

Company specializes in purifying water

Sandy residents invited to bring samples in tests

by JUDE RAMSAY JENSEN
Post correspondent

Water. Vital, clean, health-giving water. That was the topic under scrutiny recently at a meeting in the Community Room of the U.S. National Bank in Sandy.

Representatives of Forever Living Products, manufacturers of the ChaR/O 2000 water purification

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— John Engdall

system, invited members of the public to bring samples of their drinking water for examination. A dozen or so local citizens braved a rainstorm to attend the meeting.

Water samples first were metered to determine the total parts per million of dissolved solids, metals such as lead, mercury, sodium, chlorine, barium and arsenic. The metering showed only the presence of solids. Laboratory analysis would be needed to identify the specific metals present in any water source.

The readings of water samples from the Sandy area varied widely. The lowest reading came from the Dover area; its water had 10 parts per million of dissolved solids. A sample from the Cherryville area produced a reading of 50 ppm. The highest reading came from the Firwood area, 115 ppm. And a sample taken from the tap in the Community Room read 40 ppm. Most of the rest fell between 40 and 70 ppm.

The water was then subjected to electrolysis. Two electrically powered rods, one iron, one stainless steel, were suspended in the water. Ardelle Anderson, the company's representative from Tigard, explained the procedure.

"One rod is positively charged, the other, negatively charged, creating an electrical reaction in the water. The flow created by the negative-positive charge reacts with the total dissolved solids in the water. The more metals, the more reaction you get. The metals themselves color the water samples," she said.

Observation of the procedure supported her statement. The samples with higher meter readings bubbled ferociously, while those metered as having the fewest parts per million of dissolved solids set up practically no current at all. Colors of electrolyzed samples varied from greenish-brown to rust to dark brown. Silt particles could be seen resting on the bottom of the jar and floating on the surface of the water. Most agreed it wasn't a pretty sight.

Why the concern? First and foremost, water is vital to life. Clean water supports and sustains a healthy biological system. Contaminated water threatens the body's health, interferes with its ability to function, deposits harmful substances throughout the system and weakens its immunological responses.

Secondly, for the past decade,

there has been growing concern voiced over the use and handling of chemicals and hazardous wastes as regards America's aquifers, the vast caches of water that lie beneath the surface of the ground in strata of permeable gravel, sand and rock. America's underground aquifers hold five times more water than all measurable surface water sources, but unlike surface water, which relies on evaporation and filtration to eliminate many contaminants, contaminated aquifers are nearly impossible to clean up.

According to a videotape shown at the meeting, titled "Poison on Tap," a 1984 documentary, the problem of contaminated water is widespread, threatening all of America's water sources, most notably the subterranean aquifers. The Pacific Northwest houses one of the nation's largest aquifers.

The film noted that the sources of contamination are many. Acid rain drives airborne pollutants back to earth and into the soil where they eventually reach the aquifers. Acid rain also has a caustic reaction on the naturally occurring aluminum in the earth's crust (5 percent of the earth's crust is composed of aluminum), leaching aluminum into the underground waterways.

Hazardous wastes buried in the soil leak toxins into the water strata. Pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers are spread on the surface of farmlands and forests at the rate of millions of pounds per year, and find their way into the underground water sources. The film mentioned that an estimated 500,000 domestic American households are drinking water unfit to swim in, and as many as 13,600 municipal water systems in America may be contaminated.

There may be other concerns about our area water that residents should be aware of. John Engdall, independent distributor for Forever Living Products in Sandy, said, "I'm concerned because there are a lot of insecticides and pesticides being used in this area, as well as nitrates from fertilizers. All of them can easily move down into our water strata."

"Acid rain coming down in the Mount Hood watershed moves contaminants into our area," he continued.

"One of the other concerns involving acid rain was the Chernobyl accident. And there may be innumerable other chemicals harmful to our water. We also have so many uncontrolled hazardous waste dumps in this area that eventually those substances work down into the aquifers."

A map of Oregon's abandoned hazardous waste disposal sites issued by OSPIRG — Oregon State Public Interest Research Group — showed 95 percent of the state's known, abandoned dump sites are located in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

What about chlorination? Chlorine has been used since early in this century as a water treatment agent. But chlorine, according to Jeffrey Bland, a consultant for Forever Living Products, "...has no significant impact upon the elimination of the major pollutant families, i.e., organic substances; inorganic chemicals such as lead, mercury and cadmium; radioactive particles; or physical



John Engdall, Ardelle Anderson and Dave Blount check results of electrolysis on water samples from the Sandy area.

Photo by Jude Ramsay Jensen

agents such as asbestos or biological contaminants."

He further explained that when water systems are already contaminated with organic matter, chlorinating them will result in a secondary chemical reaction, "producing new chemicals called trihalomethanes (THMs), substances such as chloroform and trichloroethylene, both shown to be carcinogenic and mutagens (capable of producing genetic change)."

What can be done to insure a safe supply of drinking water? "It's up to the individual to take care of the problem at the point of use," Engdall said. "We can't expect the government to do anything about it."

Indeed, throughout the film viewed at the meeting, congressmen, doctors and scientists kept repeating the same message: a water reclamation project of the scope necessary to deal with the problem nationwide would be an expensive proposition for the government. It is left to the individual to purify his or her own drinking water at the tap.

Of the several kinds of water purification systems available, according to the company's literature, types using a combination of reverse osmosis and carbon (charcoal) filtration have been shown to be the most efficient.

In reverse osmosis, pressurized water passes through a semipermeable membrane. Water, calcium, magnesium, iron and potassium molecules continue through the system to be filtered through charcoal.

Reverse osmosis filtering removes chemicals, metals, bacteria and parasites, according to company literature. Charcoal filtration takes care of chlorine, THMs, coliform and other substances.

The ChaR/O 2000 system uses both reverse osmosis and a double-activated charcoal filter, one granular and one solid block.

"What emerges," Engdall said, "is plain, high quality drinking water."

Forever Living Products will discuss its water purification system at 7 p.m. on Jan. 21 at the U.S. National Bank, 38561 Proctor Blvd. A presentation is also planned for 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Lions Club building in Wemme.

Community theater needs performers

The Sandy Community Players group is searching for performers to complete the cast for its production of "On the Verge of Becoming an Angel."

Parts for two male roles and one female role have yet to be cast for the two-part drama, which depicts the

thoughts and emotions of Mark Twain as seen through the eyes of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer.

A 17- to 23-year-old black male is needed to play the part of Jim. And a 25- to 60-year-old white male is needed to play the part of a lawyer.

An 18- to 25-year-old female is needed to play the part of Olivia

Langdon Clemens.

For more information, write the Sandy Community Players, attention "Mark Twain," Box 221, Sandy, 97055. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The play will run April 25 at 8 p.m. and April 26 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Square Theater.

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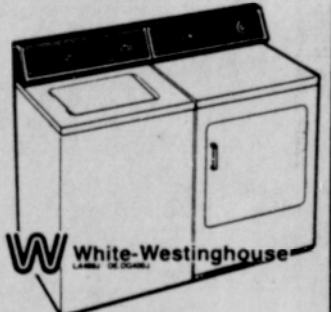
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