

Everyone's Backyard

CITIZEN'S CLEARINGHOUSE FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE, INC.

Vol. 5 No. 3 — Fall, 1987

Common Sense Wins

Dear Lois:

Last June, three colleagues and I took part in your excellent first effort to offer a national conference for citizens against hazardous wastes. At that time our community was fighting against a hazardous chemical waste incinerator in our midst. The overall content of CCHW's two-day program in Arlington confirmed our belief that we were marshalling our strategy in a positive manner.

We subsequently won our fight against the incinerator. I would like to give you a sketch of the events that led to our victory.

Lower Price Hill, a Cincinnati neighborhood, was once a thriving area of German and Irish settlers. It is now largely migrants from Appalachia; few stores are left in the business district; the housing stock is rundown; most residents live on public assistance; we have the highest dropout rate in the city, and adult illiteracy is over 50%. Not a pretty picture.

In 1979, the local Board of County Commissioners opened a hazardous waste incinerator in our neighborhood, a mere 1½ miles from Cincinnati's prosperous, attractive downtown. It was the only taxpayer-supported, commercial incinerator in the U.S. Industries throughout the Midwest were invited by the politicians to dump their mixed hazardous

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CASE of Sumter County, South Carolina, enlists Lois Gibbs to help in battle to close toxic waste "Super Dump." The dump is run by GSX and has already begun leaking into groundwater.

The Toxic Queen: An Environmental Horror Story

Once upon a time in the sun kingdom known as South Florida, there lived a mean and deadly Queen named Carcinogenia. She was Queen of the Biscayne Aquifer.

She ruled trillions of toxic bacteria and germs breeding happily in the Biscayne Aquifer.

Queen Carcinogenia lived under the N.W. 58th Street Dump in West Miami. Every day the garbage trucks

would feed her toxic trash.

The Queen loved to eat, and dined lavishly on trash ala pesticide with creamed chemicals and side orders of hazardous waste. Another favorite dish was toxic stew made from steel drums left to rust and leak poisons onto her plate. . .yummy, marinated garbage.

"Oh! What an idyllic life," sighed

See QUEEN, page 3

SENSE, from page 1

chemical wastes here. The people of Greater Cincinnati were not consulted by the county commissioners. Residents of our community did not, at that time, know how to effectively organize themselves against this menace. Finally, in 1983, the Ohio EPA ordered the incinerator shut for multiple, flagrant violations of environmental laws. (The power-grabbing and political corruption that long delayed this shut-down are a separate story.)

In April 1985, one Lower Price Hill resident learned by mere chance that the county politicians planned to reactivate the unlicensed incinerator. New shipments of hazardous wastes were already being accepted into the tank farm, and burning was to resume in June.

But this time the neighborhood was prepared to fight. A citizens group was formed, chaired by a recently retired Cincinnati police officer. He made good use of his professional skills, spending months in investigative research against the incinerator and its operators. Other key players on the committee included two experienced organizers and a publicist. Within three months we were joined by a chemist, one of the most eminent experts in America on treatment of hazardous wastes. We were all volunteers. We worked days, nights and weekends.

The politicians didn't know what hit them. Dormant Lower Price Hill had come alive. Typically, obstacles were maneuvered across our path every step of the way. But we dug and dug for facts about the incinerator—all of which were appalling. Reporters described our chemist as "Sherlock Holmes with a library card." We cultivated a sympathetic media. We waged war with wit and words. We were accurate, credible and civilized.

When in Arlington for the June convention, we gave your office a binder containing a chronological file of our research, correspondence and press clippings as of that time.

We were already living proof of the advice given by two CCHW attorneys at one of the workshops: Don't get bogged down with lawsuits. Groups



The Coalition for Health Concern in Western Kentucky takes action, staging their first balloon launch protest against toxic plant discharges near Paducah.



The Tuscaloosa Turkey in Alabama, a close cousin of the Toxic Queen (a.k.a. Miami Monster) and another example of how wrong mass burn incineration can be as a waste management option. Details appeared in the last issue of *Everyone's Backyard*. Write us for details.

of angry people wield far more power over oppressors than do lawyers making concessions to cut a deal.

The pressure we applied built to a crescendo. At last the politicians caved in. The incinerator will not be re-activated. We insisted that it be dismantled. The closure plan will be enforced by EPA.

Our fight of well over one year cost only \$450. The bulk of that was spent for postage.

Our committee is still in operation. Because of the wealth of knowledge and experience we have gathered, we are now in a position to help other citizens groups just getting started. We have given free counsel to people from other towns in Ohio, plus Indiana, Kentucky, and even Vermont.

It is vital for you to keep getting the

message out that "little" people can fight and win against multi-million dollar hazardous wastes developers.

