

Orono Weekly Times

Wednesday, January 16
Letter to Editor

Incineration

Dear Editor

Early in the 20th century it was a given that homes built close to the town's industrial facility, the local 'plant', were worth less than those a few blocks away. However, there was little understanding of the connection between the rising incidence of devalued health, and smoke stacks, chemicals, exudates, and runoff. We really do breathe, today, the air regenerated in Chernobyl yesterday.

I've given considerable thought to this issue, listening at the extremely well-attended Energy from Waste? meeting at the CAW hall last week, hearing divergent views as I question neighbours, and calling up the World Health Organization on the Web, specifically the IDEA Irish Doctors Environmental Association.

Four tons of waste produces one ton of ash, not all of which is toxic, but some surely is.

When my family moved to Orono in 1976, dear Dr. McKenzie told me (suffering from chronic sinusitis and a frequent cough) that we'd moved to one of the worst areas for chest problems in North America, a sort of cup bounded by The Lake, The Ridges and the GM plant, and that we had a higher incidence of asthma in our citizenry than normal. This view was echoed by Dr. D. Jefferson who has garnered a number of doctor's signatures in defense of an incinerator-free atmosphere. Their opinion shines a light on Preventive Medicine, an entity sorely lacking in our current health care modus operandi; as we attempt to 'cure' at vast expense what might have been stopped in its tracks with thoughtful Primary Care. The treatment of Chronic Disease is strangling our health system, which originated to fix broken legs, on-the-job injuries, appendicitis, and other acute ills.

The IDEA mentions 'burning the earth's resources instead of sharing them with future generations', 'incinerators creating their own demand', and the fact that 'incineration does not destroy municipal waste, it transforms it into emissions into the environment and converts household waste to hazardous waste'. These are not new concepts, just ideas, apparently, that the flat-earthers refuse to acknowledge. I do sympathize with our municipal representatives who would like to 'do something' to wash their hands of a topical situation.

I propose a new paradigm, necessary if we're to enjoy a planet healthy for humans in the future. We've made great progress with the 3 R's in our area; it's up to us to teach producers by our buying habits; it has to start with us. This new mind-set could begin with the clear understanding that "We are a throwaway society that has forgotten that there is no place called 'away'. Everything we do affects everyone else, unto the Third and Fourth generation?"

Yours truly,

Pat Irwin Lycett
Orono