



# Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2010

[www.gasp-pgh.org](http://www.gasp-pgh.org)

## In this issue

Clean Air Transport Rule	1
Marcellus Shale: A Threat to Our Air	1
In the Marcellus Drilling Fields	3
Pitt GSPH Panel Discussion on Marcellus Shale	4
Clean Air Fund Expenditure to Cut Diesel Emissions from Construction Vehicles	5
Smoke School	5
Region's Tugboats Get a Little Greener	6
Kids Passionate about Clean Air	7
Peddle-Paddle-Peduto	7
Of Costumes and Cookies	8
Greening Your Bookshelf	9
GASPToberfest	12

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.

## GASP Asks EPA to Strengthen Clean Air Transport Rule to Protect Southwestern Pennsylvania

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

Much of southwestern Pennsylvania's air pollution originates from local sources, such as the cars and trucks traveling on our roads, the power plants and factories that dot our landscape, and the trains and tugboats that chug past night and day. While these local sources deserve much of the blame for our poor air quality, and efforts to pressure these sources to reduce their emissions must continue, a significant portion of our air pollution burden in southwestern Pennsylvania is

produced by sources in upwind states. For example, roughly half the particulate matter detected at the Liberty monitor (the monitor most affected by emissions from the nearby US Steel Clairton Coke Works) originates from sources 50 or more miles away. This situation is not unique to the Liberty monitor—most states in the eastern half of the U.S. can blame upwind states for a significant portion of their local air pollution.

continued on page 10

## Marcellus Shale: A Threat to Our Air

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

The potential for Marcellus Shale drilling and production to contaminate our water has received a lot of attention. Lately it's hard to avoid stories of flammable water coming out of kitchen faucets, fish kills, and polluted wells resulting from shale drilling operations. Though it hasn't received as much attention, the threat Marcellus Shale activity poses to our air is just as troubling as its threat to our water.

A number of steps are required in order for a natural gas company to convert underground reservoirs of natural gas into cash. From well drilling, to fracking, to gas extraction, processing, and transmission, sources of air emissions exist at every step in the process. Air pollution sources from natural gas operations include:

- vehicle emissions from construction equipment and diesel trucks hauling

- workers, drilling equipment, frack water, and waste water;
- diesel engines used to power drilling rigs and fracking pumps;
- natural gas-fired engines used to compress natural gas for pipeline transport;
- emissions of raw natural gas to the atmosphere during well completion and from leaking pipes, valves, storage tanks, and processing equipment; and
- volatilization from open wastewater pits.

Individually, the emission sources listed above may seem insignificant—in fact, they're often small enough to avoid air pollution permitting and emissions reporting requirements—but taken together, the net impact of these numerous, small sources can be massive. Consider the air impacts

continued on page 2

## Marcellus: A Threat to Our Air continued from page 1

in other areas that have recently experienced natural gas booms. For instance, a 2009 Southern Methodist University study of drilling in the Barnett Shale region of Texas concluded that more smog-forming air pollution (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs) was emitted by natural gas operations in the Dallas-Forth Worth metropolitan area than by all car and truck traffic combined.<sup>1</sup> After several years of elevated ozone levels in southwestern Wyoming, in 2009 the state asked the US EPA to declare the Upper Green River Basin an ozone nonattainment area. This will be the first air pollution nonattainment area in the state's history. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality concluded the elevated ozone "is primarily due to local emissions from oil and gas (O&G) development activities."<sup>2</sup>

NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC emissions can transform into ozone and particulate matter in the atmosphere. That's particularly troubling in Pennsylvania because much of the state fails to meet federal health-based standards for these pollutants. However, air toxics emissions are probably the greatest cause for concern as they can cause cancer, birth defects, and neurological damage. Air toxics emissions associated with natural gas operations include the BTEX compounds (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene) and hydrogen sulfide. All of these compounds are neurotoxins, and benzene is a potent carcinogen. Several studies from the Barnett Shale region in Texas suggest elevated air toxics concentrations near natural gas operations are commonplace. A Texas Commission on Environmental Quality monitoring study carried out between August and November 2009 detected elevated levels of several air toxics at monitor locations near natural gas operations. Benzene concentrations in excess of Texas health standards were detected at 21 out of 94 monitoring locations.<sup>3</sup> Air toxics modeling commissioned by the town of



PHOTO: TOM HOFFMAN

A pit storing "flowback water"—fracking fluid that returns to the surface after fracking is complete. Flowback water contains a variety of organic compounds that can volatilize into the atmosphere when stored in open pits. Many VOCs are toxic and contribute to the formation of ozone and particulate matter.