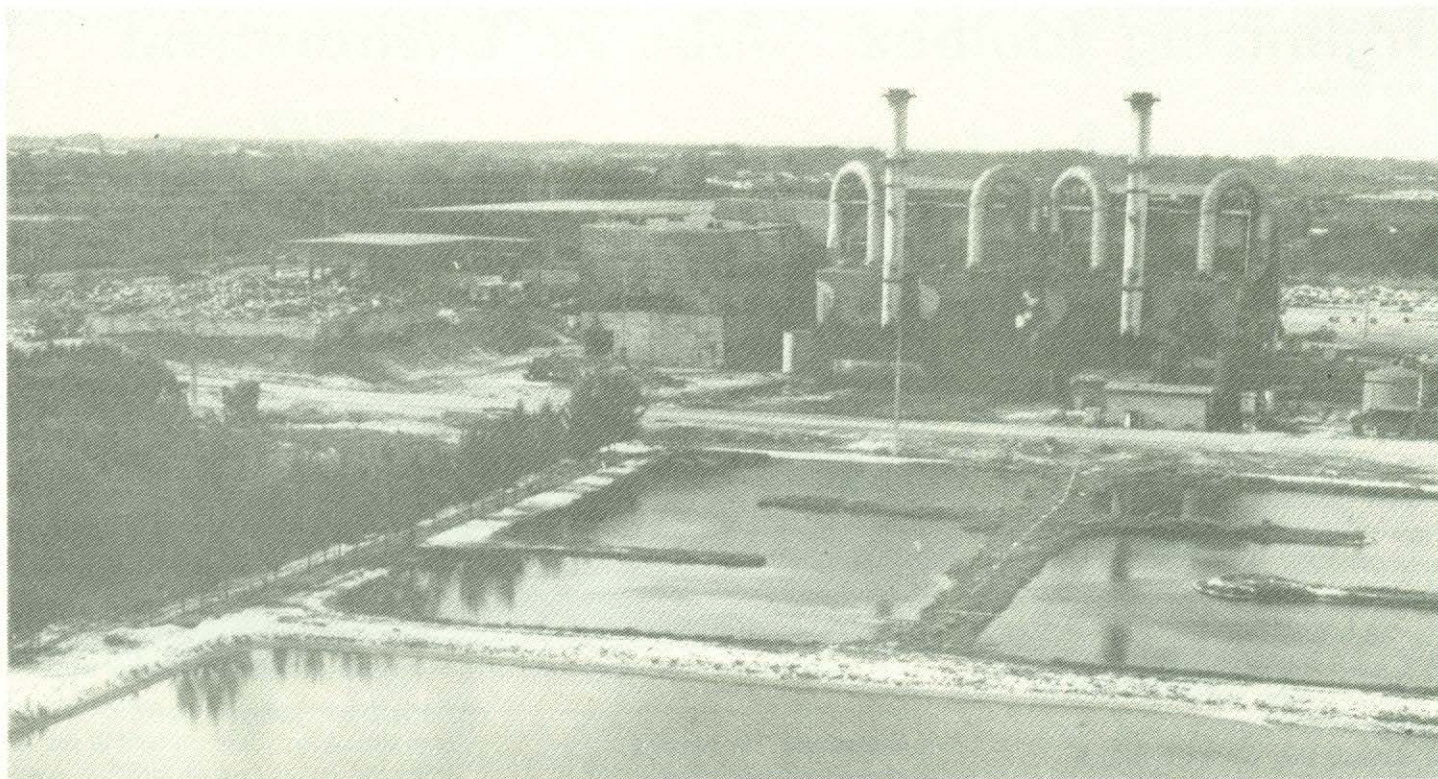
If it would be of benefit to your membership, we would be happy to present a "how to" workshop to talk at an upcoming CCHW meeting. We are not only veteran campaigners, but we have professional educators within our ranks.

What we did to win our war, other citizens groups can do too. People need only to be made aware of how to use to their own advantage the tremendous power that they possess.

All best wishes for continued success in your invaluable work. ●

Sincerely,
Jack Degano

President
Lower Price Hill Community Council



This is the "Toxic Queen" (also known as the Miami Monster) in all her glory, accompanied by her consorts, a rank collection of leachate ponds. Another "great" reason for tourists to come to Miami!

QUEEN, from page 1

the Toxic Queen. "My subjects are infecting three million humans who drink, cook, and bathe in my germ-filled water. The rate of cancer and birth defects is skyrocketing. This year, when Florida reaches third in the U.S. for cancer deaths, I'm sure King Toxic will award me the 'Royal Order of Suffering.'"

Then, all of a sudden. . .the garbage gobblers stopped unloading at the Toxic Queen's palace. The humans couldn't squeeze any more garbage into the dump! Queen Carcinogenia was livid, and flew into a rage. "I'll fix them—how dare they stop feeding me!"

Carcinogenia cast a spell on the County elders governing the County of Dade. The wicked Queen forced them to build a giant oven where the garbage gobblers could drop their loads. Now the garbage would be cooked just the way she liked it. . .she was tired of cold food anyway.

"Red Hot Garbage!" covered with the world's most dangerous chemicals, dioxins, polyvinyl chloride and furans. The Queen loved to watch thick black smoke pouring out of the ovens and carrying foul odors and nauseating fumes. How delightful!

