



# Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2004

35th Anniversary Issue

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

## GASP Celebrates 35 Years!

by Marla Ferrency, Hotline Editor

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As GASP celebrates 35 years this fall, we highlight some special memories and historic events in this commemorative issue of the Hotline.

On October 20, 1969, Michelle Madoff organized a meeting in her house of some 50 people concerned about cleaning up Pittsburgh's air. At the end of that meeting, the organization had a name, a mission, a president and 43 members. Thirty-five years later, GASP's first president, Michelle Madoff, and other early GASP members will join GASP again at our anniversary event to celebrate our long history and our many victories for clean air. Read more about Michelle and the founding of GASP on page 2.

We invite all of our members and friends to join us on October 16, 2004 as we remember the past and take a look into the future. The evening's topic, "Is Hydrogen in Our Energy Future?", will feature a panel of experts discussing the pros and cons of using hydrogen as an energy source. Following the panel discussion will be a dessert and wine reception, silent auction, and multimedia display of GASP's history, including the showing of the early GASP film "I Belong Here." More details about the event are on pages 6-7.

The history of local and federal air quality legislation, from the 1970s up until today, and GASP's role in it, is featured in the article on page 3 along with the accompanying list of GASP's key achievements throughout the years on page 4.

Those among us who were around during GASP's early days will recall Dirty Gertie (the Poor Polluted Birdie), a mascot who helped raise funds through the sale of bird-shaped cookies. She is being spotlighted again for the October benefit event! Award-winning baker and GASP fundraiser Jeannette Widom is featured in the article on page 5.

Since the election is right around the corner, we are publishing a candidate forum for the office of Pennsylvania U.S. Senator on page 8. Other legislative news is discussed in the article on the U.S. Patriot Act II on page 9.

This year a lot of changes are happening for GASP, as the summer issue of the Hotline detailed. Not only do we have some new staff members, we are also moving to a new office for the first time since our founding. We are looking forward to inviting you to an open house early next year in our new home, but first we need some volunteers and donations to help with the move in early December. See back cover for our office wish list. Please contact Rachel Filippini at (412) 441-6650 if you can offer time or office equipment.

GASP thanks all of our members, past and present, for enabling us to do our work for clean air for these past 35 years. We couldn't have done it without you! If you're not a member, please consider supporting us now so that we can continue to work for the health of the environment and all of southwestern Pennsylvania's citizens. Join using the form on page 11.

Hope to see you on October 16! 🚲

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.

# Spotlight on GASP Founder: Michelle Madoff

by Walter Goldberg, GASP Board Member

On October 16, 2004, GASP holds two celebrations: one is the 35th year of our existence; the other is the return visit of GASP's founder, Michelle Madoff.

If there any fools around who think that when you've seen one environmentalist, you've seen them all, behold Michelle! Gathering like-minded friends in her home in 1969, Michelle lit the match that blazed up into a war on Pittsburgh's worst polluters.

Mind you, this was before Earth Day 1970; it was before there was an EPA. It was a time when big-time polluting corporations could successfully threaten to take their plants to another state where environmental regulations were ineffective or, even better, non-existent.

But back to Michelle. When that small crowd left her living room at the end of that October evening in 1969, we were convinced that ordinary citizens, if mad enough, could take on the big corporations who were using our sky as a dumping ground.

What was Michelle's trick? For one thing there waschutzpah, one of her most effective weapons. Then there was the recognition that ignoramuses have no place in this pollution fight. Our knowledge about what pollution control measures could work and what could not, had to match that of the corporate engineers and lawyers whom we would be facing in hearing after hearing.

From the very beginning it was apparent (or is the word "clear"?) that the fight for cleaner air was going to take a lot of our time: time for learning the ropes of pollution control, time for preparing testimony, and time for generating

publicity in print, on the radio and TV. If GASP members thought there was a cleaner way to make steel, coke, and electric power, we had to come up with the better way ourselves. Getting this knowledge wasn't easy, because those who held it were on the payroll of the offending corporation. Of course, there were outside consultants who knew a lot, but you can imagine where their allegiances lay. Our salvation was often found in academia, including graduate students, engineering professors, and lawyers. Sometimes allies were found in the regulators themselves. The help of the United Steel Workers of America was crucial, as well.

