



Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Summer 2010

www.gasp-pgh.org

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The American Lung Association State of the Air Report: Pittsburgh 3rd Worst in Nation for Short-Term Particle Pollution

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

On April 28th, the American Lung Association (ALA) Released its 2010 "State of the Air Report," an annual ranking of the areas of the United States with the highest and lowest levels of ozone and particulate matter pollution according to EPA data. It should come as no surprise to anyone who follows local air quality issues (or has ever stepped outside and noted the sulfur odor that frequently tinges the late-night/early morning air during a pollution-trapping inversion) that southwestern Pennsylvania fares poorly in the ALA reports. In 2008 and 2009, the ALA ranked the Pittsburgh metropolitan area worst in the nation for short-term fine particle (PM2.5) pollution. This year Pittsburgh's short-term PM2.5 ranking was 3rd worst in the nation—slightly less dire than our ranking in previous years, but certainly no cause for celebration.

Nearly as interesting as the report itself is the hostility and denial its release generates locally. Each year, like clockwork, immediately after the ALA report is released, the local papers' editorial pages are filled with reactions to the report, calling it, for example "disingenuous,"¹ "junk science,"² "bogus,"³ "farce,"⁴ "worthless,"⁵ "biased, and unscientific,"⁶ "pure fiction,"⁷ and (my personal favorite) "tripe."⁸ But the attacks aren't limited to the opinion pages. An April 29, 2010 Pittsburgh Tribune review article quotes an Allegheny County Health Department Spokesperson who describes the Pittsburgh ranking as "very misleading."⁹

As it now stands, in order to describe an unfavorable ranking in 2011, local pundits seeking an original phrase to attack the ALA report will be restricted to words ranging from the quaint to the bizarre: bombast, hogwash, drivel, poppycock, baloney, hooley, balderdash, tommyrot, claptrap, mumbo-jumbo. Clearly, there is a looming crisis at hand: if our region's air quality rankings do not improve soon, our supply of family-friendly synonyms for "inaccurate" will be entirely exhausted.

But what about the substance of the attacks on the ALA report? Is the report really a bunch of horsefeathers? Critics consistently rely on a single assertion to attack the report: that "the numbers that determine the [ALA] ranking can't possibly speak for the region because they come from a single monitor—in Liberty, near U.S. Steel's Clairton coke works."¹⁰ However, this statement simply doesn't stand up in the face of reality. Let's look at the facts.

1. First a point of clarification: ALA does *not* arbitrarily select a monitor in each metropolitan area and deem it representative of the entire area. For each day in the 3-year period each ALA report studies, ALA identifies the highest PM monitor in each county. All areas are judged based on their worst-performing monitor, not just Pittsburgh.

2. While Pittsburgh's ranking is heavily influenced by the elevated PM readings at

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.

Behind the Veil of Fragrance

by Sue Seppi, GASP Project Manager

“A rose by any other name would smell as sweet” but the familiar floral scent in commercial fragrance products is much more mysterious. The United States Fair Packaging and Labeling Act of 1973 (FPLA) requires companies to list cosmetic ingredients on the product label—but exempts chemicals in fragrance. So what is lurking in the inscrutable fragrance? According to a 2010 report released by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) entitled *Not So Sexy: The Health Risk of Secret Chemicals in Fragrance* (NSSR), in a test of 17 name brand fragrances (perfumes and body sprays) there were, on average, nearly equal numbers of secret and labeled ingredients.¹

When applying a dab of perfume, a dash of body spray or a sudsing shampoo, the fragrance may seem to be relatively benign. NSSR’s analysis revealed that some of the chemicals, both disclosed and hidden behind the “fragrance” moniker, have studies associating them with potential adverse health effects.

Sensitizers and contact allergens

A sensitizer is defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration as “a chemical that causes a substantial proportion of exposed people or animals to develop an allergic reaction in normal tissue after repeated exposure to the chemical.” In 2007, the American Contact Dermatitis Society named fragrance the “Allergen of the Year.”² In the NSSR, 38 undisclosed chemicals in the 17 name-brand fragrance products assessed included nine chemicals that are potential sensitizers or contact allergens, including four compounds that companies must list on product labels in the European Union.

