. Shannon Brewer, Sun Oil Company Director of Media Relations, said fluctuations are to be expected. "I think the levels we've been seeing are mixed," she said. "Some have come back higher but others have been lower. The changes can be attributed to the

spill's movement. The company has conducted tests at more than 30 households in an effort to determine the direction of movement. "Were doing this sampling for two reasons, said Brewer. "The first is obviously to assist the homeowners with filtration needs and the second is to identify the range of the

It will be several days before officials can say how large an area has been contaminated. "Not all of the data has been collected at this point," said Brewer. "We can say with some certainty that it is moving down grade, but just how many homes have been affected or will be affected is not clear yet. We intend to hold another public meeting a week from this Thursday to discuss these issues with residents.

The state Department for Environmental Protection (DEP), which is overseeing the clean-up, has collected its own samples from an even larger number of households. "Our sampling started last Friday and I would estimate we took somewhere between 50 and 60 samples," said Mark Carmon, DEP spokesman. "What we're trying to do is go from Chase Corners down Chase Road to the intersection with Hillside Road. I would say we were able to take samples from most of the homes in that area but some people didn't want us to take a sample and still others weren't home at the time our hydrogeologists were in the neighborhood.'

"I'm not only talking about our property values I'm also thinking about our health."

> John Hritz Jackson Twp. homeowner affected by spill

DEP officials expect results to be available later this week. "Right now we have some good initial data pointing to the area between Chase Corners and the little bridge which passes over the creek (Brown's Creek) as the most affected area," said Carmon.

Long range cleanup plans will be discussed once the test results are available. "Our goal is to determine the extent of the contamination and hopefully that will give us some good information to pass along to Sun so they can design and install a permanent filtration system," said Carmon.

Personal water purifiers have been installed in a number of homes where gasoline has been found. "We put carbon filters in

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Shannon Brewer Spokesperson, Sun Oil Co.

where residents have asked us to do so," said Brewer. "The monitoring that is being done at homes with the carbon filters indicates they have been successful in capturing the MTBE and BTX compounds typically found in gasoline. The carbon filters are definitely working.

John Hritz said his family is taking precautions despite reassurances that the water is safe. "It (water contamination) goes beyond being an inconvenience," said Hritz. "It's frightening. Sun has installed a carbon filter which they tell me measures the level of MTBE in our water before its treated and again afterward to prove the chemicals are being removed. That really doesn't make me feel any more comfortable because the filter is only mechanical it can fail at any time.

Others are more confident the carbon filters offer protection from harmful pollutants. "I met with the people from Sun this morning and they just finished putting filtration systems in two homes in Evergreen Estates," said Tony Garbush, who owns Lehman Homes, the company which developed Evergreen Estates and Meadowcrest Manor. "In both of those instances slight contamination was found and the filters were installed as a precautionary measure. Samples taken from other homes in the area and the community well which serves Meadowcrest have come back clean.

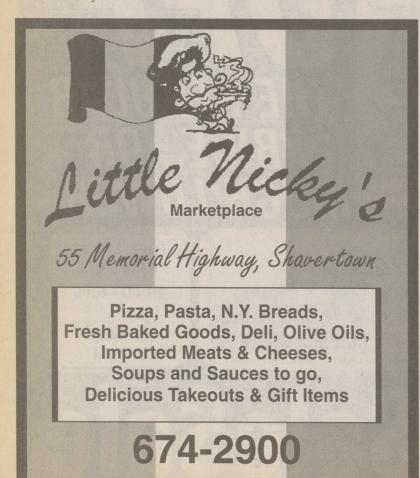
Garbush, who said he is satisfied with the manner in which environmental concerns have been addressed, is taking a waitand-see attitude about any possible economic impacts. "Overall I'd say Sun is doing a good job but I think it's premature to determine whether or not property values will be affected," he said. "It depends on the cleanup but I don't really think there will be any problems as far as that is concerned.'

Hritz said selling his dream home is something he may have to consider but right now he is more concerned with getting definitive answers. "No one wants to give us any guarantees about the future," he said. "I'm not only talking about our property values I'm also thinking about our health. In the short-term it may not be too bad, but if you're planning to live the rest of your life here you have to be concerned about possible health effects."

Senior volunteers offer help with taxes

The Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Bureau for the Aging is pleased to announce volunteers from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will be available to give assistance with federal and state income tax, PACE, and PA Rent/Property Tax Rebates. Volunteers will be at the Dallas Senior Center (675-2179) Tue. March 7. Taxpayers will be taken by appointment only. There is no charge for this service.

Please bring with you: all 1099's, social security 1099, W-2's, Tax or Rent Receipts, copy of last year's taxes and rebate, and any other income you received in 1999. Forms cannot be completed without all the necessary information.



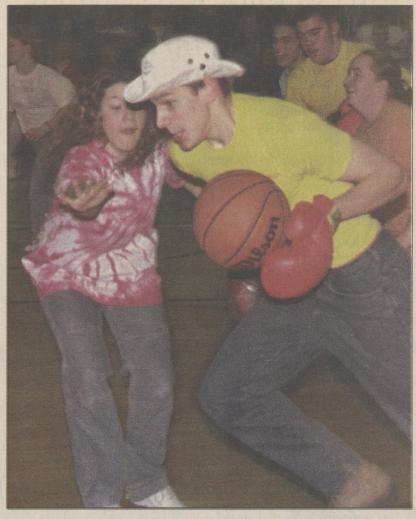
Playing their way to D.C.

The annual (40+ years, according to Rich Gorgone, even organizer) donkey basketball game filled the Lake-Lehman High School gym to overflowing last week. Gorgone said the event raises \$3,000 to \$4,000 that is used to finance the senior class trip to Washington. A preliminary contest had the senior boys and girls playing, with the boys wearing boxing gloves. Gorgone said the student/staff donkey basketball game was decided when teacher and coach Ed Narkiewicz hit a shot in overtime. The staff has never lost, Gorgone said. The end was meaningful, since "Nark" has said he will retire after this year, and this time he really means it!

In photos, clockwise from right: Jackie Sikora tried to get a hand on the ball as Tom Brislin lit out for the basket; Laura Maslowski passed around Matt Loftus; Matthew McMahon tried to slow down his spirited mount, which dragged him and others around the gym several times.

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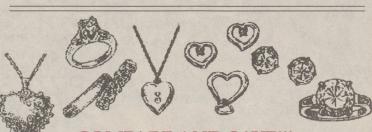
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