



photo credit: [Marcellus Protest](#)

Greetings!

It's the heat of the summer and things are beginning to "catch fire" as the truth comes forward. As a follow-up to a story entitled "[The Widespread and Systemic Contamination Found - at the EPA](#)" presented in [the last issue](#), our feature story focuses on the all-too-familiar topic of politics getting in the way of scientific truth. Walter Brasch follows Dr. Geoffrey Thyne's scientific career as politics interfere and he ends up "Fired for Telling the Truth." Walter points out the industry money trail, the most likely culprit in truth-silencing scenario. Just like the latest California vaccine law passed by politicians who accepted [large donations from the pharmaceutical sector](#), the oil & gas industry is making their money talk and silencing the opposition.

Our second feature highlights the alarming levels of radioactivity found in a Washington County tributary to the Monongahela River. Many have questioned the potential radioactivity of the Marcellus Shale. However, testing of the "flowback" or fracking wastewater is rare, and this contaminated waste is disposed of by a number of means including: injection into deep storage wells, treatment and release back into the watershed, and/or dumping in landfills. Waste is an enormous and expensive problem for the industry, one that compels them to seek out new (and in our minds, absurd) solutions. Such is the proposal we told you about in our last issue using the drill cutting waste to build [an airport runway](#) or spreading flowback on municipal roads for dust control.

The concluding "Voices of Reason" video showcases important comments from a recent public hearing in South Fayette Township regarding fracking near residential areas within the community. With all the potential environmental contamination from the industry, it's more important than ever that the truth be told, and municipal zoning is set up to protect the health and welfare of the residents. Stay tuned for the second RDA zoning video, to be included in the

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In Other News

Unconventional Gas and Oil Drilling is Associated with Increased Hospital Utilization Rates

Over the past ten years, unconventional gas and oil drilling (UGOD) has markedly expanded in the United States. Despite substantial increases in well drilling, the health consequences of UGOD toxicant exposure remain unclear. This study examines

next issue!

"In Other News" kicks off with research conducted by physicians and scientists from Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania who recently published a peer-reviewed study that suggests increased rates of hospitalization in areas where unconventional drilling is taking place. Authors state that the study shows "an association between well density and inpatient prevalence rates for the medical categories of dermatology, neurology, oncology, and urology. These data suggest that <unconventional> wells, which dramatically increased in the past decade, were associated with increased inpatient prevalence rates within specific medical categories in Pennsylvania."

This is followed by a pretty cool study on trees, a little PA political lobbying history, and another glimpse through Frank Finan's FLIR infrared camera. Frank's images should serve as a reminder of the invisible air pollution constantly emitted from the condensate tanks lurking around our countryside. The cumulative air pollution from such tanks is a big unknown at this point.

A number of "Action Points" are also included for your participation.

This issue closes with a public hearing notice from SRBC. The meeting is coming up on **Thursday, August 6th**. Please consider traveling to Grantville to speak out for Forksville! If you can't attend the hearing, the deadline for written comments on this 3-million-gallon-per-day water withdrawal from the Loyalsock Creek is August 16th. [Click here to submit your comment.](#)

Thank you for caring and staying informed,

Brooke Woodside
RDA Working Group, Managing Editor

Visit our website at: www.rdapa.org

Fired for Telling the Truth

July 21, 2015 - by [Walter Brasch](#)

Dr. Geoffrey Thyne, a hydrogeologist, didn't plan to be an expert witness for law firms. But, that's the way it turned out shortly before he planned to retire.

He had spent most of his career working in the oil/gas industry and then in academics. He didn't have problems when he worked for ARCO for seven years after getting an M.S. in oceanography from the University of South Florida. However, he did have problems in academics when he tried to tell the truth.

After five years as an assistant professor at California State University at Bakersfield, in the heart of the state's rich oil industry, he left to become an associate professor/researcher at the Colorado School of Mines (CSM), a public university with a strong reputation in engineering and applied sciences. For 10 years, he taught and did research. But in 2006, as horizontal fracking began to be the way the industry was headed, he learned that research is compromised by politics.

That's the year he was asked by the Oil and Gas Accountability Project (OGAP) to evaluate an EPA study about horizontal fracking. The EPA study, conducted during the Bush-Cheney administration, had claimed there were no problems with horizontal fracking, one [a practice] that used millions of gallons of water, dozens of toxic chemicals, and a new procedure to extract trapped gas in narrow shales.

"I wasn't aware of the study, or much about fracking," says Dr. Thyne, "but I

an association between wells and health care use by zip code from 2007 to 2011 in Pennsylvania.

