

# The Go-Back Club

Newspaper of the Simple-Living Brigade

March 2014

Forty-seven members in seven states, the District of Columbia, Canada and Korea.

## Keystone XL Pipeline Opponents Score Victory in Court

By Lori Pilger

Lincoln (Nebraska) Journal Star: February 19, 2014

Nebraska landowners fighting TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline won a victory in state court Wednesday with a Lincoln judge's finding that the state's pipeline siting law is unconstitutional.

Lancaster County District Judge Stephanie Stacy ruled that LB1161 — passed by lawmakers in 2012 — violates the Nebraska constitution by shifting control over routing decisions of oil pipelines from the Public Service Commission (PSC) to the governor and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ).

She said the decision to give TransCanada eminent domain powers — meaning it can force people to sell land in the pipeline's path — should have been made by the PSC.

In her order, Stacy blocked the state from enforcing the law and taking any action on Governor Dave Heineman's approval a year ago of the Keystone XL route.

"TransCanada's Keystone XL Pipeline has become a political lightning rod for both supporters and opponents of the pipeline but the issues before this court have nothing to do with the merits of that pipeline," she wrote. "This case involves constitutionality of LB1161."

It likely won't be the last word on the matter. Late in the day, the state Attorney General's Office filed notice to appeal the ruling to the Nebraska Supreme Court. Heineman said in a statement he supports the decision to appeal.

Omaha attorney Dave Domina, who represented landowners challenging the law, said the ruling sends Heineman and the Legislature back to the drawing board.

"TransCanada has no approved route in Nebraska," he said in a news release. "TransCanada is not authorized to condemn the property against Nebraska landowners. The pipeline project is at a standstill in this state."

But Omaha Congressman Lee Terry said he's confident the decision will be overturned and, even if it's not, it does not prevent President Barack Obama from approving construction of the pipeline. "Let



Photo from Bold Nebraska Web site

At a small-group meeting of Nebraskan activists, Mary Pipher read the introduction from her new book, *The Green Boat: Reviving Ourselves in our Capsized Culture*. Her book is about the dynamics of this small group and the larger coalition that includes Bold Nebraska, the Sierra Club, the Nebraska Wildlife Federation, Audubon Nebraska, Nebraska Farmers Union, Nebraskans for Peace and university environmental groups. It chronicles their struggles with the Keystone XL pipeline.

me be very clear — this decision does not impede President Obama from doing the right thing after five years of delays and signing the permits to build the Keystone XL Pipeline."

The Canadian company that wants to build the pipeline is waiting on a federal permit for the 1,179-mile northern leg of the pipeline.

In September, a crowd packed a Lincoln courtroom as Domina took jabs at the state law that handed the power of approval for its path through the state to the governor.

"The statute ought not survive," he argued at a bench trial that took only about half an hour because the case essentially boiled down to two issues.

1. Whether plaintiffs Randy Thompson, Susan Luebke and Susan Dunavan had standing to bring the suit against the state; and

2. Whether LB1161 was unconstitutional, as the plaintiffs alleged.

At the trial, Domina said his clients had standing as Nebraska residents and taxpayers and he argued a laundry list of reasons why the law was unconstitutional.

On the other side, Assistant Nebraska Attorney General Kate Spohn argued plaintiffs had failed on both fronts.

As for standing, taxpayer money wasn't used as a result of LB1161, she said.

While the law appropriates \$2 million from the NDEQ's cash fund to pay for an evaluation of any proposed pipeline, Spohn said, the pipeline carrier ultimately pays that. In the case of TransCanada, she said, the state was reimbursed.

But Stacy said she was not persuaded that because the state was reimbursed the taxpayers couldn't raise a legal challenge.

"While private reimbursement of public expenditures may be good fiscal policy, it should not be used as a legislative tool to insulate allegedly unconstitutional laws

Keystone continued on page 2

## FOES OF KEYSTONE XL BEGIN NEW LEGAL BATTLE AGAINST STATE DEPARTMENT

By John H. Cushman Jr.

InsideClimate News: January 31, 2014

<http://insideclimatenews.org/content/foes-keystone-xl-begin-new-legal-battle-against-state-department>

Just as the State Department is on the verge of releasing its final environmental impact statement on the Keystone XL pipeline, 16 environmental groups have demanded that the department expand its scope to include at least one other pipeline as well.

In other words, their January 29<sup>th</sup> petition said, the department should go back to the drawing board.

The green groups said the State Department could not realistically account for the effects of TransCanada's Keystone XL project on global warming without taking into account the proposed expansion of Enbridge's Alberta Clipper line — a second pipeline project that would also carry hundreds of thousands of barrels a day of high-carbon tar sands crude from Canada.

