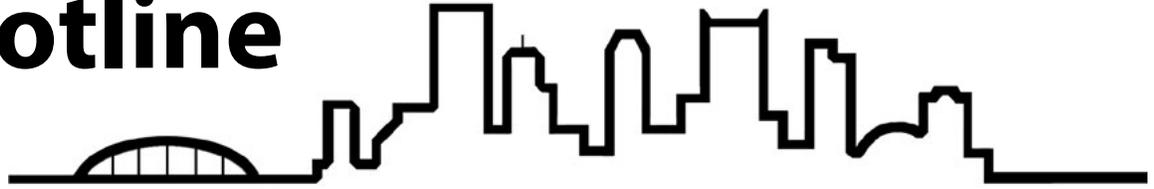




Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2014

www.gasp-pgh.org

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Medical Professionals for Healthy Air

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

School nurses, respiratory therapists, pediatricians, cardiologists, and other medical professionals can play a critical role in helping organizations like GASP get important information out to the public and advocate for healthy air. Medical professionals are trusted by their patients and a credible source of information for the community and decision-makers. Some medical professionals, however, are not knowledgeable about our region's poor air quality, the sources of our pollution, and the effects on their patients' health. This is where GASP comes in via our new Medical Professionals for Healthy Air project. This initiative aims to educate health professionals about regional air quality issues through

educational events, meetings, and webinars and then in turn, we hope those professionals become champions for healthy air.

What does it mean to champion for healthier air? This could include such things as educating patients about various air quality issues, speaking at public hearings and press conferences, presenting at community meetings, meeting with regional decision makers, writing blog posts and letters to the editor, etc. Interested medical professionals can get involved in whatever way they are comfortable and in any way that their schedule allows. For more information about this new initiative and how you can help, please contact Rachel at rachel@gasp-pgh.org.



The First Step to Reducing Diesel Emissions... Turn Off the Engine!

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

Reducing diesel emissions can be an expensive and cumbersome process when you are talking about retrofitting an old school bus, but simply turning off the engine is a no-brainer.

By eliminating unnecessary idling, drivers reduce exposure to diesel pollution by students, teachers, and the surrounding community... not to mention their own exposure. Diesel exhaust contains significant levels of small particles, known as fine particulate matter. These particles pose a significant health risk because they can pass through the nose and throat and lodge themselves in the lungs or pass into

the bloodstream. These fine particles are linked to asthma attacks, heart attacks, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and reduced brain function. Children are especially vulnerable since their bodies, including their respiratory systems, are still developing and because they breathe at a faster rate than adults.



"No Idling" signs are required to be displayed where diesel vehicles load and unload passengers.

Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is a nonprofit citizens group in southwestern Pennsylvania working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP has been a diligent watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy maker on many environmental issues, with a focus on air quality in the Pittsburgh region.

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School Flag Program—Reaching New Heights!

by Jessica Tedrow, GASP Education and Events Coordinator

The EPA School Flag Program that GASP manages in southwestern Pennsylvania continues to make great strides to encourage students to check their air quality conditions each day. They're raising the corresponding colored flag based on the predicted air quality index and making adjustments to their outdoor activities if necessary.

As of early October, we'll have 14 schools participating in the School Flag Program and four more lined up to start within the month. Our goal is to have 25 schools this winter and with increased interest throughout the area, we anticipate meeting this goal.

We'll also provide all participating schools with an informational banner to inform parents and the surrounding community about their involvement in the program.

If you know anyone at a school in your area that might like to participate, please contact Jessica Tedrow at jessica@gasp-pgh.org with their information.

To learn more about the program visit www.gasp-pgh.org/projects/epa-flags/



Participating Schools:

Environmental Charter School - Upper School
Environmental Charter School - Lower School
Cecil Elementary School
First Street Elementary School
Hills-Hendersonville Elementary School
Canon-McMillan High School
Borland Manor Elementary School
Clairton Education Center
Christ the Divine Teacher Catholic Academy
Colfax Upper Elementary School
Winchester Thurston Middle School
Blackhawk Intermediate School
St. Maria Goretti School
Pittsburgh Gifted Center

Upcoming Schools:

Gateway Middle School
Assumption School
Chartiers-Houston Junior/Senior High School
Sacred Heart Elementary School

Left: Students from Sacred Heart Elementary School will soon be starting the School Flag Program.

The **Hotline** is the semiannual newsletter of the Group Against Smog and Pollution.

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GASP Mission Statement

The Group Against Smog and Pollution works to improve air quality to ensure human, environmental, and economic health.

Methods of Achieving Mission

GASP is a citizens' group based in Southwestern PA which focuses on environmental issues in the surrounding region. When pertinent to these concerns, we participate in state and national environmental decisions.

