



Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Summer 2004

www.gasp-pgh.org

Breathing Easier in the 'Burgh: GASP Settlement Agreement

by Suzanne Seppi, GASP Project Manager

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Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is a non-profit 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.

As Hotline readers may recall, GASP and its legal team had been in negotiations with Reliant Resources, Inc. and its wholly owned subsidiary Orion Power MidWest L.P. (OPMW) concerning excessive particulate emissions at its Cheswick Power Station. We are happy to report that a settlement has been reached and OPMW and GASP expect the precipitator at the power plant to soon be functioning more efficiently.

Background

The Cheswick Power Station, located in Springdale, PA, began commercial operation in 1970. It is a coal-fired power plant producing (on average) 580 MW (net) per hour of power and is the only coal-fired power plant located in Allegheny County coming under the air quality regulations of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). It is operated by OPMW, which was acquired in February 2002 as a result of Reliant Resources Inc.'s acquisition of Orion Power Holdings, Inc.

The Cheswick Power Plant continues to use the original precipitator installed in 1970. As required in federal regulations, the plant has a Continuous Opacity

Monitor (COM) installed in the emission stack to continuously read the particulate emissions. The COM readings detailing any opacity exceedances of the Allegheny County standards are reported quarterly to ACHD. The Allegheny County opacity standard requires that there be no more than three minutes collectively of smoke opacity equal to or greater than 20% in any hour and no opacity at any time equal to or greater than 60%.

The Problem

In reviewing the COM opacity quarterly reports for the last three years, it became apparent to GASP that there were numerous exceedances of opacity standards as read by the COM at the Cheswick Power Plant. Further GASP research of similarly operated plants in Pennsylvania determined that the Cheswick Station was experiencing opacity exceedances at a rate about four times greater than at other similar plants.

PHOTO: MAREM LEPVA COOKE



The Cheswick Power Station is reducing its pollution output as a result of GASP legal actions.

Despite this poor performance, there was no enforcement action taken. In Allegheny County, the method used to determine

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Winds of Change Blow Through GASP

by Jonathan Nadle, GASP President

There have been a number of changes occurring at GASP that you should know about. Some are of our own making and others the result of circumstance.

Our long-term Executive Director, Suzanne Seppi, stepped down this spring to attend to family matters. Over the past 6 years Sue has provided invaluable leadership to the cause of a healthier, cleaner environment in the Pittsburgh region. She has ably represented GASP and initiated important campaigns. Although Sue is too modest to say so, it's fair to say that many of GASP's recent successes are largely due to her hard work. It's been my pleasure to work with and know her. Fortunately for GASP, Sue's dedication is not easily diverted, and she has agreed to continue serving part-time as our Project Manager.

At our May board meeting, Sue's Executive Assistant and manager of the GASPer air monitor program, Rachel Filippini, was unanimously promoted by the Board to be our new Executive Director. She has worked closely with Sue and has proven herself as a dedicated environmentalist in her own right. The board feels confident in her ability to capably lead GASP into the future.

As GASP has taken on more ambitious projects, it has become evident that we needed more staff. Thanks to increased membership and support from the Heinz Endowments, we were able to hire Elizabeth Rosemeyer as our Policy and Outreach Coordinator. She has a background in community and nonprofit work and also has a law degree. Elizabeth will work closely with Rachel and the board, researching policy matters and regulations and helping

GASP increase its presence in the community.

Our Development Director, Meliza Jackson, has been with us part-time for a year and a half now, but some of you may not have met her yet. Please take the time to talk to her if you do. She helps with GASP events, grant writing, and touching base with our supporters.

We also are fortunate to have a new intern, Michael Roth, helping our staff. Mike hails from Oberlin College and has a background in economics and the environment. He will assist with our diesel pollution monitoring projects. We are looking to hire an administrative assistant soon as well. Please help us welcome and support our new staff and volunteers. You can read more about them and the GASP Board on our website at www.gasp-pgh.org.

Speaking of our website, GASP board member, *Hotline* Editor, and webmistress Marla Ferency has been busy updating its content. She also started using new software that will allow us to improve newsletter production values, starting with this issue. Among other changes, *Hotline* sports a new masthead and the photos are of higher quality.

The final change of note is that, this fall, GASP will be moving out of its long-term office space in the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Liberty.

