

Sunday
POCONO RECORD SUNDAY
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Natural gas rush stirs concerns for environment

Marcellus shale in N.Y. could forever change the upper Delaware watershed

By **MARY ESCH**
 Associated Press Writer
 ALBANY, N.Y. — Advanced drilling techniques that blast millions of gallons of water into 400-million-year-old shale formations a mile underground are opening up “unconventional” gas fields touted as a key to the nation’s energy future.

These deposits, where natural gas is so tightly locked in deep rocks that it’s costly and complicated to extract, include the Barnett shale in Texas, the Fayetteville of Arkansas, and the Haynesville of Louisiana. But the mother lode is the Marcellus shale underlying the Appalachians.

“This gas well drilling could transform the heavily forested upper Delaware watershed from a wild and scenic natural habitat into an ugly industrial landscape that is forever changed.”

Geologists call the Marcellus a “super giant” gas field. Penn State geoscientist Terry Engelder believes it could supply the natural gas needs of the United States for 14 years.

But as word spread over the past year that a 54,000-square-mile shale field from southern New York to West Virginia promised to yield a trillion dollars worth of gas, making millions of local landowners, environmental alarms were sounded.

Would gas wells damage water wells? Would chemicals poison groundwater? Would fabled trout streams be sucked dry? Would the pristine upstate reservoirs that supply drinking water to New York City be befouled?

“This gas well drilling could trans-

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Our song for you



MARIA HORN

Gary Wehrkamp, producer and co-writer of ‘Christmastime in the Poconos,’ coaches vocalists Ellen Ryan, center, and Marge Diamond as they rehearse at Wehrkamp’s New Horizons Music Studios in Snydersville in October.

Area musicians write and record Pocono-themed Christmas tune to raise money for Monroe’s children in need

By **HOWARD FRANK**
 Pocono Record Writer

A group of local music royalty evoked the healing powers of song recently to help children in need.

Pocono-area artists gathered at New Horizons Music Studios in Snydersville to put the finishing touches on “Christmastime in the Poconos.”

The group, who call themselves The Wishmakers, recorded the closing chorus to the new, Pocono-themed Christmas song to benefit Monroe County Children and Youth Services.

The idea started small, according to Gary Wehrkamp, artist, producer and studio owner.

A CHRISTMAS WISH

Band: The Wishmakers

Song: “Christmastime in the Poconos”

Written by: Gary Wehrkamp, Bryan Schmidt and Ed Mason

Release date: Monday, Nov. 24

Benefits: Monroe County Children and Youth Services Children’s Christmas Fund

The song will be available for PayPal downloads or mail order at the Web site www.thewishmakers.org.

Can’t wait? You can pick up a copy of the CD at Main Street Jukebox, James Diamond Jewelry, Old Mill Pub, Sarah Street Bar and Grille, and Callie’s Kitchen.

“Bryan Schmidt, a friend and piano student of mine, approached me in early August. He had an idea of writing a song about Christmas and relating it to the Poconos. I was immediately interested.

“My first question to him was, ‘Who was producing the song?’ He shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘How about you?’ So I said let’s have a meeting and see what we come up with,” Wehrkamp said.

Schmidt, Ed Mason and Wehrkamp went over a sketch of the song. Schmidt and Mason began reworking the lyrics. Wehrkamp shaped the

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Hard times, hard drinking: For people who can’t cope, economy can be trigger

By **HOWARD FRANK**
 Pocono Record Writer
 Three drunks passed out on local roads in three days: Not what police had in mind when they say don’t drink and drive.

On Friday, Nov. 7, a man was found at 4:20 a.m. sleeping, with his Chevrolet truck still running and in gear in the middle of Lower Swift Gap Road near Chestnut Ridge Road in Eldred Township. Lehigh state police said the 41-year-old Kunkletown man showed signs of intoxication and was taken to police barracks for a breath test.

At 2 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, a Kunkletown man was cited for public drunkenness for sleeping on Route 534 in Penn Forest Township in Carbon County.

The next day, Sunday, Nov. 9, a Tobyhanna man was cited for public drunkenness after police found him sleeping in his car on Simmons Road, just off of Route 196 in Coolbaugh Township. He had told police he had been drinking in



“Alcohol has always been the primary drug of choice in the county. Opiates are a close second.”

JAMIE DRAKE
 Carbon Monroe Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission

Stroudsburg with friends.

A disturbing trend, perhaps due to recent economic turmoil and an increase in unemployment?

Not so fast, a mental health expert said. It’s far more complicated than that, and more difficult to treat.

Although it would be easy to blame these incidents on the troubled economic

times we live in, there are more fundamental issues at play, according to Jamie Drake, the treatment program manager for the Carbon Monroe Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission, a private, nonprofit organization for drug and alcohol problems in Monroe, Carbon and Pike counties.

“I definitely do think there are some correlations,” Drake said. “When there are

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TODAY'S FORECAST



Windy and colder with flurries.
 High: 39 to 44
 Low: 25 to 31
Weather, B8

TODAY'S FEATURE

TOUGHENING UP FOR WINTER

Despite the Poconos' harsh winters, when most of the area's forests are bare and brown, evergreens provide the area with some greenery in the coldest of months. Read John Serrao's column, **Page D1**.

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