Finally, there were the courts, always a last resort. Some lawyers took cases for GASP on a contingency basis; others charged nothing at all. To illustrate GASP's technical prowess even in those early days (circa 1975), we obtained a court order compelling a polluter to

put in place fifteen pages worth of equipment and procedural changes that GASP had identified.

No wonder that the EPA (created soon after GASP was born) described GASP as a model for future citizens' involvement in environmental affairs across the nation. More than thirty years later, that statement is still true.

In those old days, as now, there were lots of smart Pittsburghers who hated the pollution and were working hard to end it. Could they have won all those fights and created an organizational model for the whole country without Michelle? To those fortunate to know her personally, the question seems foolish, and the answer is a resounding "no."



The EPA described **GASP** as a **model** for future citizens' involvement in environmental affairs **across the nation**.

**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.

# For 35 Years GASP Plays Prominent Role in Region's Fight for Cleaner Air

by David Fowler, GASP Board Member

In 1969 a newly-formed, Pittsburgh-centered Group Against Smog and Pollution added a strong voice to the swelling public outcry against air pollution in Allegheny County and southwestern Pennsylvania. Much had already been done since 1940 to lift the pall of smoke that hung over the city and its environs, through the Allegheny Conference on Community Development led by industrialist Richard B. Mellon, in cooperation with Pittsburgh Mayor David L. Lawrence.

This local smoke control became part of a far larger movement. In the 1960s the United States, like most industrialized countries, saw the rapid growth of widespread efforts to protect and improve the man-made as well as the natural environment. As essential landmarks in this growth, one might cite publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), exposing the dangers of pesticides, and the holding of the world's initial Earth Day in 1970.

Among governmental actions, however, the creation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 by Congress, signed into law by President Richard Nixon on January 1, 1970, stands as the most important of all. As a result of the government and public recognition of the importance of environmental issues, President Nixon presented to Congress on July 9, 1970 a reorganization plan that included the formation of the EPA. With no objection from Congress, the new agency officially came into existence on December 2, 1970. Along with the new agency, an entirely rewritten version of the original 1963 Clean Air Act known as the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970 was passed by Congress.

## GASP Acts on Local Air Quality Matters

From its founding, much of GASP's striving for cleaner air took the form of exerting pressure—through membership and other participation—in committees of the Board of Health of Allegheny County, which, like that in Philadelphia, had been empowered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to enforce their own health regulations. Here, GASP won credit for influencing the strengthening of the

county's regulations in the early 1970s and also for aiding their enforcement by bringing legal action—or by threatening to do so—against local corporate polluters of the air.

Among the founders of GASP, Michelle Madoff, its first president, played a central role in publicizing GASP's demands for action. She and other members also worked to enlist other citizens, including dozens of scientists and engineers, many of them members of local university faculties, to give testimony when local firms sought variances from county air regulations.

Through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, as GASP kept up

its watchdog role in Allegheny County and southwestern Pennsylvania, the federal government became more and more influential in efforts to clean the air. Through new legislation in the form of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977, Congress codified the "new source review program," strengthening regulations controlling industrial emissions. These added rules required not only new large sources to use the best pollution controls but required the addition of up-to-date pollution controls for facilities also significantly improving equipment.



1972 photo of a smokestack in downtown Pittsburgh with Three Rivers Stadium in the background

## Encourages Environmental Education

For years, GASP has facilitated environmental education in local schools, principally by using, demonstrating, and encouraging students in the use of a GASP owned air quality monitor. To this effort the organization has recently added an annual student prize competition for environmental research and advocacy, as shown in essays and displays, in memory of the late William W. Mullins, a GASP board member.

