



# Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2009

40th Anniversary Issue

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

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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's 40th Anniversary will Honor 40 Environmental Heroes

**G**ASP is celebrating our 40th year of working to clean up the air and improve the environment in southwestern Pennsylvania by recognizing 40 "Environmental Heroes" for the good work they have done for the environment in the greater Pittsburgh area (see list of heroes on back).

Join us at our 40th Anniversary celebration on the evening of **Friday, October 23, 2009, from 6 to 9 PM at the Union Project**, 801 N. Negley Avenue in Highland Park.

Tickets for the event are \$40 and will include hors d'oeuvres, coffee and desserts, musical entertainment, and silent auction. Tickets available at 412-325-7382 or [gasp-pgh.org](http://gasp-pgh.org).



## \$3.49 Million Recovery Act Funds to Help Cut Diesel Pollution in the Pittsburgh Area

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

**O**n August 13th, the U.S. EPA announced that Allegheny County would receive \$3.49 million in Recovery Act funding to help reduce diesel emissions in the Pittsburgh area. The Allegheny County Health Department will distribute the EPA funds to four projects that will replace and retrofit engines and equipment in a variety of diesel fleets operating in the area, cutting particle pollution by 2.6 tons annually.

The Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution, led by GASP and Clean Water Action assisted the Health Department in selecting projects.

The following projects will be supported through this funding:

- Port Authority of Allegheny County will use a portion of the funds to assist in replacing two 1996-model buses with 2010-model cleaner diesel hybrid electric buses and to repower nine 2003-model diesel buses with engines that meet the new, higher 2007 emission standards. This will reduce particulate matter pollution by approximately 0.1 tons per year, carbon monoxide by 2.8 tons per year, and nitrogen oxides by 6.8 tons per year.

continued on page 2

**Recovery Act Funds  
continued from page 1**

- Constructors Association of Western Pennsylvania will use retrofit technologies - engine repowers, upgrades and diesel particulate filters - to upgrade 23 diesel-powered, heavy non-road construction equipment in Western Pennsylvania. The various upgrades will reduce particulate matter pollution by 1.8 tons per year, carbon monoxide by 14.6 tons per year, hydrocarbons by 2.09 tons per year, and nitrogen oxides by 9.73 tons per year.
- Diamond Head Trucking and MultiServ Corporation are two companies that provide trucking for U.S. Steel Corporation. They will install diesel particulate filters on 35 dump trucks operating in and around U.S. Steel's Mon Valley Works. Diamond Head services the Edgar Thomson and Irvin plants, while MultiServ serves all three plants in the Mon Valley. Once upgraded, these dump trucks will be 90-percent less polluting than they are today. It is estimated that the diesel particulate filters will remove 0.22 tons of particulate matter per year, 0.74 tons of carbon monoxide per year, and 3.39 tons of hydrocarbons per year.



PHOTO: LEE SZYMANKIEWICZ

**Diamond Head Trucking is one of the companies that will benefit from the Recovery Act Funds.**



PHOTO: LEE SZYMANKIEWICZ

**Rachel Filippini (GASP), Kathy Lawson (Clean Water Action), Jim Thompson and Jayme Graham (both from Allegheny County Health Dept.) holding the \$3.49 million check at the August 13th press conference announcing Recovery Act Funding.**

- CSX Transportation will replace one vintage diesel switcher locomotive without emission controls with a two-engine configuration that has the latest in emission control technology. The GenSet switcher locomotive engine will operate at CSX's McKeesport/Demmler rail yard. The project will cut diesel particulate matter by approximately 0.5 tons per year, carbon dioxide by 172 tons per year, and nitrogen oxides by 16.6 tons per year. It will also save 15,000 gallons of diesel fuel annually and provide quieter operation for the nearby residents of McKeesport.

These projects represent a wide array of the kind of clean up that will need to happen to significantly reduce diesel emissions in our region. Trucks, trains, transit buses, and construction equipment are all important diesel vehicles to clean up. We are fortunate to have received such a sizable chunk of the \$16 Million dedicated to the mid-Atlantic region. Allegheny County is one of only seven applicants that won funding in our region.



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

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**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.