The petitioners include groups with long experience challenging federal agencies in the courts under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, which governs environmental assessments of major federal actions.

Their filing signaled — not for the first time — that they might sue if the final impact statement reaches the same conclu-

sions as its first draft, issued in March 2013. That draft contended that the Keystone line would not result in significantly higher emissions of carbon dioxide, the main global warming pollutant.

The final environmental review is widely expected to be released Friday.

The environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, the National Resources Defense Council, Friends of the Earth, the Center for Biological Diversity, the National Wildlife Federation and 11 others, have previously filed comprehensive objections to the State Department's first draft.

This time they outlined a new basis for challenging the State Department's approach.

NEPA, they said, requires that when a federal agency has more than one similar action or decision before it, the government must consider the "cumulative impact" of them all together.

And, they pointed out, the State Department is currently reviewing just such a second case — whether to approve Enbridge's application to expand its pipeline.

Under the law, the two should be considered in tandem, the petition said — not one after the other and certainly not by waving TransCanada's application through without any meaningful discussion of Enbridge's.

"Neither the original Alberta Clipper project nor the proposed Alberta Clipper

expansion is listed or discussed anywhere in the cumulative impacts assessment," the petition said.

The groups called that omission a fatal flaw in the State Department's Keystone review, which was well under way when the separate Alberta Clipper review was just getting started.

They said the NEPA law requires a new review "that considers the cumulative impacts of Alberta Clipper and other reasonably foreseeable pipelines," such as a project that would reverse the direction of a line that cuts across New England into Canada.

NEPA requires this cumulative test in order to stop agencies from approving one environmentally damaging project after another, each time on the grounds that no single project does much harm. The petition cites several precedents in which the courts have upheld the principle that similar cases ought to be lumped together.

For the groups to raise this new argument so late in the game suggests that they fear the State Department is not going to back down from its initial analysis when it releases its final version.

Sean Howard, a spokesman for TransCanada, called the petition "another attempt to try and delay the review process by the paid professional opponents of Keystone XL."

He noted that in 2007 and 2008, when

**Foes continued on page 3**

### Keystone continued from page 1

from taxpayer challenge, particularly when the appropriation of significant public funds is necessary to implement the law," she said.

Spohn also argued plaintiffs failed to prove the law was unconstitutional on its face because LB1161 did not completely take away the PSC's jurisdiction but created a sort of shared jurisdiction by authorizing an alternate process.

The judge shot down other challenges to the law but concluded that it did take the power to regulate oil pipelines from the PSC and give it to the NDEQ and the governor.

"In arguing this issue, both the plaintiffs and the defendants mischaracterize, to

some extent, the practical effect of LB1161," Stacy wrote.

She said the law, as it's written, gives pipeline carriers the choice of seeking route approval through the PSC or through NDEQ and governor. That clearly restricts the PSC's power over carriers who opt to go around it, Stacy said.

In other words, if the governor approves the route, the PSC permanently loses its decision-making authority over siting it. The commission was created in 1885 to regulate railroads and prevent political favors.

Stacy's decision suggests TransCanada will have to restart the siting process, this

time going through the PSC.

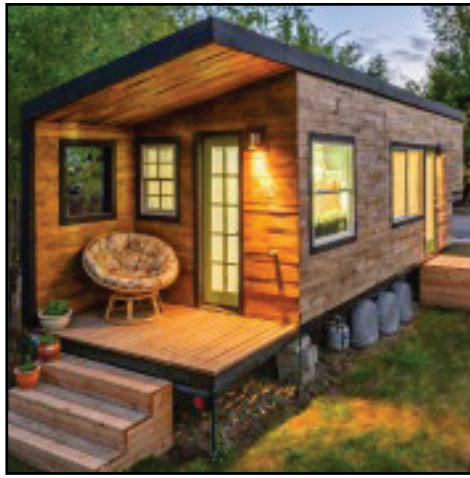
In response to the ruling, Domina said the case wasn't a commentary on the pipeline itself. "That subject belongs to the President of the United States exclusively. This ruling means that, in Nebraska, the Governor's office has no role to play and all state law decisions must be made by the Public Service Commission."

Reach Lori Pilger at 402-473-7237 or [lpilger@journalstar.com](mailto:lpilger@journalstar.com) or follow her on Twitter at [LJPilger](https://twitter.com/LJPilger). Algis J. Laukaitis contributed to this story.

### What on Earth is The Go-Back Club?

We are a group of people who are willing to use our lives to purposefully go backwards to using less energy, living more simply, etc. No obligations, no money — just a free monthly, online newsletter. If you want to share your new and creative

tips, I'll be happy to publish them. You can reach me at [gobackclub@pa.net](mailto:gobackclub@pa.net), [www.gobackclub.com](http://www.gobackclub.com) or 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255. Hard copy subscriptions are \$30 a year payable to Iona Conner. Thanks!



