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To the editor, The longer we refrain from hydrofracking in New York State the more facts come to light that argue for restraint, caution and inaction.

On Sunday, 12/12/10, Sixty Minutes did a feature story on the country of Brazil. Prominent in the introduction, along with population figures and land mass were these strategic indices: they have supplanted gasoline imports with homegrown (and sustainable) sugar based fuel, and Brazil controls 13% of the world's fresh water. Thursday's (12/23) Binghamton Press informed us of the discovery of hexavalent chromium, a carcinogen, in the water supplies of 31 American cities. Ruining water supplies is easy. In Monday's (12/20) Binghamton Press appeared a sad story about what hydrofracking has wrought in an area over the Haynesville Shale deposits in Louisiana, Arkansas and East Texas. The story was familiar: bad water, escaped gas requiring evacuations, dying cows. Of special note was this: The Haynesville Shale is estimated to contain 250 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. "enough to power the United States for more than a decade..."

Put this knowledge together with the fact that from Waverly to Vestal, the Counties of Tioga and Broome sit atop a "sole source" aquifer, one of fewer than 100 designated as such. What follows is from the U.S. EPA web site concerning our aquifer from the Federal Register Notice Volume 50, NO 9, Page 2025. Of particular interest and concern are the findings. "1. The Clinton Street-Ballpark Valley Aquifer System of the Broome and Tioga County areas is the "sole source" of drinking water for approximately 127,555 residents of Vestal, Johnson City, Endicott, Nichols, Waverly and Owego, New York."

It continues, "Since ground water contamination can be difficult or impossible to reverse and since the aquifer in this area is solely relied upon for drinking purposes by the population of the Broome and Tioga County areas, contamination of the aquifer could pose a significant threat to public health."

Now, I know, (because the flacks for the natural gas extraction industry constantly inform me), that no instance of a well or aquifer contamination has ever been traced to a

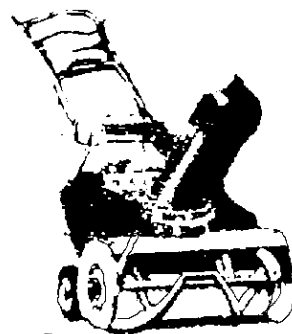
particular activity by a particular well driller. I recall this is the same argument made for decades by the tobacco lobby. It appears to require the "Marlboro Man" speaking through a trach tube, or their own well being spoiled to make believers of some people. If hydrofracking begins on a grand scale, the nearly inevitable contamination of the aquifer would negate the dubious prospects for great wealth (to be shared by all inhabitants of the area?- think again!) Any gains would be more than offset by the costs of cleanup. Of course, if cleanup is "impossible" as the U.S. Government cautions, there is no cost. There is only catastrophic loss.

The point is we cannot afford to, nor must we imperil our water. There is enough gas in the Haynesville Shale and Pennsylvania's portion of the Marcellus (in addition other formations already in "play") to power the entire country until either a fail-safe method of extraction is invented, or renewable energy sources are developed, as in Brazil. In the meanwhile, the fresh, uncontaminated water of the Southern Tier increases in value day by day. We can't live without fresh water. No one can. It is the constraining factor in much of the world. In time we will come to understand it is our most precious resource. It is more valuable than shale gas. And, as Will Rogers said in another vein, "they aren't making any more of it."

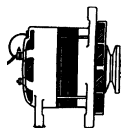
The other obvious benefit to delay is that both strategic resources; gas representing energy and water representing sustainability would be in strategic reserve. No one is going to steal the gas from beneath the land, and we cannot afford to allow the water to be contaminated. We can afford the luxury of time, as both resources increase in value as both become scarcer. If water is truly the more limited and valuable commodity as I believe it is and will forever be; we will have done right both by ourselves and future inhabitants of our Counties and New York State. This is the winning strategy for our State, our Country and our selves.

Mark Trabucco, Owego

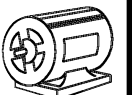
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