

MARCELLUS MONTHLY

“All the Fracking
News that Fits”

DECEMBER 2014

Anti-Fracking Rally

Welcomes Election Winners

HARRISBURG: Two weeks after Election Day, demonstrators under the banner of “Pennsylvanians Against Fracking” came to the State Capitol.



Pennsylvanians carry a no-fracking message to Gov-elect Wolf and incoming legislators in Harrisburg, November 18.

(Photo credit: Michael Bagdes-Canning)

Their rally, for a “clean up Pennsylvania” campaign, was aimed at Gov-elect Tom Wolf and the state legislature.

About 150 people turned out, in a coalition of groups which included Marcellus Protest and Protect Our Parks.

The response from our end of the state was coordinated by Marcellus Outreach Butler, and other local groups supporting the event include Friends of the Harmed and SHAADD (South Hills Area Against Dangerous Drilling). Among the other members are Cleanwater Action, Food and Water Watch, the Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Committee, and Thomas Merton Center.

The ‘clean up Pennsylvania’ campaign used the tag-line “Filthy energy makes for filthy government.”

In other news, [State Impact Pennsylvania](#) (affiliated with National Public Radio) covered a report from Common Cause showing that the gas industry has spent more than \$50 million to influence Pennsylvania’s elected officials since 2007. The same story predicts that Mr. Wolf will have a fight on his hands to accomplish even his proposed 5% “severance tax” on frackers — let alone any true protection for the state’s environment.

The incoming legislature is controlled by Republican recipients of gas industry money: Returning as Senate President Pro Tem, Joseph Scarnatti was second only to Tom Corbett in pulling down industry cash. On the other side of the Capitol, the Speaker and the Majority Leader of the House are also coming into office with a big boost from the gas industry. Common Cause notes that its dollar totals are conservative because they include only those individuals and PACs at the very top of the gas industry “food chain,” but not the suppliers and subcontractors in other fracking-dependent businesses.

Last-Minute Appeal:

Come to County Council

Tuesday (Dec. 2) - 5:00pm



PITTSBURGH: POP’s citizen-sponsored Ordinance on fracking in Allegheny County parks will be introduced at County Council on Tuesday evening, December 2. **We need a show of support at this meeting**, at 5:00 pm in the County Courthouse on Grant Street. [See www.protectparks.org]

Protect Our Parks delivered signatures from residents in two-thirds of the county’s municipalities, petitioning Allegheny County Council to adopt a “wait and see” approach toward future fracking at County parks. The proposed Ordinance calls for a two-year evaluation period, after gas is produced from the lease at Deer Lakes Park; and it prohibits any negotiation or solicitation on further leasing until Council receives a full public report on the environmental and economic experience of this first leasing decision.

As soon as the County Solicitor validates the petitions, POP’s Ordinance will be placed on Council’s agenda. But the County Executive, Rich Fitzgerald, has already threatened to veto the legislation, even though it merely formalizes his own public assurances about any plans for further fracking on public land.



Joni Rabinowitz delivers 1800 signatures to County Council staffer Joe Catanese.

(Photo credit: Dianne Peterson)

Earlier, as [reported](#) in the Tribune Review, Mr. Corbett’s “energy policy czar” had dismissed these reports on campaign finance, charging that the numbers were compiled by people “... fundamentally opposed to gas drilling.”

Other leading recipients of industry money included Sen. Tim Solobay (D-Washington County) and Democratic candidate for governor (in 2010) Dan Onorato.

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

We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it from our website: www.marcellusprotest.org/news. Source citations for all articles are available upon request.

