

# Genoa Township Newsletter

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## **Alert - Lead Poisoning - An Increasing Danger by paulette skolarus**

Until recently it was assumed that paint was the primary source of lead poisoning in children. While paint is still a source of this disease, plastic mini-blinds have been identified as containing dangerous levels of lead. County Health Departments have linked children's lead poisoning to plastic mini-blinds from Taiwan, China, and Mexico. These mini-blinds are very popular and currently being sold in discount stores, home improvement stores, and shopping catalogues nationwide (some without a brand name).

Small children tend to put everything into their mouth, which puts them at the highest risk. Even if they do not put the blinds into their mouth just touching them will expose them to the lead, when they put their hands into their mouths or eat after touching the blinds. If you are uncertain, test your blinds. Lead testing kits are available locally. If in fact you find that your mini-blinds do contain lead, experts recommend that you remove them. Just don't put them in a garage sale where another child could fall victim.

### Statistics

Lead poisoning is entirely preventable, yet it is the most common environmental disease of young children. One in six children under age six in the United States has enough lead in their blood to place them in what scientists consider high risk poisoning. Sadly, the only cure for lead poisoning is prevention.

Lead that is absorbed into a child's brain remains there forever. The first step in prevention is to test for the presence of lead in the home and then have your children seen by a doctor.

### Lead Poisoning

#### What you can do

- Get your child tested.
- Keep play areas, toys, floors and hands clean.
- Prevent your child from chewing on anything covered with lead paint.
- Make sure that your home is lead free by checking window sills, furniture, toys, cribs, mini-blinds, etc.
- Don't remove lead paint yourself; use a qualified professional to do the work.
- Get the lead out of your drinking water or at least have it tested by the Livingston County Health Dept.
- Eat right by eating foods rich in iron and calcium.

The effects of lead poisoning are Reading and Learning Disabilities, Speech and

Language Handicaps, Lowered I.Q., Neurological Deficits, Behavior Problems, Mental Retardation, Kidney Disease, Heart Disease, Stroke and sometimes Death.

### **We Get Letters**

To the Genoa Township Board:

I have lived in Genoa Township nearly 5 years and moved here for the country like setting. Grand River used to have vacant/wooded property that was enjoyable to drive by. Now we have Meijer, Wal-Mart-, Home Depot and too many fast food places.

If you visit West Bloomfield they maintain a rural environment, with wooded lots and it is beautiful! That is why the wealthy live there. If you really are working for the people of Genoa, we don't want this growth. We want you to say NO. You cannot honestly think this is good for us nor is it beautiful.

Why do we need a Super Wal-Mart across from a Meijer? Why do we need KFC in Brighton City and Genoa Township? Why allow St. Joseph to build and remove a golf course? Why did you allow a huge shopping mess across from Latson Elementary School? Don't you think about safety? You are not doing what the people of this community want. Do what the taxpayers want.

From talking to other parents, especially regarding the Meijer situation, the residents know that you don't listen to us. So stop and listen now before it is too late. Take a drive down Grand River and really look with your eyes and remember what it really looked like five or more years ago. There is still time to stop this madness. The time is NOW.

Signed  
A Genoa Township Resident

Response:

Dear Resident,  
I will tell you that we feel the same as you do. We don't want to lose all of that beautiful open space along Grand River. The fact of the matter is that any person who owns land has a right to develop that property and we cannot just say NO.

We have one of the strictest zoning ordinances in the state and we can only do the best that we can under the law. We don't want to open the township to lawsuits by denying all those developments that you mentioned in your correspondence. That is what is happening in other communities and their residents end up paying the cost. They pay the cost because the courts settle on behalf of the landowner. The cost of the lawsuit and all damages are then assessed against the residents of the community that said NO.

Our township-zoning ordinance is on the web and I would ask you to read through that document. You mentioned West Bloomfield - our planners have advised us that our ordinance is just as strict as West Bloomfield. If you can tell us how to make it better we would be glad to discuss your ideas with the township planning commission and planners so that those ideas could be incorporated into our zoning ordinance. We need and want your input.

Signed  
Your Genoa Township Board

NOTE: This letter and our response are provided in an effort to better understand the working of the township and the responsibilities of your elected officials as well as their limitations. We do not get many letters questioning our decisions, however, we feel that there is a perception within the community that we are not doing all that we can to limit development. The primary beneficiary of commercial and industrial development is our local school districts. Tax dollars are provided with literally no impact to the school population. Mr. Rick Terres of Howell Public Schools recently complimented the Genoa Township Board on the development along Grand River and the increased revenue to their district.

**We are working hard to protect your drinking water by paulette skolarus**

The source of municipal water serving Genoa Township's drinking water needs is water contained beneath the ground, hence groundwater. Observing potential sources of contamination, such as land-use activities, within what has been delineated as the "wellhead protection area" is protecting this area.

Livingston County and Township officials are working together to build a "wellhead protection area" to monitor and manage that groundwater. The wellhead protection area includes the wellfields and the recharge areas that contribute to replenishing water from the surface back to the ground.

Genoa Township and MHOG have established a wellhead protection area for the water supply system that operates from the wellfield in Marion and Howell Townships. A perimeter was investigated around the well field called "The Ten Year Delineation Zone". This means that contaminants water captured at the boundary of the capture zone would take approximately ten years to travel

through the groundwater to reach the well fields.

While the aspect of this application may appear simple, it is far from being so. The goals of the wellhead protection program are to complete a comprehensive groundwater protection plan that address the following:

- Delineate the Wellhead Protection Area for the Ten Year Capture Zone
- Identify and Inventory Potential Sources of Contamination
- Develop Management Approaches for Wellhead Protection
- Establish contingency Planning for a Water Supply Emergency
- Siting of New Wells for Population Growth or Replacement
- Establish Public Participation, Agency Duties, and Public Authority

This program has been started to give the community the advantage of building a proactive program that corrects problems before they occur, with the final objective to protect drinking water quality. Potential sources of contamination, therefore, are managed using best management practices that will minimize threats to the public water supply.

While community wells are important, your home's on-site well should also be evaluated for possible sources of contamination. Do you store gas, used oil, or other household hazardous waste near your wellhead? Do you apply fertilizers to your lawn?

Remember...What you put on or into the ground may eventually filter into your drinking water supply.

(For more information regarding wellhead protection programs, please contact Roger Andrews at the Livingston County Health Department: 517-546-9858, ext. 523.)