

## Janet and Fred McIntyre Butler County, PA

Janet and Fred McIntyre of Connoquenessing Township have two grown children and an adopted child. ***Before they were allowed to complete the adoption process, they were required to have their well water tested. Results from a 2004 test showed their water was in good condition. "They told me [our water] was so good that I could sell it," said Fred.***

On the evening of January 23, 2011, Janet and her family (including her two grown children and grandchildren) had dinner together, the meal having been prepared using tap water pumped from her well. In the middle of the night, Janet received a frantic call from her daughter whose nine-month old baby was projectile vomiting and had diarrhea running out of her diaper and down her legs. By the next day, Janet and her husband woke up feeling ill and started projectile vomiting as well.

Janet's and her husband's achiness, nausea and bouts of vomiting persisted for a week. During this time, she also received a call from her son who was experiencing the same symptoms. On the night of January 29 into the early hours of January 30, Fred went into the kitchen to get a glass of water, and turned on the faucet to discover the water was foaming. He tested the bathroom sink, the tub and the toilet and all three also produced foamy, soapy-feeling water.

The next day, a friend brought Janet and Fred several gallons of bottled water. Their health only started to improve after about a day of drinking the bottled water.

Janet called Rex Energy, and they came out to her house to do a water test on February 3. Janet had heard a rumor that state law required Rex Energy to report a possible contamination to the DEP within five days, but five days passed and she received no notice – so Janet called the DEP herself and explained the issue.

Rex Energy had never reported the incident, the DEP representative told her.

On February 8, Rex had a water buffalo sent to Janet and Fred's house. On February 10, the DEP sent someone to Janet's house to do a bailer test on her standing well water. The DEP representative said if he found anything suspicious, the DEP would be back to test the wellhead.

Janet came home on Monday to find the DEP sitting in her driveway.

The DEP had discovered high levels of iron, manganese and toluene in her well, "but that didn't require [Rex Energy] to provide me with water," said Janet.

Janet also had three dogs at this time. Two of them refused to drink the tap water, but one continued to drink it. In late January, when Janet and her husband fell ill, so did her third dog. ***“Fred and I would have to lay him on a sheet and carry him outside because he was too weak to stand up on his own. . . I came home on February 14<sup>th</sup> to find him lying on the floor, unable to move. He started gagging and throwing up blood – he [even had] diarrhea with blood in it. By the end of the night, he was gone.”***

Meanwhile, while Janet was still waiting for the official results from the DEP, the water company called her sometime in mid-March to say it was taking her water buffalo away. She told them she didn't have the DEP results yet, but they said they had no choice – Rex Energy had told them to do it. Before she received a DEP letter dated March 23 explaining there was an ongoing investigation of her water, her water buffalo had been removed.

Janet and her family had no choice but to resume drinking their well water. On the morning of April 4, she received a call from the DEP and was verbally told the level of manganese in her water was 194,000 micrograms/liter, iron was at 36,600 micrograms/liter, and toluene was registering at 0.372 micrograms/liter.

According to the DEP, the acceptable levels of these materials are 0.00005 micrograms of manganese/liter, 0.0003 micrograms of iron/liter and *no acceptable levels of toluene in drinking water.*

The DEP returned to Janet's property on April 4 to take another water sample from her well. When she received the results in May, she was told her substance levels had reached pre-drill levels, but later investigation showed the DEP never retested for toluene even though it had been three times the acceptable amount. The results she was given in May – which led the DEP to conclude her well water was safe for consumption – did not include a second test of her toluene level.

On August 1, Janet and Fred noticed that their water had a harsh stench – “like rotten eggs, chemicals and gas. It made you want to throw up. Everyone would know if you turned the water on because the smell would spread through the whole house.” The smell persisted throughout the week, and on Friday, August 5 Janet discovered that three bowls she'd left sitting in her kitchen sink had become discolored.

She and her family started drinking bottled water again, and she called the DEP on August 8 to complain.

The DEP came back to test her water on August 9, and Janet begged Rex Energy for another water buffalo. Rex refused her a water buffalo, but provided her with several cases of drinking water. “They make you feel so stupid,” said Janet. “They say, ‘There's no one around here who has this problem, but you.’”

Janet also smelled intense chemical smells in the outdoor air at certain times, especially when the gas wells were being flared. “It was flaring the week we were sick,” she said. Recently it happened again. “Last Friday [Sept. 2] they were flaring another well – it’s way farther away from us but it smelled putrid,” Janet said. “I had a scientist from Duquesne University here over the weekend and he said, ‘My god – what’s that smell?’ You stand outside for five minutes and you get a throbbing headache and your eyes are all red by the time you come in.”

Janet visited her family doctor on Thursday, August 25 and showed her physician that her fingernails were curling under and that she’d been experiencing hair loss – symptoms which her grown daughter was also experiencing. Her doctor informed her that both were signs of arsenic poisoning.

A representative from the DEP called Janet on the morning of August 29 or 30 and said he was going to take another water sample from her well. Janet asked for a reason, and after persistent questioning was told there was an issue with her water. ***The DEP rep said high levels of chloromethane (752 micrograms/liter) and t-butyl alcohol (5,440 micrograms/liter) were discovered in the results to her previous water test. According to the scientist from Duquesne, the level of both substances should be zero.***

***Janet told the DEP representative what her doctor said about possible arsenic poisoning, and asked him to test her water for arsenic. He told Janet, “That’s not a normal thing we test for” and refused to test for it.*** Janet is currently trying to locate a toxicologist so she can be tested to find out the level of heavy metals in her blood.

Janet and Fred are currently consulting with an independent water tester who took a sample of water from their well on August 26.

“When they don’t fess up to what they’re doing, that’s what makes me angriest,” said Janet. “At least say, ‘We made a mistake,’ but they won’t.”