GASP representatives continue to serve regularly and effectively on the Allegheny County committees dealing with air quality. And the organization takes part in legal action, alone or in cooperation with other environmental groups and agencies, to further its mission. One example of such efforts was a lawsuit against the LTV Corporation's

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# GASP's Key Accomplishments in 35 Years

Since GASP's founding in 1969, it has developed into a strong local voice for the environment. Some of GASP's key accomplishments include:

- ❖ Successful litigation in federal district court in the 1970s to require Allegheny County to adopt standards based on the Clean Air Act of 1970.
- ❖ Cooperation with the EPA in the 1980s to gain enforcement of air quality standards at the U.S. Steel coke production facilities at its Clairton Works.
- ❖ Joining a successful EPA suit against LTV corporation in the 1990s to enforce existing air quality standards at the firm's Hazelwood plant; the plant was subsequently closed.
- ❖ Filing a notice in 1998 of GASP's intention to sue Shenango, Inc., for long-standing air quality infractions at its Neville Island coke plant which was preempted by a successful EPA suit on the same issue. In each case the court action resulted in substantial financial penalties and/or remedial actions being imposed on the defendant.
- ❖ Joining the EPA in several suits involving violations of clean air legislation. GASP and the Sierra Club sued the EPA, asking it to classify southwestern Pennsylvania in "serious non-attainment" of specified ozone levels.
- ❖ Undertaking a continuous program to educate the public about pollution and its remediation using several methods: publishing GASP's quarterly and widely circulated newsletter, Hotline; participating in public meetings and organizing our own; providing a speakers bureau; giving statements to the media; writing letters to the press; appearing on local (and sometimes national) radio and television programs; and conducting an air monitoring program involving training sessions and the loaning of a professional-level air quality monitor to local secondary schools and citizens.
- ❖ Joining efforts to protest a new coke plant on Hazelwood's riverfront property after LTV's coke facility closed in 1998. A Hazelwood community group, Citizens Helping Our Community (CHOC), was organized with GASP's help. GASP strongly supported this group with advice and participation for over a year. This joint effort clearly contributed to defeating the sale of the LTV site to the firm.
- ❖ Combining efforts with other environmental and advocacy groups in the region and state, such as the Sierra Club, PennPIRG, Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, Clean Water Action of Pennsylvania, and Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project.
- ❖ Researching and officially commenting on Title V operating permits, a program of the 1990 Clean Air Act. GASP held several public meetings to educate and encourage the public to comment on Title V permits.
- ❖ Campaigning to clean up emissions from coal-burning power plants in Pennsylvania which pose serious environmental and health hazards. Recently, GASP had a settlement agreement with Reliant's Cheswick Power Station in Springdale to reduce particulate emissions as measured by an in-stack monitor.
- ❖ Serving on advisory committees at the county, state, and federal levels. Since its inception, GASP has had a representative on the Allegheny County Air Pollution Advisory Committee, where we are often asked to chair one or more of its subcommittees. Also, GASP meets regularly with Dr. Bruce Dixon of Allegheny County Health Department.
- ❖ Stimulating an anti-idling ordinance at County Council for heavy-duty diesel vehicles and participation in developing the regulatory language through the Allegheny County Air Pollution Control Advisory Committee and its subcommittees. 🚲



View of downtown Pittsburgh from the Liberty Tunnel, 1947.



Same location, 1974.



# Smart Cookie Jeannette Widom to Join in 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

by Meliza Jackson, GASP Development Director

**B**akers of the many mouth-watering desserts at the GASP event on October 16 will be working to turn out their very best creations, once word gets out that charter GASP member Jeannette Widom will be among the attendees!

Like all GASP pioneers who contributed their expertise (whether scientific, legal, or organizational), Jeannette had savvy the new group needed and, with the help of many others, she raised thousands of dollars during GASP's early years. First, Jeannette, repeatedly named Champion in Baking at the 1968–1973 Allegheny County Fairs, created a cookie representing GASP's mascot and organized community baking sprees to produce these. Eventually, she wrote a cookie cookbook to benefit GASP, and then two more!

