

The story behind Madison's lost city. 1C



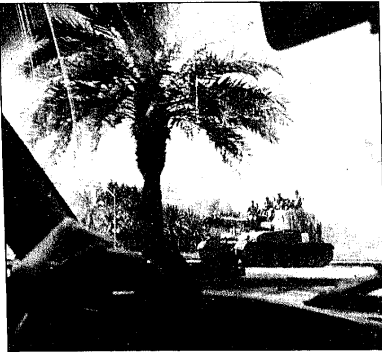
Welcome Packer fans to Madison. 1D

# The Capital Times

Volume 147, No. 58 MADISON, WISCONSIN ★ ★ ★ THE WEEKEND OF AUGUST 18-19, 1990 50¢

## Bush to call up reserves

WASHINGTON — President Bush has decided to call up tens of thousands of Army, Air Force and Navy reservists to support the U.S. military deployment to the Middle East. Final details of the call-up will be worked out by the Pentagon in the days ahead, administration officials said Friday. An Army official said as many as 80,000 Army reservists could be called to active duty, based on the Army's recommendations to the president. Some notices to reservists could go out next week. The other services' contribution to a reserve call-up would be substantially smaller. (Brig. Gen. Jerome Berard, the Wisconsin Army National



Iraqi tank Iraqi soldiers ride on top of one of their tanks through the streets of Kuwait City on Aug. 4, two days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The photo was taken through the window of a passing car.

## Iraq to hold foreigners until 'threat' ends

By Thomas Wagner Associated Press The speaker of Iraq's parliament said Friday that Iraq will hold all foreigners from "aggressive nations" — presumably including 3,000 Americans — until the threat of war against his country ends. He said they would be housed throughout the country in military and civilian installations. The White House refused comment Friday night on Baghdad's announcement. "We don't have a reaction," said Doug Davidson, an assistant White House press secretary. "We may well have one in the morning." The United States sent some of its most sophisticated offensive weapons to the region as the Persian Gulf crisis entered its third week. Continued on Page 2A

**INSIDE:**  
■ Refugees tell of escape, 1B  
■ Expanded role by U.N. discussed, 1B  
■ Aspin sees Iran leak, 1B

## Vendors cry foul over city proposal

By Mike Ivey The Capital Times Hawkers peddling T-shirts and pennants on Breese Terrace are as big a part of Badger football as losing records and broken hearts. Yet things could change this season if the city passes an ordinance designed to control the crowds who gather in the street next to Camp Randall. All street vending would be eliminated on Breese Terrace and moved to assigned slots near the south end of the stadium if the City Council passes a high-density vending ordinance Tuesday night. "My motivation had to do with complaints of long-term residents in the area," said Ald. Ken Golden, District 10. Golden said incidents of noise, litter and drinking in the street have increased over the past years. Moving vendors off Breese Terrace would help eliminate some of the problems, he said. But the proposed ordinance has some vendors screaming for a penalty flag. They say vending isn't the problem; it's just lots of people gathering for an event. "The City Council is ordinance happy," said Dave Gadow, who sells souvenirs: aerial photos of the stadium for \$5.

"The problem on Breese Terrace is you've got a football stadium across the street that holds 70,000," he said. "It's not that vendors are there causing the crowds. The vendors are there because the people are there." Golden admits moving the vendors won't eliminate all the problems, which range from underage drinking to fans using residents' bushes as urinals. But he said something must be done to ease the congestion. "This is a residential street and neighborhood," Golden said. "The ordinance is an attempt to compromise the interests of the neighborhood vs. the football fan." Under the ordinance, vendors would be assigned spots by a lottery system. Many of the sites would be in the small triangle of land near the intersection of Monroe and Regent streets.

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## GROUND-WATER CONTAMINATION



Water, water, everywhere . . . but is it safe to drink?

By Dan Allegretti The Capital Times Virtually all the water used for drinking in Madison and the rest of Dane County comes from deep underground, where it was long thought to be safe from contamination. It was safe, until fairly recently. Now a myriad of hazards — industrial wastes, fuel, agricultural chemicals — have reached underground to threaten the once-pure aquifers that feed some 18,000 private and public wells supplying water for the county's rapidly growing population. Dane County may well have more polluted wells affecting more people than any other county in Wisconsin, and the problem is not just a rural one. At least a dozen public municipal wells, including seven in Madison, have been found to be contaminated with potentially cancer-causing substances. "The county is unique, fortunate to have the best of both urban and rural life. Besides Wisconsin's second city, Madison, it has some of the best, most productive and highly valued farmland in the world."