Hormone disruptors

Long-term studies that address potential endocrine disruption have not been done, but laboratory research



suggests that synthetic musk fragrances such as tonalide and galaxolide can disrupt hormones. “Galaxolide and tonalide can bind to and stimulate human estrogen receptors, and both musks have been shown to affect androgen and progesterone receptors.”³ A 2003 study that included these two chemicals noted, “Since synthetic musks strongly inhibited larval development in *A. tonsa* (a marine crustacean) at low nominal concentrations, they should be considered as very toxic.”⁴ A 2009 EWG report documenting contaminants in infant cord blood showed the presence of one or both musks in 7 of 10 babies tested!⁵ In the 17 fragrance products tested in the NSSR, galaxolide was found in 15 products and tonalide in five products.

To protect perfume scent chemicals from being oxidized due to light exposure, ultraviolet light absorbers typically used in sunscreens are frequently added to perfumes and colognes. Some of these sunscreen chemicals have been shown to have hormone-disrupting properties. EWG cites, for example, oxybenzone, a common sunscreen ingredient,

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GASP Mission Statement

GASP will act to obtain for the residents of southwestern Pennsylvania clean air, water, and land in order to create the healthy, sustainable environment and quality of life to which we are entitled.

Methods of Achieving Mission

GASP is a citizens’ group based in Southwestern PA which focuses on Allegheny County environmental issues. 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.

CMU's President Cohon speaks about the Hidden Costs of Energy

by Janis Johnson, GASP Board Member

Dr. Jared Cohon, President of Carnegie Mellon University, spoke on the Hidden Costs of Energy at GASP's spring educational meeting on May 13, 2010 at the Imagine Environmental Charter School in Regent Square. His lecture summarized and explained the recent National Research Council Report on the unpriced consequences of energy production and use. Dr. Cohon was selected to lead a prestigious panel of academicians and researchers in carrying out this study requested by Congress in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The report was completed and advance copy distributed in October 2009.



Dr. Jared Cohon, President of Carnegie Mellon University

tion. Damages from electricity production from gas, nuclear, and renewables and heating production were negligible in comparison.

Of special interest to GASP members, the committee focused especially on air pollution and its impact on human health, grain crop and timber yields, building materials, recreation, and visibility of outdoor vistas. Health damages, which include premature mortality and morbidity (such as chronic bronchitis and asthma), constituted the vast majority of monetized damages, with premature mortality being the single

largest health-damage category. The sources of damages, primarily coal-fired power plants, are heavily concentrated in the mid-Atlantic region, including in Pennsylvania.

The report had additional findings regarding damages from climate change, but these were more difficult to quantify. The committee concluded that infrastructure and security impacts may be significant and worthy of further analysis.

The talk was followed by a lively question and answer session. You can download Dr. Cohon's Powerpoint at: <http://www.gasp-pgh.org>. The entire report is available from the National Academies Press at http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12794&page=1.



The crowd listens attentively while Dr. Cohon speaks about the Hidden Costs of Energy

The committee was charged with defining and evaluating key external costs and benefits—related to health, environment, security, and infrastructure—that are associated with the production, distribution, and use of energy, but not reflected in the market price of energy or fully addressed by current government policy. The goal was to identify and quantify costs that are not reflected in the market price of energy. Dr. Cohon stressed that the scope of the report was limited by its charge to economic measures and not to social or moral considerations.

In general, the damage estimates presented in the report for various external effects are substantial, more than \$120 billion of non-climate damages for the year 2005 alone. Approximately one-half was attributed to electricity generation from coal-fired plants, and one-half to ground transporta-



Dr. Cohon speaks with GASP Board Member David Eibling

RRI Cheswick Power Plant Update

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

In the Spring Hotline we described our efforts to prevent the RRI Energy Cheswick Power Plant from receiving an amendment to their permit to install a sulfur-dioxide scrubber which would allow the plant to emit neurotoxic lead at more than four times the facility's historic lead emissions level. We are pleased to report that, as the Spring edition was going to press, GASP entered an agreement with RRI Energy which should ensure lead emissions from the Cheswick Station will not increase when the scrubber commences operation. This agreement could not have happened without the massive effort of residents living near the power plant and the students at Springdale High School. Both groups led successful petition drives, and through their advocacy kept the issue in the public eye.

The agreement requires RRI to do the following:

1. Accept an enforceable limit on lead air emissions from Cheswick of 626 pounds per year. This limit is comparable to Cheswick Station's actual lead emissions in past years and is nearly three times lower than the lead limit RRI initially proposed (1810 pounds/yr).