We believe in the public's right to receive accurate and thorough information on these issues and to actively participate in the decision making process.

To achieve our environmental goals on behalf of our membership, GASP will advocate, educate, serve as an environmental watchdog, mobilize action, and litigate when necessary.

We will work both independently and in cooperation with like-minded individuals and groups as determined by the Board of Directors.

We will uphold GASP's reputation for scientific integrity, honesty, and responsible involvement.

GASP Legal Update

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

GASP's attorneys never seem to have a hard time keeping themselves busy. The following is a sampling of GASP legal projects that are ongoing or recently concluded:

- review of Title V Operating Permit Renewal for Genon's Keystone Generating Station, Plumcreek Township, Armstrong County, PA;
- review of General Permit 5 Authorization for Range Resources' Apted Compressor Station, Greene Township, Greene County, PA;
- review of General Permit 5 Authorization for Pennsylvania General Energy Company's Tract 203 Compressor Station, McHenry Township, Lycoming County, PA;
- review of Operating Permit Application and Ambient Air Monitoring for McConway and Torley facility, Pittsburgh, PA, Allegheny County;

- review of Title V Operating Permit Renewal for Liberty Pultrusions facility, West Mifflin, Allegheny County, PA;
- review of various proposed changes to Allegheny County's Article XXI, Air Pollution Control Regulations, including §2101.07.c - Air Pollution Control Advisory Committee, §2105.50 - Open Burning, and §2108.01.e - Emission Inventory Statements;
- continued work on citizen suit against Shenango's Neville Island Coke Plant, Neville Township, Allegheny County, PA;
- review of compliance records for several southwestern PA facilities EPA identified as "high priority violators."



GASP's 2nd Annual Clean Air Dash

GASP's 2nd annual Clean Air Dash 5k was Sunday, October 5, 2014 at the South Side's Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Hundreds of participants celebrated our community's progress in cleaning up the air in our region, and learned about the ways to keep fighting. Thanks to all who attended, volunteered, and sponsored the event!

To see race results visit the GASP website: gasp-pgh.org

T-shirts are still available for \$12 (includes shipping) so please contact jessica@gasp-pgh.org if you'd like a piece of history!

Special thanks to our co-sponsors:

The Heinz Endowments' Breathe Project
The University of Pittsburgh



Clean Air Dash photos by Ken Carl



See a list of sponsors and more photos from the race on page 6 and the back cover.

Almost Heaven, Appalachia

by Dr. Maren Cooke and Roger Day, GASP Board Members, and Ron Gaydos, Principal, Scenius Strategies

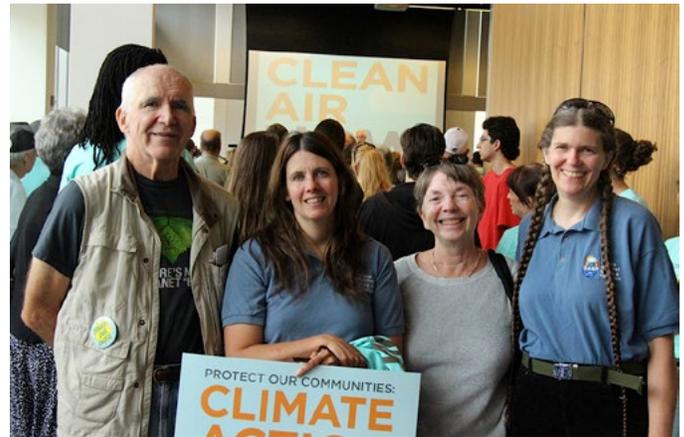
Members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) recently visited Washington, DC to oppose new EPA rules to decrease CO₂ emissions from power plants by 30%; a large contingent also came to Pittsburgh for the EPA hearings on the proposed regulations. The workers fear that the rules will harm the industry and consequently endanger the jobs, pension funds, and health care benefits that they depend on.

The miners' interests would seem aligned with their employers', but history says otherwise. The coal industry has a long history of attempts to offload expenses for pension and health onto its workers. The coal companies, not the EPA, are the ones working against the miners. Viewing a company's production units—including people—solely through the lens of profit leads to a frantic short-term focus that devalues employees. Shirking prior corporate commitments looks like a good business strategy. Blaming the EPA rules for an inability to meet those commitments is cynical. However, the rest of us have a responsibility to couple improvements in energy production with solutions for workers who gave decades to America's energy production and in retirement might be harmed by this strategy.

The federal government has a long history in balancing needs for industrial production with workers' well-being. The Coal Commission was established by the Coal Act in 1938. In 1989 when the Pittston Company attempted to shrug off its responsibilities to workers, the struggle was resolved in the miners' favor by the Coal Commission. The Coal Commission asserted this principle: "Retired miners have legitimate expectations of health care benefits for life; that was the promise they received during their working lives, and that is how they planned their retirement years.