DISH, Texas revealed unhealthy air toxics concentrations at 5 of 7 monitoring locations.<sup>4</sup>

Assuming natural gas production in the Marcellus Shale grows at the rapid pace many industry analysts are predicting, what can Pennsylvania do to avoid air quality problems like those created by natural gas operations in Wyoming, Texas, and Colorado? A number of control measures exist that can drastically reduce emissions from natural gas drilling operations, such as:

- electric powered compressor station engines
- "green" well completions
- vapor recovery units on condensate tanks
- low- or no-bleed pneumatic valves
- closed-loop wastewater storage systems
- acoustic and infrared leak detection and repair programs
- flash tank separators

Of course, industry is rarely eager to adopt additional emissions controls voluntarily, and government agencies are often hesitant to mandate such controls. However, many of the most effective natural gas emissions controls, including those

continued on page 10

The **Hotline** is the quarterly newsletter of the Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc.

GASP  
Wightman School Community Building  
5604 Solway Street, Room 204  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

phone 412.325.7382  
fax 412.325.7390

www.gasp-pgh.org  
gasp@gasp-pgh.org



Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled, processed chlorine-free paper at Forward Lithography, 4065 Irvine St., Pittsburgh, PA.

### 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.

# In the Marcellus Drilling Fields

by Sue Seppi, GASP Project Manager

**M**arcellus Shale drilling in Southwestern Pennsylvania continues to grow significantly. Hydraulic fracturing, extensive water requirements and subsequent disposal issues, and air quality impacts raise concerns. The PA DEP has provided the following statistics, as of July 30, 2010:

Southwest PA Counties	2010 Marcellus gas wells drilled	2010 Marcellus gas well permits issued
Allegheny	0	2
Armstrong	14	18
Beaver	1	3
Butler	16	38
Westmoreland	17	46
Fayette	16	44
Washington	98	175
Greene	50	98
Somerset	4	7

Drilling, new regulations, and legal challenges are all happening concurrently, despite concerns that much is not known given the expected large scale of drilling. Acknowledging the need for better information, the EPA's Office of Research and Development is conducting a scientific study to investigate the relationship between hydraulic fracturing and drinking water contamination. The EPA may expand the study to include impacts on air quality from the shale gas extraction process, but unfortunately the study won't be completed until 2012.

This is one reason why GASP takes the position that we need a moratorium on Marcellus drilling in Pennsylvania until more knowledge based regulations and assurance of safety for the public and environment can be developed. The gas isn't going anywhere.

There is no better place than in the communities where Marcellus wells exist to note their impact. The Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project aims to give residents of affected communities assessment skills and education to empower them to deal knowledgeably with deep shale drilling issues and help paint a larger picture of Marcellus drilling's impact. As community members develop their stewardship activities, it is expected that the project, with its guidance materials, can grow to new Marcellus locations.

The project consists of several parts:

1. Four educational meetings will take place in Southwestern Pennsylvania: Connellsville (September 28); Greensburg/Latrobe (October 5); Farmington (November 4); and Somerset (November 9). A variety of issues will be discussed including a general understanding of the drilling process, permitting and legal requirements, potential health implications and possible air and water impacts.



PHOTO: TOM HOFFMAN

A drilling rig at a Marcellus Shale well site. These drilling rigs are over 100 feet tall. To get a sense of the scale, note how the rig dwarfs the pickup trucks at the far left.

2. Following the educational meetings, there will be several training sessions in assessment and monitoring techniques. GASP will be providing air monitoring equipment to some residents for carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, radioactivity, methane, particulates and total volatile organics. All of these emissions are likely increased around Marcellus gas drilling sites at various times. Intentional and unintentional releases can occur during drilling activities and from machinery exhaust, leaks, and evaporation at impoundments.

Consideration for effects of Marcellus-related air emissions on nearby residents is important and mostly where GASP will concentrate, but another air quality aspect is the need for an assessment of the overall emissions from the rapidly increasing number of wells. (See "Marcellus Shale: A Threat to Our Air" on pages 1-2 of this newsletter.)

3. Where appropriate, the community participants will be sharing their Marcellus related data and experiences on an expansive website called "Fractracker" at [www.fractracker.org](http://www.fractracker.org). The site is managed by the Center for Healthy Environments and Communities at Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health. This public website of collective data, experience and information will help to grow the larger Marcellus gas impact picture.

Mountain Watershed Association and Youghiogheny Riverkeeper are leading the Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project. Other groups participating include GASP, Center for Healthy Environments and Communities, Clean Water Action, PennEnvironment, Three Rivers Waterkeeper and the Fayette County Conservation District.

The Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project and Fractracker are supported by the Heinz Endowments.