We asked Jeannette, a clean air advocate clear back to the days of “smoke control” in 1940s Pittsburgh, why she took on this tremendous labor of love. “I was very dedicated to the environmental movement, and wanted to do what I could because this was the first stirrings of the movement here.” Having her baker's pun on *stirrings* recognized, Jeannette was inspired to reminisce about many of the fun and



Jeannette Widom baked cookies for GASP fundraisers in the 1970s

imaginative ploys used by GASP in the early days to get the attention of a relatively oblivious public and media. “I can't believe it, I did such outrageous things—I had no shame” where this worthy cause was concerned, Jeannette recalls. As outrageous as Jeannette may have been, we understand that it was not she who wore the Dirty Gertie costume that she assembled - which included blue rubber swimming flippers, a red trapdoor union suit, bedraggled wings, and a mask Jeannette talked a costume company into producing. (Among other public relations duties, the mascot handed out annual meeting “Dirty Gertie Awards” to scofflaws that contributed to local air pollution.)

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Dirty Gertie got her start as a cartoon character on GASP public service spots for television. It was as meeting refreshments, though, that the famous mascot—formally named Dirty Gertie the Poor Polluted Birdie—first showed up in cookie form. Two-toned, with outstretched wings sprinkled with chocolate jimmie pollution, and crossed eyes from breathing all that bad air, Dirty Gertie sported a cashew nut beak. After admiring and chomping the Dirty Gerties, meeting attendees “hatched” the plan to raise funds by selling the cookies—at the unheard of price of 25 cents each (\$1.26 in today's terms). But how to get quantities of specialty cookies made that no bakery would tackle?



Pioneers put their community organizing skills to work, and soon ovens lit up in clubs, schools, and congregations all over Allegheny County. GASP spouses fashioned cutters out of sheet tin, Giant Eagle donated the trimmings, Jeannette crafted step-by-step instructions, and volunteers helped her get the baking kits out to diverse, willing groups. Ecology clubs, Scouts, YWCAs, home ec classes, churches and synagogues baked 1,200 Gerties for the first promotion—some of them in the kitchen of Rodef Shalom, site of the anniversary celebration. The confections were billed as “Pittsburgh's most expensive cookie—made by people you know,” and the first promotion was front-page news locally and nationally. It happened to be during the worst January inversion and highest particulate pollution

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## Needed: Home Bakers to Use Flour Power, Make GASP Signature Cookies

It just wouldn't be a celebration of GASP's beginnings without including signature Dirty Gertie cookies among our featured desserts on October 16, so we're looking for some home bakers to help out. Just as in those days gone by, GASP will supply volunteers with a detailed instruction sheet, recipe and special cookie cutter. If you think you can bake a dozen or two cookies (which we will pick up, if you can't bring them to the reception)—freezing them, if necessary—please call Meliza at 412-441-6650.



# Is Hydrogen in Our Energy Future?

*A Panel Discussion and Benefit Reception  
Celebrating GASP's 35th Anniversary*

**Saturday, October 16, 2004, 7:00–10:00 PM**

**Rodef Shalom, 4905 Fifth Avenue, Oakland**

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- ▶ Discuss the pros and cons of a hydrogen economy
  - ▶ Celebrate GASP's 35th anniversary with GASP Founder, Michelle Madoff
  - ▶ See highlights from GASP's history presented in a multimedia display
  - ▶ Enjoy a dessert and wine reception
  - ▶ Bid on silent auction items
- 
- 

For ticket information and reservations, call GASP at (412) 441-6650 or e-mail [gasp@gasp-pgh.org](mailto:gasp@gasp-pgh.org)



**Group Against Smog and Pollution**

**Celebrating 35 Years ▶ 1969–2004**

# Event Panelists

These featured presenters will attempt to answer the question, “Is Hydrogen in Our Energy Future?” at the GASP event on October 16, 2004. We are sharing with you their backgrounds and some of their thoughts on the event topic.