We've been fortunate to have use of that donated office space for many years, but the church has need of it now. We are

most grateful to the church for their support, but are looking forward to renting a more spacious office that will more comfortably accommodate our staff. ☺



PHOTO: MARLA FERENCY

Rachel Filippini (left), Elizabeth Rosemeyer (right)

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 Western 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.

Diesel Anti-Idling Ordinance Chugging Along

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

GASP continues to stay heavily involved in the advancement of the diesel anti-idling ordinance. Since January of this year, several important events have happened.

March 3, 2004

At the Allegheny County Board of Health meeting, Roger Westman, Air Quality Program Director, presented the latest version of the school bus idling regulation, and requested that it be made available for public comment. The Board of Health approved a public hearing.

April 13, 2004

The Allegheny County Health Department held a public hearing to receive comments regarding a proposed modification of the Air Pollution Control Regulations (Article XXI) to include the school bus idling regulation, created to prevent unnecessary school bus idling. GASP gave comments at this public hearing and encouraged interested citizens to comment as well. To read about some of the specific items in the regulation GASP wanted to see strengthened, go to www.gasp-pgh.org/action/idling-041304hearing.html

May 5, 2004

The Board of Health approved the School Bus Idling Regulation. Next, it must go to County Council for

approval before it can be enforced. To view the final version of this regulation visit our website: www.gasp-pgh.org.

We are hopeful that County Council will pass the new legislation in plenty of time for it to start being enforced for the upcoming school year. As you may remember, the school bus idling regulation is just one piece of the original anti-idling ordinance that was passed late last summer by Allegheny County Council. The Health Department must still craft regulations for many other kinds of heavy-duty diesel vehicles, including trucks, other buses (including PAT buses), and trains. We have been reassured by Health Department Director Dr. Bruce Dixon that the Board of Health will direct the Air Quality Division's Advisory Committee to start working on another piece of the original ordinance at their July meeting. GASP will, of course, remain very active on this issue, continuing to play a role in the creation of future anti-idling regulations.

In addition to keeping our readers updated on the anti-idling regulation, we also want to know your concerns about idling vehicles. Is there a particular street corner where diesel vehicles always idle in your neighborhood? Contact GASP with your air quality concerns at (412) 441-6650 or gasp@gasp-pgh.org. 

Other Diesel News

In May 2004 the EPA announced a new off-road diesel rule that would significantly reduce emissions from tractors, bulldozers, locomotives, barges and other off-road vehicles propelled by diesel fuel. Although these vehicles spew more soot than the nation's entire fleet of cars, trucks and buses, off-highway diesel engines have not faced the same regulatory scrutiny that highway diesel vehicles have. For example, heavy diesel equipment was not required to meet any emissions standards until 1996, a full three decades after the first regulations for highway diesel trucks and buses. On average, off-highway engines contribute about 45% of the particulate matter, and one-quarter of the smog-forming nitrogen oxides from all mobile sources. In Allegheny County, off-highway diesel contributes roughly 56% of PM10.¹ It is predicted that once the current fleet of diesel-powered engines is retired, the level of nitrogen oxides in the air will be reduced by 738,000 tons annually and the level of soot by 129,000 tons.

The new regulations, which will require refineries to produce cleaner-burning diesel fuel and engine makers to cut U.S. diesel emissions by more than 90%, could prevent as many as 12,000 premature deaths and 15,000 heart attacks each year, according to health experts. Another study by air pollution officials and regulators estimates that stronger regulations would save the nation \$67 billion annually through avoided incidences of hospitalization, lost work days, premature death and other health effects.

¹ Union of Concerned Scientists. Comparison for All Diesel Equipment in Pennsylvania
http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_vehicles/trucks_and_buses/page.cfm?pageID=1212

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opacity violations is that a trained inspector visually reads the opacity (smoke) as it leaves the stack. Under this sporadic methodology, clearly not usable at night, there had never been any observed (and enforceable) visible emissions violations at the Cheswick Power Plant.

Action Plan

GASP believed that, as the ACHD air quality regulations required the COM to be calibrated and functioning properly, there was no reason not to rely on the accuracy of this monitor to determine compliance with opacity regulations, in addition to the human smoke reader observations. Therefore, in April 2003 GASP issued a "60 Day Notice of Intent To Sue" to appropriate individuals at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Allegheny County Health Department, Bureau of Air Quality, and a copy was sent to OPMW/Cheswick Power Plant.