# Pitt GSPH Panel Discussion on Marcellus Shale

by Ed Gerjuoy, GASP Board Member

In late August, the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) hosted a panel discussion, open to the public, on the potential environmental and public health concerns posed by the Marcellus Shale gas extraction process known as “fracking,” namely hydraulic fracturing of the shale rock layers to release the gas. The discussion was led by Dr. Dan Volz, an assistant professor in the GSPH Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, who is Director of GSPH’s Center for Healthy Environments and Communities (CHEC). The audience of about 300 included at least half a dozen GASP board members. The next day the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette published a story by Don Hopey summarizing the forum: [www.post-gazette.com/pg/10240/1083398-454.stm](http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10240/1083398-454.stm).

I found the panel presentations—by Volz and two colleagues, Charles Christen and Samantha Malone—both interesting and informative. For instance, I learned that, according to current estimates, the quantity of extractable gas from the Marcellus shale formation could satisfy the U.S. natural gas requirements for at least 15 years. The Marcellus shale formation, lying up to about 8000 feet deep in Pennsylvania and several neighboring states, is one of about 25 deep shale gas-containing formations discovered in this country, a number of which (especially in the western U.S.) also are being mined at the present time. Moreover, deep gas well drilling is also underway in Germany and Poland and soon will commence in Scandinavia. The discussion made it clear that fracking is the only known practical means of extracting gas from these deep shale formations.

Unfortunately, it’s also clear that the potential environmental and health hazards of fracking are even greater than I previously had understood. These hazards include:

- large quantities of toxic chemicals (e.g., benzene and strontium) in the fracking waters returning to the surface
- contamination of nearby rivers and streams when these waters are discharged into those rivers and streams, as is unavoidable considering the enormous quantities of those returned fracking waters (on average, millions of gallons per fracking well)
- evaporation of correspondingly large amounts of volatile toxic and combustible pollutants from ponds storing the returned fracking waters
- aquifer contamination, because experience indicates that a significant portion of the fracking waters is always retained underground
- even if contamination of presently employed drinking water sources can be avoided, shortages of drinking water because of the vast amounts of fracking fluids these sources will have to supply



PHOTO: MAREN COOKE

Ed Gerjuoy, GASP Board Member, addresses the panel about the Marcellus Shale gas extraction process

- and—less likely but far from wholly improbable—seismic disturbances and/or sinking of the ground surface above the fracked shale

The foregoing makes it evident that the U.S. and the rest of the world might be able to safely satisfy energy needs via fossil fuels for a considerably longer period than was anticipated only a few years ago, if—but it is a very big if, alas—the aforementioned potential environmental and health hazards of fracking can be largely avoided. Regrettably it presently seems likely that—should there ever be genuine energy shortages—humanity will not refrain from employing whatever fracking-produced natural gas is available, whether or not there is reason to believe the aforementioned associated environmental and health hazards actually will occur. It follows that the GASP Board’s recent decision, to advocate a moratorium on fracking until the process assuredly no longer is hazardous, was well taken. Without the knowledge that profits and associated taxes will be postponed until production of gas from deep wells is not hazardous—whether by solving the problems associated with fracking or by inventing a safe alternative production method—neither private industry nor government will have the motivation to expend the considerable funds required to develop non-hazardous methods of mining gas located far below the earth’s surface. I hasten to add that the conclusions advanced in this paragraph are mine alone; the panel did not address either the possibility of future energy shortages or the merits of GASP’s advocacy.

I will conclude by alerting my Hotline readers to the new CHEC-maintained “Fractracker Marcellus Shale Data Tracking” website, [www.fractracker.org](http://www.fractracker.org), which also can be reached via the main CHEC site, [www.chec.pitt.edu](http://www.chec.pitt.edu). CHEC intends that Fractracker will keep current numerous datasets pertinent to the Marcellus shale controversy, in readily accessible and understandable forms. ☺

# Board of Health approves a Clean Air Fund Expenditure Request to Cut Diesel Emissions from Construction Vehicles

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

At their September board meeting, the Allegheny County Board of Health approved a \$920,000 Clean Air Fund expenditure request to reduce diesel emissions from construction vehicles and equipment in Allegheny County owned and operated by small construction companies and contractors.

This summer, the Education and Pollution Prevention subcommittee suggested to the Air Quality Program that some money from the Clean Air Fund be used to establish this worthwhile effort. By retrofitting construction equipment, particularly among construction companies that would likely be unable to afford equipment upgrades on their own and may keep older and less-efficient equipment rather than pay to update their fleet, this project will cut diesel emissions in Allegheny County. Off-road diesel construction equipment

is a significant contributor to Allegheny County's diesel particulate matter, representing approximately one quarter of the problem.