Best of all, she enjoyed the little bits of ash coated with poison dioxins that floated into human's food. "They don't call me Carcinogenia for nothing," she growled.

The Toxic Queen thought, "What else can I do to those humans for closing my dump? I'm still outraged, even though there is enough poison to last for hundreds of years. They must be taught a horribly wonderful lesson."

Excitedly, she swam back and forth from a place the humans called Palm Beach, down to an Island called Key West, stirring up the contaminated waters she loved so much. In her rage, she swam faster and faster, spreading her deadly toxins into the Biscayne Aquifer.

Suddenly, she stopped and cried, "By cancer, I know! I'll have the humans build me a giant toxic swimming pool connected to my garbage burning oven so all the sweet bacteria-laden juices will flow into my pool!"

"Just think—freshly contaminated burnt ash and thousands and thousands of tons of raw garbage. A constant stream 24 hours a day, and it's all mine!"

"Why I'm creating an environmental disaster all by myself!" said

the Toxic Queen proudly. But, I can't take all the credit for so much sickness and death. I have to share it with the County, State, and Federal elders who ignore the dioxin emissions from the oven and my lovely leaking toxic leachate pool right over the Biscayne Aquifer.

Queen Carcinogenia sat on her throne of polished dioxin and thought, "Why are humans so strange? If a thief steals paper money or yellow metals, they become outraged. But when my tiny toxins flow into their homes through their water faucets, stealing their health and causing crippling sickness, disease, suffering, and death, no one lifts a finger to stop us.

"Humans don't want to face *toxic realities*. If they ever realized that the daily doses of delicious chemicals I pour into their water and send up in the air can cause cancer and other fearsome genetic damage, my days will be numbered; but the humans could live happily ever after!"

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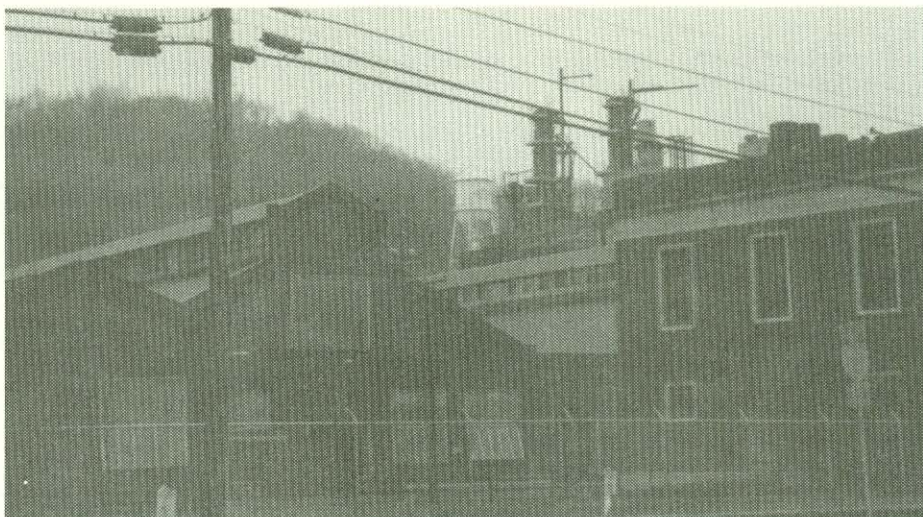
Organizing Toolbox: "Jobs vs. Environment"

by Will Collette

Industry's strongest argument against us is Job Blackmail. Whether you're fighting against toxic pollution from an operating plant or to block a waste facility from being built, arguments about jobs and the economy will be used by your opponents. The "jobs vs. environment" issue even comes up sometimes to counter community demands for site cleanup. "We don't want to create a hostile climate for industry by having all these sites on Superfund," say some state officials. That's why, for example, there are so few Superfund sites in Louisiana, why Virginia officials resist Superfund listing of big companies' sites and why it took a change of governors in 1984 to get Wisconsin sites on the National Priority List.

Despite Love Canal, Stringfellow, and Times Beach, there still is a lot of support for trading off health, safety and the environment for the elusive promise of jobs. And it's not just the Chamber of Commerce. Many of our friends and neighbors feel the same way, even though, when they work in the plants, they might be the first victims in the Chemical Killing Grounds American industry creates. Here are some ways to deal with the Jobs issues:

- **Existing Plants.** Examine the company's financial conditions. If the company is thriving and they've invested millions of dollars into the plant, it's very likely their Job Blackmail threats are bogus. If a company's going through hard times, having layoffs or if their plant facility is old and deteriorating, they might very well close the plant. Many petrochemical plants and other "smokestack industries" in the U.S. are on their last legs. One response is to take a tough stand and tell them to *Go take a hike!* Call their bluff. A healthy company is unlikely to leave; a shaky one is likely to close anyway. Another approach is to fight for "Good Neighbor Policies," where you set out concrete, good neighbor expectations you have of the company. Residents



One of Union Carbide's West Virginia plants. Union Carbide is one of the most skillful practitioners of Job Blackmail.

of Gettysburg, PA fighting Westinghouse even went so far as to name their group "Good Neighbors Against Toxic Substances" (GNATS).

