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Please see SPECTER, page

# Cleanup will have water being sucked out of Olean Creek

By JOHN T. EBERTH

The Times Herald

OLEAN — Three thousands tons of contaminated dirt and silt are scheduled to be hauled out of the Olean Creek next week.

Last October, the state Department of Environmental Conservation attempted to clean up an 810-foot-long section of the west bank of the Olean Creek, but were forced to stop after heavy rains increased the amount of water in the creek.

"Back in October we had about 150,000 gallons per minute coming through here, now it's down to 20 to 40,000 gallons per minute," said Kevin Glaser, a Department of Environmental Conservation construction inspector.

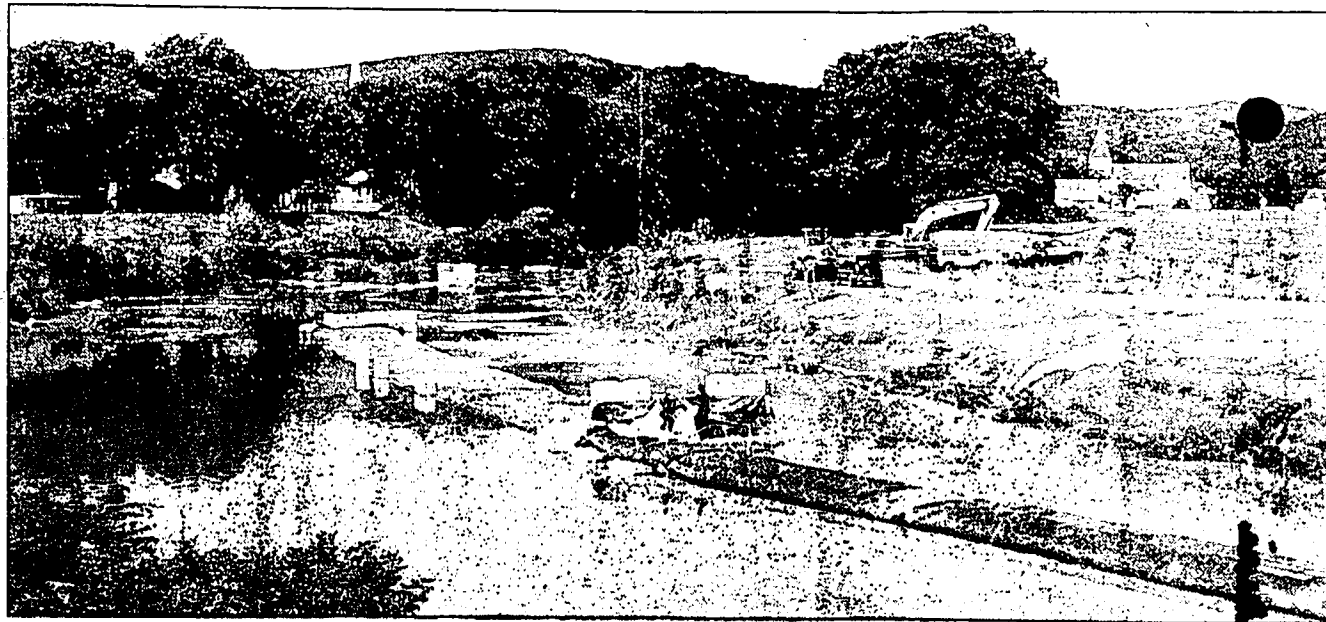
The bank is contaminated by heavy metals dumped into the creek by the former Van der Horst Plant No. 1 on Pennsylvania Avenue. The cleanup is part of a state Superfund cleanup of that plant and Plant 2, located off Johnson Street. The project has been ongoing since 1990.

Mr. Glaser said a rubber dam in the center of the creek will be used to clear the contaminated area of water. The dam will enclose the 810-foot-long contaminated area and the water will be pumped out.

A large vacuum cleaner will be used to suck up silt from the bottom of the west side of the creek bed, down to 18 inches.

Allstate Power Vac. Inc. of Linden, N.J., is doing the cleanup work.

The west bank of the creek was contaminated between 1941 and 1957 by chrome-plating operations at Van der



Workers are building a portable dam in the center of the Olean Creek so contaminated soil and sediment can be removed from the creek bed and shore.

Horst. The company discharged liquid waste into a city storm sewer which emptied into the creek, downstream from the city's water filtration plant.