# The Public Hearings of the Fall of 1969 and the Founding of GASP

by James Longhurst

*This is the second 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 now an Assistant Professor of History at UW-La Crosse. His book, Citizen Environmentalists, is due out from the University Press of New England in May 2010.*

To understand the foundations of GASP, we'll need to talk about the early-20th century progressive civic organizations that preceded it, and the national events later in the century that triggered its formation. But the Hotline that you hold in your hands was written and distributed exactly 40 years after the formation of GASP, and it's appropriate to commemorate that fact with a discussion of the public hearings which brought GASP's founding members together.

It began with a county code that had outlived its popularity. By the fall of 1969, Pittsburgh had enjoyed regional smoke and air pollution control for quite some time. Immediately after WWII, a particularly successful reform effort was championed by Mayor David L. Lawrence and supported by local business leaders. This system was centralized under the county's Article XIII in 1960. These collaborative efforts were fairly popular, and industry leaders as well as the national press praised the collaborative spirit of local control.

But when changes in federal law mandated a revision of county codes as a part of a new state plan, what had been acceptable for some time came to appear intolerable. The county Air Pollution Advisory Committee, charged with producing a revised code, split irreversibly. "I am becoming more and more disturbed by the course we are taking," said committee member and University of Pittsburgh professor Morton Corn in July of 1969. The problem was that two years of collaboration had produced a proposed Article XVII that was only incrementally more strict, even while the public had become convinced that more significant restrictions on polluters and a much more active role for citizens was necessary. For more than a month, those opposed to the weak revisions were organized and coached by the League of Women Voters, the Federation of American Scientists, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. These organizations helped foster a core

group of activists—a coalition of civically-active housewives, citizens, academics and scientists.

Among several events, these activists were preparing for the hearing of September 24. The Allegheny County Board of Health had originally planned to discuss the proposed revisions for, perhaps, a few hours. Instead, the meeting stretched over three days, and was filled with acrimony, tears, and public denunciations. What would usually be a

small hearing swelled to include hundreds. Citizens informed the committee members that their proposals were not only poorly thought-out and impractical but also represented "legalized murder." Former steelworkers stood up to read typewritten paragraphs describing their emphysema. A mother presented her four-and-a-half month old daughter and said that the wailing baby's "lungs were sore and her eyes ran red." Citizens appeared wearing buttons emblazoned with the skull-and-crossbones, the words "Cough, cough!" or "Remember Donora!" Speakers called for jail terms for the "boards of directors of polluting firms." "Citizens Turn Air Blue" said one headline, "Citizens Flay Anti-Pollution Plans" another. Local papers summarized the meetings by stating that "the roof fell in" on the committee, that the

proposed criteria "took a beating" and that the public had "ripped them to shreds."

Brought together by the public hearings, and impressed with their own energy and accomplishments, 43 activists agreed to reconvene at the Squirrel Hill home of Michelle Madoff. In October, they formed the Group Against Smog and Pollution, with the intent not only of promoting cleaner air, but also of transforming the process to substantively include the public. GASP, born of public hearings, had begun its 40-year history.

*Next time: GASP's Progressive Roots*



**Michelle Madoff at the hearing on September 26, 1969, just prior to GASP's founding**

# Clarifying Clairton: Addressing Common Questions About the Planned Upgrades at the Clairton Coke Works

by Joe Osborne, GASP Legal Director

On September 4th, the Allegheny County Health Department Division of Air Quality issued a final installation permit for US Steel's proposed "D Battery Project" at its Clairton Coke Works facility. The D Battery project is part of a billion dollar effort to modernize the Clairton facility's coke-making operations and GASP provided lengthy comments during the permitting process.

First some basics: Coke is a refined form of coal used to fuel iron ore blast furnaces. Coke is formed by placing coal in specially designed ovens which heat the coal to temperatures as high as 2000°F in the absence of oxygen. This process removes oil, tar, and variety of gases from the coal, leaving behind carbon-rich "coke." Coke-producing ovens are grouped into "batteries." The proposed D Battery would be made up of 84 coke ovens and would produce over one million tons of coke per year.

