

Cleanup

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to get out, and will require long-term treatment.

"We feel comfortable that we've been able to control the conditions," Brogna said. "We have no indication of new areas of migration."

There were concerns immediately after the spill occurred that gasoline might get into Brown's Creek, and from there feed into Huntsville Creek. So far, that hasn't happened. "It's still within the original boundaries," Brogna said.

Brogna credited quick response to the spill and cooperation between Sun and DEP with preventing further contamination. The relationship is still productive, he said. "They haven't done anything we haven't agreed to, and everything we've asked them to do, they've done," he said. While Sun can propose different methods of treatment, they must be reviewed by DEP scientists who make the final decision. Sun must pay all costs.

Things aren't going as smoothly between Sun and Jackson Township. John J. Wilkes Jr., chairman of the township supervisors, said he is frustrated by a lack of communication regarding an environmental consultant hired by the township. Wilkes says he has written authorization from Sun to engage a consultant, which Sun would pay for. But the township's bills for service have been ignored so far, he says.

"DEP has kept the township

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Jody Brogna
Environmental Cleanup
Program Manager
Dept. of Environmental Protection

abreast of every development," Wilkes says, but Sun hasn't responded to requests for payment made since March or April. He called the township's solicitor Monday to request that he contact State Sen. Charles Lemmond and State Rep. George Hasay, to ask if they could assist the township's cause.

Shannon Breuer, a spokesperson for Sun, said Monday afternoon that the company was aware of the township's concerns. "We definitely do not like being viewed as unresponsive," she said, adding that the company was working on a written reply. "It has taken more time than we had hoped," she said.

Breuer said this was the first time she could recall a local municipality engaging its own consultant. "We like to work directly with state agencies," she said. "They will hold us to a pretty high standard."

Compensation

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Even when Sun buys the property, a complete cleanup must be made. "We're requiring the cleanup no matter who owns the property," said Jody Brogna, DEP Environmental Cleanup Program Manager.

Home owners who choose to stay in their properties receive payments graduated over the time they remain, up to a total of \$95,000 after five years.

"We're trying to make people whole regarding their real estate,"

Breuer said. She could not say how many people had accepted either offer, but said it was "just a small number; just a few."

Sun also must pay all the costs of the cleanup, and supplies water filters or bottled water to any affected household at no charge. If the ground water cannot be cleaned satisfactorily, the company may have to pay the cost of providing a public water supply to the affected area.

