

## OCTOBER 2015

### **Shalefield Stories, Vol. 2**

A new edition of the *Shalefield Stories* is available from [Friends of the Harmed](#). Now at 54 pages, the size of the new book is both impressive and sobering. Like the first edition, it's \$5 per copy, with all revenue providing direct, tangible relief (drinking water, air scrubbers, etc.) for those who bear fracking's consequences.

Those who get help from Friends of the Harmed aren't required to go public: fear of intimidation frequently comes along with fracking's health impacts. But one who did decide to speak out is Shirley Eakin, who lives with her husband just outside the entrance of Cross Creek Park in Washington County, PA.

While Range Resources was touting the drilling at Cross Creek Park as a 'success story' (to sell Allegheny County Council on fracking at Deer Lakes Park), the lawn around Shirley's house was bubbling with mysterious foamy liquid. As the Eakins' physical symptoms multiplied, DEP advised them not to drink their water, but did nothing to address the situation. Since then, Friends of the Harmed have [provided](#) a water buffalo and conducted independent tests of their well water at no cost to the Eakins.

Since then, Shirley (who, like others, doesn't want to be labeled an "activist") has become a call to accountability in her community.

You can read her appeal in the *Shalefield Stories*, "Please, just one honest government worker, doctor, gas company [employee]: Speak the truth! The long-term effect is here now."

### **Fracking in the Court!**

HARRISBURG: On December 19, 2013, the most egregious provisions of "Act 13" became null and void. Not because the Pennsylvania Constitution said so — although that document has some very courageous words — but because four members of the State Supreme Court said so.

Two years later, two of those four are gone, (another, who didn't participate in the *Act 13* case, won't return in 2016). So we'll fill three State Supreme Court seats with our November ballots. And

### **Why it matters who's on the bench.**

the next time that the court sits in its full strength, its composition will be very different.

*Marcellus Protest*, as a 501(c)3 organization, can't endorse candidates (although other non-profits, such as the [Sierra Club](#) and [Clean Water Action](#), can and do), but we can encourage you to vote for candidates who share your values, especially with respect to fracking.

We've seen, and should remember, what a difference a few judges can make; and other states continue to remind us:

- Colorado's Supreme Court has agreed to rule on whether municipalities can control drilling;
- Ohio's Supreme Court struck down some past fracking-control ordinances, but recently upheld the right of citizens in Mahoning County to place such a measure on their ballot.
- As expected the State Supreme Court of Texas nullified a 'banning the bans' suit against Denton, where activists and city officials had decided to avoid a fight.



Shirley Eakin with some of her correspondence with PaDEP and the water quality test results provided by Friends of the Harmed.

### **PaDEP has been “cooking” your fracking complaints**

PITTSBURGH: *Public Herald*, the team who brought us the movie *Triple Divide*, has published the results of a 30-month review of fracking-related complaints filed with the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP). Unlike the DEP, however, *Public Herald* has also made their raw data available for anyone who wants to draw their own conclusions.

The results of this work are worthy of

the headlines they've gathered. But upon reading the details one is struck first by the barriers that *Public Herald* faced in simply obtaining the relevant public documents from DEP.

The [report](#) lists nine ways that DEP “cooked” the statistics, including:

- Not counting complaints that DEP had “bucked” to other agencies;
- Letting complaints grow stale and then dropping them from the count;
- Using post-drilling water tests (from operators) as if they were “baseline.”

**Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): [www.thomasmertoncenter.org](http://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](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/news). Source citations for all articles are available upon request.**

## Another International Visitor: Fast-Track Fracking in the U.K.

PITTSBURGH: As we reported in [August](#), Pennsylvania has been attracting [if that's the right word] visitors from all over the world, coming to see the impact of fracking first-hand. This month, at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, we met with the Rt. Rev. Graham Clay, a retired Anglican bishop who's active in the "[Frack Free U.K.](#)" movement.

The Conservative government of P.M. David Cameron, free of their Liberal-Democrat coalition partners after winning the May general election, has decided to "[fast-track](#)" shale drilling across the U.K., over the objections of affected residents. One hotspot is the district of Ryedale, in North Yorkshire, known for agriculture, scenery, and the North York Moors National Park.

Conservatives hold a majority on the North Yorkshire County Council, which will vote in mid-October on the proposal to frack a well in the village of Kirby Misperton. The usual misrepresentations, evasions and fast-talking on the pro-fracking side are documented on the "[Frack Free Ryedale](#)" website. You can read about their struggle, and share your good wishes there.

At the end of his visit, Rev. Cray concluded, "Thank you - you helped me to see what we might become if we don't stop this."



## Heard on the Street: A write-in campaign for County Executive

Democrat Rich Fitzgerald won't be entirely unopposed for Allegheny County Executive, apparently. "Nellie" entered the race as a write-in, with the slogan "The best dog in the race." Nellie's campaign's website is [www.Nellie4ACE.com](http://www.Nellie4ACE.com)

## Not Too Big to Fail: Fiscal reality comes to fracking

WALL STREET: We've been saying for a long time, "It's not about the gas, it's about the money." This past month, the wheels of the fracking juggernaut began wobbling alarmingly; and it might not be long before they come off altogether.

- *Fortune* magazine [reports](#) "Doomsday may be coming to the fracking industry," with price-hedging running out and no likelihood of higher prices any time soon. [9/26]
- A major drilling company withdrew its public bond offering rather than swallow a much lower than advertised value for its assets. [*Wall Street Journal*, 9/23, p. B3]
- Huntley & Huntley is frantically acquiring leases, while Range Resources (it's operating partner) has slowed-down or suspended drilling in the region. Huntley has also packed municipal meetings to shout down any zoning of fracking.

As the *Fortune* article explains, fracking depends upon big banks for working capital, through loans secured by the value of each driller's leased acreage. When the appraised value per acre falls — because of market conditions or local restrictions on fracking — those loans may not pass audit for renewal, which happens annually in October. Then a driller faces the prospect of bankruptcy if it can't find new acreage to jack up its collateral. That's where Huntley & Huntley finds itself now, along with many other recent high-fliers.

## A Range of Resources

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

"[High Volume Hydrofracturing in Michigan](#)" The 200-page report from a three-year analysis of fracking, performed at the University of Michigan, it makes no recommendations but catalogs the likely 'strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of various courses of action' with respect to allowing fracking in the state.

The [Multi-State Shale Research Collaborative](#): A joint effort by nonpartisan research and policy organizations of Pennsylvania and four other states, focused on economic and community impacts of Marcellus and Utica shale.

## Upcoming Events in October and beyond:

**October 14, National Day of Action (Pittsburgh, 10:30am).** Sponsored by the [Peoples Climate Movement](#). Local planning by [Pittsburgh350](#). Watch the Pittsburgh 350 website and our calendar for details.

**November 3, Election Day.** Remember to vote — especially for Pennsylvania judicial candidates.

**November 9, Thomas Merton Award Dinner (Sheraton Station Square, Pittsburgh) 6:00pm.** The [Thomas Merton Center](#) is the fiduciary sponsor for Marcellus Protest. The 43rd annual Thomas Merton Award will be presented to California Congresswoman Barbara Lee (who cast the only vote against the Congressional 'use of force' approval in September, 2001).

**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](http://www.marcellusprotest.org).**