But that also has subjected its ground-water supply to the consequences of both urban and rural living. It has more active landfills than any other Wisconsin county and nearly as many abandoned dumps — 130 of them, and probably many more — as Milwaukee County. Many of these dumps are slowly leaking cancer-causing chemicals into the sandstone and limestone aquifers from which the Madison Water Utility draws some 31 million gallons of water each day. At the same time, Dane County has more rural wells threatened by farm chemicals — pesticides and fertilizers — than any other Wisconsin county. And some of these chemicals are suspected of causing serious health effects, including cancer. There is a better than even chance that if you live in a rural area of Dane County, your water is polluted by pesticides, or nitrates from fertilizer, or even by volatile organic chemicals such as benzene from the nearby abandoned dump or the leaking gasoline tank behind the barn.

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Dennis Jello is dwarfed by his corn crop, grown without the use of atrazine.

Weekender

LATE NEWS UPDATE



## Legendary Pearl Bailey dead at 72

Pearl Bailey, the actress and singer with the sexy, throaty drawl and droll sense of humor who once was called America's "ambassador of love," died Friday in Philadelphia at age 72. The singer, dancer, humorist and homespun philosopher — Pearlie Mae to friends — performed for 57 years. 1B

## Help keep Muskies in Madison

The Capital Times, Q106, American TV, Gateway Travel and Sprint Print are teaming up to help keep the Madison Muskies in Madison. A special promotion that features prizes, including a free trip for two to one of this year's World Series games, starts today. Local baseball fans are encouraged to support the team by purchasing season tickets to next year's season, but fans can enter a special drawing without a purchase. 3C

# Water

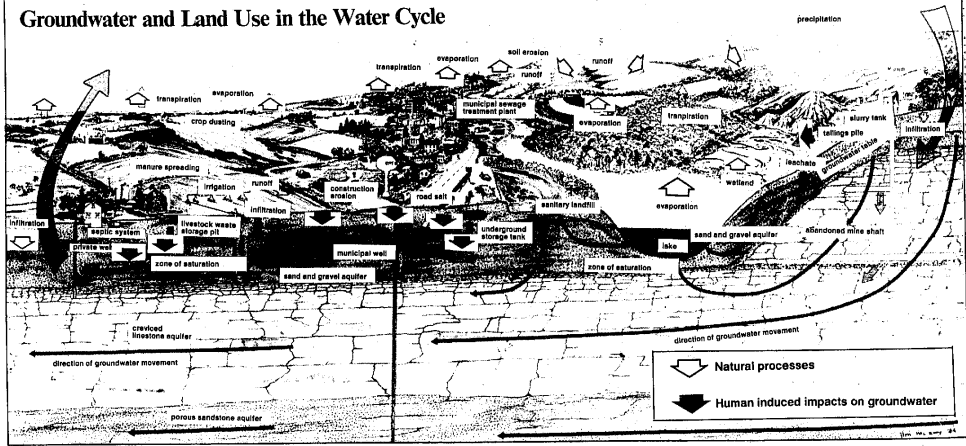
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City dwellers are not immune either. VOCs now have been detected at measurable levels in eight of Madison's city wells. Most of these are at low enough levels not to cause concern for human health — for now. The one well with VOC levels above health standards has long been shut down.

But no one is sure where the chemicals are coming from, or whether concentrations in the water will rise. No one knows, either, the effect of combining low levels of several different chemicals in drinking water.

Population growth, with its attendant quest for ever-higher standards of living, has come at great cost to the earth, and not least to the water we drink.

Graphic of the water cycle from the Bureau of Water Resources Management, Department of Natural Resources.



## Where do herbicides go? Into water, some find

By Dan Allegretti

Unlike the experts, Dennis and Dorinda Jelle were not surprised when tests last year found that the well on their Sunny Ridge Dairy Farm near Mt. Horeb and their neighbors' wells were polluted with the popular herbicide atrazine.

"When you put it on the fields, where's it going to go?" Dorinda Jelle asks rhetorically. That's a question, she says, that her husband had asked repeatedly over the years and never received a satisfactory answer.

The Jelles decided not to wait for an answer. As close to the land as they were — Dennis Jelle's family had farmed their 200 acres for 100 years — they could see that something wasn't right. Where atrazine dripped or spilled during application, nothing would grow for years.

"They went instead to mechanical means of weed control — something people did 50 years ago" — and it has proven as ef-

fective as chemicals.

