

The last hold out To the Editor:

On Nov. 24 I bade my 14-year-old neighbor goodbye. She was not moving; she had died of asthma complications. We were all saddened by her death and mourn. Fall was always a bad time of the year for her.

You see, she lived in Algonquin, the last hold out in the Fox River Valley for still allowing its citizens to burn leaves. When the leaves were being burned, she would struggle for breath and gasp for air as a pall of heavy smoke hung over the valley.

The ambulance squad knew her well. On Nov. 20 she took her last ride with the squad. She is tragically gone from her mother's life, gone from her father's life, gone from her friends' and classmates' lives, gone from all of our lives.

Is there anything that we, as citizens of Algonquin, could have done to prevent her death? Maybe not, but we should have made sure the times she had on earth were a little easier. We should have insisted that the village of Algonquin join ranks with the rest of the valley and ban leaf burning.

Priscilla W. Peters
Algonquin

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Opinion

Northwest Herald

"Solvency is entirely a matter of temperament and not of income."

Logan P. Smith

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A burning question

It shouldn't have to come to this, begging the government to end leaf burning. It is a tradition that is losing its place in this rapidly growing, increasingly suburban county.

This is a familiar story. We read about it again yesterday when a Lake in the Hills mother asked village officials to end burning and find another way to get rid of leaves. For Jo Ann Scholl, this is a critical health issue. Her children are asthmatic. There were days last fall when they struggled to breathe. Her children gasped for air so neighbors — unwittingly, no doubt — could save a few dollars. Unless burning is stopped, the same frightening experience will be repeated next fall.

There's nothing romantic about children fighting for air. There's nothing romantic about the hazard leaf burning poses to people with heart disease or emphysema.

There's nothing romantic about the discomfort it causes people with allergies. There's nothing romantic about

smoke that hangs over entire towns when leaves are burned on cloudy, damp fall days.

And it's an insult to suggest that people sell their homes and move to avoid the smoke.

Jo Ann Scholl isn't the only person in Lake in the Hills who knows firsthand the danger of leaf burning. She happens to have the guts to stand up in front of village officials and ask that they do something about it.

This is the time to make plans. Fall is months away. Village officials can investigate the different methods employed in nearby communities to dispose of leaves. Lake in the Hills doesn't have to start from scratch. Village officials just need to tailor a program to fit their community.

Open burning of leaves is a public health threat. It needs to be treated as such by municipal officials.



On February 22, 1992 I lost my oldest daughter Jennifer to a severe asthma attack. We spent that day together at the Mall which is pretty much a controlled environment where my daughter did not have to worry about what she breathed into her precious little body. She enjoyed herself for the first part of that day.

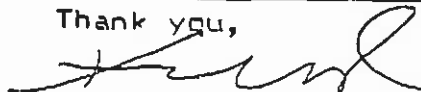
Then after running several errands we returned home. Home is suppose to be a place where every child should feel safe and at ease. Unfortunately neighbors were burning yard wastes, trying to get a jump on spring clean up. Our neighborhood looked as if a big fog had rolled in because the smoke was so thick and it just lingered there in the air.

My daughter Jennifer, 11 approached me telling me she was having trouble breathing. I advised her to take a nebulizer treatment. She walked out of our kitchen about 10 feet and sat down on a chair and began to cry. I immediately went to her to see if I could help her. As I approached her she collapsed to the floor banging her hands on the floor begging me to help her. I previously had called the doctor and now proceeded to dial 911.

As I walked to the kitchen to dial 911 with my daughter in my arms she went unconscious; I then laid her on the floor. As I waited for the ambulance service I watched as my daughter took her last breaths. I watched as her skin turned pale and her lips turned blue and there was nothing I could do, because there is no way to resuscitate an asthmatic without the proper equipment.

I had to stand there helplessly and hold my daughter and watch her die in my arms being unable to do anything for my her. She's gone now and there is nothing I can do to change the past; but there are things I can do to change the future for other asthmatic children. I can plead with you to make the right choice to save other parents from having to go through the tragedy of having their child die in their arms and having to relive that nightmare over and over again everyday of their lives. Please vote to ban open burning in our state. Give our children the RIGHT to breath clean air.