CCHW, Greenpeace and the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards also support fighting for **waste reduction** as a positive way to defuse Job Blackmail. Studies in North Carolina and by INFORM and the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, as well as practical experience, show how companies can make money, cut losses and liabilities, save jobs and protect health and the environment through aggressive waste reduction. [See CCHW's new guidebook, *"Reduction of Hazardous Waste: The Only Serious Management Option,"* \$8.98.] This approach is a smart way to deal with any company, except those that are so far gone that they'll close, no matter what.

Tony Mazzochi, the well-known chemical workers union activist, advises environmentalists to stop being naive, though, when they discuss the jobs issues with plant workers. Workers know better than you where their bosses are really at and whether your ideas have even the faintest chance of working. They also have a pretty good idea when their plant is circling the drain. So, if you go to them with some Pollyanna scheme about how you're going to

save their jobs while protecting the trees and fishes (not to mention your kids), don't be surprised if they're more inclined to listen to their own common sense, than to you. Give their instincts the same respect you give your own.

- **Proposed Facilities.** It seems like every operator proposing a new facility promises jobs, prosperity and peace in our lifetime, if only he's allowed to build this turkey, whatever it is, in your community, despite the fact that (a) no other community will tolerate it, (b) he can't or won't explain what damage it'll do, (c) can't get insurance coverage and (d) couldn't, if his life depends on it, name one company championing at the bit to follow him in to your community after his operation is on line. Sadly, a lot of your neighbors believe these promises anyway. Operator of undesirable plants (called LULUs—"locally undesirable land uses") target low-income, high unemployment areas for the nastiest stuff, knowing that hungry people are desperate people. That's how Waste Management, Inc., came into Sumter County, AL and built the world's largest hazardous waste landfill. However, since WMI's site opened in 1978, Sumter County residents found reality to be a tad different. Official Alabama

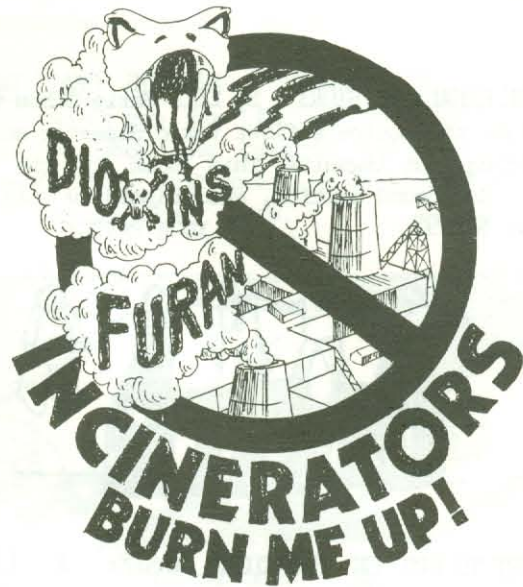
See TOOLBOX, page 6

Let them know where YOU Stand!

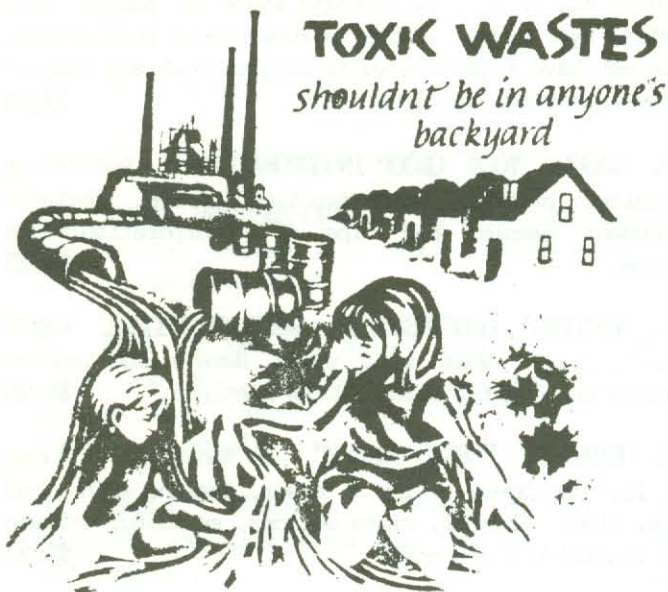


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*Work to prevent landfill
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"TOXIC WASTES SHOULDN'T BE IN ANYONE'S BACKYARD" t-shirt with a design done in about a dozen colors by the national-famous Jim Morris Environmental T-Shirts of Boulder, CO. Many, many more colors than you normally see in a t-shirt. Small, medium, large, extra-large. \$9.45



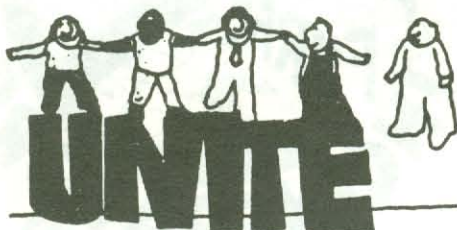
"DUMPBUSTER" t-shirt. Multi-color. Specific small, medium, large or extra-large. \$9.45

EXPANDED!