But by then it was too late. Twenty-five years of atrazine use had taken its toll, and like other farmers who trusted in the assurances from the manufacturer and the government experts, they found their well polluted.

Atrazine levels in their water are below the health standard of 3.5 parts per billion. Still, says Dorinda Jelle, "Nobody wants to drink chemicals. It's scary."

The experts, though, were shocked at the results of the survey of dairy farm wells. More than half of all the farms in Dane County showed measurable levels of atrazine, which is suspected of causing cancer. The state agriculture department did a follow-up survey, in which rural residents sent in samples of their well water to be tested. Again, in Dane and several other counties, more than half were tainted with atrazine.

Here's a compound that it was thought in the '70s was going to break down, that it wasn't getting into ground water," said Nicholas Neher, head of the agriculture department's resources management division. "Well, it's there."

'I don't think anyone would have predicted we'd find (atrazine) in half the wells tested in Dane County.'

KEVIN KESSLER

The first time any agricultural chemical showed up in Wisconsin's ground water was in 1980, when aldicarb was found in central Wisconsin wells. But the soil there is sandy, the water table shallow, and aldicarb was thought to be a unique problem.

Says Kevin Kessler, chief of the state Department of Natural Resources' ground-water management section: "I don't think anyone would have predicted that we'd find (atrazine) in half the wells tested in Dane County."

Atrazine, like aldicarb before it, now is facing strict new rules being drawn up by the state agriculture department. Its use next year is likely to be severely curtailed in much of southern Wisconsin, and banned entirely in some areas, including parts of Dane County.

But atrazine is only one of many contaminants that can get into ground water.

Years of testing has found consistently that more than a third of all Dane County wells contain levels of nitrates above the health standard of 10 parts per million, with some above 50 ppm. Nitrates can occur naturally in ground water but have been greatly augmented in recent years by animal wastes and the heavy application of fertilizer on farmland.

High nitrate levels in drinking water are dangerous for infants, and some scientists believe the health levels may be set too high. Nitrates, they say, can break down in the body into nitrosamines, another suspected carcinogen.

Hundreds of Dane County wells, mostly in rural areas, also have shown levels exceeding health standards for volatile organic chemicals, resulting from gasoline spills or leaks, improper dumping of paints and solvents, and leaking landfills. Among the

most dangerous of these are benzene, found at high levels in 27 Dane County wells tested by the DNR, and vinyl chloride, which exceeded health standards in 43 wells. Both are potent carcinogens.

Other pesticides also show up occasionally. Alachlor, marketed as Lasso, has been found in a few wells and could become the next agricultural chemical to come under stricter government control.

"In terms of agricultural problems, Dane County would rank at or near the top in problem counties in the state," says the DNR's Kessler.

Del Maag, DNR Southern District water supply manager, agrees. "I'd say your chances in Dane County of having a contaminated well are higher than most other places because of the development and the heavy agriculture. The risk is definitely higher," he says.

"We tell people their water comes from as far as you can see

from your field," says Ron Hennings, a geologist with the state Geologic and Natural History Survey.

"Water usually originates (as precipitation) within a few miles and is some years old, maybe as much as 10 or 20 years" when it reaches a well. "What you do in your lifetime can have an impact on the water in your well," Hennings says.

Farmers who increasingly have come to rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides to increase their crop yields, have found that out the hard way. Some, such as the Jelles, already have changed their practices.

Dennis Jelle says he and his neighbors support more stringent regulation of atrazine, but feel betrayed by the chemical companies that assured them over the years that their products were safe for the environment.

Now it's time for farmers to "stand up and start speaking out," and to take some responsibility for their own futures, says Dorinda Jelle. "If we don't, we may all have cancer and whatever else it causes."

"Do we want to sit around and just wait to see how much it takes to cause cancer?"

## 8 of city's once-pure wells now tainted by chemicals

By Dan Allegretti

Just 10 years ago, the Madison Water Utility could boast — in an article in *The Capital Times* — of providing possibly the purest drinking water of any municipality in the United States.

The city draws its water from the bottom of a deep aquifer, 1,000 feet underground, and officials were satisfied that pollution could never reach down that far.

No longer can anyone express that kind of confidence.

Today eight of the city's 24 wells have detectable levels of volatile organic chemicals, and others are in danger of contamination.

The pollution may have been there for many years and gone undetected simply because the technology did not exist until the past decade to detect VOCs at the minute levels — in fractions of parts per billion — that now set off concern and even state regulatory action.

