‘Cluster’ of defects reported

Continued from Page 1

the neighborhood — including herself — who have had miscarriages, stillbirths or children born with congenital defects since October 1977.

In that period, there were two miscarriages, one stillbirth and five cases of birth defects. The adopted child of a woman in the neighborhood has contracted two severe blood diseases since 1980.

“Those are people I know personally,” Ross said in her letter. “I haven’t made a formal survey, but I’ve observed the area for five years and I’ve heard about the same thing. The neighborhood is known for its high incidence of birth defects.”

Leak reported

These concerns came to a peak after Ross read the newspaper article about the chemical leaking from Fairchild’s underground silo tank in her neighborhood’s water supply. She then wrote to the water company.

Fairchild officials have acknowledged that the company is responsible for the leak of 1,1,1-trichloroethane — a solvent used to clean silicon chips — into one of the Great Oaks Water Co.’s 12 wells. However, officials for both the state Department of Health Services and the Regional Water Quality Control Board said that the leak was discovered more than a year ago.

In her letter, Ross referred to that phrase, saying “this may or may not seem to be a major threat to public health, but it is of major importance to us who are directly affected. We are fearful that 20 years into our future, we may be experiencing repercussions from this.”

Report due in week

Glanzmann said she expects to have the county statistician’s report in about two weeks. At that time she will meet with Jackson and “other experts” to decide what steps should be taken.

While the county health department reviews birth statistics, the state will be looking at studies on the health effects of chemicals used at Fairchild.

Jackson said he was unaware of any link between 1,1,1-trichloroethane and birth defects, but he said the literature search was being made to satisfy that question. He said the state also will look for studies linking birth defects to other chemicals used at Fairchild.

In a letter she delivered to the water company on Tuesday, Ross said the plants were eight weeks in a row. It is not known how many cases of miscarriages and stillbirths will occur.

Area where birth defects were reported

[Diagram showing the area where birth defects were reported]
Parents concerned about birth disorders in neighborhood gathered Tuesday at home of Lorraine Ross, center

Birth disorders near plant now total 19.