2. Increase the frequency of stack emissions tests for lead from once every five years to once every two years. Stack tests determine the rate at which a pollutant is emitted from a facility. These emission rates are used to calculate actual emissions. Requiring this test every two years provides added assurance the plant's reported actual emissions remain accurate.
3. Provide the monthly average lead content of coal combusted at the facility to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). Lead emissions from Cheswick Station are determined in part by the amount of lead in the coal combusted. By requiring RRI to report lead content information, ACHD, individuals, and environmental organizations like GASP can access this information to ensure coal lead content does not increase sufficiently to exceed the facility's 626 lb/yr lead emissions limit.

This agreement is positive news for our air and, more important, for the health and safety of children living near the power plant.



Fragrance continued from page 2

that has been linked with cell damage, hormone disruption and allergy.⁶

Despite the fragrance exemption, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) and the FPLA authorize U.S. regulation of cosmetics. The FD&C Act prohibits the marketing of adulterated or misbranded cosmetics in interstate commerce; adulterated includes among other items, any poisonous or deleterious substance that may cause injury under customary use. The FPLA requires an ingredient label declaration to enable consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. This includes, for example, listing order of cosmetic ingredients by predominance (with some variations). Cosmetics that fail to comply with the FPLA are considered misbranded under the FD&C Act.⁷

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not have premarket approval authority for cosmetics, but it does have enforcement authority for marketed cosmetics based on the FD&C Act and FPLA. The FDA may collect samples during plant inspections for examination and analysis, carry out import inspections, and follow up on complaints of adverse reactions. The FDA must prove in court that the product is

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What can you do to be as safe as possible when using cosmetics?

- ✓ Take advantage of your consumer power!
 - Use the EWG's Skin Deep database (<http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/search.php>) to search for safer cosmetics. For example, you can search for cosmetics that do not list fragrance on the label. Note that a label may say "fragrance free" but actually have some fragrance chemicals with a masking agent!
 - See http://www.safecosmetics.org/downloads/Not-SoSexy_report_May2010.pdf, Appendix F of the NSSR for a list of companies that have pledged to include all ingredient chemicals, including fragrance chemicals, on their labels.
- ✓ Ask your representatives in Congress to give the FDA the authority and resources it needs to ensure the safety of cosmetics and ensure full disclosure of ingredients.
- ✓ Tell companies to be transparent and complete in their labeling. Phone numbers for most companies can be found on the label or packaging.

Clean Construction Legislation Introduced for Pittsburgh Projects

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

On June 1st, Pittsburgh City Council introduced two pieces of legislation aimed at minimizing diesel emissions from construction equipment and mitigating stormwater runoff at publicly subsidized projects. The legislation was sponsored by four council members: Bill Peduto, Natalia Rudiak, Doug Shields, and Bruce Kraus, but it will need at least two more sponsors to ensure that it is veto proof. Through our leadership on the Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution, GASP played a key role in helping to develop the clean construction legislation.

Why focus on reducing emissions from construction equipment? The construction industry uses more diesel engines than any other sector and, according to EPA, it generates roughly 32% of all land-based, non-road oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions and more than 37% of land-based particulate matter 10 micrometers or smaller in size (PM10).

Poor air quality created by diesel emissions has an adverse affect on our community's health, especially on our children and the elderly who are more vulnerable to air pollution. They also have a negative impact on construction workers who are receiving the most potent, toxic dose of diesel emissions as they work around that equipment each day. Diesel exhaust contains over 40 toxic air contaminants, carcinogens, ozone-forming elements, as well as fine particulate matter.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, numerous studies of occupational exposure to diesel exhaust have been conducted in truck drivers, bus drivers, dock workers and railroad workers over the past three decades. These medical studies have linked diesel exhaust and particles to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, bladder cancer, colon cancer,



nervous system impairment, stroke, asthma, and premature death. More information can be found at http://www.theoec.org/PDFs/PressReleases/CATF_Diesel_Occupationalfs.pdf

In its current form, the clean construction legislation works to minimize human exposure and the health risks from diesel particulate emissions by requiring city construction projects or publicly subsidized development projects in the city to utilize ultra low sulfur diesel fuel in diesel powered on-road and off-road vehicles and equipment on the project site. In addition, contractors would not be permitted to operate any diesel on-road vehicles or off-road equipment without the best available pollution reduction retrofit technology.