Cardiology inpatient prevalence rates were significantly associated with number of wells per zip code, while neurology inpatient prevalence rates were significantly associated with wells per km². Furthermore, evidence also supported an association between well density and inpatient prevalence rates for the medical categories of dermatology, neurology, oncology, and urology. These data suggest that UGOD wells, which dramatically increased in the past decade, were associated with increased inpatient prevalence rates within specific medical categories in Pennsylvania.

Further studies are necessary to address healthcare costs of UGOD and determine whether specific toxicants or combinations are associated with organ-specific responses.

[Click here to read more.](#)

How Trees Calm Us Down

A new study found that an additional ten trees on a given block corresponded to a one-percent increase in how healthy nearby residents felt.

In 1984, a researcher named Roger Ulrich noticed a curious pattern among patients who were recovering from gallbladder surgery at a suburban hospital in Pennsylvania. Those who had been given rooms overlooking a small stand of deciduous trees were being discharged almost a day sooner, on average, than those in otherwise identical rooms whose windows faced a wall. The results seemed at once obvious-of course a leafy tableau is more therapeutic than a drab brick wall-and puzzling. Whatever curative property the trees possessed, how were they casting it through a pane of glass?

That is the riddle that underlies a new study in the journal Scientific Reports by a team of researchers in the United States, Canada, and Australia, led by the

looked at the document and said it appeared to be political." He did say there was no data to lead to the EPA conclusions, which would eventually be used to help justify the Halliburton Loophole, which exempted the industry from numerous environmental laws. But, it was Dr. Thyne's observation about the validity of the EPA report that upset the university's administration.

Research about fracking apparently upset some in the administration, one of whom was Dr. Myles W. Scoggins who had worked for Mobil and ExxonMobil for more than three decades, eventually becoming president of the International Exploration & Production and Global Exploration division and then executive vice president of ExxonMobil Production Co. before becoming CSM president in 2006. In 2014, the last year of his presidency, Dr. Scoggins received \$380,000 in salary and, according to the Public Affairs Institute, about \$800,000 from being on the boards of three oil and energy companies.

A meeting with a low-level administrator resulted in an agreement that Dr. Thyne should not say that there was insufficient data in the EPA study and that he could not identify himself as from CSM in public and written statements.

But, there was more. Dr. Thyne soon began advocating for more university research about fracking and its effects.



This time, instead of a department head telling him never to use his university affiliation in his research and public statements, it was a university vice-president. Dr. Nigel T. Middleton, vice-president of academic affairs, told Dr. Thyne the university was dropping him to half-time employment and ordered him not to discuss fracking. Dr. Middleton also has a long history of work with the oil and gas industry.

Dr. Thyne believes the initial protest this time came from the Colorado Oil and Gas Association (COGA). The university president for four years (2007-2011) was on the board of directors of COGA.

In an official public relations statement, CSM denied terminating Dr. Thyne's employment. The university claimed Dr. Thyne left CSM solely because he had another job. However, that was a carefully-couched distortion of truth. CSM did not renew his contract after he did an interview with National Public Radio, and reiterated his position that there was insufficient data to justify EPA conclusions.

The American Association of University Professors had wanted to take up Dr. Thyne's case as a violation of academic freedom-"but I declined because by that time, it really seemed to be a no-win situation."

The next year, he became a researcher at the University of Wyoming, from where he received a Ph.D. in geology in 1991. This time, six years after he began working at the university, a comment made to a local newspaper led to his termination. The Cheyenne Tribune-Eagle had published a five-part series about fracking and water usage. He says he had told the reporter each well could use two to ten million gallons of water, but for certain wells the water used could be 350,000 to one million gallons per stage, and that there could be as many as 40 stages of drilling. The reporter took the maximum per stage, and the maximum number of stages, and noted there could be more than 40 million gallons of water used. The source of the highest possible number of gallons was unattributed. However, representatives of the industry demanded to know the source, which the newspaper's editor revealed.

That eventually led to Dr. Thyne being called before the university's vice-

University of Chicago psychology professor Marc Berman.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Documents Show PA GOP's Courtship of Gas Industry

This is the first of a two-part series on the natural gas industry and Pennsylvania politics. Today: Pre-primary wooing.

The pitch to the Marcellus gas industry should be stark, the lobbyist urged Tom Corbett's campaign

[Click here to read more.](#)

FLIR Infrared View of Condensate Tanks at Korban Compressor Station near Hop Bottom



July 15, 2015 - from Frank Finan - The tanks at the site are now putting out more hydrocarbons than the last time he was there.

