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# THE SUNDAY DENVER POST

Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire

Final Edition 75 cents

## Shell Co. poison tested on infants

By Mark Omasick  
Denver Post Environment Writer

Research by Italian doctors, financed by a Shell oil Co. affiliate, exposed newborn babies to a Colorado-made insecticide to determine whether the chemical was toxic to humans, according to records and the doctor who supervised the tests.

The research on 89 newborn infants from 1968 to 1969 tested Shell's No Pest Strip, which was being sold in the United States with

a printed warning against their use in nurseries or around patients.

Insecticides for the Italian baby study were manufactured by Shell at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver and packaged for market in Princeton, N.J. A Shell spokesman said:

An internal Shell corporate document, filed in the firm's American headquarters in Houston, called the newborn baby experiment a "Shell supported study." That document was made public last month

as part of a colossal California lawsuit over Shell's role in the Superfund cleanup at the arsenal.

The research included placing infants in a "poorly ventilated room" and subjecting them to varying concentrations of the insecticide. The doctors concluded that the babies could be exposed to the insecticide "without significant effects affecting their health."

But earlier tests, conducted from 1965 to 1967 on 121 hospitalized adults and children, concluded that the chemical, called Vapona,

altered nervous system activity in all patients at high doses and in some patients at low doses. Because those patients didn't display any signs of physical illness, the doctors wrote that Shell recommended Vapona doses in hospitals were "clinically harmless."

The study results were used to bolster a decision by Italian officials allowing Shell to sell the insecticide to hospitals in Italy.

When asked why Vapona was tested on patients in the hospital, instead of mice in the laboratory,

one of the Italian scientists replied, "Because, in the hospital, there were people and no mice."

Last year in the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency deemed the chemical a "probable human carcinogen" and required product containers to carry a cancer hazard warning. Shell stopped selling Vapona to Americans in 1986.

Shell's No Pest Strip, marketed to homeowners and retailers,

Photo by GUY POISON on 18-A

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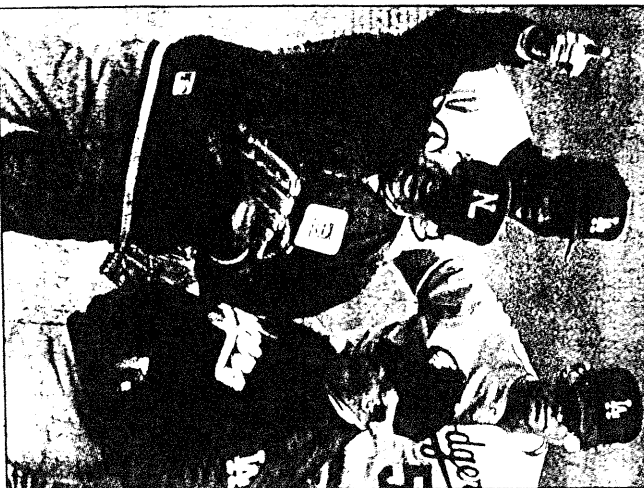
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### L.A. LOSSES PITCHER, GAME



Associated Press

Dodger pitcher Jay Howell, right rear, watches as Umpire Harry Wadsworth ejects him from Saturday's playoff game against the New York Mets after finding illegal pine tar in his glove during the eighth inning. Dodger manager Tommy Lasorda, right, couldn't change the umpire's mind. The Mets scored 5 runs in the inning and won 8-4. STORY, 1C

### Outrage greets razing of town of Chernobyl

By The Associated Press  
MOSCOW — The radiation contaminated town of Chernobyl, near the site of the world's worst nuclear accident, is being razed because it will be unfit for human habitation for years.  
Officials even plan to erase the Chernobyl administrative region by eliminating Communist Party and government bodies in the area and transferring seven villages to a neighboring region. The newspaper Pravda reported.

clean up the 800-year-old town. It questioned why the decision was made without announcement and without asking people who wanted to return home.  
Pravda said the town's fate was decided by the local Atomic Energy Ministry Combine, and suggested the Academy of Sciences or higher government organs should have been involved in the decision. Chernobyl, once home to 10,000 people, was evacuated in April 1986 after a fire at the power plant with

### Denver schools to offer Koeppe 1-year extension

By Alan Gottlieb  
Denver Post Staff Writer

Denver schools Superintendent Dick Koeppe will be offered a one-year contract extension, the school board unanimously agreed Saturday.

The decision, made during an informal work session, still requires an official vote Oct. 20. It also is contingent on whether Koeppe can get an additional year's leave of absence from the University of Colorado at Denver.

School Board President Ed Garner will seek the university's approval Monday.  
"We need someone who can offer us stability and leadership, and we think he can do it," Garner said.

Board member Bill Schumacher agreed. "Our consensus was enthusiastically unanimous. Our enthusiasm is so profound that it's pretty exciting."  
The 57-year-old Koeppe also was eager. "Provided the university ap

proves the extra leave, I don't want to lose my professorship," Koeppe, superintendent of Cherry Creek schools for 15 years, went on to teach educational law and administration at CU.

He said the board has not discussed whether he would be in-creased the second year. But he added, "I trust my relationship with the board, and I'm not going to worry about that."



"Realistically, it's especially important to the school system now," Koeppe said, because the makeup of the board is in flux. Last week, board member Paul Santavall resigned. And three of the board's seven seats are up for election in May.

### Rocky Flats safety incident leads to closing of plutonium building

By Bruce Finley  
Denver Post Staff Writer

The Department of Energy closed the main plutonium processing building at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant Saturday because of safety concerns.

An incident in which three workers entered a potentially dangerous area without protection led to the closure, said spokesman for Rockywell International, which operates the factory for the federal government.

The energy department also was concerned that the "combustible" solvents for radioactivity may not be working properly.

Two plant employees and one DOE employee underwent lung tests after they walked past a bag of waste with contaminated equip-

ment that did not see a warning sign because an object had been placed in front of it, obscuring it from sight.  
Initial tests, performed at the plant, indicated the workers were not harmed in the Sept. 29 incident, Heitz said. "The employees will undergo most tests."  
The devices that workers use to screen themselves for radioactivity by having been of concern to DOE officials since plant safety inspections in February.  
"From time to time, those machines get out of calibration," Heitz said. "If a worker has contamination on his hand, for example, perhaps the reading may be off by a small amount."  
About 575 Rockywell and subcontractor employees work in the processing facility, known as Building 771. It will remain closed until DOE officials deem it safe, said Rockywell spokesman Pat Eichert.

appraisal in February, more DOE inspectors have been dispatched to the plant, Eichert said.  
"They identified a number of safety-related issues, none of them life-threatening," he said. "We work with very hazardous materials out there. If they can identify anything that can be improved, they like to do that and take the initiative."  
**Question raised**  
Asked whether there had been other incidents involving potential contamination of workers since February, Eichert said, "There could have been."  
In the recent incident, contaminated equipment from the sealed "glove boxes" had been placed in a lead-lined sack on the floor in the production area, when the three employees approached it, Eichert said.