

# Blau Appraisal Company helped these property owners win!

## LAND USE AND TAXES

### Appeals court backs reduction for water supply systems

By TOM HESTER

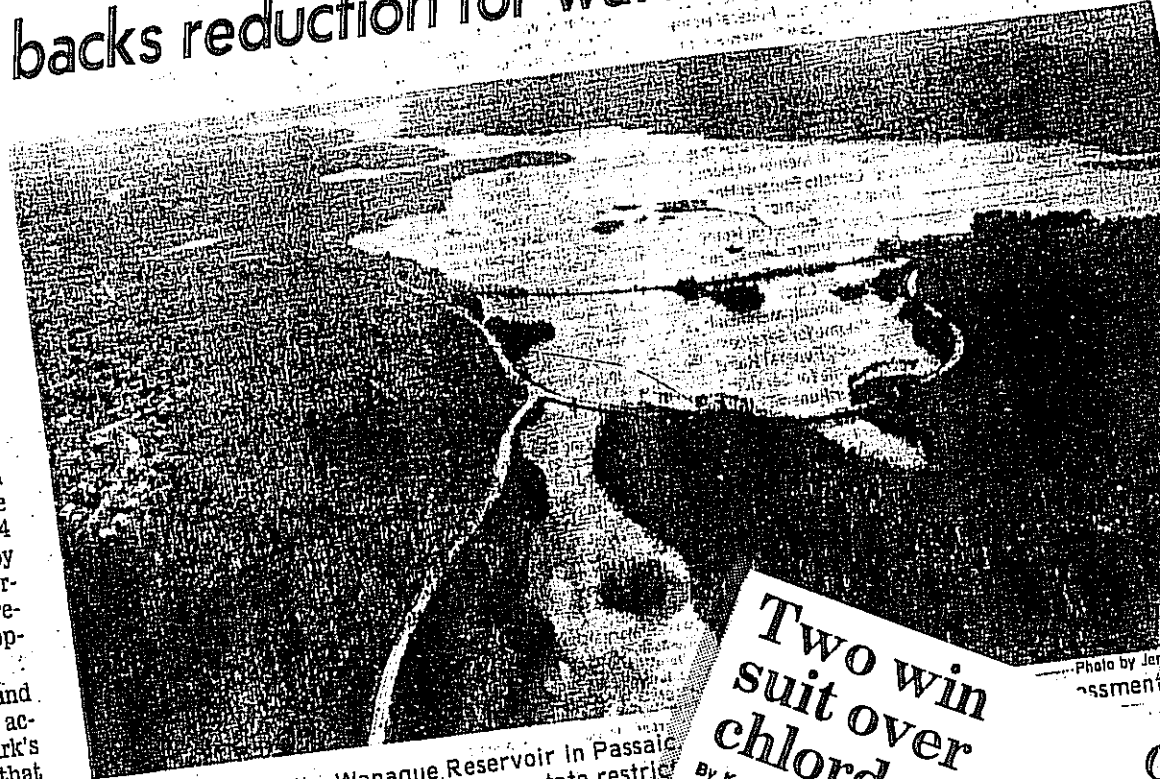
A state appeals court handed down a precedent-setting property tax decision yesterday reducing the assessment on watershed land because state restrictions on its use make it less valuable.

Attorneys said the decision would have ramifications for all water suppliers and communities where their reservoirs sprawl.

The three-judge panel upheld a tax court ruling that lowered the property tax assessment on 3,384 acres of watershed land owned by Newark in Morris County's Jefferson Township because state restrictions on the sale of such property reduce its value.

The ruling saved Newark and West Jefferson about \$100,000, according to Philip Elberg, Newark's counsel. "This means towns that own water supply lands in other areas, such as Newark, Jersey City and East Orange, will file tax assessment appeals," said Elberg. "This is good for towns that own water supply lands, but it's not as good for towns where watershed lands are located."

According to lawyers and officials, water suppliers that stand to benefit through tax appeals from the decision—besides Newark, Jersey City and East Orange—include the Hackensack Water Co. and the Elizabethtown Water Co. Communities like Jefferson that could be assessed to lower tax assessments on watershed land within their borders include West Milford, Parsippany-Troy Hills, Hardyston and Kinnelon.



An aerial view of the Wanaque Reservoir in Passaic County, showing the watershed land because state restrictions on its use make it less valuable.