Mr. Glaser said the silt and soil will be hauled away from the site to a toxic waste landfill.

"It will take probably two weeks to vacuum up the sediment," Mr. Glaser said, adding the crews should be done by the end of September.

New York state has spent roughly \$12 million cleaning up the two Van der Horst plants.

DARRELL GRONEMEIER/Times Herald

**BUSINESS:** Future owner of WMNS/WMXO awaits FCC approval/A-7

# THE TIMES HERALD

THURSDAY, March 13, 1997

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**LIBRARY TALK:** Olean businessman Erick Laine will talk at the Olean library March 20 about his father's book that documents his experiences in a Russian work camp in the 1930s. **PAGE A-2.**

## Van der Horst contamination deepens

*More hazardous waste discovered beneath ground water in North Olean neighborhood*

By **JOHN T. EBERTH**

□ *The Times Herald*

OLEAN — Greg Sutton thought he'd be wrapping up the cleanup at Van der Horst plant No. 1 this summer.

Then some test wells were drilled on the former plant site off Pennsylvania Avenue and Mr. Sutton, project engineer for the state team cleaning up the site, found something unexpected.

"When we got down past the ground water, we found what we call a monolith of chromium conta-

mination," Mr. Sutton told aldermen Wednesday. "It's very, very hazardous."

The plants and the area around them were contaminated between 1941 and 1987 by chrome-plating operations at the plants. In 1967, the Cattaraugus County Health Department advised residents living around plant No. 1 to stop drinking water from their wells.

In 1987 the plant closed and the sites were placed on the state's Inactive Hazardous Waste Site list.

For the past two years, engineers have been cleaning up the

Van der Horst plant No. 1 site off Pennsylvania Avenue. Soil and buildings contaminated with chromium (a poisonous heavy metal) have been removed and hauled away or sealed in a dump on the property. Mr. Sutton said 6,000 tons of hazardous waste and soil have been taken from the site.

Mr. Sutton said the new area of chromium contamination is below the water table and is 60 feet by 40 feet and at least 15 feet in depth. Engineers haven't drilled all the way through the contaminated area yet.

The reason the state didn't detect the contamination during testing in the early 1990s was that a building was over the site, preventing a drilling rig from being used. That building has since been brought down.

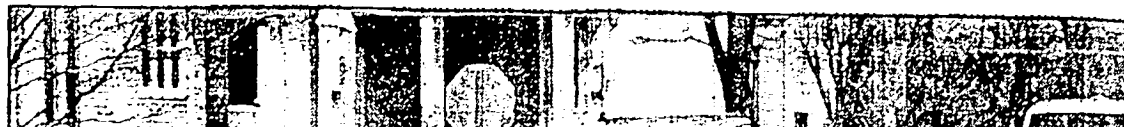
Mr. Sutton said the state has to contain or remove the contamination, but the agency isn't sure how to do that. He said it may be possible to inject material into the soil to seal the contamination in place, or the area may need to be excavated. The contamination begins 24 feet below the ground.

"We're estimating there's 3,000 tons of it," Mr. Sutton said of the contamination. "We're, at this point, taking a step back and evaluating what we're going to do."

He said he expects the state to have a plan to deal with the new contamination by this time next year.

Mr. Sutton said the state has spent approximately \$5½ million already cleaning up Van der Horst Plant No. 1. The agency plans to do another \$6 million cleanup at the former Van der Horst plant No. 2 site off Johnson Street.