Photos by Marc Walters

The sustainable, 196-square-foot Macy Miller (seated left, at her desk) designed and built for herself and her 100-pound Great Dane. See additional photos at <https://www.droptbox.com/sh/npi02i8f7a0rt55/4SZJeYsz7K>.

## Architect's Big Idea: *Build Tiny, \$11,400 House*

By Claudine Zap  
Yahoo: December 17, 2013

Architect Macy Miller had a big idea: Build a tiny house.

After dealing with a messy foreclosure, the 30-year-old sought a way to have a place of her own while avoiding the mortgage trap. Her solution: Build a micro home.

"I wanted a way to escape dependency on banks without being a 'renter,'" the Idaho resident told Yahoo in an email. "I like having my own space to make my own, which is difficult to do without taking out a large mortgage."

Miller began to build a 196-square-foot house in 2011, right on a flatbed truck. The cost: \$11,400. The handy Miller did most of the work herself, with advice from her friends and father as needed.

Miller did need some extra help last August: While working on her roof, she fell and broke her foot and her back in two

places. She says she has since recovered from her injuries.

The house, finally finished this summer, is parked in an empty lot in a downtown Boise neighborhood. It is connected to the power grid and has potable water. Miller keeps warm with radiant-heat floors. When nature calls, she has an environmentally friendly composting toilet, which requires sawdust instead of water. No need to hook into a septic system.

Miller settled in for her first winter in the cozy home with her 100-pound Great Dane, Denver, and her baby-to-be: She is pregnant and due in March.

Although she and her boyfriend live separately, she said, "We spend most of our time together in the house cooking dinners or hanging out and it accommodates two people and a dog very well." She adds that she plans to stay in her mini house even after her baby is born.

"The fact is that babies (and big people)

don't need a lot of 'things,'" Miller told Yahoo. "The tiny house has everything we need, nothing less, nothing more."

The space itself has a surprising number of amenities. There's a king-size bed, an oversize shower, a fully-functioning kitchen (including a double-basin sink, oven and stove), plus a living room area with seating for two, a washer and dryer — and plenty of storage.

There's another upside: cheap living. Noting that expenses amount to only about \$250 a month, Miller said she is able to live — and save — in her tiny home until she builds her next, slightly bigger, small home.

"It will afford me a way to work much less and spend more time with my daughter," Miller said.

In a few years, Miller hopes to build a 600-square-foot cabin in the woods. "I have a plan in the works for a different kind of sustainable small home."

### Foes continued from page 2

TransCanada's original Keystone line and Enbridge's original Alberta Clipper line were subjected to overlapping reviews, the State Department "didn't consider them together and no one took that issue to court when the two projects were renewed and approved separately."

But that was under the Bush administration and back then the reviews did not focus on the question of climate change, which the Obama administration has called a crucial test on Keystone XL. Cumulative emissions of carbon dioxide from the tar sands are now at the heart of the decision on the fate of the pipeline.

In last year's draft, the State Department reasoned that Canada's tar sands expansion and the increased carbon dioxide emissions that would result, would be inevitable with or without Keystone XL, because the industry would find one way or another to get its fuel to market — either via other pipelines or by rail.

The environmental groups' latest petition is aimed squarely at this reasoning.

"The Department cannot plausibly argue that other infrastructure projects are inevitable and that it is powerless to affect the rate of tar sands development in Alberta, when it is simultaneously deciding whether

to approve the second-largest cross-border tar sands pipeline proposal," they wrote.

In addition, they said, it is harder to believe that shipping tar sands products by rail is a credible alternative to pipelines if the railroads might have to carry the volume of two pipelines instead of just one.

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# Michael Mann: Climate Scientist and Defender of Earth

## Book Review

By Iona Conner

*The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars: Dispatches from the Front Lines* by Michael Mann is a deeply researched, well-documented account of the ways in which climate-change deniers have manipulated information to purposefully mislead the public and legislators and stall meaningful actions to stop the most damaging factors which are warming up our planet and causing climate chaos.

If you want to understand the illogical, deceitful and well-funded campaigns to confuse people about the harsh realities of global warming (especially if you have a scientific background), this is the book for you.

Dr. Mann, who helped develop the famous “hockey stick” chart, which was published in a peer-reviewed journal in 1998, has come under grossly unfair attacks since then because people funded by the likes of the fossil-fuel industries, Koch brothers and the Scaife Foundation have poured millions of dollars into lies and subterfuges to halt political restraints on “business as usual.”