Publications and Materials

REVISED!

1. LOVE CANAL: MY STORY by Lois Marie Gibbs who led the fight at America's first toxic disaster solved by organizing, not lawsuits. This book is the inside story. Hardbound edition, autographed by Lois. List prices: \$12.95 YOUR PRICE: \$9.95



2. FIGHT TO WIN ON HAZARDOUS WASTE: A LEADER'S MANUAL. How to start a group, keep it going, research your opponents, organize your community, carry out effective action, raise funds and Win! It's the tool for leaders! \$7.50

3. HAZARDOUS WASTE FACT PACK. Lively overview of issues and problems and what to do about them. Excellent for general education. \$4.95

4. STRESS: WHAT IT DOES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AT DUMPSITES. Lois spoke to mental health providers on how stress occurs, hurts families at dumps and what can be done about it. \$4.95

5. HAZARDOUS WASTE DUMPSITES LISTS. Do you know if you're living near a dump? Lists for nearly every state: list those you want. \$1.50 per state.

6. RESEARCH GUIDE FOR LEADERS. Our best material on how to research for opponents, do corporation investigations, community analysis and combine research with effective tactics. \$3.50

7. LOVE CANAL: A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS THAT SHAPED A MOVEMENT. The national movement against hazardous waste began at Love Canal. Find out how it happened in the words of those who were there. Also includes great charts and maps that could be a model for your community. \$9.95

8. JOBS VS. ENVIRONMENT: HOW TO FINANCE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE. Describes little known "Industrial Revenue Bonds," and how they deal with public officials and industry who say you have to choose between jobs or your lives. \$0.75

9. ALTERNATIVES TO LAND DISPOSAL. They don't have to dump. There are better ways and this paper describes them. \$2.25

10. WILL A COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY WORK FOR YOU? Think before you count. Questions you should solve before you begin and advise on what to do when you start. \$4.50

11. EXPERTS: WHERE TO FIND THEM, HOW TO GET THEM, HOW TO PAY FOR THEM AND HOW TO USE THEM. Answers common questions and gives proven techniques to get your money's worth. \$4.75

12. LAWYERS: HOW TO GET THEM TO WORK FOR YOU SO YOU'RE NOT WORKING FOR THEM. How to keep out of trouble if you decide to use a lawyer; avoid problems, create and use opportunities. \$5.75

13. ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING: WHERE TO LOOK, WHAT TO LOOK FOR, HOW TO DO IT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN. Practical advice for getting and using testing to fight to win. \$6.95

14. INCINERATION: BURNING ISSUE OF THE EIGHTIES. Pros and cons of both municipal and hazardous waste incineration with ideas for action. \$8.98

15. DEEP WELL INJECTION: AN EXPLOSIVE ISSUE. About 60% of all of the U.S.'s toxic waste is pumped into wells, yet very little is known about this method. You may have injection wells in your backyard and not know it. Find out more. \$7.95

16. SHOULD YOUR GROUP INCORPORATE? Points out problems, pitfalls, gives practical advice, includes document samples and tips if incorporation makes sense. \$6.25

17. VICTIMS' COMPENSATION: WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT? What's fair? What will work? Here's what leaders around the country said at CCHW meetings. \$4.95

18. REPRINT: "LEGAL CORNER" by Ron Simon, issues #1-10. Includes: hiring a lawyer, dealing with a bad one, libel, slander, class actions, settling, statute of limitations and more. \$3.50

19. REPRINT: "ORGANIZING TOOLBOX," issues #1-10. Includes door-knocking, meetings, burn out, counter attacks from opponents, in fighting, grassroots fundraising, research, spirit building, experts, politicians and more. \$3.50

20. REPRINTS: SCIENCE FEATURES FROM EVERYONE'S BACKYARD. Includes water testing, landfill problems, should you conduct a health survey, incineration alternatives, bottled water, priority pollutants, municipal waste and more. \$4.00

21. SUBSCRIPTIONS. All CCHW members get our two newsletters as a membership benefit (why not join today?). However, if you only wish to subscribe, or give a gift of subscription, order:

EVERYONE'S BACKYARD, (quarterly) feature stories, unique perspective on the hazardous waste problem. **\$25/Year**

ACTION BULLETIN, (every 2-3 months) news, inside stories on the grassroots movement, resources, victories. **\$25/Year**

22. RESOURCE LISTS. Lists of the best materials we've found **\$0.50 each**

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (a) alternatives | (b) asbestos |
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| (e) family stress & children | (f) ground water |
| (g) land treatment methods | (h) landfills |
| (i) Love Canal | (j) municipal solid waste |
| (k) municipal sewage sludge | (l) waste exchange |

23. CCHW's great, new "DUMP BUSTER" T-SHIRT. Multi-color design. Specify small, medium, large X-large **\$7.00**

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27. INCINERATOR T-SHIRT. Also multi-colored, design on white with the slogan: "Incinerators Burn Me Up!". Small, medium, large, X-large. **\$7.00**