At the conclusion of the 60 Day Notice period, none of the federal, state, or local agencies had moved to initiate their own action relevant to this issue. GASP, therefore, prepared and sent to OPMW a draft complaint seeking civil penalties and injunctive relief, in order to get their comments and reaction before actually filing a legal suit. At this point, OPMW initiated a meeting with GASP to discuss the complaint. Shortly thereafter, OPMW was willing to negotiate a settlement of the GASP complaint.

Essentials of the Settlement Agreement

1. OPMW agreed to follow a detailed schedule of repair and improvement on the Cheswick electrostatic precipitator to be completed no later than three years from the date of the agreement.
2. OPMW agreed to stipulated penalties for failure to follow this schedule.
3. An Advisory Committee was created by GASP to monitor OPMW compliance with the schedule and to meet periodically with OPMW.
4. OPMW is funding a three-year Environmental Education Program(s) developed and administered by GASP.
5. GASP agreed not to sue OPMW with respect to opacity violations for the period of the agreement as long as OPMW is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.
6. Ninety days after the date for final completion of all actions specified in the Schedule for Improvement or December 31, 2005, whichever is earlier, if Cheswick Power Plant continues to experience significant opacity exceedances, GASP shall be free to initiate any appropriate legal actions based on opacity exceedances which occur thereafter.

7. GASP has the right to terminate the agreement each year just prior to the anniversary date of February 18, 2004, based on a lack of steady progress in reductions of opacity exceedances, as compared to the record of other best performing coal-fired power plants (with respect to opacity exceedances) in Pennsylvania operated by Reliant. Reliant has an interest in about 25 power plants in Pennsylvania. Some of these coal-fired plants have better records than the Cheswick Power Plant with respect to opacity violations.
8. The Cheswick Power Plant will follow a regular plan of precipitator maintenance as defined in the agreement. This will be monitored by the Advisory Committee.
9. The agreement is intended to deal only with opacity readings and visible emissions from the Cheswick Power Plant. It is not intended to govern the actions of either party with respect to other types of emissions or facilities.



PHOTO: MAREN LENTIA COOKE

Advisory Committee members tour the Cheswick Power Station with plant employees

Recent Progress

GASP has developed its Advisory Committee comprised engineers from the GASP Board and membership, a physicist, GASP staff and a Cheswick resident. The committee and OPMW held its first meeting on May 4, 2004, which included a tour of the Cheswick Plant. The Cheswick Power Plant was planning a May 2004 shutdown for repair work, during which OPMW planned to do 60% to 70% of the precipitator repairs. Repairs are based on consultant recommendations per a 1/12 scale operating model of the Cheswick electrostatic precipitator that had been built to model emissions and help determine new construction/replacement actions.

The very night after the May 4 GASP-OPMW meeting, there was an unexpected fire at the power station and the

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GASP in Action: Speaking Out Against Mercury Pollution



PHOTO: MAREN LETIA COOKE



PHOTO: TIANA DISCHUNGER

GASP Executive Director Rachel Filippini (above) spoke at a press conference at Point State Park on June 1st regarding mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants and the ongoing attempts by the Bush Administration to roll back some requirements of the Clean Air Act (see the previous issue of *Hotline*). Behind Rachel are staff from PennEnvironment, which organized the press conference, and a largemouth bass the size of a small school bus. The inflatable fish helped drive home the connection between coal-fired power plants and human health; fish consumption is the primary way that humans are affected by mercury pollution.

GASPer Maren Cooke (at left, flanked by her daughters Innes and Kielan) also spoke at this event, putting the issue in historical context and discussing the many ramifications of mercury pollution on all humans, especially on the very young.

GASP Introduces the Public to “Green” Cars

by Marla Ferrency, GASP Board Member

It may have been the largest gathering of hybrid electric vehicles in western Pennsylvania! GASP held its Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener event in May at Construction Junction with a total of 14 Honda Civic Hybrids, Honda Insights and Toyota Priuses. GASP introduced the public to hybrid electric vehicles through test drives, hybrid cars on display, and several fact sheets and information about the environmental and financial advantages of purchasing a new hybrid car.

Despite a rainy afternoon, the event attracted an estimated 175 people, 60 of whom took advantage of free test drives in cars from Rohrich Toyota and McKean Honda. During the four-hour event, the two test-driving vehicles were in constant demand. Some of the participants were in the market for a hybrid; many of them just wanted to see what it was like to drive one (it's remarkably similar to a conventional car).