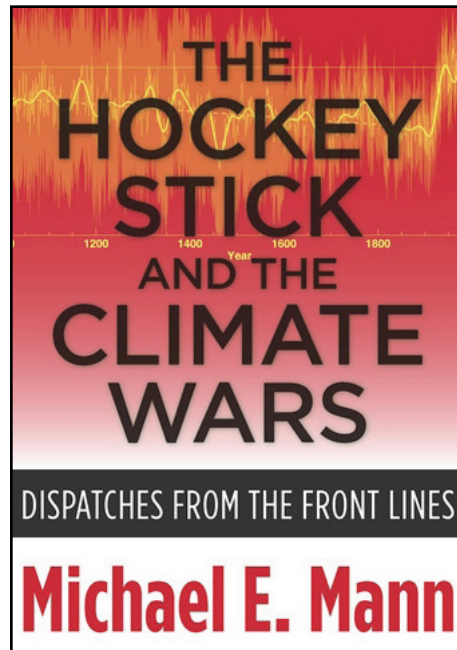
The book contains one sickening story after the other of malfeasance in these attempts to block corrective actions. Mann politely uses the term “disinformation” but I am not so charitable. Lying is what’s happening. Twisting evidence. Harassment. Intimidation. Even death threats. The goal is and always has been to keep uneducated people so confused that they will not demand action.

Mann explains that there are four pillars the deniers use, each has been debunked:

1. Climate models are crude, untested and unvalidated.
2. The instrumental record of global temperature is unreliable.
3. Other data contradict the claim that Earth is warming.
4. Even if Earth is warming, it could be due to natural factors.

Step by step and year by year, Mann provides documentation and footnotes to back up his statements and those of other maligned scientists whose lives are devoted to their research and the higher goal of showing what’s really going on with the global climate (contrasted with transient weather conditions).

In spite of prolific scientific statements, the book often reads like a novel, full of suspense and intrigue. These unfortunate researchers have wasted an



enormous amount of time defending their conclusions, time which could have been spent delving further into the intricacies of climate change.

On January 17, 2014, Mann wrote an editorial for *The New York Times* urging others, “If you see something, say something.” His first paragraph sums up the problem: “The overwhelming consensus among climate scientists [thousands, worldwide] is that human-caused climate change is happening. Yet a fringe minority of our populace clings to an irrational rejection of well-established science. This virulent strain of anti-science infects the halls of Congress, the pages of leading newspapers and what we see on TV, leading to the appearance of a debate where none should exist.”

Back to the book, Mann describes the ugly things he’s had to deal with: “Imagine how unpleasant it might be to have your private emails, text messages or phone conversations mined by your worst enemy for anything that, taken out of context, could be used to make you look bad. Then imagine what it would be like to be expected to defend each and every instance of sloppy word choice or ambiguous phrasing that could be found. This is the position in which climate scientists whose emails had been hacked found themselves.”

After years of anguish, Mann and his colleagues were vindicated of any misdeeds by Penn State (where he is a professor and director of the Earth System Science Center), the U.K.’s House of Commons Science and Technology select committee

and the Office of the Inspector General of the National Science Foundation, which had the final word on the matter in the scientific community “finding no research misconduct or other matter raised...this case is closed.”

Because of all the last-minute attacks and requests for instantaneous information by bureaucrats and other trouble-makers, the Climate Science Rapid Response Team was founded in 2010. This is a network of over 100 scientists ready to engage with the media in response to attacks and smears ([www.climaterapidresponse.org](http://www.climaterapidresponse.org)). Mann’s own blog is [realclimate.org](http://realclimate.org).

Mann’s concluding paragraph describes the continual threat to healthy scientific inquiry and the future of Planet Earth, “Climate change contrarians continue to launch hand grenades, the denial machine persists in churning out disinformation and the attacks against climate scientists — myself included — continue. Yet something is different now. The forces of climate change denial have, I believe, awakened a ‘sleeping bear.’ My fellow scientists will be fighting back and I look forward to joining them in this battle.”

My husband, John, and I had the pleasure of visiting Michael Mann on January 31<sup>st</sup>. He helped us figure out how best to communicate climate issues to the people in our networks. Our lives are devoted to educating and motivating ordinary citizens to take action to halt the downward spiral of conditions threatening all life.

John asked what can we do to persuade people to act and Mann replied, “Not some little thing that’s going to make them feel better.” We need to find more significant activities for them to do.

In terms of his general outlook, Mann said, “All you can do is move the needle in the right direction. If you spend too much time looking at the needle, it depresses you.” He told us that the “luxury” of his position is that he can be a conduit for putting people in touch with others in a way that can help everybody.

Related to The Go-Back Club, Mann inadvertently told us in regard to climate tipping points, people are “like a blind man walking randomly toward a cliff.” The only thing that will save him is to go backwards.