This project complements the Diesel Partnership's efforts to reduce diesel emissions in Pittsburgh through the passage of the Clean Air Act legislation, which would require contractors to use cleaner construction vehicles and equipment on large publicly subsidized projects.

Construction projects like the one in Oakland (pictured here) are often in close proximity to schools, hospitals,

homes, offices, daycares, and where commuters walk, bike, and wait for the bus. Cleaning up this equipment not only benefits the construction workers operating the equipment, but also the many citizens who may be exposed where they live, work, study and play. 🚲



PHOTO: RACHEL FILIPPINI

Former Children's Hospital site in Oakland being razed

## Smoke School

Eastern Technical Associates will be holding Smoke School in the Pittsburgh area for anyone interested in understanding what comes out of smokestacks and how to tell if violations are occurring. Smoke readers can observe smokestacks and make reports, which can lead to inspections by County Health Department officials. Tuesday's class session is followed by a field test on Wednesday or Thursday. Sign up through GASP and the certification is free, and your mileage will be reimbursed. Help us put more eyes on industry and fight for clean air!

**Tuesday, October 5** - Classroom, 8:30 AM - 5 PM  
Marriott Springhill Suites, 239 Summit Park Dr., Pgh,  
PA 15275

**Wednesday or Thursday, October 6 or 7** - Smoke  
Reading Field Test. Registration and testing begins at  
8:00 AM. Settlers Cabin Park, Oakdale, PA 15071

**Free if you register through GASP! Contact  
suesepi@gmail.com to register.**

For more information visit: [www.eta-is-opacity.com](http://www.eta-is-opacity.com)

# Region's Tugboats Get a Little Greener

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

When we think of diesel emissions we usually picture black smoke billowing from a diesel truck or school bus, and while that unfortunately does occur, more than 40% of diesel soot in Allegheny County comes from marine vessels. The EPA's recent Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant will help reduce diesel pollution on our three rivers—cutting five tons of particulate matter, 112 tons of nitrous oxide, 15 tons of carbon monoxide, and two tons of hydrocarbons from our air.

The more than \$1.1 million grant was awarded to the Port of Pittsburgh Commission this July to oversee the extensive repowering of four marine towing vessels (8 engines) with new, cleaner, more fuel efficient diesel engines and generators. The Port of Pittsburgh and three private participating companies (Campbell Transportation Company, Consol Energy and River Salvage, Inc.) more than matched the EPA's grant with their own \$1.97 million.

The Port of Pittsburgh is the second busiest inland port in the U.S., moving 30 to 40 million tons of cargo a year.

This project is just one of many supported by a DERA grant over the last five years. Here's a snapshot of other local projects that are DERA funded and their estimated annual emission reductions:



PHOTO: RACHEL FILIPPINI

The request for proposals for another round of DERA funding is expected to be announced this fall, and this could be the last round if DERA is not reauthorized in the next transportation bill. DERA has provided funding to every state to reduce toxic diesel emissions, and has continually garnered widespread, bi-partisan support in Congress and from a diverse coalition including industry, labor, environmentalists and health groups.



Project	Particulate Matter reduced	Carbon Monoxide reduced	NOx reduced
33 City of Pittsburgh garbage trucks retrofit with diesel particulate filters	.22 tpy (tons per year)	.74 tpy	—
Repower of 9 Port Authority transit buses	.83 tpy	7.4 tpy	—
Replacement of 2 Port Authority transit buses with diesel hybrid electric	90% reduction	30-40% reduction	—
Repower a conventional diesel switcher locomotive with a GENSET diesel engine	.5 tpy	172 tpy	16.6 tpy
Retrofit/repower 28 pieces of off-road construction equipment	3.9 tpy	33.1 tpy	23.2 tpy

# Kids Passionate about Clean Air

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

It was a sweltering day in July, but more than 50 middle school students serving in the Pittsburgh Cares e-serve program who gathered at the West End Overlook weren't complaining about the heat. They assembled to draw attention to Pittsburgh's poor air quality and the need to do more to clean it up. They wore bright green shirts, held posters they designed, and chanted, "Clean air now!" Specifically, the students were supporting Pittsburgh City Council's recently introduced Clean Air Bill which aims to curb diesel emissions from construction vehicles and equipment. If passed, the legislation would require contractors working on publicly subsidized projects in Pittsburgh to use equipment that has been retrofit or repowered to reduce diesel emissions.