### A moo-ving experience



## County opens home health care services

Tomorrow's Temperatures

HIGH

45

# Creek soil dumped in Hinsdale not hazardous

By JOHN T. EBERTH

The Times Herald

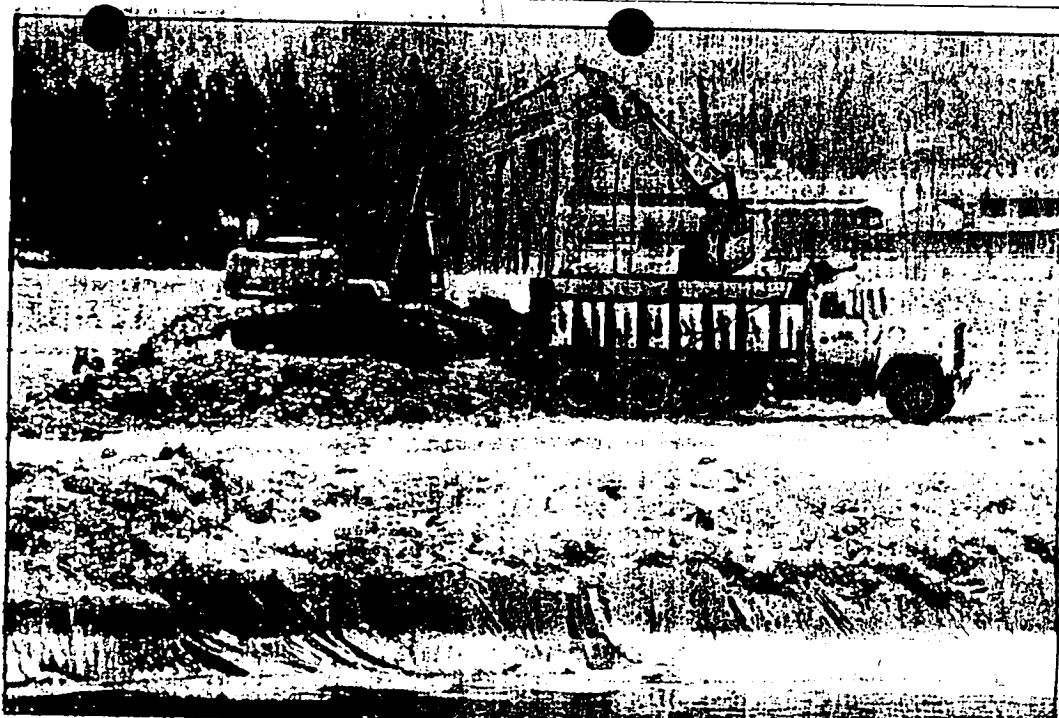
OLEAN — Work has begun again at the Olean Creek cleanup site and that work has some Hinsdale residents concerned that hazardous waste from the creek is being dumped off Gile Hollow Road in Hinsdale.

Not so, said Greg Sutton, project manager for the Department of Environmental Conservation's Van der Horst cleanup. While dump trucks are taking soil from the site to a deposit site in Hinsdale, that soil is not part of the contaminated material being removed from the creek.

Mr. Sutton's team is working to remove 3,000 tons of chromium-contaminated dirt and silt out of the creek as part of the \$12 million Van der Horst cleanup.

The contaminated soil and silt is concentrated along the northwest bank, or Boardman Park side, of the creek, downstream from where a conduit from the Van der Horst plant No. 1 discharged water laden with the contaminants.

THE SOIL BEING hauled out by Wayne Paving and Contracting of Shinglehouse, Pa., is along the northeast bank of the creek and



Removal of silt from the banks of the Olean Creek started late last week.

BILL MUELLER/Times Herald

is not contaminated, Mr. Sutton said. However it had to be hauled out due to flooding danger.

"We contracted with Wayne Paving & Contracting to remove a sandbar that had built up and restricted the creek's flow," Mr. Sutton said. "We had been requiring the contractor to remove it because it's sitting in the flood plain itself on the inside of the levy. It could cause flooding in the spring."

"We tested the soil they're hauling, it's clean and shouldn't cause a problem."

Wayne Stephen, owner of Wayne Paving and Contracting, said his company is only supplying the trucks to haul the silt; they're

not doing any digging at the site. That job is being handled by the Department of Environmental Conservation's main contractor, Allstate Power Vac Inc. of Linden, N.J.

Mr. Stephen said his company is hauling the soil for fill to a private residence off Gile Hollow Road.

In November, Department of Environmental Conservation hazardous cleanup crews halted cleanup work at the creek due to poor weather.

The creek cleanup is only part of the project to clean up pollution from Van der Horst plants no. 1 and no 2, which from 1941 to 1975 operated chrome plating plants.

# 'English Patient' gets 12 Oscar nods; Madonna snubbed

By LYNN ELBER

The Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — The romantic epic "The English Patient" received a leading 12 nominations today, including best picture, for the Academy Awards. Madonna's effort in "Evita" was passed over.

Other best picture contenders were "Fargo," "Secrets & Lies," "Shine," and the only big-studio product among the five, "Jerry Maguire."

"Fargo" and "Shine" had seven nominations apiece, while "Jerry Maguire" and "Secrets & Lies" each got five.