# DATE WITH A CLIMATE-CHANGE DENIER

By Megan Kimble

High Country News: Received February 14, 2014

He was tall and cute and the perfect amount of awkward. Our first date was on a balmy Tucson evening in January. I scootched back in my chair and crossed my legs beneath my sundress as he asked, “What do you write about?”

“Right now, I’m writing a lot about food.”

“Oooh!” he said. “Like restaurant reviews?”

“Well, sort of. I’m interested in how our food systems affect the climate.”

He nodded and thought this over. “Do you think this whole climate change thing is going to catch on?”

“What do you mean?”

“You know, ‘global warming?’” His voice wore italics and, though his hands didn’t leave the table, his fingers became bobbing quotation marks.

I opened my mouth and paused. He smiled that uncomfortable first-date smile and took a sip of his beer.

Hmm, I thought. Yes. The climate is changing, has changed and humans are central to the story. Sheets of ice are cleaving away from glaciers and more and more carbon dioxide and methane molecules are swarming through the atmosphere, heating it up and they will continue to do so whether or not the “idea” of global warming, you know, “catches on.”

My date took another sip of beer and stared at me with the blue eyes that had prompted me to give him my phone number in the first place.

“I think climate change already has caught on?” I said, hating how my voice rose into a question mark. “I think it’s happening? And I think a lot of people agree that, um, it’s a ... big deal,” I said.

“Hmm,” he said, and nodded, considering this. He smiled and in a teasing, flirtatious tone said, “So you’re all into that, the global warming stuff?”

Some believe that the climate deniers will just die out. Not many in my generation get riled up about interracial marriage, for



instance — it is, for most of us, entirely a non-issue — and many say that attitudes toward climate change could similarly shift with time. The academic term for old ideas dying along with old people is called “cohort replacement” and, according to this logic, all we have to do is wait.

According to this logic, however, an eligible young woman does not find herself on a date with a very cute 28-year-old man who puts “global warming” in quotation marks.

“Well ... I sort of don’t think climate change is something to be believed in,” I said haltingly. “I mean, it kind of ... is.” I hesitated, wondering, should I go further?

He changed the subject. “So you said you work at the University of Arizona?” he asked. “What do you do?”

I chuckled. “I work in the University’s Office of Sustainability.”

“Sweet! What do you do there? What exactly is sustainability?” he asked, all blinking blue eyes and lanky curiosity.

Finally, the date ended. I called my sister as I biked home across campus to tell her about my foray back into dating. We laughed — how did I find these people? He was 6-foot-4 to my 6-foot-1: a rare find. He was sweet and courteous: so much potential. He had a college degree!

“How did you meet him?” she asked.

“A coffee shop.”

“Climate deniers drink coffee?”

“Evidently.”

“You need a better screening process,” she said.

“How do you screen for ‘acceptance of climate change?’” I asked.

I rolled through the dust and heat of a 70-degree winter’s evening and wondered how I should have responded to his question. How do we talk about something as big as global warming on something so small as a first date? And yet — how can we not?

For those of us who live in the desert Southwest — indeed, for all of those who live in extreme climates around the world — it is impossible to ignore the fact that annual temperatures and precipitation levels have already swerved far away from the norm.

What can I say? Yes, climate change is a big and scary idea but there are all sorts of things we — no, I’m sorry, I’m afraid there will be no “we” after tonight — there are all sorts of things you can and should do to help work towards a solution.

The problem is that “believing” in climate change is not as simple as learning the facts. Psychologists have found that people absorb information selectively, picking and choosing those facts that fit into their already-established worldviews. Yet psychologists have also found that familiarity breeds fondness: Repeated exposure to a new idea leads to progressively lower fear and avoidance and even, eventually, sometimes, to acceptance.

Perhaps that Friday evening offered my blinking blue-eyed date the chance to ease his mind into the idea — the very big, scary idea — that our world is warming rapidly and we’d better do something about it.

But somebody else would have to offer him a second exposure to the concept.

*Megan Kimble runs, hikes and bikes around Tucson, where she’s a student in University of Arizona’s MFA program for creative nonfiction. Originally published in the December 10, 2012 issue of High Country News (hcn.org). Feel free to make a donation to High Country News and support independent, award-winning journalism like this at <http://www.hcn.org/support>. Photo from iStock.*

## Temperatures Rising

By Brian Kahn, excerpt

Climate Central: February 20, 2014

Talk about a hot streak. Last month was the fourth-warmest January since recordkeeping began in 1880. It was also the 347<sup>th</sup> consecutive month with above-average temperatures compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> century average, which has been fueled in

large part by climate change. That streak is one month shy of 29 straight years.

Global average temperatures were also among their top 10 warmest for the ninth straight month, according to data released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Global average temperatures over land and sea in January checked in at 1.17°F above the 20<sup>th</sup> century

average. This is the 38<sup>th</sup> consecutive January with above-normal temperatures and the warmest since 2007; Siberia was the most anomalously cold place on the planet, with temperatures running as much 9°F below the long-term average.