The coking process produces substantial air pollution. The Clairton Works currently operates 12 coke oven batteries, is the largest fine particulate matter (PM2.5) source in Allegheny County, and is a major contributor to the consistently high PM2.5 readings at the Liberty and Clairton air monitors. The D battery is projected to emit 1105 TPY (tons per year) of carbon monoxide, 485 TPY of NO<sub>x</sub>, 197 TPY of PM 2.5, 226 TPY of SO<sub>2</sub>, over 1000 pounds per year of the potent air toxic benzene, and an unquantified amount of greenhouse gases, to name just a few pollutants.

Despite the projected increased pollution, the D Battery project and the nearly identical C Battery project approved for construction in the summer of 2008 are frequently billed as efforts to improve Allegheny County's air quality. For example, a July 25, 2008 article in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review characterized the C Battery proposal as a "project to reduce pollutants."<sup>1</sup> When US Steel announced its intention to indefinitely delay new battery construction this past spring, the media described it as a potential blow not only to the economy, but also to the environment.<sup>2</sup>

So you may be wondering: If C and D Batteries will produce thousands of tons of air pollution per year, how can their construction result in improved local air quality? The short answer is that C and D Batteries themselves will not result in air quality improvements, but other, separate repair and modernization efforts that will occur at Clairton over the next five or six years will result in reduced air emissions.

Here's the longer answer: In the last half of 2007, a number of violations, mostly related to smoke opacity, occurred at US Steel's Clairton Coke Works and Edgar Thomson Plant.

This prompted US Steel to enter a March 2008 consent agreement with the Allegheny County Air Quality Program. Under the terms of the consent agreement US Steel must shut down six of its oldest, worst-performing batteries, and make a number of additional repairs at both facilities. These consent agreement terms are the actual source of projected air quality improvements at the facility and must be carried out regardless of whether C and D battery are ever constructed.

These shutdowns and repairs are projected to reduce air emissions enough to more than offset the emissions increases that will result from the construction of C and D Batteries. In fact, US Steel is relying on the emissions decreases from the shutdowns in order to avoid triggering the stringent "new source review" permitting requirements of the Clean Air Act. To avoid new source review, the old batteries must shut down before the new batteries can start up, but in order to maintain production capacity, US Steel would prefer the startup of the new batteries to occur as soon after the shut down of the old batteries as possible.

Clearly the shut down of the old batteries and start up of the new ones are closely interrelated but the projects are not one and the same. The common practice among journalists and public and industry officials of referring to all upcoming projects at Clairton collectively by terms like "the Clairton upgrades" or "the billion dollar Clairton project" is great for the sake of brevity, but not so great for the sake of accuracy.

Lastly, if US Steel is putting the C and D battery projects on hold, why did the county invest so much time and effort into promptly issuing a final D battery permit? Although the consent agreement shutdown and repair requirements are not contingent on actual construction of C or D Battery, the consent agreement does make the requirement to shut down six old batteries contingent on the county issuing permits for the construction of the C and D Battery projects. The county is relying on the old battery shut downs in order to attain the federal PM2.5 air quality standards in the Liberty-Clairton area by the EPA's 2014 deadline. Therefore, timely issuance of the C and D Battery permits was vital to demonstrating attainment by the deadline.

1 *U.S. Steel gets OK for project to reduce pollutants*, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (Jul. 25, 2008).

2 For example, see *Dark cloud, blue sky: Freezing the Clairton project doesn't mean bad air*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Apr. 3, 2009), (describing C Battery as "an ambitious endeavor that promised to bring both construction jobs and cleaner air.")



# Board of Health Tables the Air Toxics Guidelines

by Rachel Filippini , GASP Executive Director


Numerous recent studies and reports have highlighted our region's serious air quality problems. Several of these reports specifically underscore the need for Allegheny County to further scrutinize and control air toxics.

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency released their National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) report. The report indicated that residents of Clairton and Glassport are exposed to toxic air pollutants that make their risk of getting cancer around 20 times greater than the national average. Specifically, the report calculated the cancer risk for Clairton residents at 762 in 1 million, and for Glassport residents at 700 in 1 million—the third and fourth highest risk rates in the nation. (More information can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/nata2002>.)

