



BELLEVUE, PA

KEN HOLMES

CONCERNS



ODORS



QUALITY OF LIFE



STRESS



SOOT

HEALTH EFFECTS



ASTHMA

I moved to Bellevue in 2004 when I bought my house here. It kind of reminds me of the small town I grew up in. I got tired of having to drive everywhere, of not being able to just walk. I like the house where I live because I have a view of the Ohio River in the winter. It's about a quarter mile to the river and I like walking there.

When Shenango was operating it was dirty. I would have to clean soot off of my windows and porch furniture constantly. It looked like 1940's/1930's industrial Pittsburgh. I felt like it's necessary for jobs and other things but it shouldn't be as harmful as it's allowed to be. It's an antiquated plant operating under antiquated rules. Knowing that the plant was there and that there was constant fall-out from smoke, to me it was just stressful. **The people that lived here in that smoke, especially the kids, are suffering from it every single day.**

When I moved here my two sons were living with me. My oldest son has a mild case of asthma. When he was in Columbus he would visit and every time he would come home he would start having respiratory problems, congestion and breathing prob-

lems. It just baffled me that every time he came home he suffered from these problems, so I'm thinking finally that it may be the Shenango Plant. I'm anxious for him to come home and to see what the results are after the plant closed.

Since the plant has shut down it's as if the stress has lifted. There has been a big change to the quality of life. I don't have to feel guilty about having the doors and windows open anymore. **People say that to avoid indoor air pollution all you have to do is open your windows but here if you opened your windows you were letting in worse pollution than was inside but not anymore.**

I have been involved with an environmental community group here for years now. Recently I became involved again because I heard about a

meeting and I stopped by to see that there was a new group of people who were really passionate and serious about change.

I remember a community meeting with the Health Department and they were giving us a tutorial on coke making, as if everyone wanted to know how to make coke because Shenango was in the community. **The longer I sat there listening, the angrier I got about the problem Shenango was having with their equipment not working properly.**

And there was the Health Department official, as if they were a representative of the company, trying to dissuade everyone's anger. At that point I said, "They're violating the rules. They're out of control. Their plant is not working as efficiently as it should." I simply asked if they had the power and authority to shut them down. They wouldn't answer the question, and I asked two or three more times. I sensed in the audience that they were thinking I was going too far in the way I was asking the question. "They're here to help us, right?" What I was seeing was that they were not here to help us. They were here to help themselves.

It was a complete surprise when I heard on the radio that Shenango was closing. I think that everyone in Bellevue, especially the political people, should look at that as a momentous day in the life in the North Boroughs. There's no accumulation of particles and soot in my windowsills. It is nothing like what it was before, where every few days you have a buildup of soot in your house. It had vastly improved.

According to DTE, it was a business downturn, just a lack of demand for their product. I have no reason to believe that that's not true. I'd like to think that whatever we did may have had something to do with it. The point is, they're shut down and we have to make sure that another polluting industry doesn't take their place. I'd like to see a park—a green area. It would be nice, but it's an industrial

They talked about energy and they talked about their investment in a solar facility that is in construction right now in Michigan. We suggested they do something similar here. They were open to it, and happy that we suggested it. The fact that they're an energy company, and they're capable of doing it, who knows. They may surprise us and do it. Hopefully they will. That would be nice.

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area so I doubt that's going to happen. Another possibility, people have mentioned a solar array or other renewable energy. That's the ideal use for that. It should be an improvement and contribute to air quality rather than detracting from it.

If a solar array wouldn't be a good thing as far as production of electricity goes, it would at least be symbolic. I think that, in and of itself, it would be a big stimulus for this area and areas like this to promote solar energy generation. It would be looking at tomorrow rather than yesterday. That is where progressive companies have to be. They have to believe that it's possible to do that, and it is.

People have to get out of that mindset that industry means poor air. We should be beyond that by now. We can overcome that by pointing to areas that aren't as polluted. In a lot of cases, other economies are better than ours. You don't have to give up jobs to have cleaner air.

I went to the DTE Shareholders meeting this year. We were there just as advocates for maybe turning it into a solar farm or some form of renewable energy. But outside of that, I didn't sense that it was much of a concern to them.