Read full story at <http://www.climatecentral.org/news/play-it-again-january-continues-globes-warm-trend-17097>.

## Tracking Fracking

### Anti-Fracking Activist Barred from 312.5 Square Miles of PA

By Alexander Reed Kelly  
Truthdig.com: February 2, 2014

Every week the Truthdig editorial staff selects a Truthdigger of the Week, a group or person worthy of recognition for speaking truth to power, breaking the story or blowing the whistle. It is not a lifetime achievement award. Rather, we're looking for newsmakers whose actions in a given week are worth celebrating.

Now, without a doubt, the physical mobility of Americans can be limited by corporations via the power of the state. Pennsylvania resident Vera Scroggins has been barred via a court injunction from 312.5 square miles of Pennsylvania land owned or leased by Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation — including hospitals, grocery stores and restaurants — for refusing to quit protesting her tracking of the Marcellus Shale, a rich deposit of oil beneath the northeastern part of the state, where she has lived for more than 20 years.

*The Guardian* reports that, "Court filings did not accuse Scroggins of violence or of causing harm to property and she has never been arrested or charged with trespass. She has not chained herself to machinery or staged sit-ins." Nonetheless, Cabot's managers, security contractors and lawyers have successfully pushed her off the land where they operate. For five years in those places Scroggins has shot more than 500 videos uploaded to YouTube, alerted health and environmental regulators to potential violations and organized bus tours for the likes of celebrities Yoko Ono and Susan Sarandon and Canadian elected officials.

"None of that activity by Scroggins or other activists was illegal or presented a public danger, according to Jason Legg, the District Attorney for Susquehanna County," *The Guardian* reports. "Even by Cabot's own admission, in court testimony last October, Scroggins seems to have been more nuisance than danger. Her biggest and most repeated offence, according to court testimony, appears to have been parking her car on access roads — and at times even on the narrow public county roads — at angles that required the big water tankers to swerve around her.

"Scroggins, who does not appear adverse to confrontation, was also insistent on talking to personnel on site. But in every instance cited by Cabot witnesses, she left the area within five or 10 minutes — sometimes after they threatened to call police." To ensure she avoids fines and arrest, Scroggins was forced to determine at a local courthouse what land she could and couldn't travel on; Cabot refused to provide her with the information. Her willingness to confront the officials who oppose her have earned her a reputation for pugnacity. But she rejects the idea that she should be "nice."

Scroggins is quoted in *The Guardian* as saying: "I am doing this as nicely as I feel is warranted. I have other concerned citizen friends who play passive and they don't get anything done more than I do. They are just in the background. ... They are playing passive and nobody even hears about them. Those who want to play that womanly role, they can play it. I don't have to." As for Cabot and her critics in the community, Scroggins said: "They can just get used to it."

The consequences to civil disobedience imposed by those at which it is aimed are almost always costly. For Vera Scroggins, it's made her an open-air prisoner in her hometown.

For sacrificing her physical freedom in a country that claims to venerate it, we honor her as our Truthdigger of the Week.

### Eminent Domain Gas Pipeline Fight Headed for Court

By Scott Beveridge, *excerpt*  
*Washington Observer-Reporter*



WASHINGTON, Pennsylvania (AP) — Ron and Sallie Cox's house in North Strabane Township is nestled behind a lush forest they are fighting to protect from a new natural gas pipeline inching toward their property.

The couple are so adamant about preserving their land that they have found themselves among more than two dozen property owners in Washington County involved in a complicated legal battle challenging Sunoco Pipeline's right to cross their land.

"Its a disaster," Sallie Cox said last week as her attorney prepared their case against the Philadelphia-based company's claims that it's a public utility and has a right to impose eminent domain powers to enter private property for the 50-foot-wide project. ...

"The property owners have their full right to use their property as they wish," said Harrisburg attorney Michael F. Faherty, who represents the Coxes and nine other property owners. Faherty argued...that Sunoco needs to obtain eminent domain authorization for the pipeline from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, claiming the state court has no jurisdiction in the case...

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### Prosecutor Eyes Gas Royalty Check Complaints

By Marc Levy (AP), *excerpt*  
*The Daily News* (Huntingdon, PA): February 17, 2014

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania — Following a request by a state senator from northern Pennsylvania (Senator Gene Yaw), state Attorney General Kathleen Kane is reviewing whether her office has jurisdiction to investigate complaints into the costs that natural gas exploration giant Chesapeake Energy Corp. deducts before it pays royalties to the owners of land where it drills. ...