PHOTO: RACHEL FILIPPINI

West End Overlook is located in Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith's district, and the students weren't shy about directing their comments and appeal for passage of the Clean Air Bill to her. In a respectful yet firm way, the students asked Councilwoman Smith and all city council members to support passage of this important legislation to reduce particulate pollution and directly benefit their health. The students pointed out that diesel pollution is unhealthy to breathe, especially for kids whose lungs are not fully developed, and who take in more air per pound of bodyweight. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette editorial, "Air kisses" ([www.post-gazette.com/pg/10199/1073307-192](http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10199/1073307-192)).

stm) that ran the following Sunday said, "It was a breath of fresh air to hear the young people speaking for themselves on an important public policy. We hope all nine County Council members were listening." We sincerely hope so too.

We expect the Clean Air Bill to go to committee and be voted on this fall. The companion Clean Water Bill, which aims to mitigate stormwater runoff at publicly subsidized projects, passed with eight votes this summer. 

## Peddle-Paddle-Peduto Ohio River Kayaking Tour on October 2

City Councilman Bill Peduto will join GASP and representatives from Riverlife, Friends of the Riverfront, and Three Rivers Waterkeeper for an educational kayak trip with Venture Outdoors along the Ohio River. We'll paddle 5 miles round trip, stopping on Brunot Island for a round table discussion on public policy, riverfront development and trails, the connection between air and water quality, and whatever else you'd like. GASP members can receive the Venture Outdoors member price by calling Venture Outdoors.

**Saturday, October 2 at 1:00 - 4:30 PM**

\$33 non-members, \$25 GASP or Venture Outdoors members (includes kayak rental)

For more info go to the Activity Calendar at [www.ventureoutdoors.org](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org)

To register at the reduced price, call Ashley at VO at 412-255-0564 x21

# Of Costumes and Cookies

by James Longhurst, Ph.D.

*This is the sixth 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*

This continuing series on the 40 year history of GASP has touched on a number of familiar themes: public hearings, city politics, and legal battles. But one theme of GASP's first few years is surprising to many, and requires a little explanation: Dirtie Gertie, GASP's original mascot. In the 1970s she was featured prominently in publicity efforts, depicted on bumper stickers, shown on TV, and even appeared in person. "Dirtie Gertie" awards were made yearly to the dirtiest polluters, handed out by a costumed, anonymous female GASP member. Wearing red long johns, flip-flops, and a papier-mâché head, one unknown GASPer was actually ejected from the Pittsburgh Hilton in 1972 after attempting to present Edwin Gott, chairman of the board of U.S.Steel, with that year's "Dirtie Gertie" award. But most Pittsburghers saw Gertie in three animated PSAs shown on local television. In the spots, Gertie flew haltingly through the polluted skies of Pittsburgh, eventually crashing to the ground, sickened by air pollution.

Gertie proved to be so popular that GASP held a contest for school-age children to name her child. The winner of the contest was an eight-year-old boy from Mt. Lebanon, who named the baby "Dirty Dick, the Poor Polluted Chick." Several extended versions of Dirtie Gertie's story portrayed children and their health as central to GASP's mission. One story for children describes how Dirtie Gertie flew "past the steel mills and the factories" with Dick: "He looks just like his mommy. And he coughs just like she does too. This worries Gertie because she knows that dirty air is not for the birds. . . . And especially not for children!"

Despite the fact that Gertie is long forgotten in today's GASP, it should not be surprising that in the early 1970s, GASP's mascot was a cartoon woman and mother. In fact, much of GASP's fund-raising, organizing, and educational activities took place in what might be termed women's social space, through cookbooks, garden clubs, schools, and a network of women's social and civic groups. Women provided the organizational backbone of GASP, often served as leaders, and steered the group into educational missions and rhetorical expressions reflective of their goals.



In fact, GASP's educational mission was funded through the production, promotion, and sale of cookies and cookbooks.

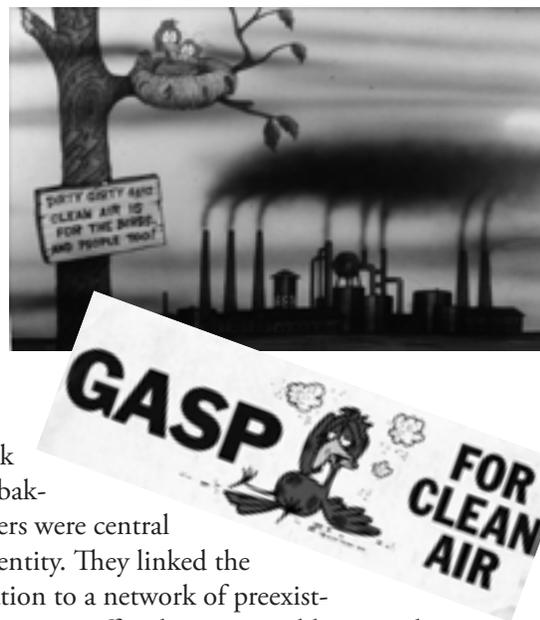
The cookbook projects and baking fund-raisers were central to GASP's identity. They linked the new organization to a network of preexisting women's groups, offered positive publicity, and furnished a high profile for environmental messages. They even managed to make a significant profit every year.