Hydrogen fuel is a multifaceted, highly controversial topic, very much in the news these days as the nation and the world try to chart a course through the unknown waters of global climate change, combustion pollution, and a limited fossil-fuel supply. If you'd like to learn more about the ins and outs of hydrogen as fuel prior to the event, we've collected some resources, available on our website at <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/hydrogen.html>.



**Robert Hirsch** is a Senior Energy Program Advisor at Science Applications International Corporation. He has held senior positions in industry, government and the non-profit sector and was a member of the recent National Academies Hydrogen Economy Study Committee. Recently, he was a senior

staff member at RAND, and prior to that he was Executive Advisor at Advanced Power Technologies, Inc. He has also served on the Boards of a number of organizations including Fusion Power Associates and The Annapolis Center.

*“My presentation will show how the various components of a hydrogen fueled transportation system must fit together. Major cost reductions will be necessary for public acceptance and some complex safety issues must be resolved. Major changes in energy markets and intensive research could well lead to practical hydrogen transportation in the distant future.”*



**Edward Rubin** is the Alumni Professor of Environmental Engineering and Science, and Professor of Engineering and Public Policy and Mechanical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. He is also director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies.

*“In the near term, it is unrealistic to produce hydrogen from anything but fossil fuels, which would produce more CO<sub>2</sub> than other means of power generation. The salvation might lie in carbon sequestration, where hydrogen can be produced to feed the transport sector.”*



The panel discussion will be moderated by **Don Hammonds**, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Writer



**Lester Lave** is the Harry B. and James H. Higgins Professor of Economics and Finance, Professor of Engineering and Public Policy, and Professor of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University. He is also director of the Carnegie Mellon Green Design Institute and co-director of the Carnegie Mellon Electricity Industry Center. He is one of the founding members of GASP.

*“There is considerable doubt that a hydrogen economy will ever be desirable compared to the other options available. In any case, we need to focus on improving environmental quality and sustainability now, rather than hope that in 20 to 50 years hydrogen will solve all problems.”*



**Thomas Flower** is President of Stationary Fuel Cells at Siemens Westinghouse Power Corporation. Before heading the plant located in Pittsburgh, he was the Chief Technology Officer for Siemens Power Generation.

*“The hydrogen economy and fuel cells are often discussed as though they were synonymous. This is a slight misperception which I would like to clarify. Although the two are strongly related, they are separate topics and must be viewed separately. Success in one area does not automatically lead to success in the other. I will also portray scenarios where we can see how our energy supply and the emission levels can be affected by hydrogen technologies and fuel cell technologies.”*

# U.S. Senate Candidate Forum

by Jonathan Nadle, GASP President

**G**ASP often publishes a candidate forum around election time. The purpose is to give candidates the opportunity to share, in their own words, their views on environmental matters with our voting readership. This year, one of Pennsylvania's two U.S. Senate seats is up for grabs. We invited all candidates on the ballot to participate. Incumbent Senator Arlen Specter never responded, nor did Constitution Party candidate Jim Clymer. The Democratic party nominee, U.S. Congressman Joe Hoeffel, did. Below are the questions we sent to each candidate and Congressman Hoeffel's response.

**1) Write a paragraph or two discussing your general views on the environment, your voting record if you've previously held elected office and voted on environmental issues, and/or actions you've taken in an unelected capacity regarding the environment.**

As a member of the US House of Representatives, I have been a consistent voice for our environment. I have traveled to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and have seen, firsthand, this pristine wilderness. I have opposed every attempt to disturb this area by opening it up to oil drilling and I will continue to champion this cause in the Senate. I have also been to Yellowstone to see the damage that snowmobiles have caused to that area and I have supported legislation to phase out the use of snowmobiles in that park. In my own district in 2000, I secured \$1.5 million for the Center for Sustainable Communities at Temple University's Ambler campus to promote anti-sprawl, growth management strategies.

