

# LABOR OF LOVE

Couple completes restoration of historic house and barn.

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SUNDAY,  
JULY 20,  
2014

# Observer-Reporter

OUR 205TH YEAR, WASHINGTON, PA

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INSIDE



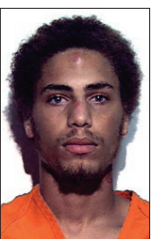
**2013 Miss Rain Day reflects**  
Page B2

## Area man arrested for alleged assault

*Police: Uniontown resident used infant daughter as shield*

By KATHIE O. WARCO  
Staff writer  
kuwarco@observer-reporter.com

California police arrested a Uniontown man Friday afternoon after he allegedly assaulted the driver and a passenger of a vehicle, almost causing it to crash with his 2-month-old daughter inside.



Lewis

Da'quan Laguant Lewis, 19, was getting into what police called a domestically motivated argument with the other driver and a passenger traveling in the 100 block of California Drive about 2:30 p.m.

Lewis is accused of punching the two while the vehicle was in motion. Police said Lewis almost caused the vehicle to crash while his daughter was sitting in a car seat in the backseat.

When police arrived, Lewis allegedly used his daughter as a shield while he reportedly resisted the efforts of officers to take him into custody.

Lewis, who was bleeding from the altercation with the two people in the vehicle, reportedly smeared his blood all over the rear partition of the cruiser. Police said he reportedly attempted to write the word "innocent" on the partition. Lewis was taken to Monongahela Valley Hospital for treatment of his injury.

The driver and passenger, whom police did not identify, were evaluated at the scene by emergency medical personnel but refused treatment. Lewis was arraigned before District Judge Gary Havelka on two counts of simple assault and one count each of resisting arrest, endangering the welfare of children, institutional vandalism, disorderly conduct and harassment. He was placed in Washington County jail on \$25,000 bond. A preliminary hearing is set for July 28 before District Judge Joshua Kanalis.

# Monitoring air quality

*Health group provides devices to residents near Marcellus sites*

By EMILY PETSKO  
Staff writer  
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Mickey Gniadek remembers the exact day when he stepped outside his Finleyville home and felt like a fish out of water. It was Dec. 4, 2013.

Gniadek, who had no pre-existing conditions, gasped for air and nearly collapsed from what he believes was a suffocating mix of gases in the atmosphere.

"When I came out the door I noticed there was a heavy white cloud that just hung across (the property). ... It smelled very acidic," said Gniadek, who lives on Cardox Road.

Gniadek never learned what caused the incident, but he hopes to glean new findings from an air-quality monitor placed inside his home. More than 100 people in Washington County have received an air monitor, free of cost, from a public health and research group called the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project.

Ryan Grode, environmental health educator with the McMurray-based SWPA-EHP, said ongoing research focuses on residents who live near natural gas wells and compressor stations in Washington County and, to a lesser extent, Greene County and Morgantown, W.Va.

Grode said the group is "not really out to point the finger," but they feel it's important to study any potential links between Marcellus Shale industry activity and spikes in air pollution in surrounding areas.

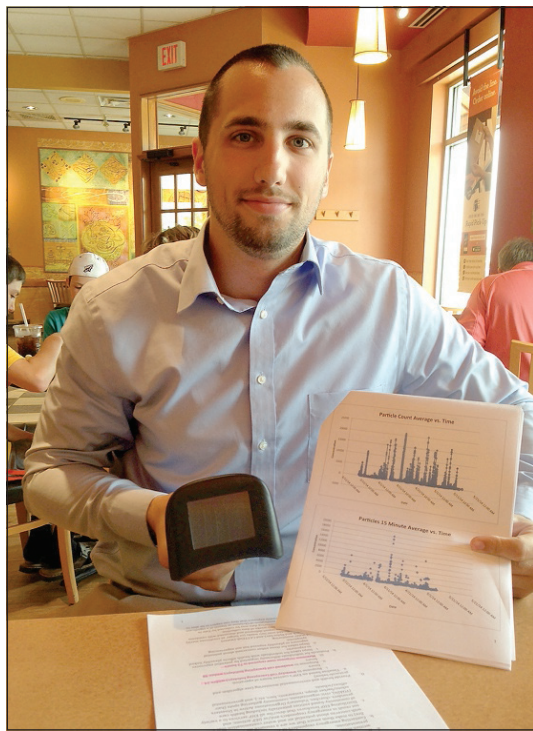
"The important thing to know with our organization is that we're not an activist group. ... We're actually just a public health organization," Grode said.