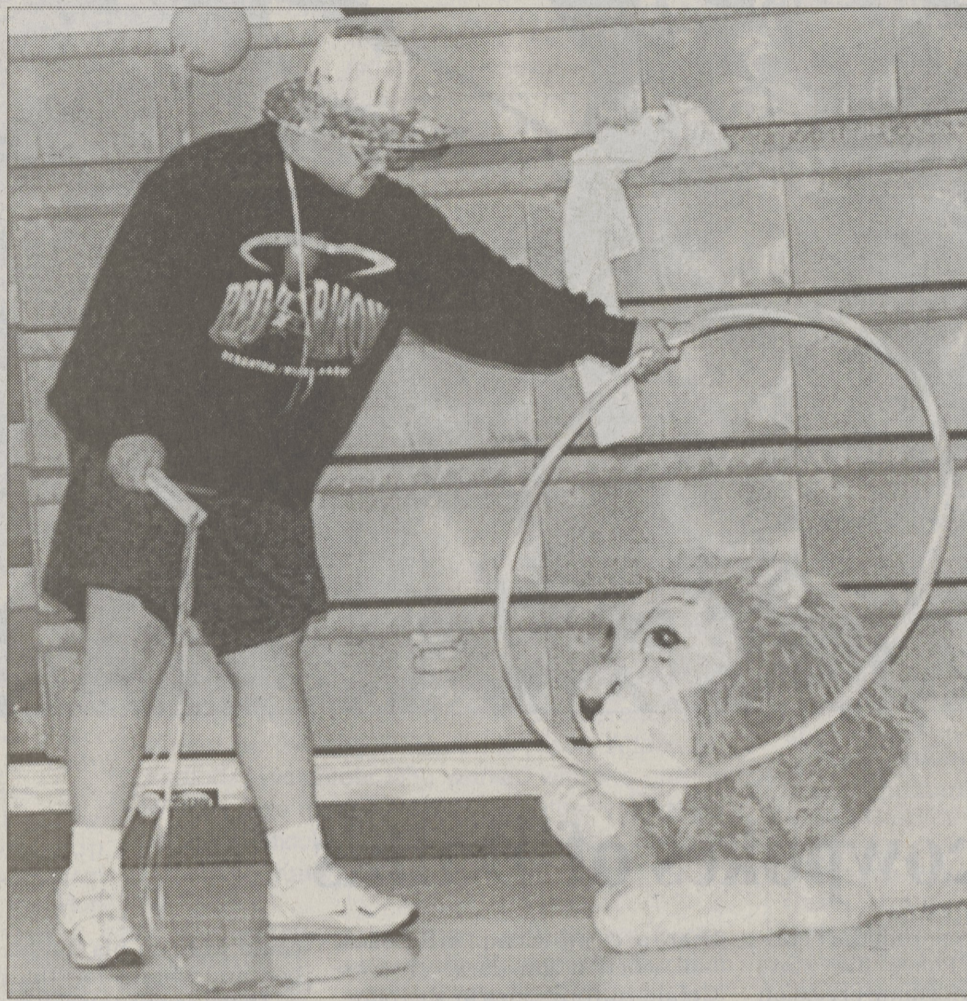
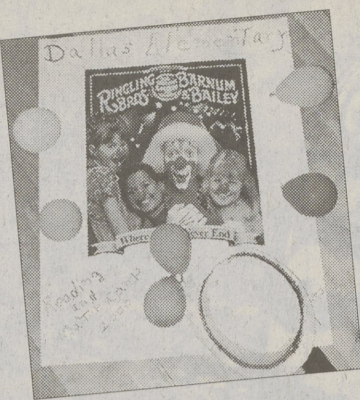
More than ever A Real Hometown Paper
The Dallas Post

Not just clowning around

Dallas students in grades K-6 participated in "Circus Week," the final event of a four-week summer review program for reading and math, directed by Sharon Hartshorne. Performing, clockwise from below: Bobby Redinski trained a lion to be as docile as a stuffed animal; Melanie Vankevich sang

"Lucky" as she gave her best Britney Spears imitation; Brent Carder displayed his juggling prowess.

POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Defenders

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son townships.

Conyngham said the land has a public aspect that cannot be ignored. "The land has always had a privileged status," he said. "It has weighed very lightly on the tax rolls. People took the water company's land as an asset they could depend on. Sale of the land in that way seemed to be an insult. There were interested conservation buyers willing to talk to the utility company."

DOW has joined forces with Penn Futures, a public interest advocacy firm. "They bring expertise in organizational matters and media contacts. They also have a strong legal team," said Smith.

"The land has always had a privileged status."

Will Conyngham
Lehman Twp.

DOW intends to launch a media campaign to inform the public about the issues surrounding the sale of the land.

DOW believes that a land use document created by PG Energy could still be enforced. A committee was formed in 1997 to study the land and make a determination of the best use of the land.

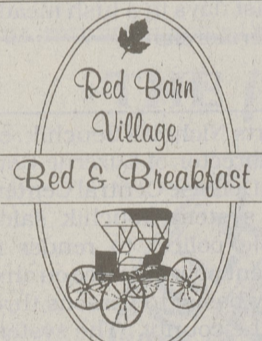
The document stated that the 29,000 acres of watershed land should be protected. "They created this beautiful document then ignored it," said Smith.

PG Energy has claimed that the document applied to the land only while it owned it. But Conyngham disagrees. "The implication was the committee should be used for any ongoing transactions," he said. Some members of that committee are still interested in acting in that role.

Even as DOW begins to examine the legal and environmental issues surrounding the sale of the lands, their mission is clear. "We

want to find out what is the most important land and do everything we can to preserve it," said Smith.

Defend Our Watershed meets Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. in the commissioner's meeting room at the Luzerne County Courthouse. For information about the group, visit their web site: www.defendourwatershed.com or contact them by e-mail at defendourwatershed@hotmail.com.



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