A public hearing is scheduled for July 1st. Stay tuned to see where this legislation is headed. 

Reducing Pollution from Diesel Engines in Pittsburgh Yesterday, Today and for the Future

Come celebrate Pittsburgh's progress in reducing diesel emissions and chart our next steps toward further reductions.

July 28, 2010

Media Event, 10:30 AM

RiverQuest Dock Aboard The Explorer

One Allegheny Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Symposium, 1:00-5:00 PM

DEP Southwest Regional Office

400 Waterfront Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15222

For registration and event details: go to <http://www.marama.org/calendar/events/pittsburghMDC.html>

Contact Rachel Filippini at GASP: 412-325-7382 or gasp@gasp-pgh.org

Getting in the Door at the Variance Board

by James Longhurst, Ph.D.

This is the fifth in a series of articles by James Longhurst. Dr. Longhurst, a former member of the GASP Board of Directors, received his Ph.D. from CMU and is an Assistant Professor of History at UW-La Crosse. His book on the history of air pollution politics in Pittsburgh, Citizen Environmentalists, is now available from the University Press of New England.

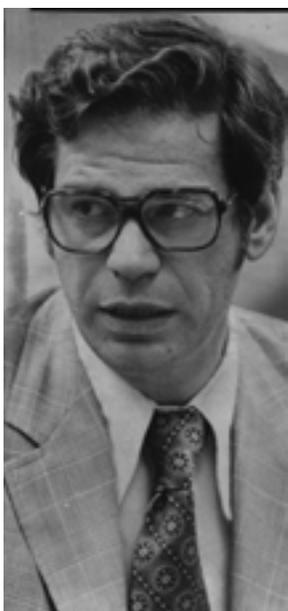
In our series on the history of GASP we've covered a variety of themes and events, from the influence of the Progressive era to the hearings of the fall of 1969 and the background of national politics. But in GASP's early history, it is arguable that the group's most important role in pollution debates was before the Health Department's Board of Air Pollution Appeals and Variance Review, informally known as the "Variance Board."

In 1969 the new county air pollution code, Article XVII, provided that polluters could face a \$100-per-day fine, or appeal for a variance. In deciding those appeals, the five-member Variance Board could subpoena evidence, hear appeals and testimony from the violator or the Bureau, and hold public hearings. This was an incredible opportunity for involvement, and GASP representatives indicated their plans to appear before the board to intervene in variance hearings with testimony, evidence, publicity and critical questions.

Duquesne Light, seeking a variance at the board's first meeting in 1970, objected to GASP's presence and the possibility of large crowds attending the hearings. In fact, the utility attempted to have GASP's actions before the board severely limited before that first hearing, an eventuality which would have transformed the balance of power. Through the first half of the decade, the utility and GASP

were in public opposition, though the relationship improved substantially by the late 1970s.

Arthur Gorr, GASP's pro bono lawyer and later president, wrote to the board in response to Duquesne Light's concerns. His response highlights the irony that Duquesne Light was objecting to public participation in the face of significant public demands for participation. Seemingly with tongue in cheek, Gorr promised that GASP "has been working with interested citizen groups to hold down the numbers in attendance." Portraying GASP as barely holding back the enraged hordes, Gorr



GASP's pro bono attorney Art Gorr in a photo taken in 1975



The County Health Department's Variance Board, meeting in 1970

points out that in a previous board hearing, "we were able to limit the attendance of irate citizens to about two hundred, and very few people had to stand. . . While we cannot guarantee the same success in the case of Duquesne Light, we will do our best."

The utility was arguing that involvement before the board was limited by law to those who had a direct (in other words, economic) interest in the case at hand. Gorr responded by arguing that: "We are all directly affected by the dirt and SO₂ which Duquesne Light is dumping into the air and into our lungs." Speaking to the Press, Gorr was a bit more blunt: "If the people who breathe the polluted air coming from Duquesne's stacks don't have a direct interest I don't know what a direct interest is."

