

DECEMBER 2013

What’s at Stake? (And What Will It Take?)

PITTSBURGH: If you could choose, of all places in the world and any time in history, where and when would you want to have lived? As one response, judging by the popularity of movies, books and video games, many people yearn for a dramatic time and place where irresistible forces clash, heroic choices are demanded and life is lived at non-stop intensity.

Yet nothing fits that description better than where we find ourselves, here and now.

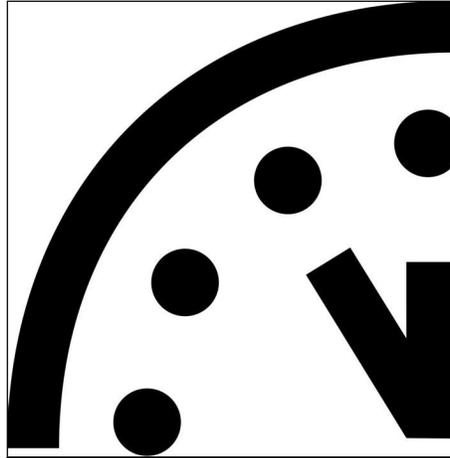
A recent panel discussion about “environmental journalism,” made the case: We are first-hand witnesses to the most important “news story” that anyone has ever covered: bigger than war or peace, bigger than a cure for cancer. It’s no exaggeration to say that the future of the human species is being decided over these next few years. And it’s not far-fetched to expect that Pennsylvania is where some of the most pivotal events will take place.

Anyone with open eyes can see that fracking is destructive, dirty and dangerous. But, more than that, fracking is *desperate*: an all-consuming drive for more, more fossil fuel. Nothing that grows on the surface, no human habitation, no political process is allowed to stand in its way. How ironic that Marcellus shale gas was once hailed as “a game changer.”

In three years, since Marcellus Protest began, the world has seen more extreme climate events than anyone could have imagined: heat waves, tornados, typhoons, droughts, floods. While polar ice vanishes, crops fail, and coastal cities are awash, Western governments are marching along behind the Pied Piper of energy capitalism, dancing us away to destruction. (As this is written, another round of U.N. climate talks adjourns in futility, with smaller nations pleading for action before it’s too late.)

The Fossil Fuel Era is ending. It was, in all senses of the word, *unsustainable*. The rich and powerful nations are caught in its death-grip, while the poor—who could once have survived on their own terms—risk being dragged down as well.

Here, where we live, those thrusts of history are converging head-on. Nearest to the grassroots, individuals, families and citizen groups are fighting to save our communities from drill-



[The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#) uses this “*Doomsday Clock*” to dramatize the threat of human self-annihilation.

ing for shale gas. Lined up against us, working top-down, Big Business and Big Money clog the press and the halls of power with the same flimsy rationales that they first brought with them: *It won’t hurt (much). It will happen anyway, why not grab some for yourself?*

Our local environment needs protection from fracking for its own sake: we need a place to live; we need breathable air here, drinkable water, and safe neighborhoods.

But there’s also an existential question of whether human beings will yet be the ones to *decide* what will—and won’t—be destroyed, as the price of fossil energy. If our parks can’t be saved, then what about our homes? What about the farms? What about the rain? *Where will this fever stop? Can it be stopped?*

Many parts of the world have yet to experience fracking up close; every month brings requests from would-be visitors to come to Pennsylvania to see it. We, who live here, are already standing where the action is, with a chance to change the outcome. If we show that *people* make decisions, then people around the world will be strengthened. If we allow *money* to hold sway, then money grows even more powerful. Everything precious now teeters on the balance, on a knife’s edge.

What could you offer, to make a difference in such a cause? What would you have given, to have had your chance to try?

