

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nonpartisan politicians

I enjoyed my Democratic friend Rufus Foshee's letter asking who are they now.

I too am old fashioned and having lived in Camden for 40 years, and being in the main arena a long time, do not wonder why politicians do not label their signs.

The country is crying for nonpartisan, work together politicians. The media has destroyed President Bush and marked the Republican Party in a negative way.

However, my mother-in-law Shirley Brawn taught me to be positive and I do truly believe when people start asking what kind of change the country wants and then listen to what is being proposed, they will vote Republican in November.

My wise father, Sam Curtis, once told me, "Change for the sake of change does not work. Dig deeper and get the facts."

Linda Brawn
Camden

Dragon's advisory panel

VillageSoup recently reported that Dragon Products Company has formed a community advisory panel to improve communications with the community and to get feedback on Dragon's operations. Among the 17 members of the panel are members and supporters of the citizen advocacy group, Neighbors for a Safe Dragon, for which I have served as president since 2004.

The community advisory panel is a positive step for Dragon Products. Open communication with the area public is critical. Dragon's communications with the community, however, must lead to action. The next steps for Dragon are to (1) reduce further the level of its Thomaston and Rockland air contamination and blasting vibrations, and (2) like other cement plants in the United States, establish a community reimbursement and relocation fund.

Neighbors for a Safe Dragon was formed in 2004 after a meeting of nearly 200 local residents concerned about Dragon Product's fugitive dust and blasting vibrations. In 2005 NSD petitioned the state Board and Department of Environmental Protection to force Dragon to comply with state environmental regulations. The board held hearings in 2006-07 and issued an order requiring Dragon Products to cover its 15-acre pile of cement kiln dust, and reduce and confine its wetland contamination from caustic material leaching from that pile and from a second 13-acre waste clinker pile.

To its credit the company acted promptly, capping the CKD pile and reconfiguring the stormwater runoff from the piles to protect the

Weskeag's marshes. Last year the department installed air pollution monitors in the community to measure the presence of fugitive dust from the Dragon Products facility, taking dozens of air samples over a period of months. An analysis of that air monitoring was just completed this past April. Results indicate that the dust on nearby properties "probably" comes from Dragon Products operations.

From the start, we have urged Dragon Products to acknowledge its societal obligations as a good corporate citizen of Knox County by creating a community reimbursement fund, to help residents with property purchases, community relocation programs, and other protection programs, including reimbursement to residents whose homes and businesses have been damaged by the blast vibrations from Dragon Products' quarry.

As Dragon's quarrying nears the edges of Old County Road, damage to neighboring citizens' homes and places of business is inevitable. This occurs to the neighbors of rock quarrying operations everywhere, and compensation is appropriate to repair foundations, walls, windows and chimneys, or corrosion of paint on cars and doors from dust. In February 2008, one community resident, Steve Darney, filed in court an updated nuisance and trespass claim against Dragon Products, in which he also asks for an award in damages to fund a community property damage compensation program.

Let's hope that Dragon's newly formed community advisory committee will be able to nudge Dragon into taking the measures other cement makers in this country have. Reducing even further Dragon's off-site impacts, and reimbursing for damage to citizens' homes and businesses, need to be front and center on this new committee's agenda.

Ron Huber
President
Neighbors for a Safe Dragon

Camden dedicates town report to Bailey

This is a great start for a great man. I would propose naming the Bog Bridge boat ramp the "Bailey Boat Ramp" for all of his efforts on behalf of Lake Megunticook and the entire watershed area. No better way to honor the man who continues to do so much for our beloved lake.

Robert S. Gatof
Lincolntonville

Continued on next page