Best actor nominees included Ralph Fiennes for "The English Patient," Tom Cruise for "Jerry Maguire," Woody Harrelson for "The People vs. Larry Flynt," Geoffrey Rush for "Shine," and Billy Bob Thornton for "Slade Blade."

Top actress contenders were Kristin Scott Thomas for "The



Tom Cruise earned a Best Actor nomination for "Jerry Maguire."

English Patient," Brenda Blethyn for "Secrets & Lies," Diane Keaton for "Marvin's Room," Frances McDormand for "Fargo" and Emily Watson for "Breaking the Waves."

CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT from the actress nominations was Madonna for her performance in "Evita." Debbie Reynolds was also forgotten by the academy for her role in "Mother."

The controversial film "The People vs. Larry Flynt," about the life of the Hustler sex magazine publisher, didn't receive a best picture nod, but saw its director Milos Forman nominated as well as its star.

Forman, a two-time winner, competes for the best director Oscar with Anthony Minghella for "The English Patient," Joel Coen for "Fargo," Mike Leigh for "Secrets & Lies" and Scott Hicks for "Shine."

SUPPORTING actor contenders were Cuba Gooding Jr. for "Jerry Maguire," William H. Macy for "Fargo," Armin Mueller-Stahl for "Shine," Edward Norton for "Primal Fear" and James Woods for "Ghosts of Mississippi."

In the supporting actress category were Lauren Bacall for "The Mirror Has Two Faces," Juliette Binoche for "The English Patient,"

Barbara Hershey for "The Portrait of a Lady," Joan Allen for "The Crucible" and Marianne Jean-Baptiste for "Secrets & Lies."

Foreign language film nominees were "A Chef in Love," the former Soviet Union republic of Georgia; "Kolya," the Czech Republic; "The Other Side of Sunday," Norway; "Prisoner of the Mountains," Russia; and "Ridicule," France.

The nominations were announced during a pre-dawn ceremony at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences headquarters in Beverly Hills. Awards will be given out March 24 during an ABC-TV broadcast at the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium. Billy Crystal will be host.

In addition to best picture, director and three acting nominations, "The English Patient" also got nominations for adapted screenplay, original dramatic score, cinematography, art direction, costume design, film editing and sound.

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# Chromium-contaminated soil to be hauled from Olean Creek

*Effort is part of continuing cleanup from Van der Horst discharge*

By JOHN T. EBERTH

□ The Times Herald

OLEAN — About 3,000 tons of dirt and silt will be hauled out of Olean Creek during the next month as part of the continuing Van der Horst toxic waste cleanup.

Since early 1990 the state Department of Environmental Conservation has been working on a \$12 million cleanup of the former Van der Horst plants No. 1 and No. 2 off Pennsylvania Avenue and Johnson Street in the city.

Workers recently completed the construction of a hazardous waste containment dump at the plant No. 2 site. Chromium-contaminated soil and silt were gathered at the site off Johnson Street and formed into a mound, which was then capped to keep rainwater from percolating through the dirt and leaching contamination into Olean's groundwater. Building the dump completed the state's work at plant No. 2.

Kevin Glaser, a construction inspector with the DEC, said during the next phase of the cleanup an 810-foot-long section of the west bank of Olean Creek will be excavated and hauled to a waste dump.

