Chemical plumes continue to grow

East Helena | Arsenic, selenium have migrated farther toward valley than recently shown; threat not imminent, says state hydrogeologist

By EVE BYRON
Independent Record

Concerns over the ongoing progression toward the Helena Valley of arsenic and selenium plumes under East Helena has prompted the installation of five new monitoring wells and a hazard rating of “moderate to high” susceptibility for the contaminants to get into multiple public and private drinking water supplies.

Newly released maps from the Environmental Protection Agency show that in a six-month period from May to November, the head of the underground arsenic plume with close to 40 times the federal municipal drinking water standard has crossed Main and Riggs streets between Cleveland and Thurman, and appears to be following Prickly Pear Creek. Arsenic at the maximum contaminant level for drinking water — 0.01 parts per million — was detected in last November’s samples in the monitoring well on Gail Street, between Cleveland and Morton. A year ago, that plume had

Asarco dismantling set to resume

By EVE BYRON
Independent Record

The dismantling of the former Asarco lead smelter will continue this summer, and 2009 should be the year the four smokestacks come down.

Iver Johnson, who is helping manage the dismantling for the Montana Department of Environmental Quality,

The world awaits

Carroll, UM-Helena graduates set out to make an impact

Report: Taliban caused deaths
History degree recipient Marcus Geer, of Missoula, smiles as he walks back to his seat after receiving his degree during Saturday's Carroll College graduation ceremony in the PE Center.

Carroll recognizes three with honorary doctorates, awards 243 with degrees

By LARRY KLINE
Independent Record

They walked into their futures backed by a few thousand cheering family and friends, and their alma mater celebrated the beginning of its second century.

Carroll College gave degrees to 243 graduating seniors in the school's PE Center on Saturday.

Carroll officials also bestowed honorary doctorates to a celebrated Montana-born author Ivan Doig; Capt. Diane Carlson Evans, the founder and president of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation; and the Very Rev. David M. O'Connell, who now serves as the president of The

More CARROLL, page 6A

More than 180 graduates awarded degrees, adding to success of UM- Helena

By LARRY KLINE
Independent Record

Grandmothers and parents joined traditional students on stage Saturday morning at the University of Montana – Helena College of Technology's commencement ceremonies, mirroring the tight-knit family nature of the school.

On the school's 70th anniversary, CEO Daniel Bingham noted UM-Helena's growth from an aviation mechanics school housed in a small hangar to an expanding campus on Roberts Street with a growing number of degree programs.

The college awarded degrees to more than 180

More UM-HELENA, page 10A

Afghanistan | Militants used human shields during battle, says U.S. in investigation

By JASON STRAZIOUSO and RAHIM FAIEZ
Associated Press

KABUL – The U.S. coalition blamed Taliban militants Saturday for causing what Afghan officials say are dozens of civilian deaths during a prolonged battle that included American airstrikes.

The U.S. said an unspecified number of civilians died but did not take responsibility for any deaths.

Afghanistan's Interior Ministry declined to endorse the U.S. report, saying its own investigation would be completed soon.

Afghan officials have estimated up to 147 people died in the battle in the western province of Farah on Monday, but a U.S. spokeswoman called that number exaggerated. The U.S. report did not offer an estimate of the number killed in the battle.

The preliminary report said Taliban fighters herded Afghan villagers into houses to use as human shields while they fired...
Helena area police calls for May 1-7

The following list is for Helena Police Department calls for service. Not all calls are listed. Not all calls are indeed crimes. For an interactive police-call map, go to helenair.com and double click on the crime map tile in the features carousel.

**May 1**
1. Trespassing, 700 block of Great Northern Boulevard
2. Criminal Mischief, 1200 block of Waukesha Avenue
3. Theft, Wylie Drive and Big Sky Loop
4. Theft, 3200 block of E. U.S. Highway 12
5. Assault, 1800 block of Livingston Avenue
6. Trespassing, 3300 block of N. Montana Avenue
7. Stolen Vehicles, 400 block of Euclid Avenue
8. Theft, 3200 block of Centennial Drive
9. Criminal Mischief, 100 block of S. Warren Street
10. Assault, 1600 block of Pepsi Cola Avenue