From the Corporate Side:

- **Chesapeake Energy (CHK)** has notified investors of criminal charges that it faces in Pennsylvania, and other states. Here, the issue is cheating landowners on their royalty payments by (among other schemes) deducting inflated “costs” paid to its own affiliates. Elsewhere, CHK is charged with bid-rigging and fraud in obtaining gas leases.
- **Range Resources (RRC)** was among other companies rumored as possible takeover targets. RRC tells investors that it will remain “cash-flow negative” until some time in 2016. On the other hand, major multinationals may look to snap up such cash-starved producers, anticipating a better political climate for gas exports.
- **EQT Corporation** may be restructuring its “Midstream” (pipeline) assets, which would raise cash for continued drilling and acquisition. As much as \$4.6 billion could be raised next year.
- **CONSOL Energy (CNX)** was among coal companies whose shares rose on news of Republican election victories.

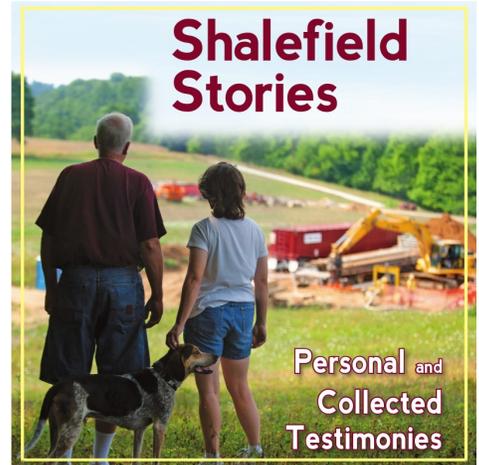
Shalefield Stories:

Making it Real

The “Shalefield Stories” has been filling a double purpose for our movement. First, it’s a fund-raiser for helping “the harmed” — those who are bearing the first-hand impacts of toxic fracking. At a suggested donation of \$5 per copy, proceeds from the book pay for drinking water and air purifiers for our neighbors who wait for justice from the courts and corporations.

Their needs are large, and growing as fracking spreads; this sort of help—one family at a time—can only scratch the surface. But while we’re working for sane social policies, we realize that— moment by moment — air and water make the difference between life or death for each of us, and for all creatures.

Equally important, “Shalefield Stories” is a unique resource for advocacy and education, in our own region and beyond. (When Members of Parliament visited Pennsylvania from the Netherlands, they wanted to hear from local residents who’d been affected by fracking. The MPs took copies of “Shalefield Stories” home to share with their colleagues.)



Thanks to the “Friends of the Harmed” who collected and edited the stories, and whose volunteer labor puts the proceeds to work for those in need. Their hands-on caring also creates opportunities for faith communities, academics and others to put their own skills and gifts to use.

We’ll be featuring some of the Shalefield Stories in future editions of this newsletter. Meanwhile, you can make a donation at www.friendsoftheharmed.com.

A Range of Resources

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

[Google Earth Tour of Wells, Pads and Impoundments](#): George Jucha put together this 20-minute, virtual “fly-over” to show the impact of fracking on the North American landscape. It’s a visceral reminder of what fracking does to our physical landscape.

[The Environmental Working Group](#): a non-profit, non-partisan resource, publishing investigations and research on environmental health, food and agriculture, and water and energy.

A **[Climate Resilience Toolkit](#)** has been published by the White House, with helpful hints on how to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Sadly, like the Allegheny County Health Dept., it focuses on the impact of climate change upon us (and how to survive it), rather than our impact upon the climate (and how to reduce it). But it’s full of ideas on rallying the community to deal with rising water and deepening drought. A cry in the wilderness from NOAA.

Upcoming Events in December:

December 2, Allegheny County Council (5pm, County Courthouse, Pittsburgh): The citizens’ agenda initiative may be introduced on the evening’s agenda. Please check for announcements at www.protectparks.org, or send your email address to action@protectparks.org to be added to our mailing list for rapid updates.

December 29, Middlesex Township Hearing (4:30pm, Valencia PA): The next encounter between the Mars Parent Group and Rex Energy (who plan to drill at the local school). See our [calendar](#) for meeting location, and the [Mars Parent Group website](#) for the full story of their fight.

(Updated details and a more extensive list of events at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

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.