Submit Your Comment to the EPA - Fracking Contaminates Drinking Water

The EPA released a long-awaited study about fracking impacts on drinking water. The oil and gas industry cheered the results because of its skewed methodology and the pro-industry spin that accompanied its release.

While the study did acknowledge what existing scientific data and countless personal experiences have already shown - that fracking does indeed contaminate groundwater resources - its headline and conclusion misleadingly assert that we

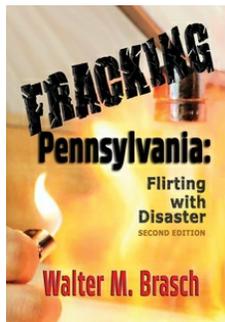
president of government affairs and a representative from Noble Energy, who demanded he retract the highest number, a number Dr. Thyne had never given the newspaper. Like CSM, the University of Wyoming also demanded that Dr. Thyne deny that any of his comments represented the views of the University of Wyoming. Shortly after that meeting, Dr. Thyne was told, "Your services are no longer needed." He was never told why his employment was terminated. Because Wyoming is a "right-to-work" state, there was no grievance procedure. The university could easily claim, without having to prove the truth, that there were no more research funds to justify Dr Thyne's continued employment. David Mohrbacher, director of the university's Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute, told the Boulder (Colo.) Weekly the reason for not renewing Dr. Thyne's was because, "We chose a different way to go, and really that's all I can say."

Dr. Thyne's last academic employment was in 2012. "With fracking booming, I thought there would be a lot of jobs," he says but no one in academia had wanted him. A couple of years later, he found out why. "A friend told me to check out YouTube." On that social network, he found a one-minute video, which he recorded in 2011, that stated human error in the fracking process can cause water pollution.

"I'm not naive, I understand politics," says Dr. Thyne, who acknowledges, "It's been a difficult transition," but one he accepts because he will not sacrifice his academic integrity for political convenience.

- See more at: <http://www.walterbrasch.blogspot.com>

Award-winning syndicated social issues columnist, Walter M. Brasch, PhD, recently released the second edition of his book, [Fracking Pennsylvania: Flirting with Disaster](#)



Fracking Pennsylvania is a fact-based overview of the issues surrounding the natural gas industry and fracking. Although it focuses upon the Marcellus Shale, it looks at cases and issues in other parts of the country. The book is not meant to be a comprehensive analysis of the science and engineering of the process to extract natural gas nor an extensive discussion of the economic, health, environmental, and political issues. It is meant as a basic reference to acquaint people with the issues, with the hope they will dig deeper into areas that directly concern them and rally their

friends and neighbors to help protect the health and environment of the people, wildlife, and natural vegetation.

Radiation in Washington County

Jul 28, 2015 - by [Don Hopey/Pittsburgh Post Gazette](#)

Recent testing by the West Virginia Water Research Institute has found evidence of radiation contamination in water discharges from the abandoned underground Clyde Mine in Washington County near the Monongahela River that are likely related to past dumping of shale gas drilling wastewater.

The new water test findings were announced last week as the state Department of Environmental Protection continues to investigate radiation levels in Ten Mile Creek, a Monongahela River tributary in southern Washington County, and several abandoned mine discharges in the area. DEP tests done in April 2014 but released only last month in response to a citizen's Right-to-Know request found radium at levels up to 60 times higher than allowed by federal drinking water standards.

The Water Research Institute testing, conducted on June 25 of this year, did not

shouldn't be worried about fracking impacting drinking water.

The study falls far short of the level of scrutiny and government oversight needed to protect the health and safety of the many millions of Americans living in watersheds impacted by fracking – nearly 10 million within one mile of a fracked well, according to the study.

[Click here to submit a comment through Food & Water Watch.](#)

Tell Governor Wolf That Trusting the Industry to Voluntarily Clean Up Isn't Working - PA Needs Real Rules Now

Since the shale boom began in Pennsylvania, gas companies have only been required to voluntarily look for and fix air pollution leaks. As one of the world's largest natural gas fields and now the second largest shale gas producer in the country, we need to do better than trust the industry to do the right thing.

By adopting strong rules to fight methane pollution, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) can save lives, improve health, and help curb climate change. DEP must live up to its mission to ensure the health and safety of Pennsylvania's citizens by enacting best-in-the-nation regulations to stop air pollution leaks from shale gas operations.

Please add your name to this petition from the Clean Air Council to tell Gov. Wolf that we need strong rules to fight methane pollution.

[Click here to sign the petition.](#)

Stop Fracking in CA

A petition created by stopfrackinginca.org is intended to put an end fracking and extreme oil extraction in California.

