



BEN AVON, PA

RAY WINTER

CONCERNS



HEALTH



STANDARD
OF LIVING

HEALTH EFFECTS



ALLERGIES



IRRITATED
SINUSES



ITCHY EYES



DIFFICULTY
BREATHING

I have lived in Ben Avon for 49 years in October. Previously in Emsworth and Bellevue. I have lived in this area almost my whole life. My parent's built a home here. We lived in Emsworth but the house was too small and we needed to build a bigger house. We looked for a couple years and then my grandmother's second husband past away and she was going to move in with us and we needed a bigger house. So we sold two houses and we built one. Ben Avon is definitely a middle class neighborhood with a lot of old Victorian homes, a lot of big trees, a lot of leaves that come down in the fall. It's small. I can walk to church, I can walk to the coffee shop. And I feel safe here.

But when Shenango was operating the air pollution was really bad. I mean it's been bad since I was a child living in Emsworth. You could feel it in your breathing. For me breathing was difficult, my allergies were really really bad. My eyes were bad enough they itched but then the smell would just irritate your sinuses and just completely clog you up. Living in the area, when you go to an allergist, you find out that you're allergic to this, this, and this. And then you say where you live, the doctors look at you and go 'oh well then.'

You could always see a haze around the area, you never got a crystal blue sky. Occasionally wind might blow the dust through and you might get a clear one. The smell was absolutely horrendous. Nothing worse than the summertime. **You didn't really need your air conditioning, but you'd open the windows at night and I can remember waking up in the middle of the night and almost gagging and realizing there was this smell in my room and that's what woke me up.** And I'd have to shut the windows but by then it was already

in the bedroom and you'd have to hope it would dissipate so you could go back to sleep.

I once found, this was a couple decades ago, a pollution number in the phone book and I was frustrated one morning by not being able to sleep and I called this number. They gave me another number to let them know just what was going on. And I called it right after that and someone, they said to me "how did you get this number, no one's ever supposed to get this number," and I went "well someone gave it to me just now to call you and let you know how bad your air is." They were shocked someone could get that far to complain.

I found out that Shenango was closing on television, on the 11 o'clock news. In December, I was up at my sister's home in Butler somewhere up there and we were just discussing this happening and I was just getting ready for bed and she was yelling full tilt out in the living room, "Come out here! Come out here! Shenango's shutting down! At last!" And that's how I found out about it with great joy.

I think they started to shut down a little bit in December because they had to close down by January because I went for a walk on Christmas Eve before all my company arrived. It was during the day and the sky was as blue as I've ever seen it before. And I went, "Well you are in a partial shut-down at this point" and thought "Wow!" And it was just amazing the difference I felt. I was just ecstatic going "This was going to be so much better."

You can leave your windows open at night now, and get fresh air in and not have to worry about closing them down or the smell waking you up.

My sinuses are better. My allergies are a little bit better even though it's allergy time right now. The one that's amazing is my neighbor. When I ran into her, and I said "Hey what do you think?" I said

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"Shenango's gone. I don't know about you but the skies are bluer." They had just moved in a couple of years ago, and she goes "there was this haze around here," and she says "It's gone. Not only that I don't have to take my asthma medicine as much anymore." She said "I am actually feeling better since they're gone."

Now that Shenango is closed I still think we need to protect ourselves from anymore pollution that comes along. Today's world is all corporate greed; let's make money, we'll give them jobs they'll lose their health, but they'll have jobs. And I think they put the dollar sign before everything else first. And that bothers me. I think the site should become something environmentally friendly. I don't know if we can make it residential, because it might be too dangerous unless they have some kind of way of going in to protect everyone. But I know we've talked about putting in the new windmills for energy production, or solar panels. You know, that could eventually reduce energy costs, the use of energy, and produce more energy. Well, if anything can help reduce our pollution or protect the environment, I'm all for that right now, I really am. You know, that could eventually reduce energy costs, the use of energy, and produce more energy.

With solar panels you say "well we won't have to use as much energy requiring this or that." That's a benefit. I think that might work. You know, I think that it should be something that benefits the community and not put us in danger again.