Yaw said his office has been inundated with complaints, primarily involving the deduction of post-production costs by the Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake Energy. ... "The words commonly used by landowners to describe what is happening are 'cheating,' 'stealing' and 'fraud,'" Yaw wrote. It is a significant consumer protection issue for hundreds of constituents..."

In a letter Governor Tom Corbett wrote to Chesapeake Energy's president and CEO, Doug Lawler, suggesting that he has complained to Lawler several times about the company's deduction of post-production costs he wrote, "Deduction of post-production costs, in a manner which seemingly few if any other operators in Pennsylvania utilize, has caused a significant erosion of the trust and goodwill the natural gas industry has established with Pennsylvania leaseholders and local communities."

# Letters and Emails from our Members



Hi Iona,

I very much enjoyed reading your February newspaper. My favorite article was the one about the Maryland man who went back to the land. I really admire all the work and growing he does to be self-sufficient.

Although I will eventually buy some land and grow a lot of my own food, maybe I can encourage others to show respect and love for the land as well.

Also, I did not know that Disney supported fracking. Good grief! I'm glad the program was cancelled!

I certainly agree with the article on materialism 'delivering despair.' I've seen people go out and buy something just because it gave them some fleeting satisfaction because they felt empty inside.

True happiness and joy come from within us and, when we achieve that, we can then focus more on community and giving. True prosperity and abundance also come from within. When you feel abundant within, that will become your outer reality and it won't take as much effort.

I'm still working on my own 'abundance within.'

Thanks, Iona!

Doug Davis, Ohio

Dear Iona,

**Subject:** Interesting item on rising sea levels: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/science/earth/grappling-with-sea-level-rise-sooner-not-later.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/science/earth/grappling-with-sea-level-rise-sooner-not-later.html?_r=0)

**Re:** Article about Rolexes and despair.

You are doing a great job! Thank you.

Do Rolex watches work under water?

Even if they do, they could slip off in the current or after trench rot sets in!

Sandy Chilcote, Newfoundland, Canada

Good Evening, Iona!

What a coincidence! I just stopped by the post office to mail a New Year greeting card to you. Of course it is in Chinese letters. I quoted it from Laoze. Meaning? When we do our best sincerely and earnestly we can reach Tao. I know that you are doing your best in the work for human beings.

Daegu? Yes, it was spelled Taegu. But nowadays it is spelled Daegu. You remind me of the Korean War and my old days as a refugee. The United Nations Forces retreated on January 4<sup>th</sup> from Seoul. And I

was one of the refugees. We left Seoul to go South.

It was really cold and it snowed. Where did I sleep? I slept in a barn or sometimes in an empty house whose owners left for the South.

Where did I eat? Anywhere possible. Sometimes on the street. My mother set up a temporary kitchen on the street on cold days. And she built fires to cook rice.

Spoons and chopsticks? Those things were a luxury. We had to use natural spoons: Fingers.

Bath? We could not even wash our face for several days.

War? Much worse than Hell. I still have some kind of trauma of the war in my heart. Thank you for thinking of me.

Pyong Roh, Korea

Dear Iona [*second email from overseas*],

Today is unseasonably warm and some people put on shorts. February 4<sup>th</sup> is the very first day of Spring by our lunar calendar here in Korea.

I thank you so much for your work and effort to publish an Internet newspaper.

I read an interesting article about livestock farming in *The Economist*. According to the article, producing a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of grain takes 1,500 liters of water: a kilo of beef takes 15,000 liters. Domestic animals also belch and fart amazing quantities of greenhouse gases and when the jungle is cut down for pasture, carbon emissions rise. In all, livestock farming produces 8-18% of greenhouse gas emissions. We have to reduce the consumption of meat in order to reduce greenhouse gases, I believe.

I will go to Taiwan on February 10<sup>th</sup> to see the nature loving campaign in Taiwan. I will stay there for a week. When I come back I will report what I see in Taiwan. I would like to be your foreign correspondent for The Go-Back Club if you permit.

Pyong Roh, Korea

Hello,

How is everything with you? I see you are back to involvement, maybe not so intensely as in the past. It is hard to stay away, isn't it?

When we have our Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators conference this March, it will mark 10 years on the board for me, seven as president. I

am passing the job on. Ed McCrea, who is actually a past president and their first CEO of the national organization, NAAEE, will be our new president. Can't do better than that kind of experience.

I am going to concentrate on "beyond the borders of PA" work. With the other state leaders from the states and D.C. in the Mid-Atlantic Region we continue our efforts to work together for the good of environmental education in the area. We just submitted a \$265,000 grant to EPA.