Welcome to the Side

Here are just a few of those who’ve weighed-in recently in the fight against toxic fracking:

- **Pope Francis** whose [picture](#) with a “No Fracking” T-shirt is not a hoax, and who is preparing an encyclical on human responsibility for the environment;
- **Angela Merkel** whose CDU party took a no-fracking position (and a new coalition partner) after the recent [German election](#), in which the pro-fracking FDP party was shut out of parliament;

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Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

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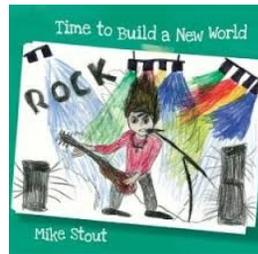
- **Top climate scientists** who [advised](#) California Governor Jerry Brown to abandon his support of fracking, and to work for a moratorium as in New York;
- **American Banker** which [documents](#) the impact of fracking on mortgage holders, and the policies banks have adopted to cover their assets;
- **Sisters Katherine and Elizabeth**, grade-schoolers who founded “Earth Kids” in their Deer Lakes Elementary School and [spoke to County Council](#) against fracking in parks;
- **Sisters of Mercy** whose [Mercy Global Action Network](#) has decided to focus on fracking as they promote “respect and care for Earth and all her beings.”

We welcome all these co-workers and encourage their efforts.

We need your contributions: All our labor (including technical support) comes from our volunteer members. We have no paid staff. But we do spend money on printing and webhosting services. Please look for our year-end email appeal, and donate what you can. If you haven't received our letter, it's online at www.marcellusprotest.org/appeal **2013**. Thanks!

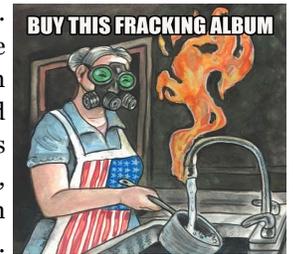
Fight Fracking to Music

Just in time for holiday gift-giving, or to treat yourself for all your hard work, here are two collections of music for fractivists.



[Mike Stout](#) is a founding member of Marcellus Protest, contributing music, passion and professional services since we began. Mike dedicated the CD release party for [Time to Build a New World](#) for the benefit of Marcellus Protest. If you missed the event, find Mike's music at [iTunes](#) or [Amazon](#).

And, coming in April, Movement Music Records new release, [Buy This Fracking Album](#), aims to bring both public awareness and financial support to our fight. The initial artist line-up includes Pete Seeger, Anti Flag, Rusted Root, Tom Chapin and other established and emerging performers. All the tracks will be new material. Jason Samuel, the producer, has designated a portion of the proceeds for Marcellus Protest. We are delighted by this recognition and we'll certainly make good use of income from album sales.



A Range of Resources

Please check out our 'Resources' page at www.marcellusprotest.org/resources, and follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](#)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus_SWPA](#)). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

“[Extracting Fossil Fuels from Your Portfolio](#)”: A guide to personal divestment and reinvestment. [See our online [story](#).] Education for you and your family, and clear steps to move your money out of unsustainable investments.

[MintPress News](#): Independent, not-partisan journalism. An online alternative news service covering fracking and other environmental issues.

Also see our online calendar of events at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.

Still “Protecting Our Parks!”

PITTSBURGH: Even though Allegheny County Council voted ‘No’ on a fracking moratorium, our fight for the County parks is far from ended.

At Council's November 19 meeting, Councilwoman Barbara Daly Danko successfully “pulled” her 3-year moratorium bill from the Government Reform Committee, where it had lain unaddressed since September. But the bill was defeated on a roll-call vote of 2-9, with 4 members abstaining.

Council members gave a variety of reasons for their “Nay” votes and abstentions. Two were unabashedly in favor of fracking; others opposed the moratorium without actually embracing drilling. They offered reasons ranging from “A moratorium is moot, because we don't have a fracking proposal before us [yet]” to “Let's not ‘tie our hands’ - we should be free to consider



each future proposal on its own merits.” The four members who abstained cited personal or business relationships with the fracking industry, which could also disqualify them from voting in the future on any decisions involving drilling or leasing.

Members on all sides agreed that public concern over this issue is beyond any in their experience. And the Protect Our Parks campaign will keep speaking out, along with other concerned citizens, at every Council meeting into the future.

At its first meeting in 2014, the Council elects new officers and chairs of committees. Then, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald has promised to submit his proposed agreement “in January,” for leasing Deer Lakes Park to be fracked by Range Resources.

We'll be there to challenge him! Come join us, at 5:00pm on December 4th and 18th and January 2nd and 14th. For details, see www.marcellusprotest.org/protect-our-parks.

Updated information on these topics (with links to original sources), along with our calendar of upcoming events, and other resources, can be found at www.marcellusprotest.org.