

'I lived near a landfill'

By **Scott Bushweller**

My wife and I moved to Long Island in 1997 and we had to find an inexpensive apartment to live in for two years while she was in school. We looked in many towns and were very frustrated by the high priced rentals. Finally, we found an inexpensive rental apartment and signed the two year lease.

On the first hot and humid day we discovered why the apartments in the area were inexpensive. There was a foul odor coming from the Brookhaven Landfill in the next town over. We got in the car and drove east on the Long Island Expressway and within a minute we saw the massive mountain of garbage. There were trucks and bulldozers going up and down the huge landfill along with hundreds of seagulls flying around the landfill looking for a meal. All along the highway were plastic bags and garbage that had blown off the grounds of the landfill and also fallen off the garbage trucks on their way to the landfill.

As time passed and I provided home care physical therapy to residents in the area, I saw how depressed the area was and unsafe to live due to the high crime rate. The people to whom I provided homecare physical therapy around the area often complained of the smell, increased number of rats/rodents in the area and garbage all around from the landfill and the garbage trucks on the road. One of the most disturbing aspects of this landfill was the arrests and convictions for illegal dumping. Once it has been put in there is no way to take it out.

I agree that Chittenden County needs to find a way to manage its own waste, but not at the expense of human health and the environ-

ment of Williston. The current site is a poor location for the following reasons: 1) It is uphill from the Winooski River which empties into Lake Champlain;

2) There are many neighborhoods within close proximity; 3) The 2000 Wendell Ford Aviation Act states that landfills should be six miles from an airport if over 50 percent of commercial airplanes arriving/departing are 60 seats or less. Burlington International Airport is well over this percentage, not including private airplanes. Imagine a small plane filled with men, women and children arriving over Taft Corners and crashing due to a flock of birds heading towards the landfill to get food.

My question to the entire Chittenden Solid Waste District Board is are they willing to go on record stating that for years and decades to come the following will not happen: 1) The landfill will not leak toxic chemicals into the ground nor will it emit toxic vapors into the air; 2) People will not become ill from this landfill; 3) Birds that are attracted to this landfill will not cause an airplane to crash.

It amazes me with everything we know now regarding landfills that the District continues to push for the Redmond Road landfill site. It is obvious that this landfill is being pushed forward for financial reasons.

Any person with a respect for human life and preservation of our beautiful environment would morally and ethically say, "times have changed significantly since the 1992 host town agreement and for the sake of the men, women and children of Williston we have decided to no longer continue with the Redmond Road site."

Scott Bushweller lives in Williston.