As Montgomery County Commissioner, I was a champion of open space preservation, implementing a \$100 million Open Space Preservation Program to preserve over 9000 acres of land including more than 4,400 acres of farmland. I took this commitment with me to Congress where I was able to secure funding from the Interior Appropriations bill to help all 50 states buy land for recreation space and bring \$1.3 million to Pennsylvania to combat sprawl.

As a result of my strong record on the environment, I have received high marks on the League of Conservation Voters' scorecard, earning a 95% rating for my votes in the first session of the 108th Congress. I also have a 100% rating with the Sierra Club and have earned their endorsement in my race for United States Senate.

**Please succinctly discuss your views and/or how you've voted on bills relating to these specific environmental matters:**

**2) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the US; efforts to fight global warming**

I am a cosponsor of the bipartisan Climate Stewardship

Act of 2004 (HR 4067) and support efforts by the United States to join with the world community in combating global warming. I believe that the Administration was wrong when it chose not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. If elected to the Senate, I will add my voice to those in the Senate that call on the President to fully implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change by ratifying and implementing the Kyoto Protocol.



**U.S. Congressman Joe Hoeffel is the leading challenger for Arlen Specter's U.S. Senate seat**

**3) Legislation to reduce air pollution, such as the Clean Air Act**

I am a cosponsor of HR 2042, a bill that would reduce emissions from electric power plants. I believe we must lower the cap on emissions of the four major air pollutants from coal-fired plants. The cost of delay to our environment is too high.

I also oppose the Bush-Cheney administration's attempts to roll back provisions of the Clean Air Act by enacting a cap-and-trade system for mercury emissions. Due to the nature of mercury, such a plan would create "hot spots" of heightened mercury pollution in Pennsylvania, jeopardizing the health of women and children. Nearly half of the fish caught in Pennsylvania's streams and lakes have dangerous levels of mercury. We must act now to reduce mercury emissions across the board.

**4) Raising fuel efficiency (CAFE) standards for vehicles and promoting new, more efficient vehicle technologies**  
We need to apply America's can-do spirit and our best minds to reclaiming our independence from the vice-grip of Mideast oil. We made that leap before when we cracked the atom in the "Manhattan Project" and put a man on the moon in the space program. That kind of public investment is good for our environment AND our economy because of the spin-off impact on private sector innovation, new products and new job growth. The U.S. is in danger of losing that innovation race because of a lack of leadership from Washington as evidenced by Toyota's success at claiming a

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# Closer Scrutiny Required

When a Department of Justice employee leaked a copy of the proposed Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003 (known publicly as Patriot Act II) to the Center for Public Integrity in February 2003, a loud and critical outcry from public interest groups and both houses of Congress was levied upon the U.S. Department of Justice, and particularly, Attorney General John Ashcroft. Since then, it appears the Bush Administration has chosen not to introduce the bill as a whole, but rather surreptitiously to include provisions of the Act in other legislation.

For example, on December 13, 2003, President Bush signed into law the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. (This was coincidentally a Saturday and the same day Saddam Hussein was captured by American Forces in Iraq.) The Intelligence Authorization Act is a large bill passed each year by Congress which allocates financial support for federal intelligence agencies. The unique item in this year's bill, which slipped through without notice by most members of Congress, is one line taken from language in the Patriot Act II that redefines "financial institution." Although it sounds innocuous, the redefinition significantly increases the powers of the FBI to obtain personal financial data from businesses, such as credit card companies, jewelers, airlines, the U.S. Post Office, stockbrokers, and car dealerships without judicial review.

This method of covert legislating threatens not only

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## Candidate Forum continued from page 8

higher market share from General Motors, Ford and Chrysler because it is taking the lead on hybrid technology. In the Senate I will provide the leadership we need to provide incentives for American car companies to invest in this new technology.

### 5) Promoting cleaner, more efficient power production in the US

I am a cosponsor of HR 1294, a bill that would establish a federal renewable energy portfolio standard for certain retail electric utilities. This bill would ensure that utilities make greater use of renewable energy. I would support companion legislation if elected to the Senate.