Gorr's arguments convinced the Variance Board's chair, and in a precedent-setting decision, GASP and others were granted full rights to intervene in hearings. Based partly on the spreading legal philosophy of "citizen standing," this decision paved the way for serious implementation and enforcement of air pollution control. With the presence of the public, the resulting Variance Board hearings were surprisingly argumentative, and local newspapers covered the nearly-weekly hearings with effusive language, as if covering a sporting event. Not surprisingly, as the first GASP newsletter noted, "[a]t almost all hearings the attorneys for the major polluters go on record as objecting to GASP's role in the hearings." But thanks to Gorr's efforts, GASP would provide expert testimony, evidence, technical reports, critical cross-examination and publicity before the board for decades. While getting in the door was difficult, for GASP it was worth it.

Next time: Of Costumes and Cookies: Dirty Gertie



Greening Your Bookshelf

by Jamin Bogi, GASP Education and Outreach Coordinator

In Jamin's *Greening Your Bookshelf* column, he summarizes books that discuss themes of interest to GASP members. GASP members' concerns range far beyond particulate matter and fly ash, and this column will hopefully be a landing pad and a take-off point for those interests. No endorsement by GASP of these books or ideas is implied or intended.

Whole Earth Discipline: An Ecopragmatist Manifesto by Stewart Brand. Viking, 2009. 325 pages.

Slow Death by Rubber Duck: The Secret Danger of Everyday Things by Rick Smith and Bruce Lourie. Counterpoint, 2009. 328 pages.

Stewart Brand, by any account, has led a full life. Military service, friendship with Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, work on Native American reservations, living on a tugboat in California—Brand has let his intelligence and creativity carry him to many unique places. Perhaps best known for creating “The Whole Earth Catalog,” Brand brought many green topics to a wide audience.

His new book is a summation of Brand's current views and apologies about getting it wrong in the past. Brand's main thrust is that environmentalists must embrace science, and not pine away for a romanticized view of the past. People are moving to cities throughout much of the world, an extremely green trend as Brand sees it. The subsistence farms they leave behind are allowed to return to nature and thus the land holds much more carbon—he claims that 55 times more tropical forest is growing than is being cut as urbanization continues. Once people move to cities, their reproduction rate decreases—so much so that Brand claims worldwide population will peak around 2050 and then begin to decrease.

He sees the urbanized populace as using nuclear energy, and lots of it, to keep society progressing while also attempting to hold down atmospheric carbon dioxide, climate change being his major concern. He deftly deflects criticisms of nuclear energy such as cost, subsidy levels, and dangers from waste and possible weaponization.

Just as you're trying to figure out whether you should support a mini-nuclear plant in your town, he moves on to describing how great he believes bioengineering is. Since we began agriculture, humans have used genetics by choosing to replant seed that came from plants that had qualities they preferred. Waiting for naturally occurring, beneficial mutations was the way it was done in the past—now organic farmers (yes, “organic” farmers) routinely blast seeds with



chemicals or radiation to produce many more mutations. More mutations means more variety and thus more likelihood of a beneficial strain of plant. Bioengineering is a simpler, more efficient way of effecting this process. According to Brand, genetically engineered crops generally require no tilling, less water, less fertilizers, less pesticides, and less land. He goes over “horror” stories that many of us are familiar with, explaining away each one as a green rumor.

Urbanization, nuclear energy, and bioengineering are the three themes Brand wants us to dwell on, but his book is full of topics that could take years to thrash out. His sprawling final fifty pages or so expand the game even further, ending with planetary environmental engineering ideas such as making clouds over the oceans or shooting two trillion reflective discs into orbit to increase sunlight reflection, nudging asteroids out of Earth's path, using artificial trees to capture carbon dioxide, and on and on. You can even bet with or against Brand on some of his predictions on www.longbets.org. A fascinating head-scratcher of a book that should be on everyone's shelf, whether he's right or wrong.

Much simpler in scope is *Slow Death by Rubber Duck*, in which the coauthors Smith and Lourie demonstrate how manmade chemicals are pervasive and practically unavoidable, and yet how simple lifestyle choices can lead to significant increases or decreases of some chemicals in our bloodstreams. They use themselves as test subjects, trying to raise their levels of chemicals by replicating activities common to many Americans. The authors focus on seven different chemicals or groups of chemicals, such as mercury, phthalates, and PFCs.

The authors found that common toys in their homes were extremely high in toxic chemical content. One ball was almost 47% phthalates, and a rubber duck (hence the title) was 27% phthalates. Phthalates have been linked to a laundry list of things you don't want children to experience, especially boys. “Smaller penis size, incomplete testicular descent and little kids with scrotums that are small and ‘not distinct from surrounding tissue’ are the highlights.” Lead



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New Pediatric Environmental Medicine Center Addresses Childhood Asthma

by Michele Tedder, MSN, RN, Community Outreach Director, Pediatric Environmental Medicine Center

Asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. It affects about 22 million Americans. Approximately six million children under the age of 18 have asthma. The impact of the disease is hardest felt in low-income and minority populations where access to adequate health care is a challenge.