GASP also arranged for a dozen local hybrid car owners to bring their cars and their first-hand knowledge



PHOTO: MARLA FERRENCY

The Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener event featured many hybrid cars owned by Pittsburghers

about owning this new technology. The display of cars with their hoods open and doors ajar attracted a host of questions from attendees and started many conversations and a few debates. Hybrid car owners turned out to be the ideal ambassadors for the cars, with ownership experience ranging from two weeks to more than three years.

With Brad Yoder providing musical entertainment, attendees had a chance to meet and socialize with GASP staff, event volunteers, hybrid car owners and other attendees. Bike Pittsburgh (a cycling safety, advocacy, and awareness organization) was on hand as well, with one of Pittsburgh's brand new bike racks and information about Bike to Work Week. There was also an opportunity to explore Construction Junction's warehouse of salvaged and recycled construction and home improvement materials.

With four new hybrid vehicles scheduled to be released in the coming year, GASP hopes to have an expanded event next year. If you are interested in planning or participating in such an event (especially if you are a hybrid car owner), please let GASP know! Call (412) 441-6650 or email gasp@gasp-pgh.org.

Links to all of our event partners can be found on the GASP website, along with an event review published in the Post-Gazette entitled “Hybrid vehicles hoping to stir desires of motorists: Seeing another kind of green”:

<http://www.gasp-pgh.org/action/drivecleaner2004-2.html>



PHOTO: MAREN LEVIA COOKE

Prius owner Joy Sabl (right) shows her car to a Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener attendee

Presentation of Environmental Advocacy Award at 2004 GASPer Air Congress

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

This past spring, GASP held its annual GASPer Air Congress at Carnegie Mellon University. The event drew several schools whose students prepared many exciting presentations. Groups of students from Woodland Hills High School, Ingomar Middle School and East Allegheny High School presented a wide array of investigations, ranging from monitoring the carbon dioxide levels in their chorus and band rooms to evaluating air pollutants in mobile classrooms as compared to interior rooms.

The student presentations were followed by a discussion of fine particulates in Pittsburgh by Cliff Davidson, Director of Carnegie Mellon University's Environmental Institute. Students spent the afternoon touring CMU's Intelligent Workplace, where they learned about the latest green building technologies to make the workplace both healthier for employees and more sustainable.

A new addition to this year's Air Congress was the presentation of the first annual William W. Mullins Environmental Advocacy Award. The award was funded by GASP's William W. Mullins Fund, an account established by donations from the family, friends

and colleagues of the late Bill Mullins, a longtime GASP board member. The recipient of this year's award is Melissa Meighan, a senior at East Allegheny High School. Melissa received the \$300 award and certificate for her project,

which focused on seasonal variations in air quality. Melissa contrasted air quality readings taken by the GASPer Air Monitor in the summer as compared to the winter at several playgrounds around the county. Melissa's project also discussed the federal administration's current backsliding on environmental and, specifically, air quality regulations.

Next year's Mullins Environmental Advocacy Award will be open to both middle school and high school students as well as to student environmental/science clubs. To receive more information and an application, contact the GASP office.

Interested teachers can also contact GASP to sign up to use the GASPer Air Monitor during the coming school year, the ninth year of the program.

GASP office phone: (412) 441-6650, GASP e-mail: gasp@gasp-pgh.org 



PHOTO: RACHEL FILIPPINI

Melissa Meighan received the first William W. Mullins Environmental Advocacy Award from GASP

GASP Job Opening

During the next two months, GASP will be starting the hiring process for a part-time Administrative Assistant. This position will start in the fall.

The GASP Administrative Assistant will independently manage a wide variety of administrative tasks to keep the office organized and efficient. Duties will include: providing administrative support to staff, maintaining GASP mailing list and database, paying bills, preparing financial reports, preparing bulk mail, assisting in event planning, maintaining office supplies, and other duties as needed.

Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to:

GASP
P.O. Box 5165
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
E-mail: gasp@gasp-pgh.org

Hays Woods Update

by Fran Harkins, GASP Board Member

Since publicly proposed on May 15, 2003 at a meeting of the Pittsburgh Planning Commission, plans to strip-mine a 635-acre parcel of woodlands on the southern bank of the Monongahela has brought opposition from GASP, the Sierra Club, Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, Clean Water Action, the Baldwin Citizens Alliance and Ground Zero Action Network.

