

Maldonado, Jane

To: jmill@health.nyc.gov
Subject: FW: Puzzles about toxic hazard reporting

Jim,

Here is another example of the press doing a disservice to the public. Last Thursday, the NY Post called DEP responding to a press release from St. Paul's Chapel. In their press release, they stated that they were doing a cleanup that was mandated by DEP.

First, we did not mandate any cleanup at St. Paul's, and after contacting the press spokesman for St. Paul's, he acknowledged same. In fact, he even called the NY Post back to explain that the cleanup was the church's idea and the City did not mandate this cleanup. He also explained to us that his wordsmithing and use of the term hazardous materials could have been better. Second, St. Paul's received a letter in February from us stating that in a recent survey (452 buildings in and around ground zero) DEP noticed debris on their property and that, as the owner of the building, it was their responsibility to assess the conditions. Based on the survey, debris was observed in the courtyard and cemetery at the site. (Please e-mail your fax # and I will forward a copy of this letter.)

FYI, a similar letter was sent to all 211 buildings that we identified as having some World Trade Center debris present at their property.

Mike Gilsenan

—Original Message—

From: Gilsenan, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2002 11:54 AM
To: Maldonado, Jane 001
Subject: FW: Puzzles about toxic hazard reporting



Puzzles about toxic
hazard rep...

—Original Message—

From: Jim Miller [mailto:jmill@health.nyc.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2002 8:24 PM
To: avaltronir@dep.nyc.gov; michaelgi@dep.nyc.gov
Subject: Fwd: Puzzles about toxic hazard reporting

Please see attached. I know about the cars, but can you shed some light on the church?

Avaltroni, Robert

From: Jim Miller
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2002 8:24 PM
To: avaltronir@dep.nyc.gov; michaelgi@dep.nyc.gov
Subject: Fwd: Puzzles about toxic hazard reporting

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Puzzles about toxic
 on the church? hazard reporting

Jim,

Here is another Example of the Press doing
 a dis service to the Public. Last Thursday the NY Post called
 DEP responding to a Press release that St Paul's Chapel
 released. In their Press release they stated that they were
 doing a clean-up that was ~~mandated~~ mandated by us. ~~we~~
~~immediately contacted the Press Spokesman for St Paul's to inquire~~
~~as to~~

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 some. In fact he even called the NY Post back to Explain that
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~~of wordsmithing~~ and use of the term hazardous materials could
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~~role has been to~~ St Paul's rec'd a letter in

Feb from us stating that in a recent survey (the survey of 452 bldg.
 in & around ground zero)

DEP noted debris on their property and that ~~was~~ the owner of the bldg. it was their responsibility to assess the conditions, ~~and Based on their finding~~ Based on the survey debris was observed in the courtyard and cemetery at the site. A copy of DEP's letter is attached for your info. FYI a similar letter was sent to all 211 bldg that we identified as having some WTC debris present ~~on~~ at their properties.

Avaltroni, Robert
From: jonathan bennett
Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2002 12:18 PM
To: undisclosed-recipients
Subject: Puzzles about toxic hazard reporting

A couple of journalistic puzzles to ponder this weekend:

Below is a story from the 3/16 Times, reporting that St. Paul's Chapel, which is right across the street from the World Trade Center, will be closing after Easter "for cleanup of debris."

The article include some hints about the nature of those debris, reporting that "the cleanup project is mandated by the city's Department of Environmental Protection" and "preservationists have said they fear the fine dust covering the church may contain toxic substances and could eventually damage it."

The report includes nothing more about the nature of those toxic substances or the specifics of the DEP's decision to mandate the cleanup. I don't have any more information about the specifics, either, but I do know that one of the laws under which the DEP can order a clean up is the City's asbestos control law, and I also know that three-quarters of the samples of dust from the trade center collapse contain asbestos, so I wonder whether the clean-up was triggered by asbestos contamination. I don't know, but it does not appear that the Times even asked, being more concerned, evidently, about potential damage to the church structure.