Thank you,



KENNETH R. TANK SR

*In Loving Memory of
Our Beautiful Daughter*

Jennifer Roxanne Tank

December 17, 1980 - February 22, 1992

*You will never truly die because we
carry you deep inside our hearts.*



*We feel so blue over losing you,
They snatched you up before we knew,
If only we could have one more glimpse of you,
To say once more I LOVE YOU; although we're sure you already
knew, how deeply our love is for you.*

*We just really got to know you when they took you from us,
How we wish we could hold you in our arms and squeeze you tight,
How wonderful it would be to feel your heart beating next to us.
Knowing I'll never hear your laughter or sweet little voice
again just doesn't seem right.*

*We feel so blue over losing you,
It's hard to picture life without you here,
We believe you're with God and he's being good to you,
No matter what darling we'll always love you,
You're a precious part of our lives that we'll always
hold dear to our hearts.*

Written with love by Mom

*With love always & forever,
Daddy, Mommy, Kenny, Tony & Stephe*

*A special thanks to all the wonderful people who have been so kind
to our family over this past year!*

Leaf burning brought on the asthma attack that took our daughter's life. Had the leaf ban been in effect a year ago, our daughter would still be laughing and smiling with us. Rather than think of ourselves and how we may be inconvenienced; let's think of our children in this community and give them clean air to breath and a chance for a long and happy life. Not even one life is worth losing if we know what the problem is and we as adults and parents have the power to prevent tragedy from hitting our community again. Please make the right choice; let's vote to continue the ban on open burning. Thank you, The Tank Family.

LOCAL REPORT

State officials hear suburban opinions on burning leaves

By C. L. WALLER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

For Shannon Lastowski of Fox Lake, leaf burning means she has to move into a hotel for at least five days a year.

But for George Turner of unincorporated Lake County, burning leaves is a right he is proud to say he has enjoyed for more than 75 years.

The pros and cons of the issue and the smoke that comes with it brought about 80 people to Libertyville on Monday to offer viewpoints or simply listen to testimony given to members of the Illinois House Energy and Environment committee, which is gathering information regarding House Bill 92. The bill is being framed to impose some sort of restrictions on leaf burning.

State Rep. Ray Novak of Kankakee said he expects the proposal to be in another committee by the end of April so members of both houses can nail down specifics. State Rep. Andrea Moore of Libertyville chaired Monday's hearing, which was also attended by Reps. Tim Osmond of Antioch and Todd Stroger of Chicago.

Moore and Novak both said Lake County is a microcosm of the state, where more rural and growing urban areas are coming together and clashing over leaf burning. Parents of asthmatic children, agencies with limited enforcement powers and farmers

with concerns about potential state mandates affecting agriculture all weighed in with opinions.

"We have people who hearten back to the nostalgic days of their childhood," Lindenhurst resident Anita Fritzier said. "Yes, we all loved it when we were kids, but it's killing us."

Fritzier said leaf burning has a devastating effect on asthmatics like herself, her child and her parents.

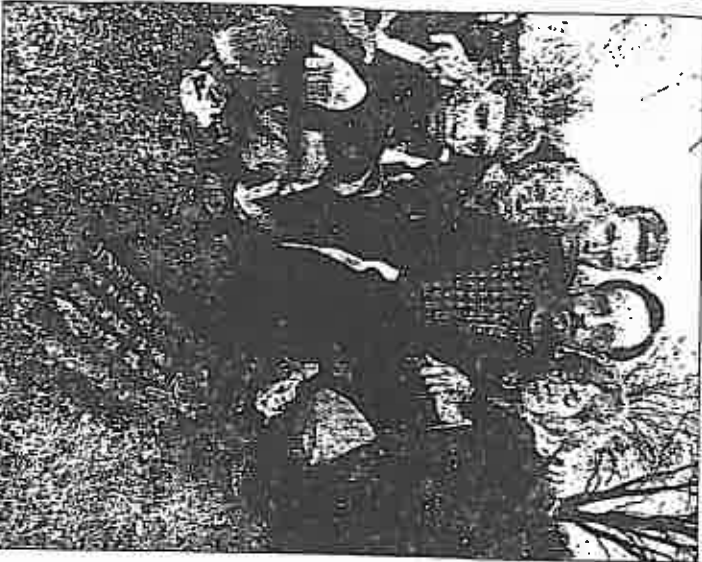
She raised no objection to people in agriculture burning yard waste but said burning in densely populated areas does not make sense.