Recently, artists Tom and Connie Merriman and Laurie Palmer, working under the auspices of the Monongahela Conference on Post-Industrial Public Spaces, contributed artwork, visuals and a June 25, 2004 presentation held at Homestead's ArtSpace. Connie and Tom's aim is to use graphic representations to stir public dialogue. Palmer's scale model of the site reveals the leveling and lowering of the land after mining; their "Burma Shave" signposts along Rte. 837 inform citizens of the value of the verdant woodland atop the nearby cliff, "Breathe Air Cleaned by Hays Woods."



PHOTO: TOM MERRIMAN

This waterfall is in jeopardy due to a proposed development in Hays Woods

Public involvement and opposition are indeed **key** to exposing the damage this project will generate.

At the beginning of summer 2004, many of the permits are still in play, and other key submissions have not been made by the Pittsburgh Development Group II (PDG), Charles Betters' company, which proposes a racetrack/slots/hotel/retail/residential complex atop the heights of South Hills.

Traffic Study

Promised to the City of Pittsburgh by March 2004, PDG has not yet submitted a study. Given the rush-hour gridlock of Rt. 837 between Becks Run and Mifflin

Roads, and the narrow, curving nature of Glass Run and Streets Run Road, crafting a rationale for easy access to this site must be a daunting task.

Surface Mining Permit

Submitted June 25, 2003, this permit continues to be under the study of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In September 2003 and February 2004, the DEP issued deficiency letters which requested PDG to provide additional information, make corrections and/or modify their plans. The DEP is now drafting a third deficiencies letter as its engineers have serious concerns both over "inadequate responses" and "serious" issues such as stormwater.

Air Quality Permit

The proposed crushing and grinding of coal and rock triggered the need for an air quality permit submitted to the Allegheny County Health Department. The public comment period has passed; the permit is pending.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)

Under the Clean Water Act, the ACOE has jurisdiction over stream and wetland fills. Potentially, about one mile of streams may be filled by overburden. PDG has not yet submitted a formal application to the ACOE. Such a request will trigger a public hearing and a public comment period—another opportunity for citizen engagement.

Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission

PDG applied for a coveted racetrack license early in 2003. Public hearings before the state racing commission will provide yet another important opportunity for the public to voice their concerns. Since slots were just legalized in PA, the state will form a Gambling Commission that will determine

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Four New Board Members Join ACHD

by Fran Harkins, GASP Board Member

After a somewhat contentious winter characterized by turf battles between the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and the Allegheny County Council, four new members join five incumbents to constitute the nine member ACHD board.

The membership process begins with nomination by County Chief Executive Dan Onorato; County Council members must then confirm the nominees.

Serving staggered four-year terms, members are responsible for formulating rules and regulations for the prevention of disease, the prevention and removal of conditions which constitute a menace to health, and the promotion and preservation of public health.

As the health and welfare of County residents depend on their decisions, the members' training and civic outreach become important to GASP members concerned with Board members' willingness to approve air quality regulations which safeguard and protect public health. Unfortunately, no biographical information is currently available on the ACHD website; merely a listing of names.

New members include Reverend Ricky Burgess, Ann Frances, Jan Rea, and Dr. Frank Santucci.

Pastor of the Nazarene Baptist Church in Pittsburgh since 1984, **Rev. Burgess** works at the Community College of Allegheny County, teaching undergrads in the Music, Speech & Theatre Department, and coordinating grant-funded projects involving youth training and inmate education.

Ann Francis is an RN who provides care for hospice patients dealing with terminal illness at the Heartland & Hope Hospice in Pittsburgh. Ms. Francis has also worked as an ICU nurse at Passavant Hospital.

Since 2000, County Councilwoman **Jan Rea** has represented the 2nd district located in the North Hills. She chairs the Standing Committee on Government Relations. Ms. Rea also serves on the boards of both the Boys & Girls

Clubs of Western PA and the Homeless Children & Family Emergency Fund. Additionally, she is a Republican State Committeewoman.

Dr. Frank Santucci is board certified in Internal Medicine and has worked as a physician since 1983. He currently practices medicine with UPMC.

Continuing board members include Doctors Titchworth, Turzai, Chaudhary, Harrison and Paul King.

Board of Health Chair, **Dr. Roy Titchworth**, is semi-retired. Formerly, he was Chief of Medicine at Central Medical Pavilion and President of the former South Side Hospital.

