

Niagara At Large

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Just When We Thought It Was Safe, Love Canal Is Back!

Posted on [December 11, 2014](#) | [3 Comments](#)

By **Doug Draper, Niagara At Large**

It is a bit surprising to learn that the name ‘Love Canal’ can still pack a public punch.

As one of the first and very few reporters for a Canadian newspaper that was covering the Love Canal when people from that Niagara Falls, New York neighbourhood were still struggling, some 34 years ago, to get away from the chemical buried under and around their homes, the name was synonymous with man-made poisons capable of causing suffering and death.

So much so at the time that then-U.S. president Jimmy Carter wrote two unprecedented national emergency orders to compensate residents for the value of their ravaged homes and no other community at the time in the United States or Canada was willing to accept this waste for treatment and reburial in a co-called “secure landfill site” or for destruction in a high temperature incinerator. In fact, any argument environmentalists made back then for excavating the Love Canal poisons from their grave near the Niagara River and shipping them off to another community for incineration was nixed by U.S. environmental officials.

‘No other community on this continent,’ and paraphrase fairly here, ‘is going to accept shipments of Love Canal wastes,’ one senior administrator for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation told me at the time.

Now here we are, all these years later, with reports this December 11th, 2014 in the Sarnia Observer and CBC Radio on wastes from the Love Canal area – wastes that include the likes of mirex, PCBs, chorobenzenes and the most toxic strain of a Vietnam War-era poison used in Agent Orange – being trucked off to the Sarnia, Ontario area for apparent safe destruction in an incinerator operated by a company called Clean Harbours hazardous wastes there.



A sign posted at the Love Canal site in Niagara Falls, New York more than three decades ago by some of its now long-gone residents.

The Ontario and Canadian governments appear to have “dropped the ball” on this one, Sarnia-Lampton area MPP Bob Bailey was quoted saying in the Sarnia newspaper.

Perhaps. But then maybe the governments were just hoping that few if any of us would remember Love Canal and the disaster that occurred in that hapless Niagara Falls, New York neighbourhood all these years later. After all, there is little evidence that this environmental tragedy continued to be taught to students on either side of the Canada/U.S. border in school as an object lesson in what can happen when we recklessly abuse our environment.

And there has never been any real effort to force the former Hooker Chemical Company in Niagara Falls, New York (later a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum out of Texas) to excavate the poisons they buried in an area of Niagara Falls, N.York that would later have a school and residential area built over top of it and destroy them in an incinerator nearby. Instead, most of the almost 20,000 tonnes of poisons buried in the 1940s and 50s by the company have been left where they are in a so-called “containment system” constructed in and around them in the 1980s – a short distance from a Niagara River that is an upstream source for drinking water for millions of Canadians and Americans living around Lake Ontario and further downstream around the St. Lawrence River.

It is important to know that concentrations of dioxin, mirex and other poisons from the Love Canal dump and others nearby, continue to be detected in the flesh of fish and other marine life hundreds of kilometres downstream.

So it appears that the Love Canal story has re-emerged and Niagara At Large will do its best to provide updates for our many readers.

For this aging environment reporter, it is (to quote Yankees baseball legend Yogi Berra) “like déjà vu all over again.”

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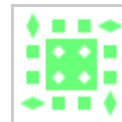
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Glad to see you back on form, Doug, with your

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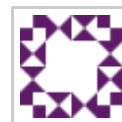
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Never trust the Ontario government on Enviro their lack of knowledge of issues. IE: Pickering generally , however, in this case, it makes abso polluted air, as it is that. I wonder why the pec issue.?

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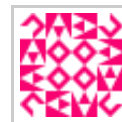
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Doug ,has enough knowledge of the Love Canal and as any body out there, and is well qualified to write a book about that subject, at that time the Province of Ontario was seeking to find a willing community to accept an open cess pool basically to dump chemicals such as the ones described dumped into the infamous Love Canal, They even wanted to use a site near Stevensville to house this toxic waste, We were saved because the NIAPENCO Authority had just mapped an area from the Niagara River , Black Creek , all of Stevensville including a swath of Welland , declaring that it was flood plain, they were using a criteria that at that time , the Province had adopted back in 1953 , based on Hurricane Hazel, The storm that hit the Don Valley and caused a huge loss of life and property.

I was part of a group that fought the Province to get the flood zone changed as basically thousands of homes were now worthless. After years of hard lobbying the Province came up with a new acceptable criteria, called a 1 in 100 year storm designation , this did make the people a lot happier , even though some areas were still declared flood plain and wetlands. The Province after trying to put the dump in Lincoln , and upsetting a lot of irate farmers, quietly let the issue fade away, meanwhile new technology was found that could safely dispose of these wastes, a company invented a closed system that broke down the elements into harmless material, This process was used by General Motors in St.Catharines to dispose of hundreds of tons, saturated sand of PCB oils. a very toxic substance. The Province known for being very hypocritical at the best of times , allowed Toronto Hydro, send thousands of gallons of used PCB oils to Quebec to be disposed of, by a mob controlled waste management corporation, the mob used to take the PCB, keep them in barrels near Smithville in an area that was fenced off, after many years the barrels started leaking, causing poisoning of the well water that Smithville depended on for drinking, Niagara Region had to provide a new safe source of water for Smithville, the owners of the dump had long



abandoned the site years before , while pocketing millions in disposal fees.

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