The Pediatric Environmental Medicine Center (PEMC) of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC was developed to address the issue of childhood asthma in the Pittsburgh area. The mission of the center is to improve asthma care and outcomes using a community centered approach. The PEMC is working with the Woodland Hills, South Allegheny and Clairton School Districts. The center has chosen these local communities to begin their efforts because asthma rates in the target communities are 18% compared to 9% in Allegheny County and 12% in Pennsylvania.

Proper treatment of childhood asthma requires a multi-level approach to reduce barriers such as poor health care access, lack of knowledge about the disease and environmental factors that can make asthma worse. The PEMC aims to address childhood asthma through clinical services offered in the community, asthma education for a variety of audiences and research activities designed to explore how environmental factors affect asthma outcomes as well as other diseases.

Asthma care and primary care services are offered free of charge in collaboration with the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. The Care mobile is a "mobile" doctor's office that comes to communities throughout Pittsburgh. Asthma care

services include asthma screening, asthma treatment, breathing tests and asthma education.

The PEMC also offers educational workshops in the community. Educational sessions are tailored to the needs of the audience and are available by request. Audiences have included school personnel, health professionals, parents, students and clergy.

PEMC research activities are focused on discovering how environmental factors like air quality, exposure to cigarette smoke and dust may affect asthma and other health issues. Other research activities will look at the effects of nutrition, exposure to violence and other social factors on asthma outcomes.

In the Pittsburgh area, asthma rates have shown a steady increase since 1997. Trend Data from the Bureau of Community Health Systems and the Bureau of Epidemiology shows an increase in asthma prevalence rates for Pennsylvania students in grades K-12 each school year from 1997 to 2004.

By using a comprehensive approach based in the community, the PEMC helps the public to better understand reasons for the high rates of asthma in the Pittsburgh area and develop appropriate interventions to improve asthma outcomes in children.

For more information about clinical services, research opportunities or educational workshops please call (412) 692-LUNG.



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is bad? Ok, we'll use cadmium. Cadmium is bad? Ok, we'll use diethylbiphenolhydropropylwhatever. Chemical names and acronyms drip off the pages and can be hard to keep straight at times.

A major theme of *Slow Death* is that in the U.S., with much innocence afforded to industry, we don't know what we are being subjected to. There are over 80,000 chemicals in use in the United States, with some 700 new ones added annually, and only a small amount have been tested for toxicity or are being monitored by the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. When the hard work of proving a certain chemical harmful is finally done, industry often replaces that chemical with a different one. These compounds stay in our

bodies for so long that the authors claim "future archeologists will be able to easily define toxic eras in human history from the telltale levels of these potent, globally sprinkled chemical in our race's desiccated remains."

The authors show that while victories over toxic chemicals are possible, the nation as a whole would benefit greatly from taking the Precautionary Principle more seriously. Until then, they offer suggestions to help reduce your man-made chemical intake. *Slow Death* is instructive in that it connects isolated issues around individual chemicals, showing the whole picture from a few steps back. A nice beach read—if you're sunning yourself somewhere along the Gulf Coast this summer.



the Liberty monitor, the claim that our rankings are based only on this monitor is incorrect. For Allegheny County, from year-to-year a monitor other than Liberty typically provides the high reading for at least one-third of the 24-hour periods.

3. Even if the Liberty-Clairton monitor were removed from the analysis, our region would still rank among the most polluted in the nation. For 2010 our short term PM2.5 pollution ranking would drop Allegheny County from 3rd worst to 10th worst and our year-round particle pollution ranking would drop from 5th worst to 17th worst in the United States. And keep in mind these revised rankings assume no other counties are given the advantage of removing their own worst-performing monitor from the calculations.