Board of Health Vice-Chair, **Dr. Lidia Turzai**, practices pediatrics with the Pittsburgh Pediatric Associates and teaches at Temple & Pitt Medical Schools. Dr. Turzai is on the Highmark Pediatric Advisory Panel and the boards of the Allegheny County Respite Care Coalition and the Children's Museum.

Dr. Safdar Chaudhary serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Pitt and is a staff psychiatrist at Torrance State Hospital. Formerly, he chaired the psychiatry medical staff at St. Francis Medical Center.

Dr. Lee Harrison is an Associate Professor in Epidemiology at Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health. He heads the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Research Unit and directs the Public Health Infectious Diseases Laboratory.

Paul M. King is Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Duquesne University. He is Chairman of the Board of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and past President of the Air and Waste Management Committee. Awarded a law degree from Pitt, Mr. King also serves as an adjunct professor of environmental law at Pitt.

My thanks go to John Mascio, Chief Clerk of Allegheny County Council, and to David Zazac of ACHD for gathering information for this article. ☺

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which track and non-track locations receive licenses to allow slots machines. Betters has indicated in recent press articles that he would pursue a gambling license with or without a racetrack. Churchill Downs, the managing partner for Betters' proposed track, indicated that it would pull out of the deal if the site were not to receive a racetrack license. Either way, the outcome could significantly alter the proposed development, thus requiring major revisions of the city and state applications.

Public involvement and opposition are indeed key to exposing the damage this project will generate. Members interested in keeping current can subscribe to a coalition listserv: Save Hays from Being Razed:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/savehaysfrombeingrazed>

Readers may also get more information by visiting the GASP website at <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/action/hays.html> which has over two dozen articles on the subject. You can also contact Heather Sage at PennFuture at (412) 258-6681 or sage@pennfuture.org. ☺

Spotlight on a Board Member

It would be shorter to list what Marla Ferency *doesn't* do for GASP than to list what she *does* do. As the chair of the Communications Committee, she produces the Hotline, website, and e-mail list. She also serves on various event committees and is helping the staff search for new office space. Marla has been a board member for five years. She'd like to encourage other GASP members to consider serving on the board, and points out that "it doesn't require in-depth knowledge of air quality issues, but rather a dedication to the issues we work on."

Marla has many interests in addition to volunteering with GASP. She enjoys quilting, joining her extended family in a five-year-old tradition of creating a warm welcome for newborn family mem-



PHOTO: ALAN FERENCY

bers. They've recently finished a colorful quilt for the fourth new arrival. Marla has also been taking basket-making classes with a local basketry artist for the past year and a half.

A Pittsburgh native, Marla shares her home with her husband, her one-

year-old daughter and one four-legged family member, a Labrador Retriever mix named Robin.

Marla earned a BA in Environmental Studies at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. She enjoys working in the non-profit sector as an environmental advocate. Her first post-college job was as GASP's Office Manager and only employee at that time. These days, she serves on the board of the EnviroLink Network, which has been described as the world's largest online environmental information clearinghouse.

Marla has spearheaded GASP's role in educating the public about hybrid vehicles. Four years ago, hearing that hybrids would be going on the market, she researched the available options. Her family bought a 2000 Honda Insight "more for environmental reasons than to save money on gas," but she's happy to also promote the economical aspects of owning a hybrid. Now used mainly for daily commuting, the Insight has taken her family on 500-mile highway trips without refueling and has been comfortable transportation to destinations as far away as New England. The Ferencys have averaged 58 miles per gallon since they bought the car. It should come as no surprise, then, that Marla took on the task of organizing hybrid owners to appear at GASP's recent "Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener" event (see page 6). 🚲

Haiku: Nature-based Poetry

by Michael Kaizar, GASP Board Member

Haiku is an ancient form of poetry that originated in Japan. It follows a simple set of rules; however, it can be quite challenging and interesting. Contrary to what every grade school student is taught, haiku does not need to follow a 5-7-5 syllable structure. This concept was borrowed from the structure for haiku written in Japanese. As English and Japanese are not equivalent, it is not possible to translate this rule to the English language. There are other basic concepts that are important.

A haiku is intended to convey a feeling or experience in a clear and direct way, often taking the reader out of the present surroundings. Haiku is always very short, rarely exceeding 17 syllables, usually on three lines. The best haiku has an element of surprise and can be interpreted in more than one way. Finally, each haiku should include some element of nature or the season. Three unpublished haiku that I have penned follow.