The National Air Toxics Assessment, based on 2002 air emissions data, helps federal, state, local and tribal governments identify areas and specific pollutants for further evaluation to better understand risks they may pose. Air toxics are of concern because they are known to or are suspected of causing cancer and other serious health problems, including birth defects. The report assessed 180 air toxics plus diesel particulate matter from stationary sources of all sizes and from mobile sources such as cars, trucks, buses and construction equipment.

The current Allegheny County Air Toxics Guidelines were developed in 1988 and utilize decades-old air quality standards. Our understanding of the health effects of many of these chemicals has grown significantly since 1988. In order to protect our health it is critical that the threshold levels of these harmful chemicals be updated to reflect current science.

In July the Board of Health had a golden opportunity to approve an improved and updated Air Toxics Policy which would enable the County's Air Quality Program to better analyze the kinds and amounts of air toxics emitted by local industries and their impact on the surrounding ambient air. This includes known carcinogens like arsenic, benzene, and chromium compounds.

It was extremely disheartening and frustrating when the board decided eight to one to table the policy until the PA DEP takes up the issue. There are no concrete plans for doing this and Allegheny County should not be forced to wait on the state. After learning of the Board of Health's decision, Joe Osborne, GASP's Legal Director said, "the county needs different guidelines than the state because it bears a greater pollution burden." 

## GASPer Air Monitor Program is Back for Another School Year

Are you looking for the perfect tool to teach your students about air quality? Look no further! The GASPer Air Monitor is currently available for use by middle and high school teachers. The monitor measures ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and solar radiation, just to name a few. For more information or to sign up to use the monitor, contact Lee at 412-325-7382 or [lee@gasp-pgh.org](mailto:lee@gasp-pgh.org).

**Pictured at right: Students from Central Catholic High School participating in the GASPer Air Monitor program.**



# That All-Too-Familiar Odor: Hydrogen Sulfide

by Sue Seppi, GASP Program Manager

**H**ydrogen sulfide is a colorless gas with a strong odor of rotten eggs even at low concentrations. In the Allegheny County area, this gas is often associated with coke ovens, although it is also linked with other sources such as natural gas, landfills, paper mills, sewer gas, and manure used in farming.

The recent Allegheny County air toxics study by Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) points out that hydrogen sulfide levels in the Avalon area “do present a potential non-cancer risk.”<sup>1</sup> A graph in the study compared CMU “study-average (1/2005-8/2008) concentrations measured at four base-line sites to national air toxic data. Hydrogen sulfide was only measured at Avalon. The national data was multi-year average concentrations measured at about 150 urban and suburban sites throughout the United States.” The graph showed the 150 national sites hydrogen sulfide average to be in a range close to .001 micrograms per cubic meter, compared to hydrogen sulfide which was close to 10 micrograms per cubic meter at Avalon. This was the largest spread comparison of the thirty-nine air pollutants represented in the graph.


The health implications of low-level exposure to hydrogen sulfide are irritation to the eyes, nose, or throat. It may also cause difficulty in breathing for some asthmatics.<sup>2</sup> Long-term, low-level exposure may result in eye irritation, headache, and fatigue.

The CMU study also points out that, “hydrogen sulfide targets the respiratory system and manganese targets the respiratory and neurological systems. Including these two

pollutants in the non-cancer interactive risk analysis suggested additional potentially important interactions.” “Acrolein/hydrogen sulfide may be important (as well)”.

Pennsylvania, and in turn Allegheny County, have a 24-hour particulate standard of .005 ppm and a one-hour standard of .1 ppm. In 2008, there were 48 exceedances of the 24 hour standard at the Liberty monitor and 3 at the Avalon Monitor with one, 1 hour exceedance at Liberty. In 2009 there have been 19 exceedances at Liberty and 1 exceedance at Avalon. Note that the Clairton Coke Works has been operating at reduced capacity in 2009.