4. The pollution in Liberty-Clairton is not solely a Liberty-Clairton problem. A 2009 CMU study found that exceedances of EPA's health-based standard for PM2.5 in Schenley Park were far more likely to occur when the wind was blowing from the Southeast, the direction of the Liberty-Clairton area.¹¹

5. The Liberty monitor is located in the Liberty-Clairton PM2.5 nonattainment area, which has a total population of over 20,000. When pundits claim the Liberty monitor does not represent Pittsburgh, they unfairly dismiss these 20,000+ individuals, all residents of Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

Some have suggested that the ALA's real or perceived methodological flaw could be addressed simply by averaging the values of all monitors. It's a reasonable suggestion, and this is precisely the approach employed by the Pittsburgh Indicators Project¹² (the late John Craig was instrumental in the creation of this project.) Based on the averaging method, Pittsburgh still ranks 3rd worst for PM2.5 pollution out of the 15 cities the Indicators Project examined.

Not only does the averaging method still reveal that Pittsburgh has an air pollution problem, the averaging method creates problems of its own. PM2.5 monitors are not distributed evenly throughout the United States. For instance, as of EPA's 2008 monitor count report, Allegheny County operated nine PM2.5 monitors, Beaver County operated two, and roughly two-thirds of Pennsylvania counties operated none. Merced, California—which is currently tied for 12th worst on ALA the list of counties with a short-term PM2.5 pollution problem—operates only one PM2.5

monitor. If future ALA reports averaged all monitors within each county, the numbers in multiple-monitor counties like Allegheny would improve because their rankings would factor in county monitors in areas with lower PM2.5 concentrations, but then one-monitor counties like Merced would cry foul because their ranking would not benefit from the reduced pollution numbers which result from monitor averaging. The end result would be that, rather than Pittsburgh, it would be areas like Merced complaining about “a single, unrepresentative monitor” skewing their ranking.

The point is, no ranking system is perfect and regardless of what methodology we use, any and every reasonable analysis reveals southwestern Pennsylvania has a legitimate air pollution problem. If our region's decisionmakers and talking heads spent half the time and energy addressing our pollution problem that they spend thumbing through their thesauruses every spring, our air would be a whole lot cleaner.

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10. State of distortion, supra note 4.
11. Identifying Likely PM2.5 Sources on Days of Elevated Concentration: A Simple Statistical Approach, Nanjun Chu, Joseph B. Kadane, and Cliff I. Davidson Environ. Sci. Technol. (Feb. 25, 2009).
12. Available at: <http://www.pittsburghtoday.org/home.html>.



Spotlight on a Board Member

Zelda Curtiss is one of GASP's newest board members, although she's served on the Advisory Board and regularly attended board meetings for some time. She has a diverse educational background, with a B.A. from Penn State, an M.S. in Psychology and Teaching Reading from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a law degree from Duquesne, which she obtained by attending evening classes when her youngest daughter started kindergarten. In her words, that degree was "a real family effort."

Zelda worked for the better part of three decades as a lawyer at the PA DEP. When she retired she was asked to teach an environmental law clinic at Duquesne Law School, which she did for two semesters before the clinic was closed due to a lack of funding. She continues to do pro bono work with former colleagues who set up a project that provides legal assistance for indigents.

In her personal life, Zelda enjoys outdoor activities like hiking and walking and loves her garden. She said that retirement has allowed her to spend more time being physically fit – she works with a fitness trainer, swims twice a week, and walks every morning. She recently has started biking as well. Zelda has "wonderful daughters, terrific sons-in-law, and five fine grandchildren."

Zelda volunteers with other organizations as well, serving as a board member of Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, being the environmental coordinator at her synagogue, and as a member of the Environmental Law Section of the Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA). She also chairs the ACBA's newly formed Senior Lawyers Committee.

When asked if she has any interesting stories, Zelda shared some from her years at the DEP:

When I graduated from law school I was 38 years old, married 13 years and had 9 and 11 year old daughters. It was not easy getting a job as an "older woman." Judges turned me down. The result, as luck had it, was an offer from the then Department of Environmental Resources. As a new lawyer there, you were responsible for everything.

Most of my work at DEP dealt with water issues. I was the lawyer responsible for the Consent Order and Agreement for Summerset at Frick Park and also issued the orders to the communities whose sewage flows into Nine Mile Run. Working for DEP gave me a second childhood. I learned about sewage treatment plants, water treatment plants, paper mills, landfills, drilling a well, plugging a well, treating leachate from a landfill, and surface mining. I've been in a steel mill and in a deep mine. I've worked with chemical engineers, geologists,



biologists, engineers – we were always learning new things.