### Two win suit over chlordane

By Kathleen Sullivan Staff Writer

A Tenafly couple whose house was contaminated by the pesticide chlordane won a \$197,000 judgment yesterday in Superior Court in Hackensack against an extermination company and a heating contractor. Thomas and Constance Heylink said their troubles began when they built an addition to their Cypress Street house in 1980 and had a contractor install a heating and air-conditioning unit in a crawl space under the addition.

When the crawl space under the house was treated for termite control several months later, the Hudson Exterminating Company drilled holes to pour chlordane into the structure but did not seal some of the holes and spilled some of the pesticide, said the Heylinks' attorney, Richard M. Goldman of Newark.

Also, Goldman said, the air-conditioning system installed by McGirl Inc. of Little Ferry leaked.

When Mrs. Heylink turned on the air-conditioning system in May 1982, chlordane spread throughout the house, Goldman said, contaminating the house, Goldman said, and clothing.

The Heylinks, who have four children, moved to another house in Tenafly after the state Department of Environmental Protection determined that the levels of chlordane in their house exceeded safety limits.

Goldman, who specializes in environmental law, said high levels of chlordane are suspected of causing cancer. In addition, exposure to the substance causes nausea, headaches and other unpleasant symptoms.

Found guilty during a trial in Bergen County Superior Court, the Heylinks' attorney, Richard M. Goldman of Newark, said the air-conditioning system installed by McGirl Inc. of Little Ferry leaked.

### Couple wins suit over chlordane

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## THIS WEEK...

### IN THE NEWS

**FORFEITURE UPDATE** ..... 5  
The state Supreme Court says its decision permitting jury trials in forfeiture cases applies to all pending cases and those on direct appeal.



BELLE SEITEL, 66, is a member of the Consolidated Labor Council. She is the wife of a man who was killed in a case that does not elevate him to the status of a defendant in a criminal case.

**WHAT A SALE** The \$300,000 price for the property of the 31-year-old East Jersey banker says John Hoss, the official in charge of the new state assets. But will the deal create red tape?



### The State Buys a Piece of History

Two federal courts back Mocco in 13-year fight against 'unseemly' actions that thwarted condo plan

By TIM O'BRIEN

More than 30 years ago, Jersey City officials decided to develop a run-down, industrial waterfront site into a handsome townhouse village in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. By 1973, city officials had a plan for 75 acres, and they called it Liberty Harbor North. In February 1985, developer Peter Mocco agreed to pay \$20,000 an acre for just under 30.5 acres of the tract, or \$611,600, and he signed a deal with the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency (JCRA) to redevelop his holdings according to the plan. The deeds were filed in late June of that year. But when Mocco got his first tax bill, he learned that the city assessor had valued his acres, surrounded by garbage dumps, abandoned buildings, toxic waste and auto wrecks, at \$5.86 million, or \$191,625 an acre. That was a jump of 858 percent.

### Union Funds Win Pyrrhic Victory in Tobacco Action

Judge sees little likelihood remaining three counts will survive summary judgment

By MATT ACKERMANN

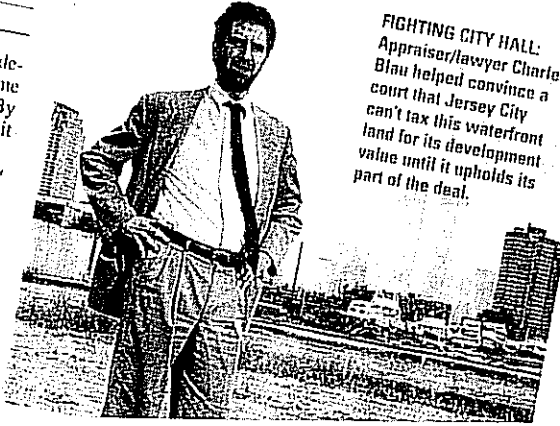
It was a technical victory at best for the New Jersey union health funds suing big tobacco to recover millions of dollars spent treating their members' smoking-related illnesses.

A federal judge in Newark ruled Wednesday that the unions cannot



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### Builder Wins \$78M Assessment Cut in War With Jersey City



**FIGHTING CITY HALL:** Appraiser/lawyer Charles Blau helped convince a court that Jersey City can't tax this waterfront land for its development value until it upholds its part of the deal.

## The Star-Ledger

FINAL EDITION

## The Record

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