

Water scare stirs dilemma

First of two parts
By TOM LONERGAN

The scene: An "emergency meeting" of southeast Michigan local and county officials.

The reason: Recent reports that the drinking water in some rural and less developed areas may be contaminated due to years of unchecked dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes.

The source: The state Department of Natural Resources' list of more than 260 polluted groundwater sites across the state, including 36 in southeast Michigan.

The local officials, members of the Area-wide Water Quality Board (AWQB), part of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), wanted some answers — and some action — to resolve the problem.

ONE AWQB MEMBER, Dr. Paul Tomboulain, coordinator of environmental studies at Oakland University in Rochester, listened quietly to state, county and township officials for nearly two hours.

Then Tomboulain put the problem more broadly than his colleagues had. "For a lot of these problems," he said, "we don't have a solution. We have to be satisfied with unhappy dilemmas."

It's not that Tomboulain, who is married to state Rep. Alice Tomboulain, D-Oakland Township, sees the problem as hopeless.

Rather, he explained in a recent interview, contaminated groundwater is only one part of a much larger hazardous waste disposal issue, and public officials fail to realize how serious it is.

"What are the long-term effects of years of exposure to contaminated air and water?" he asked.

"THE ISSUE we're dealing with is millions of possible contaminants," said Tomboulain, chairman of the chemistry department at OU.



Dr. Paul Tomboulain: Ground isn't infinite.
(Staff photo by David Frank)

"People tend to dwell on the short-term problems like, 'My well is contaminated.'"

As Tomboulain sees it, groundwater contamination in an area that has depended on landfills to dispose of industrial and residential wastes was inevitable.

"The problem dates back to our value system that ground is an infinite resource and you can do anything you want with it," he said.

"It never was true, but it was a convenient way of ignoring what you were doing."

Nonetheless, he warns against undue alarm over the quality of drinking water in areas which DNR says have polluted groundwater or suspected contamination.

THE MOST serious problem in Oakland County is in Springfield and Rose townships.

There the state declared an emergency after toxic chemicals were discovered in some residents' well water supplies.

The toxic chemicals were from two illegal dumps in the northwest Oakland townships. Barrels filled with industrial waste had been buried for years. Last month, the Michigan Legislature approved a \$1.2 million cleanup plan for the sites.

Springfield residents have sued the township, county and state for failing to protect them from environmental hazards. They are also asking damages from eight industrial firms, including Chrysler and Ford, whose toxic wastes were hauled to the dump.

TOMBOULAIN SAYS "soil is an excellent filter," but only for "most of the common substances not associated with modern technology."

He cited the solvent trichloroethylene, a common industrial cleaner. If dumped, the cleaner is not absorbed by the ground but "moves through" it.

Anything of a chemical nature is "the kind of material you don't want to put in the ground," Tomboulain said. He referred to the Springfield and Rose townships problem as "a real environmental monstrosity."

"Our knowledge of toxic substances is so inadequate, people don't want to admit it," he added.

The groundwater pollution problem is "severe," Tomboulain said, "if in fact you are drinking the water." In sparsely developed areas, polluted groundwater could enter residential wells used for drinking water.

"There's a tremendous amount of water in southeast Michigan in the ground," Tomboulain said. "There's no evidence that a large fraction of it could be contaminated, but there's always that possibility."

January Clearance...50% off original prices!*

on special selections from:

Fifth Avenue Shop • Designer Sportswear
\$FABulous Updated Dresses and Sportswear
\$FANTASTIC Contemporary Dresses and Sportswear
\$FANTASTIC and \$FABulous Suits and Stormcoats
Misses' Sport Suits and Stormcoats
Designer Dresses, Costumes, Evening Dresses, Coats and Suits
Right On! for Juniors Dresses, Separates, Coordinators, Coats and Suits
Infants', Toddlers', Children's and Accessories (boy only)
Apparel, Shoes, Sleepwear and Accessories (boy only)
Handbags, Fashion and Designer Jewelry, Gloves, Belts,
Watches, Scarves, Shawls, Umbrellas and Rainwear
Ladies' Lingerie, Robes, Sleepwear and Loungewear
Sweater Collections • Misses' Sportdresses and Knits
Women's Active Sportswear • Better Sportswear Separates • Blouses
Maternity Dresses and Sportswear (boy only)
Millinery and Fur Hats • Women's Shoes
Boys' Clothing, Sportswear and Furnishings (boy only)
Stationery and Small Leather Goods • Luggage
Guest and Gift Shop • Linen Pavilion

Men's Clearance...20% to 50% off original prices

on special selections from:

Men's Furnishings: 50% off original prices on
Dress Shirts, Sportshirts, Knit Shirts, Active Sportswear, Sweaters, Robes
Men's Clothing: 20% to 40% off original prices on
Men's Suits, Sportcoats, Slacks,
Suede and Leather Outerwear, Coats • Shoes (boy only)
Early On and Collection Sportswear...50% off original prices.

and special savings on superb selections from:

14K Gold Boutique—25% off
Selected Bras and Foundations—20% to 30% off
Revillon Furs—20% to 50% off (boy only)

*There may have been intermediate price reductions on some items prior to this sale.
All sales final. Not all items available in all sizes and colors.