The Air Toxics Subcommittee of the Allegheny County Air Pollution Control Advisory Committee will be evaluating hydrogen sulfide information as it relates to Allegheny County at the next committee meeting which is on Nov. 13 at 1:00 p.m. and is open to the public. If you have any comments or experience with this issue, please contact GASP and plan to come to the meeting.<sup>3</sup>

1. Allen Robinson, Neil Donahue, Cliff Davidson, Peter Adams, Mitch Small, Air Toxics in Allegheny County: Sources, Airborne Concentrations, and Human Exposure, March 9, 2009, p.63. <http://www.gasp-pgh.org>
2. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Tox Faqs, <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts114.html#bookmark05>
3. Check with GASP beforehand in case the meeting is rescheduled Ph. # (412) 325-7382. Meeting location is Conference Room in Building #7 at Allegheny County Health Department, 301 39th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201 (Lawrenceville). 

## Become a Trained Smoke Reader



Learning to read smoke opacity on a smoke machine during “Smoke School”

- ★ Join GASP’s Smoke Reading Team and receive professional training at no cost to you. This is the same training that Allegheny County Air Quality Inspectors receive.
- ★ You will learn how to correctly read the opacity of smoke from a stack in a large industrial facility or the chimney stack next door. This information reflects on the proper operation of the source.
- ★ Reporting problematic emissions quickly to the Allegheny County Health Department alerts inspectors to the problem. The facility will also be alerted to the emission problem.
- ★ Help keep our air clean, increase your knowledge and meet the team—call GASP for more information at (412) 325-7382. 

# News from the Environmental Protection Agency

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## EPA Announces It Will Reconsider National Smog Standards

On September 16, EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced the agency would reconsider the 2008 national smog standards to ensure they are scientifically sound and protective of human health. Smog, which is also known as ground level ozone, has been linked to asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

“This is one of the most important protection measures we can take to safeguard our health and our environment. Smog in the air we breathe can cause difficulty breathing and aggravate asthma, especially in children,” said Jackson. “Reconsidering these standards and ensuring acceptable levels of ground-level ozone could cut health care costs and make our cities healthier, safer places to live, work and play.”

The reconsideration announced today covers both the primary and secondary ozone standards. EPA sets primary air quality standards to protect public health, including the health of sensitive groups, such as children and people with asthma. The secondary standard is set to protect public welfare and the environment, including protection against visibility impairment, damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. The Agency will propose any revisions to the ozone standards by December 2009 and will issue a final decision by August 2010.

EPA will conduct a thorough review of the science that guided the 2008 decision, including more than 1,700 scientific studies and any public comments from that rulemaking process. The Agency will also review the findings of EPA’s independent Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, which recommended stronger smog standards.

EPA will move quickly to implement any new standards that might result from the reconsideration. To reduce the workload for states during the interim period of reconsideration, the agency will propose to stay the 2008 standards for the purpose of attainment and nonattainment area designations. EPA will work with states, local governments and tribes to ensure that air quality is protected during that time.

Ground-level ozone forms when emissions from industrial facilities, power plants, landfills and motor vehicles react in the presence of sunlight. Scientific studies have linked ozone exposure to respiratory health problems ranging from decreased lung function and aggravated asthma to increased emergency room visits, hospital admissions, and even premature death. Seasonal ozone exposure has also been linked to adverse effects on sensitive vegetation, forests and ecosystems.

For more information, see <http://www.epa.gov/ground-levelozone>

## EPA, University of Michigan to Research Health Effects of Roadway Pollution on Children

The EPA has announced a \$1.4 million joint study with the University of Michigan on the health effects of air pollution on children living near the nation’s heavily traveled thoroughfares. The study is funded through EPA’s *Science to Achieve Results* program.

“The knowledge gained from this study will arm local governments with the best available science when planning some of their most important projects, such as road and school design,” said Lek Kadeli, acting assistant administrator for the Office of Research and Development. “This information will help build safer communities for our children.”

Under the cooperative agreement, researchers will study the types of pollutants common near roadways, how people are exposed to them, the extent of exposures, and the types and severity of health effects. More than 45 million people in the U.S. live within 300 feet of a four-lane road, airport, or railroad.

EPA and the University of Michigan will study traffic-associated pollution in Detroit and whether it could lead to more severe asthma attacks in children ages 6 to 14. The study will also explore whether traffic exposure has any effects on the likelihood of respiratory viral infections and will help researchers improve the predictive capabilities of computer models.