Under the direction of Jeannette Widom, GASP members sold Dirtie Gertie cookies as a fund-raiser at public information booths in Jenkins Arcade and elsewhere. For the first promotional sale, twelve volunteer groups each made one hundred cookies. GASP's "flour power"—their phrase—raised \$300 for that first round, and thousands thereafter when the sales were extended to include Widom's popular cookbooks.

This is especially noteworthy because, while GASP cookbooks raised funds and created networking opportunities, they also disseminated an environmental message to a broad, general audience. They contained not only recipes but also information about GASP and descriptions of Variance Board hearings, probably a unique feature among cookbooks.

These projects also provided funding for a wide variety of more overtly educational projects, including two widely circulated documentary films, a variety of publicity-seeking stunts, a busy speakers bureau, leadership conferences, and other initiatives. The group's educational mission reached a large audience with a message that emphasized children's health, care for future generations and the citizen's right to participate in regulatory decision making. Thanks, of course, to costumes and cookies.

*Next Time: The GASP Films*



# Greening Your Bookshelf

by Jamin Bogi, GASP Education and Outreach Coordinator

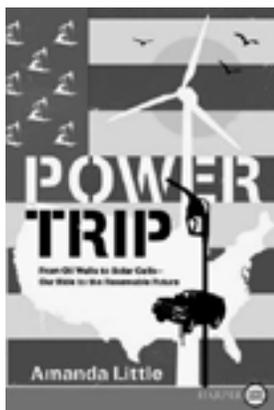
In Jamin's *Greening Your Bookshelf* column, he summarizes books that discuss themes of interest to GASP members. GASP members' concerns range far beyond particulate matter and fly ash, and this column will hopefully be a landing pad and a take-off point for those interests. No endorsement by GASP of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

**Power Trip by Amanda Little. Harper, 2009. 376 pages.**

With back-cover blurbs from some interesting authors, a dust jacket that almost glows in the dark, and the promise of being a “wonk-free, big-picture, solutions-oriented adventure story,” Amanda Little's *Power Trip* popped off a bookstore shelf and into my hand almost on its own. It begins with a firsthand, New York-based account of the great power outage of 2006, which left much of the northeastern U.S. in the dark for about twenty-four hours. The primary cause was a 3-inch-thick wire that expanded under strong heat and sagged, touched high branches, and short-circuited. Unfortunately, much of the rest of the book sags under the mass of knowledge Little attempts to channel and short-circuits the thin gauge of her writing.

A columnist, Little drags the reader through the same extended-article style, page after page. She starts with an interesting locale, like a campground outside Talladega Superspeedway at dawn, or inside a helicopter thundering out to an ultradeep drilling platform in the Gulf of Mexico, but soon loses steam. She interviews an “interesting” person, and then wonders about how a certain situation came to be that way, summing up the issue's history for a few pages. It's a style that is serviceable but repetitive, and with little new or unique information to provide, the book becomes a bit of a chore.

Much of the content can be found elsewhere—even within the confines of the few other books I have reviewed recently. While she mentions the extreme costs and safety challenges of drilling 30,000 feet into the seabed, the book was published before the Deepwater Horizon blowout and her admiring tone rings false. A Chevron bigwig shouts “Isn't this transcendent?” as their helicopter whumps out to a rig which is described as “awesomely vast and imposing” and “the Mount Everest of oil frontiers.” She raises questions about the continued search for more and more oil, only to be quickly cowed by her tour guide into agreeing



that we will be chasing after and using oil for as long as we can. And it's not that she's wrong, per se—it's her token nod to environmental concerns that grates.

She visits a NASCAR race, skeptical about such a waste of gasoline for driving in circles. But after hanging out in the pit with some crew members, she's sold. A mechanic tells her “I don't see many eco-greens in that crowd worryin' about gas mileage.” Little claims that the automobile embodies the American ethos more than any other product—missing the subtler point that looking for the spirit of a country in a consumable product is pretty shallow. Again, she might not be wrong, but rather seems to deliberately minimize environmental concerns after a mock internal debate. She asks why NASCAR shouldn't be banned during a time of war and dwindling oil supplies, and answers herself with romantic phrases, describing the cars as “mechanical birds on flight” and her joy at “the open-throttle sense of freedom.”