The second puzzle is this: Yesterday the City announced that it was postponing the planned 3/18 of the asbestos-contaminated WTC cars. The decision was reported by Nina Peneda on Channel 7 and by Julie Scelfo on Newsweek Online (<http://www.msnbc.com/news/724974.asp>), and I understand that WNYC Radio will air a report on the morning of 3/18. I'm completely flabbergasted by the absence of any coverage of the postponement by the Daily News, because the News could take legitimate credit for having set in motion the postponement by publishing, on 3/8, an exclusive report of the City's plan to go ahead with the release, a report that played up how controversial the release was (http://www.nydailynews.com/2002-03-08/News_and_Views/City_Beat/a-143745.asp). The News' report was even cited in a 3/14 from Rep. Jerrold Nadler to Christine Whitman, in which Nadler demanded that the release be postponed, which is exactly what happened. The New could have had an exclusive about Nadler's letter to Whitman, because the News had a copy of Nadler's letter to Whitman on the day the letter was written. Does anyone know why the News has had a sudden attack of modesty?

St. Paul's Chapel Is Closing for Cleanup of Debris

By TINA KELLEY

New York Times

March 16, 2002

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/16/nyregion/16CHAP.html>

St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Church, the sanctuary for weary rescue workers at ground zero since Sept. 11, is closing temporarily for a cleaning.

"There has been lots of wear and tear on the building, and it's just in need of a huge cleaning now, both inside and out," the Rev. Lyndon F. Harris said yesterday. "There is some debris outside the church that is of significant concern."

With five big grills set up on the sidewalk, the Episcopal chapel, located at Broadway and Fulton Street, has served about 2,000 meals a day, starting the weekend after Sept. 11, Mr. Harris said.

He estimated that 350,000 meals had been served there. The 236-year-old building has been open around the clock to provide food and rest for firefighters, police officers and rescue workers.

The church has held a noontime service just for rescue workers, and, for the past two months, an 8 a.m. Sunday service open to the public. Daily public prayer services are expected to begin again in May.

The cleaning will begin after Easter, Mr. Harris said. He did not know how long it would last or how much it would cost. Preservationists have said they fear the fine dust covering the church may contain toxic substances and could eventually damage it. According to the chapel's Web site, the cleanup project is mandated by the city's Department of Environmental Protection.

"After Easter and the required cleaning, St. Paul's public ministry will be reborn to address the urgent, unique spiritual needs of a community that is recovering but still grieving from the terrible tragedy," said the Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard, the vicar of Trinity Parish.

Nathan Brockman, a spokesman for the chapel, said of the closing: "It was a terribly difficult decision. Unfortunately, we were at the point where we had to make it."

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public

Thank you for contacting Ms. Alessandra Sumowicz to register your concern about the closing of St. Paul's Chapel. Ms. Sumowicz had referred your e-mail to this office.

In late January and early February 2002, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), conducted surveys of building exteriors located in and around ground zero. This survey was a follow-up to earlier surveys conducted by NYCDEP in early October 2001. During the latest survey, the representative from USEPA, together with the NYCDEP representative, indicated on their survey forms that the property at 209 Broadway (St. Paul's) had debris located in their cemetery and courtyard. On February 8, 2002, DEP sent a letter to the owner indicating that debris was observed in the cemetery and courtyard and that the owner should assess the situation and then clean up appropriately. This same letter was sent to many other buildings in the area in which debris was noted. There was no directive to close the chapel or any other buildings in the area.

temporarily

As we learned in mid-March, the Church announced that it would close (including St. Paul's Chapel) after Easter Sunday. We had conversation with John Allen, Director of Communications of the Parish of Trinity Church who informed us that the decision to close St. Paul's was entirely their own.

I hope this will clarify some of the issues for you and once again, thank you for writing to us.