Scandal after scandal has given Californians concrete

support the DEP's 2014 findings of widespread radiation contamination, except for the Clyde Mine discharge, which also contained high levels for bromides. Shale gas drilling wastewater often contains high concentrations of bromides, salts and other dissolved solids as well as natural radioactive elements picked up during the drilling and hydraulic fracturing of shale formations deep underground.

"There's something going on there that's not right," said Paul Ziemkiewicz, a mine drainage expert and director of the water research institute. "The radiation, together with higher bromide levels than you would expect to see coming out of a deep mine, point to drilling wastewater. It's something that's worth continuing to take a look at."

The 15-month-old DEP test results showing high radium readings triggered concern that Ten Mile Creek and more than 1.6 trillion gallons of water trapped in a maze of abandoned underground mines had been contaminated by radioactivity, said Ken Dufalla, president of the Harry Enstrom Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America in Greene County, and the person who filed the Right-to-Know request.



Ten Mile Creek - photo credit: [blogspot](#)

Ten Mile Creek is a major tributary of the Monongahela River, joining the river 66 miles south from Pittsburgh's Point at the boundary between Washington and Greene counties. The creek has a long history of pollution from mining operations and its drainage contains many shale gas development sites. Despite that industrial activity, the creek is a popular warm-water fishery and its mouth is heavily used by recreational boaters.

"We're going to get to the bottom of this," said Mr. Dufalla, who asked the water research institute to do the water tests. "If the radiation is in the water, let's stop it and keep it from flowing to Pittsburgh. I'm going to keep turning every stone over until we find out what's going on."

The DEP conducted a second round of tests at the Clyde and Cumberland mine discharges and on the creek in late June, during higher than normal water flows, and will release its results in late August or early September, said John Poister, a DEP spokesman.

Mr. Dufalla and Mr. Ziemkiewicz said the tests done when the creek was flowing high are unlikely to show high radiation contamination because the creek samples would be diluted.

"We're not going to address that issue until we see the new test results. If the

proof that Big Oil is poisoning their state.

First, state regulators discovered oil wastewater being pumped into their dwindling water supply. Then, scientists found oil companies selling oil wastewater laden with cancer-causing chemicals to farmers for irrigation.

This summer, while California is experiencing one of its worst droughts in history, oil and gas companies are selling contaminated waste water to farmers to use for irrigation. Big Oil not only gets away with poisoning the most important resource to sustain life, but they also earn an extra profit by selling back the poison as a farming tool. It also means all of us are at risk, since California grows 90 percent of the grapes, 95 percent of the broccoli and more than half the bell peppers Americans eat every year - just to name a few of the biggest crops. This is beyond fracked up, and that's why we need to take action.

[Click here watch a short video and sign the petition.](#)

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We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research and other projects.

It costs nothing to sign up for our e-newsletter, but tax-free donations are accepted & greatly appreciated.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to continue its valuable education and advocacy outreach in 2015, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

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Membership levels:
Adventurer.....\$10
Explorer.....\$20
Woodlander.....\$50

results show a problem, and we have to go back in and resample at some locations, we will," Mr. Poister said. "We want to find out exactly what's in the water and where it came from."

Don Hopey: dhohey@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1983.
Twitter: @donhohey

Voices of Reason

Published on Jul 21, 2015 - filmed and edited by Bob Donnan

Notable comments made during the South Fayette Township meeting on July 8, 2015 regarding drilling and fracking near residential areas in the community.

This is an edited version of the 4-1/2 hour South Fayette Township meeting, only including the top commenters.

Along with Ken Dufalla, Dorothy Bassett, Ron Slabe and Keith McDonough are two former industry workers with one verifying comments about radioactive materials, since he said they were used in every well.



Voices of Reason on Community Fracking

SRBC Public Hearing Announcement

The Forksville water withdrawal plan submitted by Chief Oil & Gas will be among the subjects of a hearing by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission next Thursday, August 6. It is *Item 4* on the official public hearing announcement, linked to below.

Thursday, August 6 @ 7 pm
East Hanover Twp Municipal Building,
Main Hall, 8848 Jonestown Road, Grantville, PA 17028

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hear public testimony on the water withdrawal projects listed in the official notice. Such projects are intended to be scheduled for Commission action at its next business meeting in

Guardian.....\$100
Naturalist.....\$500
Preservationist.....\$1,000

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September. The Commission will also hear testimony on amending the Comprehensive Plan for the Water Resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. This will be the only opportunity to offer oral comment to the Commission for the listed projects and other items.

[Click here to view the official public hearing notice from SRBC, which includes the projects scheduled for action.](#)

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Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

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