Rusting steel mills
Forgotten
Except by Papa's lungs

Red blood on the snow
Broken sled made the tree
Easy to find

Homemade casket
Frozen grave dug by neighbors
Remembering him

Write a haiku or another environmentally themed poem for publication in the Hotline! Send it to gasp@gasp-pgh.org. 🚲

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plant was taken off line. The station remained off line through July 2, and scheduled precipitator repair work as well as other plant repairs were completed. GASP was given a tour on June 8 of the actual precipitator (see pictures) after the plant had been shut down. The Advisory Committee noted, among other items, the repair of porous plating where sections were missing, and the addition of new baffles in a redesign to better direct emission flow according to the consultants recommendations from the model observations.

OPMW's and GASP's expectations and hopes are that these improvements will indeed reduce the opacity exceedances at the Cheswick Power Plant. The GASP Advisory Committee will observe the progress closely, and GASP will take



Advisory Committee member and GASP Project Manager Sue Seppi (left) and Cheswick Plant Manager Keith Bastian (right) looking into one of the containers where fly ash is collected

appropriate action should expected improvements fail to appear.

GASP has developed a plan for use of the environmental education funds. So far, that plan includes using a portion of the funds for educating local and state legislators and the community about diesel exhaust, anti-idling, and other air quality/environmental issues. GASP will also use funds to educate people about the benefits of cleaner, more fuel efficient transportation. For example, note the "Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener" event held recently featuring hybrid vehicles (see page 6).

GASP is presently working with the ACHD Air Quality Program, Air Pollution Control Advisory Committee and its subcommittees to include COMs in the county's opacity regulations. 

Recycling Alert! GASP's Moving Wish List

The GASP office has been located in the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Liberty for almost its entire existence of 35 years. The Eastminster Church has been very good to GASP over the years, offering us space at no charge. However, the church and GASP have been growing over the past year, and we have found that a new, bigger office space is needed for our operations. The location and our new address will be announced later this summer. In the meantime, we have identified some equipment needs for our new office. If you are able to donate any of the following items to GASP, please call our office at (412) 441-6650 or e-mail gasp@gasp-pgh.org. It's a **great way to recycle that unused furniture** and support a non-profit organization at the same time. Thank you in advance!

- ▶ Desks
- ▶ 12-15 folding chairs
- ▶ 8-ft-long and shorter tables
- ▶ Filing cabinets
- ▶ Bookshelves
- ▶ Cubicle separators
- ▶ Coat rack

There is also an ongoing need for office supplies. Our general wish list is posted on our website: <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/news/wishlist.html>

Join GASP Today!

- \$35 Grassroots Supporters (\$15 low income/student rate)
- \$60 Grassroots Contributors
- \$100 Grassroots Patrons
- \$250 Clean Air Defenders
- \$500 Clean Air Protectors
- \$___ Other

Call GASP at (412) 441-6650 to learn about automatic monthly giving, deducted directly from your checking account or charged to your credit card. An easy, hassle-free way to support GASP all year round!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Check Visa Mastercard American Express

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Amount \$ _____

Signature _____

All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The official registration and financial information of GASP may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Save the Date! Saturday, October 16

GASP Annual Fall Dinner and Benefit

Featuring:

- ▶ A panel of experts discussing the topic "Is Hydrogen in Our Energy Future?"
- ▶ Dinner and socializing with other GASP members
- ▶ A special celebration of GASP's 35th Birthday!

It's Who You Know That Counts!

Do you have an employer, relative or acquaintance that we could ask to be a business sponsor of GASP's upcoming 35th anniversary dinner? A sponsor makes a mostly tax-deductible donation, typically of \$500 or more. The business receives written recognition as a friend of the environment, and is encouraged to send a representative to the dinner to be introduced as GASP's benefactor. This underwriting is of great importance to us. Please call Meliza at (412) 441-6650 with suggestions. You can be as uninvolved (or as involved) in making the sponsorship approach as you would like to be.

A Call For Artists

In connection with GASP's 35th anniversary dinner, we are calling for **artists, craftspersons, authors and musicians** to contribute an item for our Silent Auction benefit. Please consider helping GASP by letting us feature a painting, photograph, CD, stitchery, pottery piece, or other inspired work in this fundraiser. The work can be something you have created or have acquired. For more information or to make a tax-deductible art donation, please call Meliza at (412) 441-6650.



Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc.
P.O. Box 5165
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

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