Workers from the coal industry oppose new EPA rules to decrease CO₂ emissions from power plants by 30%. Photo courtesy of Maren Cooke.



GASPers Ted Popovich, Rachel Filippini, Fran Harkins and Maren Cooke show support for clean air regulations. Photo courtesy of Maren Cooke.

That commitment should be honored." As the EPA rules come into effect, as the US does its duty to stem climate change, we as a nation must also prevent destruction of the coal workers, their families and communities. The key is to transition the mining jobs to renewable energy.

Automation has erased more coal jobs than renewables. Coal production has stayed relatively level, while coal mining jobs have shrunk. Cheaper natural gas and reductions in exports as overseas demand slows and decreases will further weaken domestic coal production. West Virginia employs only 21,000 workers in coal, down from 28,000 in 1990.

Meanwhile, employment in renewable energy increases; it now equals employment in the coal industry. The Appalachian region is blessed with many clean energy assets, including wind and solar potential, which the US Energy Information Agency places in the mid-range. Requiring an investment amounting to a small portion of fossil energy subsidies, we could coordinate a solution that works for coal industry workers. A look at the skills required for coal mining and for wind or solar equipment manufacturing, installation, and service on the Federal multi-agency O-Net occupational skills web site (www.onetonline.org) shows similar skill requirements.

Bingo! Former coal miners can help build a greater renewable energy economy, in energy equipment manufacturing facilities established near their communities. With minimal retraining, their skills can be applied to new green industries, manufacturing components of sustainable energy systems: solar panels, wind turbines, windows, and building insulation. People undertaking their technical vocation ed-

continued on page 5

Coal continued from page 4

ucation can go right into the renewable energy skill training that is already increasing throughout Appalachia.

During the 2008 financial crisis, the federal government somehow found trillions for Wall Street bailouts. Fossil fuel subsidies are substantial; they amount to eight times those for renewable energy development and production. So we can do this.

Several federal programs for industry transition already exist to support initiatives to make the change from fading industries to newer ones. But coal communities are generally remote from large population centers, so those programs need to focus on getting manufacturing facilities for renewables and energy-efficiency technology into those locations, to preserve the communities. The UMWA should be advocating for this kind of change. Clinging to extracting fossil energy from the ground is ultimately a doomed path. The focus we advocate for would mean jobs for decades to come in or near coal communities.

A new bill called the “Healthy Employee Loss Prevention Act,” now before the U.S. Congress, addresses potential coal job losses directly. Its goal is “to establish a worker adjustment assistance program to provide assistance and job retraining for workers who have lost their jobs due to unplanned closures of coal and coal dependent industries, and for other purposes.” Although sponsored by a Republican (David McKinley of WV), most Republicans in the House are not yet supporters. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that some of the country’s leaders are tackling the issue. We hope the UMWA will support this bill. You can track the bill’s status at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr5529#> and get in touch with people you know in Congress to urge their support.

Sources:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/11/04/heres-why-central-appalachias-coal-industry-is-dying/>

<http://www.wvminesafety.org>

<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/53-7033.00>

<http://www.onetonline.org/find/quick?s=wind+turbine>



Diesel continued from page 1

In order to prevent emissions, Pennsylvania passed a law more than five years ago, known as the Pennsylvania Diesel Powered Motor Vehicle Idling Act, which prohibits the unnecessary idling of school buses and other on-road diesel vehicles for more than five minutes in an hour. Buses can idle for up to 15 minutes during a 60-minute period, but only when passengers are aboard. Owners and operators of locations where these vehicles load or unload are also required to erect and maintain idling restriction signs. Local police can enforce this law.

Earlier in the spring, in collaboration with a number of other local environmental and health based organizations, GASP conducted school bus idling observations at Pittsburgh Public Schools. In general we found about one in four school buses was idling beyond the allotted five minutes in an hour. We also observed that the mandated “no idling” signage was not present. This all suggested that there was room for improvement and a need for more education of parents, school personnel, and drivers. Over the last few months GASP has helped to educate these various audiences about the importance of shutting off your engine. This has included presentations for bus drivers in partnership with

You wouldn't want your child's school bus driver to talk on the phone, text, or smoke while transporting your child.

DON'T ACCEPT SCHOOL BUS IDLING EITHER.

Did you know school bus idling exposes kids to harmful diesel emissions that are linked to asthma attacks, cancer, diabetes, and reduced brain function?

The good news is that Pennsylvania has a law prohibiting unnecessary idling beyond 5 minutes in an hour. Unfortunately not all school bus drivers know or follow the law.

