

This letter, in various forms, appeared in 7 papers:

TIMES HERALD-RECORD

Nov. 20, 2010

Middletown, NY

Daily Freeman

Kingston, NY

Daily Star

Oneonta, NY

The **COURIER**

Elmira, NY

The Record

Troy, NY

New Paltz **TIMES**

SAUGERTIES **TIMES**

Outraged by fracking

As a State University at Albany junior and a member of the student government, I was outraged about plans by gas companies to break up rock formations in up-state New York by using poisonous chemicals to release natural gas deposits.

Hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” has already affected communities elsewhere, leaving people sick, animals losing fur, and water so polluted that it can ignite when a match is held to it. This is the water that men, women, and children depend upon for life, itself. And now, these companies have their sights on New York!

Well aware of residents struggling to make ends meet, they are intent on seducing people into leasing their lands for fracking, by promising big cash returns. The very idea that rivers and streams—our indispensable water systems—may be irretrievably polluted in the pursuit of profit is monumentally ugly.

Eli Siegel, critic, philosopher, and founder of Aesthetic Realism, explained decades ago that profit economics is based on contempt for people: “the addition to self through the lessening of something else.” It is sheer contempt that allows a select few to profit while polluting and putting at tremendous risk the health of millions.

As editor Ellen Reiss explains in *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*: “The profit motive—however spirited and daring it’s made to look—is, by definition, the motive to use people and earth for one’s personal profit. And if that’s your motive, you cannot be finicky about such matters as people’s well-being, life, death.”

When contempt is studied, criticized, and understood by the politicians, educators, and the citizens of America, our economy will benefit all Americans, not just a few. We will have an economy that thrives, including a responsible energy policy that will not destroy our natural resources.

— MICHAEL BLAUSTEIN, Albany