**May 2**
1. Criminal Mischief, 2000 block of Livingston Avenue
2. Theft, 800 block of Mendocino Drive
3. Trespassing, 2700 block of Wylie Drive
4. Burglary, 2000 block of Cobre Drive
5. Trespassing, 5200 block of York Road
6. Theft, 1200 block of N. Last Chance Gulch
7. Assault, 900 block of N. Cooke Street
8. Theft, 900 block of Barneby Street
9. Theft, 3300 block of N. Montana Avenue
10. Theft, 500 block of N. Montana Avenue

**May 3**
32. Theft, 800 block of N. Oregon Street
33. Theft, 3000 block of Lake Helena Drive
34. Stolen Vehicles, 100 block of Helena Avenue
35. Theft, 1600 block of 11th Avenue

**May 4**
30. Criminal Mischief, 1800 block of E. Lyndale Avenue
31. Assault, 100 block of N. Ewing Street
32. Theft, 1800 block of E. Lyndale Avenue
33. Theft, 2000 block of Market Avenue
34. Criminal Mischief, 3000 block of N. Montana Avenue
35. Theft, 500 block of N. Montana Avenue

For extended police calls in the North Valley and East Helena, go to this map online at helenair.com.
Report

continued from 1A

on coalition forces in two villages in Farah.

The report said that U.S. forces had responded to a call for help from Afghan forces and that militants attacked the troops from several locations.

Troops called for airstrikes on the militant positions, and a U.S. spokesman said Saturday that fighter aircraft made 13 passes over the two villages, using a combination of flares, strafing runs and bombs.

The investigation suggests that villagers had taken refuge in a number of houses in each village. Reports also indicate that Taliban fighters deliberately forced villagers into houses from which they then attacked ANSF (Afghan security forces) and Coalition forces, a statement from the U.S. coalition said.

Neither the U.S. nor Afghan forces took responsibility for killing civilians in Saturday's statement.

A second U.S. statement said villagers seeking medical treatment told Afghan doctors that militants were shooting from rooftops while forcing the villagers to remain in their compounds.

"The joint investigation team strongly condemns the brutality of the Taliban extremists deliberately targeting Afghan civilians and using them as human shields," the statement said.

Other groups expressed concern for the investigatory process. Human Rights Watch on Saturday blasted the U.S. military and said the attack was likely to be "the largest and most tragic loss of life to U.S. bombs so far in Afghanistan.

"Yet another devastating error inevitably calls the joint U.S.-Afghan statements into question," the organization said.

Carroll

continued from 1A

Catholic University of America.

The school also recognized Good Samaritan Ministries with its annual Borromeo Award for outstanding service to the community.

Carroll President Tom Trebon urged the graduates to continue their involvement with their communities, regardless where they settle -- a lesson that begins each fall at the college as new students hit the streets to solicit donations of food for struggling families.

"With all the goodness in the world and all the badness ... every day, be a sacrament to the community in which you live," Trebon said. "Go into the world and do well."

Doig, author of the acclaimed memoir "This House of Sky," the novel "English Creek" and many other books, said he had fond memories of teaching at Carroll.

"I hope whatever you choose to do in the future brings you joy,

Carroll College Chemistry degree recipients Skyler Pester, right, and Andrew Mendez share a laugh during Saturday's graduation ceremony.

Carroll College Biology degree recipient Heather Caldwell waves to her family during the processional prior to Saturday's Carroll College graduation ceremony at the PC Center.

Biology degree recipient Heather Caldwell waves to her family during the processional prior to Saturday's Carroll College graduation ceremony at the PC Center.

after tossing their mortarboards, the new graduates were brimming with the energy that comes with a new chapter in life. Proud parents and grandparents embraced the former students.

For many, the finality of the ceremony hadn't yet hit them.

"It's done, I guess -- it's kind of weird. It'll sink in, in a week or two," said theology graduate Kelly Ruby.

She and others said what they loved most about Carroll was what attracted them in the first place -- a degrees in ecological anthropology and environmental science.

He has a few jobs lined up to keep him busy until graduate school, but he said some of his classmates are facing an uncertain market, though he noted many are opting for positions in progressive fields.