28. WOMEN AND BURN-OUT by Lois Gibbs describes the special stress new, women leaders undergo and what can be done about it. **\$1.50**

29. TIPS ON DEALING WITH CONSENT ORDERS. Tells you how to break through the stone walls erected when responsible parties and government agencies negotiate deals you don't like. **\$0.85**

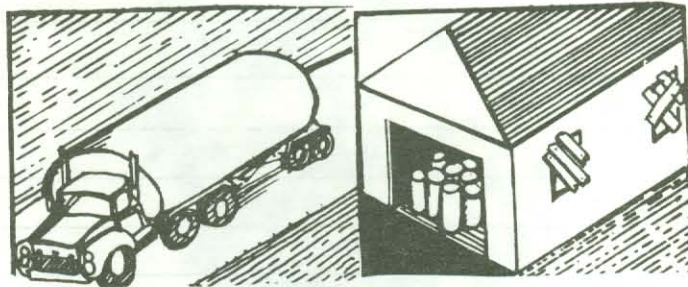
30. FAMILY STRESS. How to spot it in yourself, your spouse and your children and how to deal with it. **\$2.85**

31. CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL: COVER-UP, DECEIT AND CONFUSION. How CDC studies are used to cover-up health problems at toxic exposure sites. **\$4.95**



32. EVERYTHING YOU'D EVER WANT TO ASK ABOUT FACILITY SITING. A comprehensive list of about 200 questions you have a right to have answered before any facility is sited. Adapted from a list prepared by the Keystone Center for the State of Texas. **\$1.75**

33. NEW! LAND DISPOSAL: DINOSAUR OF DISPOSAL METHODS. Gives you the facts, case studies and arguments to show the hazards and foolishness of using landfilling, land-spreading to dispose of both hazardous and municipal waste. **\$8.50**



35. NEW! DANGER ON THE ROAD. Helps you assess the hazards posed by the transport of toxics through your community with practical advice on how to protect your neighborhood. **\$7.95**

36. NEW! HOW CLEAN IS CLEAN? Demystifies the technical debate over cleanup standards for contaminated sites and discusses strategies for how to win the best possible cleanup for your site. **\$4.95**

39. NEW! HOW TO DEAL WITH A PROPOSED FACILITY. Winning strategies for how to block bad, proposed facilities. **\$5.95**

40. NEW! MULTI-COLOR T-SHIRT, with new design by Jim Morris Environmental T-shirts and slogan, "TOXIC WASTES SHOULDN'T BE IN ANYONE'S BACKYARD". Specify small, medium, large or X-large. **\$7.50**

41. NEW! FIFTH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY. Written specially for CCHW's 5th birthday. Tells the honest truth of how the Grassroots Movement Against Toxics has come to be the fastest growing movement for social justice in America today. **\$8.55**

42. NEW! SPECIAL FIFTH ANNIVERSARY POSTER, designed by VILLAGE VOICE artist Mark Alan Stamaty Regular Edition - **\$10.00**

42S. The same poster on art-stock paper, signed and numbered by Mark. Sure to grow in value. **WHILE THEY LAST! Signed Edition - \$30.00**

43. NEW! INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES. The future is now! There are existing technologies better than the "proven" ones for destroying waste on-site, where it's been dumped and where it's generated. This guidebook details specific technologies. **\$8.95**

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Orders are shipped within a couple of days of receipt, but do allow four weeks for delivery. If we see that your order will take longer than 30 days, we'll notify you and give you the option of (a) waiting; (b) getting a refund or (c) making a substitution or taking a credit. Enclose payment and return this form to

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Call us at (703)276-7070 for question or problems. We will take phone orders with a Visa or Mastercard.

LEGAL CORNER

By Ron Simon

Q. In your last column, you discussed the problem of suing for future risks. I read in the newspapers about a so-called "landmark" decision in New Jersey that allowed a multi-million dollar verdict for "medical surveillance." Does this change the situation?

A. On May 7, 1987, the New Jersey Supreme Court decided the case of **Ayers et al. vs. Township of Jackson**. This case was brought on behalf of 339 residents of a town whose water was contaminated by a municipal landfill. Before discussing the details of this very important case, it is important to focus on some factors which limit the direct applicability of the decision to other situations.

First, bear in mind that this decision applies only to New Jersey. Other states may be persuaded by the reasoning of the court in the **Ayers** case, but they can come to other conclusions.

Second, the **Ayers** decision involved a government agency as the wrongdoer. General legal standards that apply to private parties and corporations do not apply to government agencies. Government agencies are immune from suit on the typical common law grounds for which other parties are generally sued in toxic tort cases. However, the government can be sued under the specific terms of statutes that allow such suits. The **Ayers** case is such a situation.

With these limitations in mind, we can turn to the **Ayers** case because it teaches a lot about the way courts will be looking at compensation in groundwater contamination cases. The jury verdict was for \$15,854,392.78. This verdict was based on a number of claims put before the jury.

