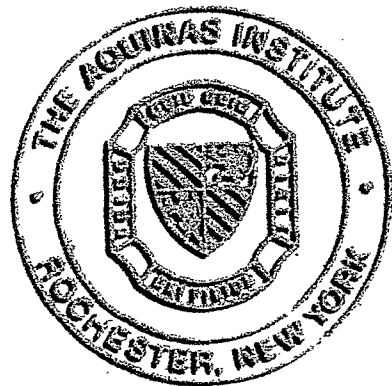


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Interfaith group fighting dumping

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Members of Interfaith Action and Rochester's Most Precious Blood Parish are calling on the City of Rochester to halt its plans to dump what they call "contaminated" soil in a landfill on the city's west side.

Edward Doherty, commissioner of environmental services for the City of Rochester, said the soil has been tested and is not hazardous.

The 25,000 cubic feet of dirt originally came from a parking-lot renovation project near Lake Ontario in Charlotte, Doherty said. After being removed, the soil was mistakenly dumped in the Town of Greece, and Greece officials have asked that it be removed, he said. The city plans to dump the soil in a former landfill, which is located behind both Edison Technical and Occupational Center's sports field and a lot where school buses are routinely parked. Doherty said that the dumping is expected to take six weeks, and that the city's dumping plan must be approved by state environmental officials.

Members of Interfaith Action, a federation of churches, businesses and other organizations, held a rally Oct. 11 at Most Precious Blood Church to voice concerns about the proposed dumping. Prior to the rally, Bernadine Gordon, a Most Precious Blood parishioner, and her daughter, Maureen Shepard, said they and their neighbors oppose the proposed dumping and learned of it not from the city, but from a television-news report.

"It's almost like they think it's the edge of the city so just dump it,"

Gordon said of city officials. "There was no regard for the people who live here and the businesses that are here."

According to Interfaith Action, neighbors are concerned that contaminated dust will float across Edison, the school buses, homes and businesses; that the soil contains arsenic, barium and other toxic materials; that the city's plans to wash down every truck after every trip to the landfill is a sign of the soil's contamination; and that people with respiratory problems will be adversely affected by the dumping. Additionally, Interfaith Action said that neighbors are also concerned about the dump trucks that will be driving through the neighborhood.

However, Doherty said the neighbors' fears are not based on facts.

"I want to make it clear that the material is certainly not harmful in any way," Doherty said. He added that the levels of toxic materials in the soil should not be a cause for concern.

"There's more arsenic in any apple field than will be left at (the landfill)," he said, adding that any soil found to have unacceptable levels of toxic material will be removed from the site. Doherty also said the city will continually monitor the air quality around the site. He said that the trucks carrying the soil must be washed after each trip to prevent soil from caking; and that the trucks will be taking a route to the site that is some distance from any residences.

"There are ways of doing this to make it safe, and we intend on doing it," Doherty said.

Father Richard Kraft, SVD, 81

Father Richard Kraft, a Divine Word missionary for 48 years, died Oct. 2, 2003, at the Divine Word Residence in Techy, Ill. He was 81.

Father Kraft was born in Rochester and attended St. Charles Borromeo School and Aquinas Institute, both in Rochester. He served in the South Pacific as an aerial gunner in the Army Air Force during World War II. After attending the University of Notre Dame for two years, he entered the Society of the Divine Word Seminary in Techy in 1947 and was ordained in 1955. His service as a missionary in the Philippine Islands for 44 years included

assignments as director of diocesan radio stations and seminary formation work. He returned to the U.S. and retired in 2000.

Surviving Father Kraft are his sisters, Bernice Conover and Marian Smith, both of Rochester; and his brothers, Donald of Enfield, N.Y., and James of Rochester.

His funeral liturgy was celebrated at the Divine Word Residence with burial in the community's cemetery.

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