Katie Sheehy, whose mother Janet works at the school and handed Katie her nursing degree on stage Saturday, said she, too, will remember the Carroll community.

"The people, really..."
into question the continued viability of the use of U.S. and NATO firepower in Afghanistan," said Rachel Reid, the group's Afghanistan researcher. "The procedures for protecting civilians and verifying intelligence before launching attacks are clearly not working and must be thoroughly reviewed again."

At the U.N. headquarters in Kabul, an official said that some at the world body were uneasy that the "very same people who are accused of causing the civilian casualties are being sent back to investigate." The official – who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to share such internal views – called for an independent investigation.

The U.S. said the findings number of civilians were killed in the course of the fighting but is unable to determine with certainty which of those casualties were Taliban fighters and which were noncombatants because those killed are all buried," the statement said.

Civilians have long been a source of tension between the U.S. and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has pleaded with American officials to cut down on the number of civilians killed in its military operations.

Karzai on Friday, during a visit to the U.S., said: "We cannot justify in any manner, for whatever number of Taliban, for whatever number of significantly important terrorists, the accidental or otherwise loss of civilians."

A White Sulphur Springs native who said he remembered traveling to Helena as a child to buy school clothes, Doig said many of his characters spent chapters of their fictional lives in the Capital City.

"The way-above-average class of 2000, the centennial class forever, begins its next chapter now, and I am proud to be a footnote to it," he said.

Evans, of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, returned from service in Vietnam to find a country not yet ready to heal the wounds of social strife. She told the graduates she knew she had a mission when she returned, but it took her more than a decade to find it. She led the battle to fund the construction of a memorial in Washington, D.C., honoring her sisters in service. She told the graduates to find their own way to serve their community, she said.

The Michael Murphy Award, presented to a graduating senior who has excelled in personal achievement, generosity and leadership, was presented to Mike Paffhausen.

Five students received the Bishop Gilmore Memorial Trophy for holding the highest grade-point average over the course of their four years at Carroll: Benjamin Dunham, Lacey Middledstead, Cherry Tomseck, Janna Tomseck and Briana Wipf.

After the speeches, and...
Disservice to Indians

I am disgusted with the upcoming PBS-backed production of “Wounded Knee”, the final installment of the “We Shall Remain” series, scheduled to air on May 11.

Producer Stanley Nelson has done nothing more than propagandize in favor of the murderers, terror and violence committed by members of the American Indian Movement. AIM was and is nothing more than a mafia organization. For 40 years, AIM has racked in millions of dollars and given very little back to the Indian people. The leadership has been convicted or associated with several murders of their own members.

I don’t believe in freeing Leonard Peltier; he is a rightfully convicted murderer. And I ask the public schools to stop teaching our Native youth that AIM is a legitimate organization. I know there are a lot of AIM enthusiasts in Helena and my statements will probably negatively impact me. But, somebody needs to tell the truth about AIM. Nelson and PBS have done no justice to Indian Country by failing to uphold their editorial integrity, honesty and fairness. Their deception is simply intolerable. The film only adds more salt to the wounds of the true Wounded Knee victims.

Shawn White Wolf
P.O. Box 136

Right-wing bias

No one can accuse the IR of a liberal media bias ... at least not on the comic page. The creators of Fillmore and State should also do the decent thing, and send half their paycheck to Gary Trudeau. Because if it wasn’t for him they wouldn’t be there.

Pete Soper
604 Wintergreen Court

Caird plan absurd

Does the Rocky Mountain Development Council have their head buried in the sand? The $425,000 per unit cost for the proposed development on the Caird Engineering site is absurd. How many working families that buy their own house live in a house that costs $425,000 to build? Not very many. What a waste of money.

The Caird site is also not suitable for residential housing. It’s been a commercial site forever. The traffic count is one of the highest in the city which is a requirement for good commercial property. Commercial land is too expensive to develop for residential use. That is proven with the $425,000 per unit cost of the project. Subsidized housing should be able to be built for the same dollars, per unit, an individual would need for an apartment building.

Richard Brockbank
1630 Hauser Blvd.

Charity hoops

Thursday, March 26, was a night to remember. That was the night of the C.R. Anderson student-faculty basketball game. This was a charity game with the proceeds going in part to the Mid Helena...
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