The research will be useful for policy makers developing mitigation plans to reduce exposures to air pollution for people living or working near roadways. State highway planners and environmental agencies can use the science to assess local impacts of vehicle emissions and determine the need for and impact of future road projects.

For more information, see: <http://www.epa.gov/ncer/near-roadway>



# Green Eye Opens to Rave Reviews

**G**ASP's Green Eye on Western PA juried photography exhibition opened on September 11 at the Coca Cafe in Lawrenceville to an admiring group. Jurors paul g. wiegman and Linda Benedict-Jones selected 21 outstanding photographs for the show that continues until October 15, 2009.

The following prizes were awarded at the preview party:

**1st Prize:** *Through a Window*, Mark Rawlings.

**2nd Prize:** *Bird on a Wire*, Judith Ruskowski.

**3rd Prize:** *Planting the Next Generation*, Melissa McMasters.

**Honorable Mention:** *The Babies*, Bonnie Lee Dake.

*The Babies* was also voted "**People's Choice**" by the guests at the opening events.

Thank you to all who contributed their time, talents, and money to put on this wonderful event. Special thanks to:

**Our Jurors:** paul g. wiegman and Linda Benedict-Jones

**Our Host:** Coca Cafe (great food!)

**Our Prize Donors:**

Sue Abramson, Pittsburgh Filmmakers

Silver Eye Center for Photography, South Side  
Frame Gallery, 1001 Main Street, Sharpsburg

**Our Patrons:**

Borelli-Edwards Galleries

The Framery

The photos can be viewed and purchased anytime during regular business hours at the Coca Cafe, 3811 Butler Street, Tues-Fri 7-3, Sat 9-3, Sun 10-3, closed Monday. Winning photos are pictured on page 9.



## Three Rivers Bioneers Oct. 16-18, 2009

The national Bioneers Conference is held every fall in California; it is surely at the heart of efforts in this country to restore our earth and ensure a bright future for our children. Founded in 1990, Bioneers promotes "practical environmental solutions and innovative social strategies for restoring Earth's imperiled ecosystems and healing our human communities." The Bioneers believe in a systemic "solve-the-whole-problem" approach. "Taking care of nature means taking care of people, and taking care of people means taking care of nature." They "connect the dots among most areas of human endeavor including environment, health, justice and spirit."

The annual conference held every October has grown so large, and so popular, that twenty cities throughout our country are now holding satellite conferences in tandem with the main conference in California. The Pittsburgh Urban Ecology Collaborative is partnering with Bioneers to bring a 2009 satellite conference to our city this fall. Our local website, [www.3riversbioneers.org](http://www.3riversbioneers.org), has registration forms, directions, and more.

Held at the Pittsburgh Project in the Northside, 3Rivers Bioneers will feature some of our local visionaries, with mornings of workshops and tours. Locally grown and cooked meals will precede the national speakers; an evening of socialization, networking, and fun will follow. We hope this three-day event will build community, and refresh and rejuvenate those doing good work in our bioregion.

Our two keynote speakers are two true Bioneers. **Khari Mosley** is director of Green Economy Initiatives at GTECH and the liaison with the national organization, Green for All. He will be speaking to us regarding green jobs and social justice. **Greg Boulous**, Western Region Director of Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), will be speaking to us about local food/local economy. These two will be joined by over 40 other visionaries that will be running morning workshops on everything from urban school gardens to how to form community benefit agreements.

As this conference is largely organized by volunteers and funded in part by two grants, we are able to offer an inexpensive price for registration, including meals and all activities. We hope you will join us in this event; check out our website at [www.3riversbioneers.org](http://www.3riversbioneers.org) for registration information and ways you can help.

# Green Eye on Western PA Photography Exhibition Winners

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1st Prize: Through a Window, Mark Rawlings.



2nd Prize: Bird on a Wire, Judith Ruszkowski.



3rd Prize: Planting the Next Generation, Melissa McMasters.



Honorable Mention: The Babies, Bonnie Lee Dake.