The jury did not even consider whether any specific disease of any plaintiff was caused by the chemical exposure. The entire verdict was based on a number of other general legal claims. \$2,056,480 was awarded for the emotional distress caused by people knowing they had ingested contaminated water for six years. \$5,396,940 was awarded for the deterioration of the quality of life of plaintiffs because of the increased risk of future disease. The court refused to allow any damages for the increased risk of future injury.

The court explained at great length why it refused to allow damages for increased risk of injury, while allowing damages for medical surveillance. (One judge pointed out that this is an...inconsistent result).

The court said that it would not allow compensation for the risk of future injury unless the jury had concluded that the probability of the person getting the injury is greater than 50%. This is the traditional rule that makes it hard to sue for increased risk. The court cited three reasons for its conclusion. The first is that allowing a claim for future injuries could create a lot of litigation and raise insurance rates. The second reason is that compensation for injury that has not yet occurred would be unfair since those who did not get sick would be compensated too much while those who got sick would get too little. The third reason for not allowing compensation for increased risk is that the New Jersey statute permitting suit against government entities specifically precluded so-called novel claims.

The court did allow compensation for medical monitoring and surveillance. The court started its

reasoning with a simple example. If a man received head injuries in a car crash and his doctor recommended medical tests to determine the extent of the injury—clearly the cost of the examination would be compensable even if the particular exams showed no injury. The injured man is clearly entitled to be compensated for the exams he needs.

The court also looked at another important case in reaching its conclusion. In **Friends for all Children vs Lockheed Aircraft**, 746 F.2d 816 (D.C. Cir. 1984), a number of orphans were injured in an air crash. The court recognized that the children had injuries that were difficult to diagnose. The court concluded that the defendant who was responsible for the injuries should pay for medical diagnostic exams before the case comes to trial. The court concluded that as a result of the crash the children needed the diagnostic exam and ordered the defendants to pay for it.

A final issue convinced the court that paying for medical surveillance was an appropriate remedy. The court recognizes that the proof of causation (that a particular injury is caused by a particular toxic agent) is difficult. However, the court could not ignore the fact that early detection and treatment of disease is necessary to save lives. Compensation for medical surveillance is favored as a public health measure that gets people expert medical examinations that can lead to early detection and treatment.

Ron Simon represents community groups, unions, communities and citizens exposed to chemicals and hazardous substances in the environment and in the workplace. In addition to being counsel to CCHW, he represents the American Legion, White Lung Association and the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics.



Leaders in Sumter County, Alabama, meet with Linda King and Will Collette from CCHW. Black and white residents work together to fight Waste Management, Inc.'s "Cadillac of Landfills" in Emelle, Alabama.

TOOLBOX, from page 4

statistics show unemployment in Sumter County **increased** by 263% (from 5.8% to 21.1% from 1978 to 1986. Total jobs declined by over 20%. Along with job loss, residents also find that homes formerly assessed at \$60,000 are now assessed at \$15,000 or less, with assessors warning that they doubt homes would sell even at only 25% of their former value.

The real way to deal with the jobs issues is to directly raise the waste reduction issue. Ironically, industry advocates who argue for continued dumping or incineration of toxic

waste aren't doing American business any favors. Disposal costs, liability issues and delays in modernizing plants (especially by gearing them for waste reduction, recovery of resources through recycling and waste exchange, etc.) make old-fashioned disposal practices one hell of a smelly, dead albatross hanging around business's neck. Waste reduction, recycling and exchange (with some on-site treatment and destruction) are among American industry's best hopes for regaining its competitive edge and preserving jobs. Some states, like North Carolina and Minnesota, recognize this and have special state programs designed to help companies do this, as well as

helping them line up low-interest capital to make plant modifications. We can't dodge the jobs issue. Nor should we. Why? Because, what we've been saying all along—that we **reject** the old line, "It's got to go somewhere"—is not only right, it's good for the economy! ●

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Resources Group
1400 Ardsley Place
Birmingham, AL 35209
(205) 870-9574



Vermonters Organized for Cleanup became the first grassroots group to take action in CCHW's nationwide "McToxics Campaign," aimed at getting McDonald's Corp. to stop using styrofoam packaging. We urge you and your group to **take action** at your local McDonald's on Oct. 23-24. Call CCHW for more details.



Linda King from CCHW visits with neighbors of Reichhold Chemical's abandoned toxic site in Columbia, MS, the "Love Canal of Mississippi." On August 18, after this visit, residents formed Mississippi's first black and white united organization to fight for cleanup of the site.

RECYCLING, from page 8

public and community education. While many local governments are willing to pay at least \$50 million for a small (50-75 ton/day) incinerator (larger ones cost upward of several hundred million dollars), successful recycling programs are being run on budgets that range from \$100-250,000. Imagine what could be done with 1/10 the cost of a typical massburn incinerator! Combine this with an active, organized effort to educate people to the values and advantages of recycling and there's little doubt that recycling programs could achieve reduction levels comparable, if not better than incinerators. AND, there are **no** toxic emissions, **no** toxic ash to dispose of.