Hack writing and boosterism aside, I managed to find a few interesting bits scattered throughout. In the 1970s, fuel economy in Detroit's fleet increased almost 50% in seven years due to severe pressure from the Arab oil embargo. What would the US be like now if we had continued on the path toward sustainability, instead of loosening standards soon after the crisis ended? If we had continued pursuing solar technology instead of cheering Reagan as he took the solar panels off the White House roof?

*Power Trip* mentions how oil led the world to war, but then follows the U.S. military around and holds them up as an agent of change. We need renewable energy because the military wants it because they're in Iraq because of oil? Wal-Mart is cheered as the biggest buyer of local produce in the U.S.—again missing the point that without the globalized food chain that Wal-Mart anchors, our food would be infinitely more local by nature. Her explanation for most issues is cost. We will continue to do whatever is cheapest until cost changes us. She laments the passage of gas-guzzlers because they sound cool and smell like gas and grease, and hopes electric cars will have loud speakers with fake vroom-vrooms. She calls for strong political leadership and grassroots surges, after writing a book hinting that only money and the market can change us.

In all, *Power Trip* is a bland, basic, and yet inconsistent rehash of the energy story. Readers will do better elsewhere.



## Clean Air Transport Rule continued from page 1

The US EPA has overseen several regulatory efforts to reduce the “interstate transport” of air pollution, including the NOx SIP Call (1998) and the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) (2005). In 2008 the D.C. Circuit Court invalidated CAIR, but allowed the rule to remain in effect until EPA could craft a replacement rule. The Clean Air Transport Rule (CATR) is EPA’s proposed replacement. This rule would secure many of the sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) reductions that CAIR would have, as well as modestly larger SO<sub>2</sub> reductions from eastern U.S. power plants.

SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> are harmful pollutants in their own right, causing acid rain and respiratory problems. Worse still, after entering the atmosphere, SO<sub>2</sub> often transforms into particulate matter, and depending on atmospheric conditions, NO<sub>x</sub> may form particulate matter or ozone. Southwestern Pennsylvania fails to meet federal health-based air quality standards for both fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and ozone. Thus a strong transport rule is a vital component of any effort to improve air quality here in Southwestern Pennsylvania. That’s why on August 26th, GASP staff traveled to Philadelphia to testify before US EPA staff regarding EPA’s Clean Air Transport Rule. The Philadelphia hearing was one of only three opportunities EPA provided nationwide to provide testimony about the transport rule.

At the hearing, we told EPA that, while we welcome the reductions in PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone the transport rule will secure, the proposed rule does not go far enough. According to EPA’s modeling, after the pollution reductions from the transport rule are fully implemented in 2014, only one place in the eastern half of the United States will continue to violate EPA’s air pollution standards for annual PM<sub>2.5</sub>. That one place, as you may have already guessed, is the infamous Liberty-Clairton nonattainment area.

EPA’s reasoning for not addressing the Liberty-Clairton problem in the transport rule is that the area is heavily influenced by local emissions from the nearby Clairton Coke Works. In other words, EPA is saying, “It’s a local problem, not a transport problem.” It’s true that the coke works has a huge influence on local PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. However, as I stated earlier, long-range transport also plays a significant role in the problem. Liberty-Clairton’s PM<sub>2.5</sub> problem is caused by a combination of local and distant sources, and it can only be addressed by achieving reductions from both local and distant sources. The Clairton Coke Works must do its part, and upwind sources must do theirs. If the transport rule is finalized in its current form, the local emission reductions currently being developed would not be sufficient to demonstrate attainment of the 1997 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard until 2017—the absolute latest deadline the Clean Air Act allows.

GASP asked EPA to take additional steps to ensure the final transport rule will provide clean, healthy air for residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania, including:

- Adopting higher “cost thresholds”—the dollar amount per ton of emissions reduced that power plants will be required to spend to satisfy the rule;
- Expanding the federal transport region to include Texas, where SO<sub>2</sub> emissions are expected to increase significantly after the transport rule is implemented;
- Moving several states from the “group 2” to “group 1” category, meaning these states will be required to further reduce their SO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- Exploring the feasibility of establishing caps on additional pollutants that may form particulate matter or ozone, such as ammonia and volatile organic compounds.

Our recommendations would not just benefit the residents of Liberty-Clairton, they would provide cleaner air for everyone living in the eastern U.S. EPA staff asked us to expand on our hearing comments by submitting more detailed written testimony, which we intend to do. In order to secure an effective rule and undercut industry efforts to weaken it, EPA needs to hear from members of the public who value clean air. To learn more about the transport rule and how to submit comments, visit [www.epa.gov/airtransport/actions.html](http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/actions.html).