Saks Fifth Avenue

Total Lines Available, Detroit and Troy: 18,000

Iron, Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge
open Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 AM to 9 PM
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10 AM to 6 PM. Sundays, Noon to 5 PM.
Saks Fifth Avenue, Detroit, Second at Lothrop,
open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM

DuMouchelle Art Galleries AUCTION

in our Galleries
Friday evening, January 18 at 7 p.m.
Saturday morning, January 19 at 11 a.m.
Sunday afternoon, January 20 at 12 noon

PREVIEWING

Beginning January 11 during regular Gallery hours, daily until auction times. We suggest previewing to know what you are bidding on.

ILLUSTRATED CATALOG \$3, Postpaid \$4
Further information by phone, call us at 963-6468 or 963-6469
FREE VALET PARKING on auction days. Just drive up to our front entrance.

Across from Renaissance Center
DuMOUCHELLE'S

409 E. Jefferson Ave. • Detroit
Lawrence F. DuMouchelle Joan Walker Ernest J. DuMouchelle
Art and Estate Auctioneers and Appraisers

Saks Fifth Avenue's Men's Furnishings Event! Sales and Special Purchases

- Dress shirts and designer dress shirts, originally 17.50 to 37.50; now 12.90 to 24.90.
- Button-down dress shirts and cotton dress shirts, regularly 18.50 and 22.50; now 13.90 and 14.90.
- Designer sportshirts and designer knit shirts, originally 28.50, '33 and '35; now 18.90, 22.90 and 24.90.
- Briefs, T-shirts and A-shirts, regularly 3 for 8.50; now 6 for 13.60. Bikini briefs, regularly 4 pair for '14, now 10.90.
- Boxer shorts, regularly 6.50 and 5.50 the pair; now 5.50 and 4.50.
- Socks: nylon and wool, regularly '13 and '14 the pair; now 3 for 7.20 and 9.60. Nylon ankle socks, regularly 1.75 and 2.25 the pair; now 6 for 8.40 and 10.90.
Acrylic and nylon sport socks, originally 2.25 the pair; now 6 for 8.90.
- Robes—regularly 37.50; now 29.90.
- Pajamas, regularly 27.50 and 16.50; now 17.90 and 12.90.
- Handkerchiefs, specially priced at 6 for 8.50.
- All, in the Men's Store—where we are all the things you are.

Saks Fifth Avenue

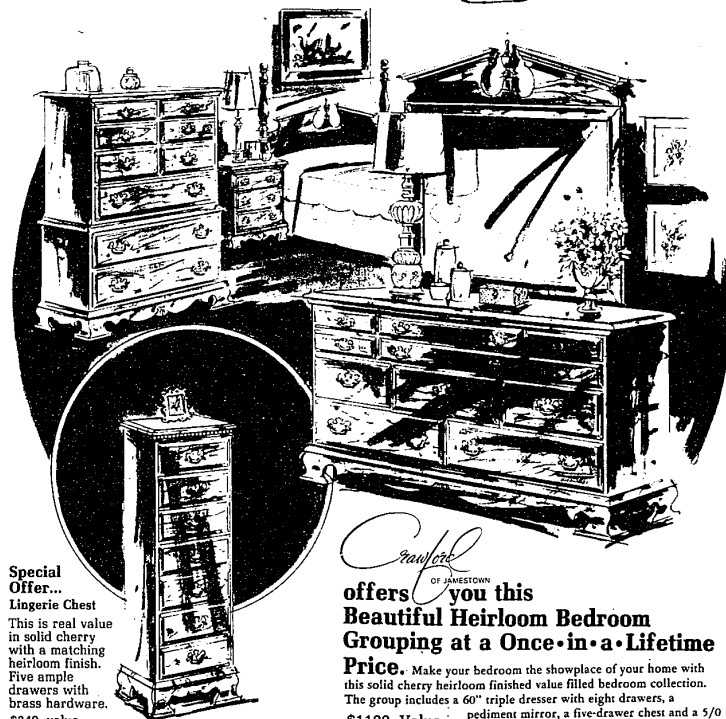
Total Lines Available, Detroit and Troy: 3,865

Troy, Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge
open Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 AM to 9 PM,
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10 AM to 6 PM. Sundays, Noon to 5 PM.
Saks Fifth Avenue, Detroit, Second at Lothrop,
open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Fine Furniture Since 1917

Visit Our Pennsylvania House Gallery

A SOLID BUY IN SOLID CHERRY!!
BUY NOW AND SAVE \$300



Special Offer...
Lingerie Chest

This is real value in solid cherry with a matching heirloom finish. Five ample drawers with brass hardware. \$249. value
NOW \$179
8 in stock

Stewart-Glenn
offers you this
Beautiful Heirloom Bedroom
Grouping at a Once-in-a-Lifetime
Price. Make your bedroom the showplace of your home with this solid cherry heirloom finished value filled bedroom collection. The group includes a 60" triple dresser with eight drawers, a pediment mirror, a five-drawer chest and a 5/0 or 4/6 pediment headboard. This same bedroom is available with a 4/6-5/0 spindle headboard and landscape mirror at \$799. Cabinet nightstand with two drawers, a \$199.00 value, now \$169.00 each. 4 groups in stock.

Now \$899

STEWART-GLENN CO.
"YOUR FULL SERVICE STORE"
has no extra charge for

*Careful Inspection and Set-Up
*Courteous Delivery Service
*Generous Storewide Parking

Ask our Interior Designers to help you with your decorating problems

Use our 4 Pay Plan (no interest) or use your Master Charge or Visa