## The photographers in the juried exhibition are:

Ann Baxa  
Bonnie Lee Dake  
David Eibling  
Joshua Franzos  
Donald Gibbon  
JoAnne Lightner  
Marti Louw  
Melissa McMasters  
George Mendel  
Patrick Onufer  
Mark Panza  
Mark Rawlings  
Mark Roberts  
Judith Ruszkowski  
Lisa Seligman

# Spotlight on a Board Member

Ted Popovich joined the GASP Board in 2009 after earlier serving on the GASP Pollution Patrol Team. He is a native of the area, growing up in the small Beaver County town of Patterson Heights. Ted earned a B.S. in Engineering and subsequently worked in sales and marketing positions in industry, retiring from Corning Inc. in the aftermath of the telecom/dotcom bubble bursts in 2001. Since then, Ted has earned additional degrees and worked as a consultant and teacher -- for R.I.T and its partner schools in Kosovo and Croatia. He returned to the Pittsburgh area to assist with family health matters. Ted has two adult daughters, one who resides in upstate New York and the other in southern California.

When asked about his reasons for becoming a GASP board member, Ted explained it's because he believes that it's incumbent on communities to be aware and to improve on our environment: "GASP is the place to be as we together work for a healthy, sustainable environment." He feels that he's become environmentally wiser just through sheer exposure.

Ted has had a number of experiences growing up that shaped his environmental ethic, which he relates below.

*I unabashedly enjoy physical activity and the outdoors. As a pre-teen, I delivered the Pittsburgh Press on foot during snowy days and by bicycle on better days. My friends and I walked 3-4 miles down the hill to the lake in Brady's Run Park with fishing poles in hand ala Tom Sawyer. As a Boy Scout, I delighted in both summer and winter camping and earned merit badges for camping, cycling and hiking. During my high school years, JFK's President's Council on Physical Fitness influenced our PE programs so that eventually I could climb a rope to the gym rafters, do multiple pull-ups, sit-ups and push-ups, even do jumps over the pommel horse. Fitness was "in".*

*At the same time, up the Ohio River, the sprawling Aliquippa J&L works was near its peak creating employment for 12,000 while causing unknown harm to the local population and the environment. During intermission at the ABC Drive-in movie across the Ohio River in Baden, my friends and I would watch in fascination as the Bessemer converters lit up the night sky followed by molten slag flowing down the river embankment*

*Down the Ohio River in Potter Township were the zinc smelting plant of the St. Joseph Lead Company and the Koppers Company plant "Kobuta" (a combination of Koppers and butadiene, a material used to make synthetic rubber). My family traveled often on SR 18 adjacent to the plants to visit relatives in Washington County. I recall the billowing of noxious vapors into the air on the industrial side of the highway while the opposite side was barren with clumps of stunted*



Ted chats with a delighted passerby at the Ten Thousand Villages Green Fair in April 2009.

*vegetation clinging to the sloping hillside.*

*Down the hill in Beaver Falls was the Armstrong Cork Company plant which produced corkboard from granulated cork. It was adjacent to Reeves Stadium home field for Geneva College and Beaver Falls HS. More often than not, the unpleasant odors from the "cork works" would waft over onto the stadium during the football games that I attended.*

*Friends and relatives developed respiratory ailments and chronic disease. No one "connected the dots" to help us understand. I thought I was being healthy by being physically fit and eating properly but my environmental encounters were unwittingly rebalancing my health scorecard.*

*Later while attending college in Cleveland, Ohio, I used my emerging education skills to better understand a local pollution problem and its consequences... a river capable of catching on fire. As a course project, I developed a paper and presentation that described the multiple fires on the Cuyahoga River and the lack of resources and resolve to improve the situation. Ironically, after my graduation the fire of 1969 was the catalyst that "galvanized clean water and the environment as a public issue." and led to the passage of the federal Clean Water Act of 1972.*

*Post script: Ted has been diagnosed with late onset allergies and mild asthma, likely due to cumulative exposure to particles in the air which cause inflammation to the body. He manages these conditions through remaining active and fit and through balanced nutrition.*



# Tribute to Gerald H. F. Gardner, 1926-2009

by Kate St. John, GASP Board Member

**G**ASP was saddened to learn of the death of Gerald H. F. Gardner in late July.

Gerry was a scientist, teacher, social activist and feminist best known in Pittsburgh for his successful legal challenge of gender discriminatory want ads (decided in his favor by the U.S. Supreme Court) and his participation in a federal lawsuit to end hiring discrimination against women and minorities by the Pittsburgh Police. These two legal challenges changed the lives of working women throughout the United States.