A story from all this: One of my first cases dealt with raw sewage flowing into yards in a small community in Armstrong County. At that time, there was still a lot of federal funding to build sewers. I met with the Supervisors of the township who were opposed to the idea of collecting the raw sewage so it would not flow untreated into the Kiski River. At one meeting, several women of the community took me aside and told me how important the project was. Their children were playing in yards with raw sewage. They begged me not to give in to the supervisors. We did not. We won our case.

Another story - My last case, based on our investigation, dealt with gas migration from a gas well. There was an explosion and three people were killed. As a result of our work, regulations pertaining to these wells were made more stringent.

My daughter recently asked me why I do this work. I was glad to have the question. After all, as a parent we set an example for our children. I told her I care. It is important to make our community and then the world cleaner and healthier. I think she knew this already. What I did not say, though, was that as a regulator and enforcer of the law, I learned just how important citizen involvement is to get things done and to get things done right. I also know the regulators often welcome our help.

As a lawyer for the Commonwealth, I always took on the hard cases. I knew the outcome if we did not try. If we lost, we were at the same place. We won a lot and, I believe, improved water quality and quality of life for many citizens.



Fragrance
continued from page 4

misbranded or adulterated before it can require the product be removed from the marketplace. The safety and choice of the premarket cosmetic ingredients is largely in the hands of the manufacturer, but manufacturers may avail themselves of information from organizations that review and assess the safety of ingredients such as the Cosmetic Ingredient Review, a private committee which publishes research results in peer-reviewed scientific literature. Over 500 ingredients are either banned or restricted for use in cosmetic products sold in Canada. The European Union Cosmetics Directive bans 1,100 chemicals, but the FDA has banned or restricted the cosmetic use of only eleven chemicals.

Regarding fragrance itself, there is similar reliance in the United States on self regulation through membership in trade organizations such as the International Fragrance Association which is a 30-year-old membership organization with a code of practice and standards.

In 2007 the European community regulation, REACH, was created. REACH is a comprehensive program for the registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals used or imported by member state manufacturers and includes requirements for the cosmetics industry. The European Cosmetic Directive also has mandated the disclosure of 26 fragrance allergens in the ingredient listing for the European Member States manufacturers and importers.

Not surprisingly, some of the above private organizations find fault with the NSSR. Nevertheless the trend is towards more transparency and safety as represented in the new European REACH requirements and, here in the United States, the California Safe Cosmetics Act of 2005, which requires cosmetics manufacturers that sell products in California to label any ingredient that is on a state or federal list of chemicals that cause cancer or birth defects and to supply health related information about cosmetic ingredients. This includes chemicals that may be used for fragrance.

1. Not So Sexy: The Health Risk of Secret Chemicals in Fragrance, http://www.safecosmetics.org/downloads/NotSoSexy_report_May2010.pdf
2. Frances J. Storrs, Allergen of the Year: Fragrance, Medscape Today <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/559985>
3. The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, Fragrance, <http://www.safecosmetics.org/article.php?id=222>
4. Leah Wollenberger, Magnus Breitholtzb, Kresten Ole Kuska and Bengt-Erik Bengtsson, The Science of The Total Environment, Volume 305, Issues 1- 3, 15 April 2003, Inhibition of larval development of the marine copepod *Acartia tonsa* by four synthetic musk substances, Pages 53-64
5. Environmental Working Group, Pollutants in People, Cord Blood Contaminants in Minority Newborns, 2009, <http://www.ewg.org/files/2009-Minority-Cord-Blood-Report.pdf>

6. Rebecca Sutton, CDC: Americans Carry Body Burden of Toxic Sunscreen Chemical—Caving to Industry, FDA Delays Safety Standards for Decades, Environmental Working Group, March 2008, <http://www.ewg.org/analysis/toxicsunscreen>
7. US Food and Drug Administration, “FDA Authority Over Cosmetics”, 03/03/2005, <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm074162.htm> 



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If you're interested in volunteering for GASP's fall fundraiser, sponsoring the event, or donating silent auction items or food/drink, please contact Jamin at jamin@gasp-pgh.org or 412-325-7382.

Attention: Graphic Artists

GASP is seeking a **VOLUNTEER** to update our tri-fold presentation board that is vital to our outreach activities at local events. If you are willing to provide your artistic talent for this project, please contact Jamin at jamin@gasp-pgh.org. Thank you!



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