The levels so far detected are very low, well below the threshold for human health concern —

except in well No. 2 near Lake Wingra, where high levels of two potentially cancer-causing VOCs were measured in 1985. Fortunately, that well already was out of service by then, and hasn't been used since.

VOCs are among the most insidious of chemicals. Including a large number of solvents, industrial cleaning agents and gasoline, they are all but impossible to contain in a landfill. They pass right through clay liners and can escape even modern, properly constructed landfills to reach ground water.

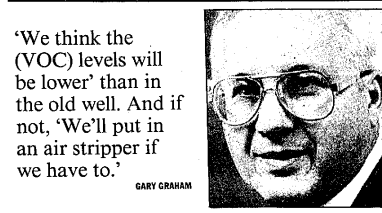
The water utility found out this year how difficult it can be to manage VOCs. It decided to replace its well No. 4, at Regent and Randall streets, in part because No. 4 had been found to contain low levels of three VOCs, including chloroform.

It dug the new well and cased it deeper than the old one, to keep out contaminants that the utility believed would not be found at greater depths. And when the new well was tested, the same VOCs were found.

"We think the (VOC) levels will be lower" than in the old well, says water utility manager Gary Graham. And if not, "We'll put in an air stripper if we have to," to try to remove the contaminants through evaporation.

The problem has been studied by the state Department of Natural Resources, but no one is sure where the contamination is coming from. It could be from unreported spills, whether accidental or otherwise; it could be that some of the thousands of tons of fill used in the city decades ago was contaminated.

Prime suspects, however, are some of the dozens of landfills and abandoned dumps located in



GARY GRAHAM

'We think the (VOC) levels will be lower' than in the old well. And if not, 'We'll put in an air stripper if we have to.'

and around Madison. As of 1985, DNR knew of 2,058 abandoned dumps in Wisconsin, hundreds of which were leaking into ground water. Of these, 130 were in Dane County, seven of which had been assigned high priority for investigation of leaks.

Dane County leads the state in the number of leaking landfills, says Kevin Kessler, DNR's chief of waste management. Since 1985, hundreds of additional abandoned dumps have been discovered around the state. Several local dumps have gained attention in recent years, including one in Middleton, two near Stoughton, and the Truax state where for years the U.S. government dumped waste from munitions. All are known to be contaminating ground water, and

some have been placed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund priority list for cleanup.

The Truax site poses a threat to two Madison city wells. Another well is threatened by an old landfill located beneath the Memorial High School football field that has been found to be leaking.

Of equal concern, though, are the abandoned dumps that have not yet been investigated and those that haven't even been discovered. One reason for the worry is that an old dump can contaminate Madison's drinking water even if no well is located nearby.

That is because Madison's deep, high-capacity wells draw water for miles around, making it nearly impossible to identify the source of a particular contaminant.

The same phenomenon raises the possibility that city wells could eventually draw in some of the agricultural chemicals, including atrazine and nitrates, that already are plaguing surrounding rural areas — as well as water from Madison area lakes, which are barely suitable these days for swimming, much less drinking.

Scientists only recently have come to understand the complex relationship between ground water and surface water.

Madison provides a good example of this. Its deep wells last year pumped 11.48 billion gallons out of the ground, more than the total volume of Lake Wingra.

As a result, the water table is lowered by 20 feet or more within an area 20 miles across, from Sun Prairie in the northeast to beyond Verona in the southwest. Nearer the wells the table is lowered by 80 feet or more. As the city's population grows and the demand for water increases, so will the area affected by this dramatic drawdown of the water table.

This has several effects, none of them desirable. The wells intercept large volumes of ground water that ordinarily would flow toward the rivers and lakes and recharge them. Black Earth Creek area residents are concerned that city water is draining away water from the creek and lowering its level. Springs may dry up and the levels of other streams, as well as the lakes themselves, may drop significantly.

Also, the powerful wells suck water from the lakes into the ground water and toward the wells. The lakes, some scientists believe, could be the source of some of the contaminants already getting into city water.

As an example, tests of water quality in Madison lakes began showing an increase in the level of chlorides (salt) around 1970, due to the salting of roads in winter. The salt could not seep directly into the ground water, since road runoff flows into storm sewers and from there into the lakes.

However, 10 years later chloride began to show up in Madison's city wells. It was being drawn into the ground water from the lakes, says geologist Ron Hennings of the state Geologic and Natural History Survey.

"People are finally realizing that the whole system is interrelated — even what's buried and put into the air in Mexico falls into our lakes in Wisconsin," Hennings says.

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