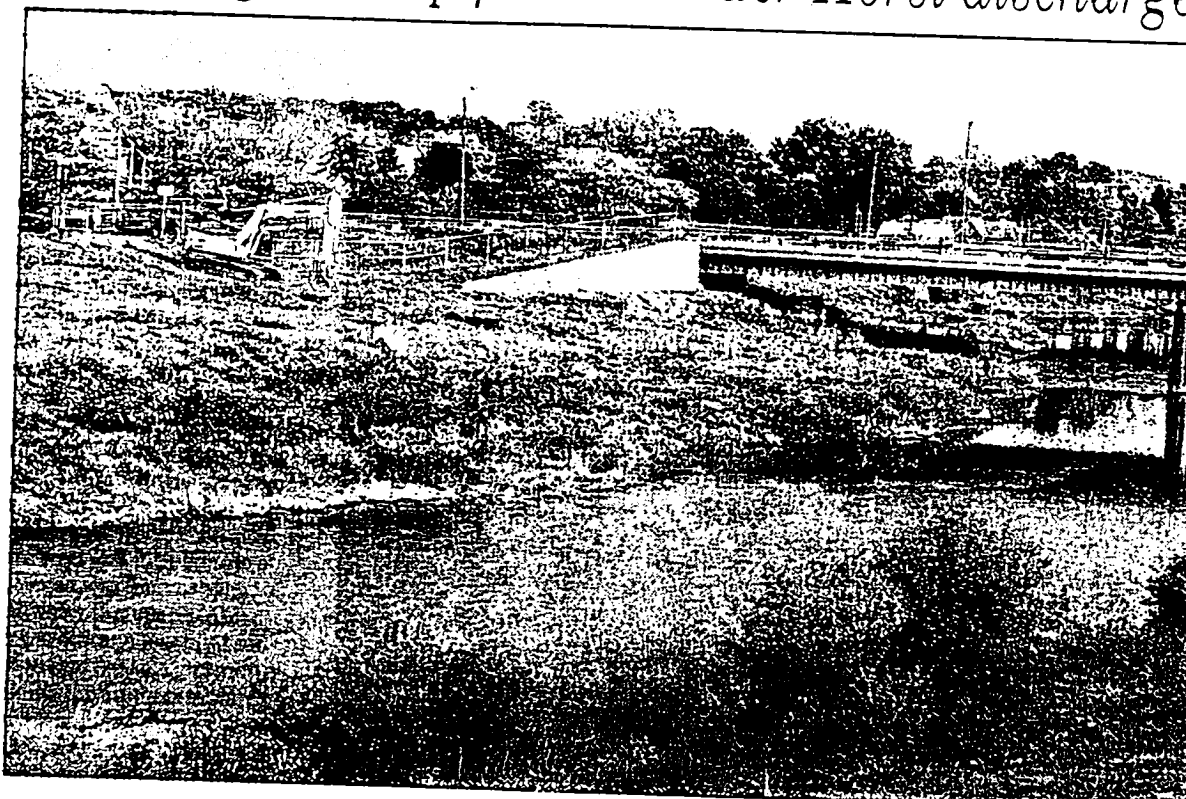
"During the next couple of days we're going to be building access roads," Mr. Glaser said Wednesday.

The access road will go over the flood control berm near the Olean Times Herald building and 84 Lumber, he said.

"In a week we'll probably be in the creek putting up dams," he said. Contractors will use high-tech vacuum cleaners to suck silt from the bottom of the creek.

Mr. Glaser said both the soil on the west bank of the creek and silt along the bottom of the creek have been found to have "elevated" levels of chromium, a known carcinogen.

Allstate Power Vac. Inc. of Linden, N.J., is doing the work. Gary Sutton,



Backhoes are being used to build access roads for hauling away the dirt and silt.

DARRELL GRONEMEIER/Times H

DEC project manager for the Van der Horst site, said work should be done by Christmas in Olean Creek, but he warned that bad weather could push that schedule back.

The soil and silt were contaminated from 1941 to 1957 by chrome-plating operations at Van der Horst plant No. 1 off Pennsylvania Avenue. The plant discharged liquid waste into a city storm sewer that led to Olean Creek.

Olean Public Works Director Peter Marcus said luckily the storm drain discharged the waste downstream from the city's water filtration plant, otherwise city drinking water would have become contaminated.

Mr. Glaser said contractors working for the state will cut out a section of the west bank of the creek 5 feet

wide and 18 inches deep for the entire 810-foot length of the contaminated area, from the storm drain to within 15 feet of the Route 16 bridge over the creek.

Earlier this week Van der Horst cleanup work in Two Mile Creek off Constitution Avenue was completed.

Mr. Sutton said roughly 700 tons of chromium-contaminated soil were hauled out of Two Mile Creek and taken to the CID landfill in Chaffee for disposal.

"We detected higher than background levels of chromium in the area near the former railroad yard," Mr. Sutton said of the cleanup off Constitution Avenue. "We did the excavation primarily because it (chromium levels) exceeded the cleanup guidelines for fish and animals."

Mr. Sutton also said that water collecting between the containment dump at plant No. 2 and the Route 16 expressway isn't causing any problems.

The mound and the water collecting near it can be seen by eastbound motorists on Route 17 just after they pass the Buffalo Street on-ramp.

"That material (in the dump) is above the water level," Mr. Sutton said. He said state wildlife biologists recently reacted favorably when a family of ducks took up residence on the water near the dump.

The state has placed several testing wells near the mound and will test soil and water from the area four times each year to determine if the dump is leaking contamination into the surrounding environment.