### 6) Legislation to clean up toxic sites; holding polluters financially responsible for cleanup costs

I believe that the Superfund taxes must be reinstated to ensure that our nation's most contaminated sites are cleaned up. I oppose altering either the polluter pays liability system or cleanup standards. 🚲

by Elizabeth Rosemeyer, Policy & Outreach Coordinator

aspects of the public's right to privacy, but also extends to the public's right to obtain information, and to protect its health and safety. Section 202 of the draft bill would allow facilities that use dangerous chemicals to keep this information secret. The Clean Air Act requires these corporations to prepare a "worst case scenario" report that details the consequences to surrounding communities if the chemicals were released for some reason. The proposed section, however, severely restricts access to this information so that communities around the facility would be left in the dark about their exposure to potential health hazards. Furthermore, activists and environmental organizations would be hindered in their abilities to ensure compliance with environmental and health regulations.

To date, the proposed Section 202 has not been passed by Congress. The potential for it or further components of the Patriot Act II to be snuck into other legislation remains great, however. The powers of the FBI were extended substantially without much floor debate or public input. This is a dangerous precedent and one that must be monitored closely. Our legislators and the public must be vigilant in scrutinizing the language in all bills introduced on the floor of the House or Senate to prevent further items from being passed which could harm our environment and the health and safety of our communities. 🚲

## EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

With one simple act, **you** can impact the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the use of our land. **Vote** to choose an official who cares as much about these issues as you do.

The deadline to register to vote is October 4th. You can register or change your address by completing a form found at: [www.dos.state.pa.us/voting](http://www.dos.state.pa.us/voting)

If you are already registered, make sure you get out to vote on November 2nd!

To find your polling place, contact your local county board of elections:

Allegheny County:	412-350-4510
Armstrong County:	724-548-3222
Westmoreland County:	724-830-3150
Beaver County:	724-728-9318
Butler County:	724-284-5308
Washington County:	724-228-6750

# School Bus Idling Comes To a Halt!

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

By the time you read this, the school bus idling regulation should be enforceable in all school districts within Allegheny County. Starting this fall, school buses will not be permitted to unnecessarily idle for more than five minutes, with some exceptions. Those include temperature-based and safety-related exemptions, among others: buses may idle up to 20 minutes an hour when the outside temperature is less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above 75 degrees Fahrenheit, or when idling is necessary to operate a lift or other equipment designed to ensure the safe loading or unloading of people with disabilities.

To view the entire school bus idling regulation go to <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/action/schoolbusidling.pdf>

Citizens can play a vital role in helping to implement this new regulation, which will be enforced by the Allegheny County Health Department and individual municipalities. Please report all suspected school bus idling violations. Call ACHD at 412-687-2243 or your individual municipality.

While GASP is excited that the school bus idling regulation is now enforceable, we are less than pleased at the time it took to get to this point (over a year). ACHD is now charged with creating idling regulations for other heavy-duty diesel vehicles. ACHD staff attorneys are looking at legal issues regarding their power to promulgate regulations and enforce them. GASP hopes these issues can be resolved quickly so that regulations will be drafted promptly and subsequently enforced. 🚲

## Hays Woods

Past issues of the Hotline have described efforts to oppose the proposed development in Hays. A coalition of groups has recently created a website which includes background information about Hays Woods, maps and photos of the site, events and action alerts, links to news articles and a mailing list. [www.savehayswoods.org](http://www.savehayswoods.org)



Please report all suspected school bus idling violations. Call ACHD at 412-687-2243



## HOLT Seeks to Acquire Undeveloped Land in Western Allegheny County

The GASP Hotline occasionally highlights the efforts of other environmental organizations in the western Pennsylvania region. The Hollow Oak Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that focuses on conservation of land and natural resources in western Allegheny County.