At GASP we also remember Gerry Gardner for his help in defeating the Sun Coke plant proposed for the former LTV site in Hazelwood.

The year was 1998. The Hazelwood coke plant had shut down in February but not until it violated air pollution regulations so badly that EPA sued. Local residents were relieved the plant had closed but shortly thereafter GASP learned that Mayor Murphy was pushing to have a new coke plant built on the same site. If approved quickly enough the plant could use LTV's pollution allowance. The proposed Sun Coke plant would be cleaner per pound of coke produced but was planned to be large enough that it would create the same amount of pollution as the old plant.

Nearby residents were outraged. GASP held a public meeting at the JCC in Aug 1998 and out of it grew Citizens Helping Our Community (CHOC), an activist group of local residents. Gerry Gardner and his wife Joann Evansgardner were founding members.

Gerry's scientific knowledge and activist experience were indispensable in the coke plant fight. Unlike most of us, Gerry understood the science behind Sun Coke's claims, knew how to look for weaknesses and where to find answers. He wrote an open letter explaining that dry quenching was the Best Available Control Technology and the plant must therefore use it. When Sun Coke balked at the cost, Gerry explained that the process would pay for itself in ten years through additional co-generation revenue.

In November Sun Coke delivered their first set of air quality models to the Allegheny County Health Department. Gerry looked closely at the models and found problems for Sun Coke that were hard to refute. The model used simple terrain, ignored the low wind speed typical for the site and did not calculate for the smokestack's elevation in the meteorological transition zone - the top edge of the hills.

Worst of all, the modeling assumed Hazelwood was a rural setting. When Gerry told Sun Coke they must use an urban model their answer was, "There is no model for an urban setting" to which Gerry replied, "That's because you shouldn't build a coke plant in a city."

Gerry Gardner was a great man in so many ways. He worked for Gulf Research, taught at the University of Houston and Rice Univ. and improved the lives of women and minorities across the U.S. through his social activism. We are grateful that he used his considerable talents to help keep the air clean in Pittsburgh. We will miss him.



*Gerald Gardner's obituary in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette is at: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09208/986677-122.stm>*



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# GASP's 40 Environmental Heroes to be Recognized on October 23



The following individuals and organizations were selected as "environmental heroes" by a panel of judges for the good work they have done in the Pittsburgh area. See front page for event information.

- |  |                      |                    |                   |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Patty Ameno  | Mike Gable           | Lydia Konecky      | Mike Schiller     |
| Peter Bartholomew  | Ann Gerace           | Mary Kostalos      | John Schombert    |
| Elisa Beck   | Caren Glotfelty      | Robert Levin       | Lisa Schroeder    |
| Bike Pittsburgh  | Jayne Graham         | Michelle Madoff    | Joy Smallwood     |
| Bernard Bloom  | Lisa Graves-Marcucci | Bob Michel         | Stuart Strickland |
| Meg Cheever  | Samuel Harper        | Jake Milofsky      | Chuck Tague       |
| Ronald Chleboski   | Barbara Hicks        | Bill Moul          | Conrad Volz       |
| Devra Davis  | Max Hurwitz          | Bill Peduto        | Ruth Weir         |
| Patricia DeMarco   | Martha Isler         | Richard Piacentini | Peter Wray        |
| Environmental Practices Committee<br>of Carnegie Mellon University | Marie Kocoshis       | Bill Roenigk       | Walter Zadan      |



## Congratulations to Rachel

Congratulations to our very own Rachel Filippini, GASP's Executive Director, for being selected as one of Pittsburgh's "40 Under 40" Award winners, co-presented by Pittsburgh Magazine and PUMP. "40 Under 40" recognizes 40 talented individuals under the age of 40 who are making a positive impact on the region's development. Rachel will be honored for this well-deserved award at the 2009 event on Friday, November 6 at the August Wilson Center. For more information or tickets: <http://www.40under40pittsburgh.org/winners.htm>

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