So why aren't more communities recycling? Why do you typically hear government and incinerator advocates argue that recycling can only achieve 10-20% reductions, that it can't be done today, that there's no market for recyclables? All of these arguments stem from one basic premise: the lack of confidence and commitment to recycling as an alternative. CCHW carefully examined and rebuts these and other myths about recycling in our new report, *Recycling: The Answer To Our Garbage Problems*.

Recycling is a realistic and viable option that can be implemented today as a solution to the growing landfill/garbage crisis. It simply takes an openness and commitment to develop an integrated waste management program that begins with a financial commitment and includes source separation in the home, education on the values and advan-

tage of recycling, attention and care to the quality of the recyclable materials, and development of markets to use, recover and recycle collected materials.

What follows is a brief description of several successful recycling programs for more details, see *Recycling: The Answer To Our Garbage Problems*. Many of these programs were presented at a CCHW conference held September 12-13 in Arlington, Virginia. A paper discussing in detail these programs, as well as waste processing systems and the role they can play, will be available shortly. Contact Steve Lester or Brian Lipsett at CCHW for more details.

1. **Hamburg, New York** has a mandatory curbside source separation program that began in 1981. 434 tons of paper, 300 tons of glass, 192 tons of tin cans and 4 tons of aluminum are collected for recycling each year, representing 25% of the town's waste, by volume.

2. **Berkeley, California's** program uses both independent businesses and non-profit groups to recycle 40-50% by volume of the city's garbage.

3. **Camden, New Jersey** runs a county-wide mandatory recycling program that includes 37 municipalities, overseen by a coordinator who is largely responsible for market development. The program is based on a 80/ton a day processing center where all municipalities send their tin cans and glass bottles. Alongside that is a curbside separation and collection program that handles metals, newspapers, waste oil and yard waste. Together, the two programs recycle 85,000 tons, amounting to 40% of

the county's waste by volume.

4. **Wellesley, Massachusetts** operates a unique recycling and disposal facility where residents bring separated recyclables and other garbage. Part of the center's success is attributed to the social atmosphere—people gather around the reusable items corner. Roughly 26% of the waste stream, including newspaper, corrugated cardboard, magazines, aluminum, glass, plastic bottles and firewood was recycled. ●

Recycling. . .



The Answer to Our Garbage Problems

If you are interested in a more complete discussion of recycling options, *Recycling. . . The Answer to Our Garbage Problems* is available from CCHW for \$8.98 and includes a detailed list of local recycling programs all over the U.S. We also point out barriers to recycling. Also available from CCHW is our *Solid Waste Action Project Guidebook* for \$8.98. A practical guide to help people push the recycling alternative.

Everyone's Backyard is published by the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes, Inc. CCHW is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, environmental crisis center which primarily focuses its work on grassroots environmental organizations across the nation. Library of Congress #ISSN 0749-3940.

Lois Marie Gibbs, Executive Director

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*Individual donors of \$50 or more receive a free, autographed copy of *Love Canal: My Story* by Lois Marie Gibbs. All members receive CCHW's quarterly newsletter, *Everyone's Backyard*.

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Recycling: The Alternative to Incineration and Landfills — Programs That Work

by Stephen Lester and Brian Lipsett

Many government officials are addressing the garbage crisis by attempting to force communities to choose: "Either we burn it or we bury it." In this context, many community people are struggling with that choice. They know that all landfills will fail, that it's only a matter of time. Even the newest "state-of-the-art" designed systems don't prevent leakage. They simply detect it sooner. On the other hand, the incinerator has its own risks: toxic emissions (metals, acid gases, dioxin and furans); hazardous ash (metals dioxins, furans); contaminated wastewater; huge costs and large uncertainties about operating efficiency and effectiveness (see Summer EBY, Vol. 5 No. 2).

What local governments don't want you to know is that there is a third choice—Recycling, reusing and recovering of garbage. Communities clear across the country, both urban and rural, are successfully operating recycling programs that in some cases achieve volume reductions comparable to incinerators. Typically, incinerators reduce weight anywhere from 60-75% (leaving 25-40% as ash that needs to be disposed of). Some recycling pro-



Concerned Citizens of Cohasset picket the CHL Landfill in Cohasset, Mass. They want to block expansion, close the dump and clean it up. Protests like this are VITAL in creating the pressure which will lead to more recycling.

grams are achieving as high as 60% volume reduction (North Stonington, CT), others slightly less (Marin County, CA). Many successful programs have already achieved between 30-40% volume reduction.

This is really not surprising when you realize that 70-85% of the typical waste stream consists of recyclable materials. One community, East Hampton, New York, has set a goal

of 70% waste reduction (by volume) to make the specific point that a well-planned recycling program can be just as effective—with much less risk and uncertainty—as an incinerator. What's remarkable about this program is that they are doing this without any significant financial commitment from the local government and, in most cases, with minimal

See RECYCLING, page 7



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