

## Dimock residents tell cautionary tales on gas drilling

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**Corning Leader**

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Painted Post, N.Y. — Several residents of Dimock, Pa., — where a bitter dispute over a cluster of drinking water problems blamed on gas drilling has made national headlines in recent years — told their stories to a crowd of approximately 200 people Thursday evening at Corning West High School.

Because of contaminated water he blames on faulty gas wells drilled nearby by Cabot Oil and Gas, Craig Sautner told the audience how he and his wife, Julie, rely on a daily delivery to fill their 550-gallon “water buffalo,” or tank, for showering and doing dishes. Their drinking water comes from five-gallon jugs of spring water.

The Sautners are one of more than a dozen families from Dimock involved in a lawsuit against Cabot.

Although testing by Pennsylvania’s Department of Environment Protection and independent firms has indicated his water contamination was due to Cabot’s wells, the company has never admitted wrongdoing, although they pay for his water deliveries, Sautner said.

However, he has to pay the cost of heating the water from his “water buffalo” in the winter.

Sautner says he’s “been abused by the gas industry like you wouldn’t believe” during his three-year ordeal. He closed with a warning to residents of the Southern Tier.

“On the ride up here, I saw what beautiful country you have here. Don’t let (the gas industry) ruin it on you,” he said.

Dimock is in Susquehanna County, about an hour’s drive south of Binghamton.

Another Dimock resident, Victoria Switzer, told of similar problems with her water. She also spoke of getting little sympathy from elected officials and being very unpopular in her hometown for speaking out against the gas industry.

While the Dimock case has been in the spotlight a great deal, it wasn’t an isolated incident, Switzer said.

“Dimock is not an anomaly. We are not the only ones this is happening to,” Switzer said.

Also speaking was Craig Stevens, who lives in nearby Silver Lake Township.

Stevens, whose family has lived on the same property for six generations, says landmen representing Chesapeake visited his 95-year-old grandmother, who has since passed away, in a nursing home.

They convinced her to sign a lease on the family land for \$135 and the minimum 12.5 percent royalty, he said, triggering a long fight for Stevens to rework the lease for fair market value: \$8,000 per acre and 20 percent royalties.

He said he felt Chesapeake tried to “steal his land.”

It wasn’t just concerned locals on hand for Thursday’s forum.

A representative of Energy In Depth - an organization that promotes the benefits of drilling in the Marcellus Shale - was on hand taking videos of the speakers, handing out business cards to media and doing interviews outside.

Several supporters of gas drilling in New York were there, too, such as Neil Vitale of Woodhull, a member of the Steuben County Landowners Coalition.

Vitale said the problems in Dimock were isolated incidents compared with the number of gas wells being drilled across Pennsylvania, and said he thought the folks who spoke Thursday weren’t lying, but “weren’t telling the full story of what’s going on there.”

A gas industry worker who said he lives about 20 miles south of Dimock agreed. He said the gas industry had brought prosperity to one of the poorest areas of Pennsylvania and saved family farms.

“They turned their little town into the poster child for a toxic waste dump, with all the media appearances and everything else,” he said. “And it’s not.”

Also speaking Thursday was Dr. Tony Ingraffea, a Cornell University professor, rock fracturing expert and former gas industry employee who spent about an hour debunking what he called some of the myths propagated by the gas industry.

Thursday's forum was organized by the Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes, Coalition to Protect New York, League of Women Voters of Steuben County, and People for a Healthy Environment.

The groups have staged similar forums in Elmira and Penn Yan in recent months; this was the first in the Corning area.

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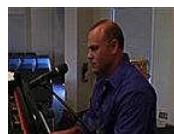
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batman124

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This forum was sponsored by anti-gas people????

Dimock was a result of human error not the technology or geology of the process. This is a plausible endeavor that our country needs.

In the future will there be plane crashes, train crashes, even the space shuttle is not 100%. With thousands of wells drilled recently and hundreds of thousands of well drilled in the past, this is not a bad record and they continue to improve on the technology. Matter of fact there are two companies that are starting to use a fracking method that uses no chemicals. In Lawranceville a major recycling plant for these chemicals is proposed to be built soon.

I cannot understand why people do not protest the amount of contamination that is put down our septic system, chemicals used on our lawns, chemicals used on our agricultural fields, these are our biggest sources of non-point pollution. The herbicide atrazine, read the studies on that and what that is doing to your water supply. Look at the studies of the chemicals below a water pollution plant that come from YOU and the drugs and hormones that you excrete and flush down the toilet.

Now I am going to give you an idea why people protest the gas drilling and not these other sources of pollution, it's called follow the money. Follow the money that is provided to a majority of the anti-gas people and you will find; OPEC, coal companies, oil companies, nuclear companies, companies that provide filtering and chemical processes to clean the pollution out of smoke stacks (they currently do not have a process for methylmercury, produced from burning coal, -- know wonder we are all losing our minds, with mercury in an organic form so easily entering the food chain--if you don't believe me check the warning on how often they recommend you eat fish).

Wake up and get the facts, don't be a puppet of these other industries manipulation. Natural gas is the best fossil fuel we can use and we need it. New technology in the future might take the place of fossil fuels in the future, however, we have to get to the future in an economically viable manner in order to be able to make the transition.

Jr1

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batman124 - Maybe some people are puppets of these energy companies I'm not really sure how prevalent those type of people are. From my perspective I think that we are crazy to let these gas companies come in and drill on our land. I remained in upstate New York for it's beauty and relatively unspoiled natural resources, so my question is what's going to be left when the dust settles? Are we destined to have our landscape littered with gas wells and construction

equipment where trees and ponds once stood? All of the people in support of these wells are looking for monetary wealth, but is that wealth really worth the spoiling of this beautiful area that we call home??

rockjock

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Beware of anti-Marcellus zealots telling stories about pollution.

I am sure that Victoria Switzer revealed that she lives about 1,000 feet down gradient from an auto repair and salvage business and that a fuel truck overturned near her home last winter? Oh, she didn't? It must have slipped her mind. She DOES tell a good story, its only drawback is that it just isn't true.

Ya think that might explain the VOCs she reports? Huh? Ya think?

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