

# Written reports confirm no contamination in two wells

By Dotti Farrington

Written reports from two independent laboratories confirmed this week that the Willis' private water well is free of cobalt. Other reports newly received say that one other well is clean of pollutants, but two other wells remain contaminated by copper or lead. The four wells are on private properties near the former town landfill site on North Main Road.

Tests of the four wells were ordered by the state Department of Environmental Management in conjunction with town plans to build a town highway barn on the landfill site when it officially closes the landfill.

The written reports were received this week by Town Manager Bruce Keiser and were to be relayed by him to GeoEnvironmental GZA of Norwood, Mass., the town consulting engineer and the residents involved.

Last week, Keiser advised the Town Council as well as Norma and Philip Willis of reports he had received by telephone that retesting showed their water was free of cobalt. Their well water was retested in Missouri for the three types of cobalt and in Connecticut for radioactivity. All tests showed that no cobalt was detected and the report indicated the well water is safe to drink.

The written report forwarded to the Willis couple said that the original result was an incorrect reading due to "human error (that) occurred while the laboratory analyst was transcribing the numerical findings from the instrument to the computer system which generates the analytical testing report. The results should have been reported as non-detected. We recognize that the initial report has resulted in undue concerns and we sincerely apologize for this. We are satisfied that the expanded testing supports the revised initial finding on non-detected (contaminants) for this compound in your water," according to GZA.

### Other wells

The well water at the Halstead well was retested for lead, found in the first tests to be above safe drinking limits. The lead levels have gone down to safe levels, and cannot be detected at the tap location, according to GZA. The Halstead water treatment system seems to adequately remove "the contaminant," GZA said.

Two of the four private wells on North Main Road in the landfill area remain polluted. One on the King property is contaminated by lead and copper, and the well on the Infantolino parcel is contaminated by lead. Both property owners were told the test levels were "above the federal safe drinking water standard" and "your untreated water is not suitable for consumption without prior appropriate treatment."

### GZA airing

As pleased as everyone was about the new test results, some councilors and residents asked why the lab worker's supervisors did not trace the mistake immediately before the reports were filed. They said the high test results should have immediately triggered the major review that eventually led to finding the error.

This week Keiser said that using his administrative authority he directed GZA to use an independent laboratory instead of its own lab facilities for tests it conducts for the town in the future.

Last week, the councilors agreed to review GZA's work, possibly at their April 10 meeting. Councilor Barbara Szeptowski specified she wanted to determine why "we should not replace that project manager (at GZA who) brings about such questions and fears in this severe, severe, really severe issue."

### State report

The DEM, which ordered the well testing in the landfill area, is



### Home again

The ospreys last week returned to their nest at Marsh Meadows. The first order of business was building a nest on the new nesting platform. Photo by Deb Seger-Pini

scheduled to give its evaluation on the 50-percent-complete plans for the landfill closure and the highway barn siting. Preliminary reports say that the proposed waterline through the old trash heap will not be allowed. All landfill debris that may need to be excavated for any construction must be removed from the site, and the floor drains for the barn need to be more detailed, according to preliminary reports.

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### LEGAL TIP

A policeman who reported to the scene of an auto accident and was struck by another vehicle there was prohibited from recovering damages from the first driver by the "fireman's rule," the Utah Court of Appeals has ruled.

The plaintiff sued the first driver, claiming that his negligence was the proximate cause of the plaintiff's injuries.

The "policeman's or fireman's rule" stands for the law that precludes a professional rescue from recovering damages for injuries sustained while responding to an emergency from the person causing the crisis.



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She was a dear friend,  
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who taught us,  
among other things,  
the true meaning  
of courage.  
She will be  
deeply missed.