---

## Marcellus: A Threat to Our Air continued from page 2

mentioned above, are revenue-neutral or pay for themselves after relatively short periods of time (often less than a year). This is because these control measures reduce air pollution by reducing loss of valuable methane and other hydrocarbons during the extraction and production process. The result is a win-win situation: air emissions decrease, hydrocarbon recovery increases. GASP is pursuing efforts to make air pollution control measures such as those listed above mandatory for all oil and gas operations in Pennsylvania.

1. Al Armendariz, Emissions from Natural Gas Production in the Barnett Shale Area and Opportunities for Cost-Effective Improvements (Jan. 26, 2009), available at: [www.edf.org/documents/9235\\_Barnett\\_Shale\\_Report.pdf](http://www.edf.org/documents/9235_Barnett_Shale_Report.pdf).
2. WYDEQ, Technical Support Document I For Recommended 8-Hour Ozone Designation For the Upper Green River Basin, WY, p. viii (Mar. 26, 2009), available at: [deq.state.wy.us/out/downloads/Ozone%20TSD\\_final\\_rev%203-30-09\\_jl.pdf](http://deq.state.wy.us/out/downloads/Ozone%20TSD_final_rev%203-30-09_jl.pdf).
3. TCEQ, Interoffice Memo: Health Effects Review of Barnett Shale Formation Area Monitoring Projects (Jan. 27, 2010), available at: [www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/implementation/barnett\\_shale/2010.01.27-healthEffects-BarnettShale.pdf](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/implementation/barnett_shale/2010.01.27-healthEffects-BarnettShale.pdf).
4. Town of Dish, Revised Air Study Documents, available at: [www.townofdish.com/objects/attachments\\_2009\\_10\\_14.zip](http://www.townofdish.com/objects/attachments_2009_10_14.zip)



# Photos from Recent Marcellus Shale Events



PHOTO: MAREN COOKE



PHOTO: MAREN COOKE

Kate St. John, GASP Board Member, spoke to City Council about the negative impact that industries like coke plants and the gas extraction industry have on property values.

Supporters of legislation introduced by Councilman Shields gather on the steps of the City-County building to call attention to the potential dangers of Marcellus Shale gas operations. The proposed legislation would ban Marcellus drilling within the City of Pittsburgh.

## GASP ONLINE

**Follow GASP on Twitter!**  
<http://twitter.com/GASPPgh>



**Find us on Facebook!**  
 Our name is "Gasp Pittsburgh"



## Opt in to our Online Newsletter

In order to conserve paper and reduce printing and postage costs, we encourage our readers to subscribe to our online newsletter and opt-out of a mailed copy. To do so, use your preferred email account to send your name and the street address where you receive this newsletter to the editor at [hotline@gasp-pgh.org](mailto:hotline@gasp-pgh.org). Put "hotline" in the subject line. Thank you!

## Join GASP Today!

- \$40 Grassroots Supporters (\$15 low income/student rate)
- \$60 Grassroots Contributors (includes recycled tote)
- \$100 Grassroots Patrons (includes recycled tote and umbrella)
- \$250 Clean Air Defenders (includes recycled tote and umbrella)
- \$500 Clean Air Protectors (includes recycled tote and umbrella)
- \$ \_\_\_ Other

*Call GASP at (412) 325-7382 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!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I want my entire donation to go to GASP. Please don't send the tote and/or umbrella

Check  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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.



# GASPtobberfest



Our fall fundraising event is coming up soon and it's going to be a blast! This year we are partnering with Venture Outdoors, who will lead both an easy nature hike and a family-friendly geocaching event in Riverview Park. Both events stay near and return to the Chapel Shelter, where we will feast on food and drink from various European traditions, such as German beers from Penn Brewery. Music will be provided by Pittsburgh's acclaimed Gypsy Strings. Come celebrate GASP's accomplishments and look forward to a future of cleaner air!

**Saturday, October 16, 2010, 2-7 PM**

**Riverview Park Chapel Shelter, Pittsburgh, PA 15214**

2 - 4 PM Nature Hike or Geocaching (arrive by 2:00 PM to participate)

4 - 7 PM Casual dining and music by Gypsy Strings

Tickets: \$35/person (\$10 for ages 6-12, free for 5 and under).

Purchase tickets online at [www.gasp-pgh.org](http://www.gasp-pgh.org) or call 412-325-7382.

SPONSORED BY:



Contact Jamin at [jamin@gasp-pgh.org](mailto:jamin@gasp-pgh.org) or 412-325-7382 to become a sponsor or donate a silent auction item.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc.  
Whitman School Community Building  
5604 Solway Street, Room 204  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PITTSBURGH, PA  
PERMIT No. 712