Twenty of the 51 municipalities in Lake County ban all leaf burning, while others impose some restrictions. The village of Hawthorn Woods has an advisory referendum about banning leaf burning on April 13 ballots.

Those who live in unincorporated portions of the county have no limitations, but Lake County Board members are studying options.

Legislators say agriculture will be exempt from any new state law regarding leaf burning, but Fremont Township Supervisor Pete Tekampe of Grayslake said he has a problem with the exemption being dropped in the future.

"To stop all burning is not feasible in Fremont Township," said Tekampe, who explained that seven villages and several unincorporated areas must co-exist.



The Tank family, Tony, 14 (from left), Stephanie, 13, Ken Jr., 16, Ken and Lori, gathers at the headstone of Jennifer, who died of an asthma attack brought on by smoke from burning leaves seven years ago.

Leaf-burning foes fired up for 2nd shot at state ban

By DAVID SOUTHWELL
Herald Staff Writer

From May through November, Christina Magoncia of Lake Zurich is on constant smoke alert.

Her 4-year-old daughter, Maddeline's, severe asthma can be triggered by smoke from leaf burning, which is banned in Lake Zurich but allowed in adjacent unincorporated Lake County.

"The smoke is drifting in from our house," Magoncia told an Illinois House subcommittee that is considering a statewide ban on leaf burning. "We live on the edge. If my daughter smells a funny odor she runs inside in panic. We are literally held hostage in our home."

Magoncia was among about 100 residents, legislators, mayors and others who attended a public hearing on the issue Monday in Libertyville.

Rep. Phillip Novak (D-Kankakee), chairman of the Energy and Environment subcommittee, and Rep. Andrew Metros (R-Libertyville), sponsored a state ban on leaf burning last year. That effort failed because it was vetoed by Gov. Jim Edgar.

They are trying again this year, hoping Gov. Blum will be more sympathetic. Novak sees formidable opposition to the ban from agricultural interests and municipal leagues. "It's a personal freedom issue," Novak said.

squats it in the seat belt lane. What people do on their own property should be their own choosing, but public health concerns come to the fore front." Among those who support the statewide ban is Lala Tank of Lake in the Hills, whose daughter, Jennifer, 11, died from an acute asthma attack triggered by leaf burning seven years ago. Although Tank did not attend Monday's hearing, she has been active in the push for a statewide ban.

"The Tank family helped initiate a leaf-burning ban in Lake in the Hills local ordinances, however, are not the solution," Tank said. "A lot of people have been argumentative, but that's one child's life worth burning a statewide?" she said. "How many more children have to die? There is only one answer. It's a ban that lowers air-burning, but you can't put a ban on smoke."

There are also local efforts to ban leaf burning. Hawthorn Woods, for example, is having an advisory referendum next Tuesday on whether leaf burning should be banned. Hawthorn Woods Environmental Committee member Cindy Qingley supports a statewide ban.

"You from New England and they think it's barbaric we still burn leaves" she said. "I will be in our village in about \$1-50. I can't wait to see how it turns out."

MORNINGLINE

Should leaf burning be banned statewide?
Yes: (647) 328-0933
No: (647) 328-0904
Phone lines open until 6:30 p.m. Monday (A charge for a local call to the 647 area code applies.) Results in Wednesday's Sun Times.