If you see excessive idling, let your child's teacher and principal know. You can also contact GASP at idling@gasp-pgh.org.

GASP's anti-idling advertisement appeared in local publications near the beginning of the school year.

Green Building Alliance and the education of school nurses working in Pittsburgh Public Schools. In addition, we've supplied the district, and the various charter, parochial, and private schools for which they are required to provide transportation with the mandated idling signage at no charge.

Knowing that diesel emissions are the number one air toxic cancer risk facing our community, any effort to reduce diesel exhaust will help clean the air, and minimize exposure.

If you see a bus idling beyond the allowable time you should contact your local police and let the school know.

Thanks to our Clean Air Dash Sponsors:



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 Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera
 Pittsburgh Magazine
 Pittsburgh Quarterly
 Pittsburgh Steak Company
 Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium
 Seven Springs Mountain Resort
 South Side Tattoo and Body Piercing
 Sunny Bridge Natural Foods



Clean Air Dash photo by Ken Carl

Spotlight on a GASP Staff Member

This summer, GASP welcomed our newest staff member, Jessica Tedrow. She is serving as GASP's Education and Events Coordinator and we are glad to have her.

Jessica wasn't familiar with GASP prior to seeing the job posting. As she put it, "After spending some time not working in my field of interest, I was very excited to stumble upon GASP. I admittedly hadn't heard of the organization, but after some research it was a perfect fit! My passion for environmental preservation and focus on education are definitely why I decided to come to GASP."

Jessica is a Slippery Rock University grad, Summa Cum Laude, who earned a BS in Secondary French Education, an M Ed in Environmental Education and an MS in Park & Resource Management. During her studies, she focused on education, community outreach, interpretation, and management. In time, she hopes to pursue a doctorate degree.

Jessica dove right in to her work, managing the recent, successful Clean Air Dash 5K in early October and coordinating the School Flag Program, recruiting area schools to participate. She has also tabled at a variety of education focused events this past summer and looks forward to tabling at more events and educating citizens about the importance of good air quality. As she relates, the majority of her extended family grew up in the Mon Valley towns of Charleroi and Monongahela and she grew up hearing their stories about air pollution and its impact on the communities. They're normally quite surprised, though, when she tells them that our air still needs more work.

When asked what she likes most about her job, Jessica said that it's working with students and teachers for the School Flag Program. "I love to go into the classroom, teach something new, and see how the presentation evolves. Every group of students is entirely unique, so it always keeps things interesting!"

Outside of her work at GASP, Jessica volunteers in her hometown of Washington, PA at the Chartiers-Houston Community Center, as well as at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum during special events. She enjoys travel, watching movies and learning new things. She visited seven National Parks out west this past summer and plans on visiting Central America for the first time next year. 



 **Join GASP Today!**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Grassroots Supporters (\$15 low income/student rate) <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Grassroots Contributors <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Grassroots Patrons <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Clean Air Defenders <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Clean Air Protectors <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Other 	<p><i>Call GASP at (412) 924-0604 to learn about automatic monthly giving, deducted directly from your checking account or charged to your credit card. An easy, hassle-free way to support GASP all year round!</i></p>
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All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The official registration and financial information of GASP may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Thanks to our Clean Air Dash Northwind Sponsors:



GNC is currently headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA and is a leading global specialty retailer of health and wellness products, including vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplement products, sports nutrition products and diet products.

GNC had its beginnings along Wood Street in downtown Pittsburgh, 1935 by founder David Shakarian, originally called 'Lackzoom'. They specialized in yogurt and other healthy foods. Within the next five years, he would open six more locations while people began to embrace the concept of natural foods and better nutrition. During this expansion, Shakarian changed the name of his chain to General Nutrition Centers.

GNC has more than 8,600 locations in more than 50 countries today. As their company has grown over the years, so has their commitment to Living Well. They are the world's largest company of its kind devoted exclusively to helping its customers improve the quality of their lives.



Gay Life Television is a membership-supported Internet Television Network of quality LGBTQ-oriented shows, news, movies, music, fashion, and comedy. They produce their own shows as well as broadcast content from other providers around the world. They're even situated locally on Penn Avenue in the Lawrenceville-Bloomfield neighborhood.

GLTV is the first LGBTQ-dedicated Internet Television Network located in the United States of America that is both LGBTQ-owned and operated. Their show hosts, content, and video quality have made them a leader in the entertainment industry.

Gay Life Television is a member of the local Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce based in Harrisburg, PA and helps support the development of LGBTQ business enterprises to further the growth of their community. They hope that their viewers enjoy their programming to provide a platform for entertaining and educational content that gives a voice for the LGBTQ family.

See more sponsors and photos on pages 3 and 6.

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Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc.