Ruth Roperti, Pennsylvania

**Submitted by Angel Smith  
Clearville, Pennsylvania**

From: Mike Benard [mailto:mikebenard@rochester.rr.com]

Sent: January 22, 2014

Subject: **Pipeline Opposition Mounts Across States**

1) Wherever Spectra Energy goes nowadays, its reputation precedes it. More and more, folks in the U.S. & Canada know about Spectra Energy's lack of responsiveness and ongoing problems at existing facilities. Words and deeds don't match up and people are learning fast.

2) There is growing opposition to the energy industry/government attitude of "more pipelines all the time." Local folks are running the numbers and concluding that the growing web of pipelines is not for the "public good" but for the corporate/government business plan.

One such example is the proposed Sable Trail pipeline from Spectra Energy and FERC. Proposed to run through three states — Georgia, Florida, Alabama — an "interstate" and energetic grassroots opposition immediately rose up.

Check out: Pipeline Opposition Mounts <http://www.shalepropertyrights.com/blog/?p=2023>

[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** I received the following email after sending my notes from *The Pipeline and The Paradigm* to our Go-Back Club Action Alerts list. If any of our readers would like a copy, please email Iona at [gobackclub@pa.net](mailto:gobackclub@pa.net).]

Excellent statement and notes, Iona—yes, keep fighting! I will pass this around.

Sandy Chilcote, Newfoundland, Canada

# Iona's Column: Generosity Saves Trees

By Iona Conner

You can call me Grandma Lorax\*. I am exceedingly stubborn about my use of wood, even with the pencils I use to write drafts of my columns. One is actually made from recycled newspapers. Another is unpainted. When I taught first grade many years ago, I was astonished by the amount of paint the children chewed off their pencils. I have hand-cranked sharpeners as there's no point in using electricity to make a point.

Most of our furniture is old, some even from our grandparents — and we are grandparents ourselves. Whenever I find myself needing another wood product, I first try to find it used by looking at Goodwill's inventory, flea markets or yard sales.

That's what I was doing when I wanted to set up a little space in the "loft" above our garage for my writing.

One day I set out to find a small desk or table. First, I went to the closest thrift store (about two miles away). No luck. Then four yard sales on the way to Goodwill. No luck. Goodwill. No luck. I was getting discouraged and my husband even suggested trying to find a new, unpainted desk at one of those box stores — Heaven forbid!

After spotting a young woman apparently closing down her sidewalk sale, where I saw a table as we whizzed past, we made a U-turn.

"Is this for sale?" I asked.

"You may have it."

"How much?"

"You may have it," she repeated.

I was stunned. A huge smile spread across my face. This kind of generosity is seen less frequently these days in our little town in rural Pennsylvania, which was already a poor area and has been hit hard by the recession with numerous plants shutting down. Even the sewing factory where I used to work closed leaving 40 of us without jobs.

The woman on the sidewalk was pleased with my enthusiasm. I could tell. I had finally found my used table — and it was free. When I explained that my husband (in the passenger seat wearing protective sunglasses) had just had cataract surgery and couldn't help me load the table into my car, she asked me to step aside and loaded it by herself. What a gift!

My love of and respect for trees goes way back to elementary school when I first learned of their amazing way of



*Trees and forests are one of the major ways our planet can soak up excess carbon dioxide and create new oxygen. The more forests and trees we can save, the better chances we have of slowing down climate change.*

**Photo from clip art.**

transforming carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to pure oxygen for us and all the other living creatures who rely on that invisible gas to survive. This knowledge doesn't even encompass the beauty and serenity one finds in the woods or just gazing at a single tree.

When I started seriously studying the environment, I read about other activists risking their lives to protect old-growth forests out West. I recall sitting in my Shaklee leader's living room with a group of suburban women discussing our dreams for all the money we were going to make selling those products.

I kept quiet and listened as the others described fancy cars, bigger homes, extraordinary vacations.

When it was my turn, I told them I would use my earnings to fly out West and join the action, yet still have enough money to post bail if I got arrested and then fly home again. Nobody said anything. I still remember that silence.

Well, I never made much money as a Shaklee saleswoman and by now that dream has faded and been replaced by

dreaming up other ways of saving trees, like writing this column, which I hope inspires you to think seriously and act creatively in reducing your own use of forest products.

You, too, can become a Lorax.

\*The Lorax by Dr. Seuss is a classic children's story with a lesson for all of us. The Lorax is a little creature who speaks for the trees as the greedy Onceler keeps cutting down Truffula Trees to make idiotic Thneeds. I love that book so much that I've read it to hundreds of children and even college students on Earth Day a few years ago. The book is better than the movie, in my mind. Curl up with your little ones and read it. You'll be amazed that Theodor Seuss Geisel foretold our current problems back in 1971.

*If you discover ways to save trees and would like to share them with others through this column or join the free Go-Back Club, contact Iona at [gobackclub@pa.net](mailto:gobackclub@pa.net) or 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255.*