How do we ensure that clean air, water, and land will be created and protected for the future? One method used by the Hollow Oak Land Trust (HOLT) is to acquire undeveloped land so that property's natural resources can be maintained. A current project of the conservation organization is to purchase a 77-acre wooded property in Moon Township. The land is adjacent to Montour Run and the Montour Trail. Its southern border connects to a property already owned by HOLT and when purchased will create a contiguous conservation area of almost two hundred protected acres.

The sales agreement identifies December 2004 as the month for closing. HOLT needs to raise \$160,000 for the purchase, with about another \$10,000 in related costs. Can you help acquire this significant property? If you would like to help, please contact HOLT's Executive Director, Janet Thorne, at (412) 264-5354. Funds need to be received soon for the property to be closed on in December. For more information on HOLT, visit their website: [www.hollowoak.org](http://www.hollowoak.org). 🚲

**Region's Fight for Cleaner Air  
continued from page 3**

heavily polluting coke operation in Hazelwood for continuing emissions violations, followed by GASP's effort to stop the sale of the plant to another coke maker, which failed, bringing another success for clean air. Another is the effort in which Reliant Corp. is currently cooperating in a settlement agreement to bring the emissions of its notoriously polluting power generation plant in Cheswick, Allegheny County, into acceptable particulate emission levels as determined by an in-stack monitor. And an ongoing effort, still in its early stages, is GASP's work to cope with diesel engine pollution in the county. Here, the first targets of action are the fleets of buses used by local school districts. GASP representatives worked to influence the Allegheny County Council to adopt legislation to limit

the idling of engines by those fleets as well as many other large diesel vehicles.

**Targets of Clean Air Action**

Of the targets of GASP's work to improve quality of the air, those electric power plants in states upwind of Pennsylvania remain the most potent and yet the most difficult to influence. This is because the EPA, as directed by the Bush Administration, has sharply weakened its efforts to enforce the Clean Air Act, including diluted New Source Review regulations. Each year that passes brings new targets for action, such as pollution by fine particulates and mercury. GASP's efforts here include publicizing such dangers, through its literature and public statements, as well as advocating for improvements from local sources having any excessive emissions of this or other pollution. ♻️

**Smart Cookie  
continued from page 5**

readings ever taken in Allegheny County, and GASPer took full advantage of the media coverage, distributing "cans of clean air" along with the Gerties.

The now-demolished Jenkins Arcade proved such a good sales location then that soon another 2,400 Gerties sold out there, created by a sorority, more churches, a boys' club, women's guilds, and others eager to hop on the Dirty Gertie bandwagon and help. Photographs of groups baking were sent to their community newspapers, and news of the project spread.

Made possible by the printing sponsorship of the Heinz USA Division of the H.J. Heinz Company, the ensuing cookbooks also were very well received. GASP became a textbook study in how a grassroots organization used home-grown skills to generate revenues that kept it afloat for years. Features about them in newspapers as far away as Florida and New England spiked GASP cookbook sales in far-flung states. The cookbooks are still for sale, available in the GASP office.

Jeannette is looking forward to seeing GASPer, both veteran and new, on October 16. She, Michelle Madoff and others have lent memorabilia for display. "So much has happened in GASP - and so much will be happening," Jeannette said recently. "I've gotten more out of GASP than I put in, including lasting friendships. I hope everyone will come on October 16th and have fun!" ♻️



**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!*

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Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

# Recycling Alert!

## GASP's Moving Wish List

The GASP office has been located in the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Liberty for most of its 35-year existence. 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 the church needs its space and GASP needs a new, larger office space for our operations. In December we will be moving to the Wightman School Community Building in Squirrel Hill. If you are able to donate any of the following items to GASP's new office, please call us at (412) 441-6650 or e-mail [gasp@gasp-pgh.org](mailto: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
- ▶ Refrigerator

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>

## 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 December.

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. Fair compensation will be provided.

Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to:

GASP  
P.O. Box 5165  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
E-mail: [gasp@gasp-pgh.org](mailto:gasp@gasp-pgh.org)



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