### Monitoring the air

The group uses Speck air monitors, which were built in Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE lab and provided to



Above, Mickey Gniadek of Finleyville holds an air-quality monitor he received from the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project. Gniadek and his wife, Sabine, live next to a natural gas drilling site, shown below. At left, Ryan Grode, environmental health educator with the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project, holds an air-quality monitor used to detect particulate matter and displays the results from one of the monitors placed in a participant's home.



PHOTOS BY EMILY PETSKO  
Observer-Reporter

SWPA-EHP for distribution. Once an air monitor is plugged into an outlet, it takes a reading of particulate matter concentrations every second of the day for two to four weeks.

Those readings are displayed on the monitor in real time and then are transferred to a database for analysis. The results, which are provided to

participating residents, show any major spikes in particulate matter and contain graphs with 30-minute and hourly averages.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, particulate matter is a "complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets" including acids like

nitrites and sulfates, organic chemicals, metals and soil and dust particles.

Larger particles, or a higher concentration of particulate matter, can cause health problems when the particles enter the lungs and even the bloodstream.

Any reading above a 5,000 count for particulate

matter is considered "very unhealthy" on the Speck monitor. Some participants with air monitors had results with spikes above 14,000, but Grode acknowledged that "just because it's a spike, (it) doesn't mean that we're saying it's from the industry."

Please see Air, Page A2



# Officials try to secure Ukraine plane crash site

By PETER LEONARD  
AND EVGENIY MALOLETKA  
Associated Press

HRABOVE, Ukraine — International monitors moved gingerly Saturday through fields reeking of the decomposing corpses that fell from a Malaysian airliner shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine, trying to secure the sprawling site in hopes that a credible investigation can be conducted.

But before inspectors ever reach the scene, doubts arose about whether evidence was being compromised.

The Ukrainian government and separatist rebels accuse each other of firing a surface-to-air missile at the Boeing 777 with almost 300 people aboard. Many see the hand of Russia, either for its

INSIDE

**Without radar, missile may not have identified jet. PAGE A3**

suspected support of the insurgents or perhaps for firing the missile itself.

The government in Kiev said militiamen removed 38 bodies from the crash site near the Russian border and taken them to the rebel-held city of Donetsk. It said the remains were transported with help from specialists with distinct Russian accents.

The rebels are also "seeking large transports to carry away plane fragments to Russia," the Ukrainian government said Saturday.

In Donetsk, separatist leader Alexander Borodai denied any bodies were



Emergency workers carry the body of a victim at the crash site of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 near the village of Hrabove, eastern Ukraine, Saturday.

transferred or that the rebels had in any way interfered with the work of observers. He said he encouraged the involvement of the international community in assisting with the cleanup before the

bodies deteriorate further.

Ukraine called on Moscow to insist that the pro-Russia rebels grant international experts the ability to conduct a thorough, impartial investigation into the downing of the

plane, echoing a demand that President Barack Obama issued a day earlier from Washington.

The jet flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur carried 298 passengers and crew from 13 countries. More than half were Dutch.

On Saturday, in the village of Hrabove, one body was seen still strapped into an airline seat, with bare toes peeking out under long jeans. Another body was flung face-up into a field of blue flowers.

Treatment of the victims' remains, left in the open air under a hot summer sun punctuated by bursts of rain, provoked outrage and distress.

"The news we got today of the bodies being dragged around, of the site not being

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A thunderstorm in the area. High 79. Low 60. Complete weather, PAGE B8

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# Burgettstown couple facing another charge of child endangerment

## Witness: 4-year-old was unsupervised, not wearing clothes

By KATHIE O. WARCO  
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A Burgettstown couple currently awaiting trial on a charge of endangering the welfare of children are now facing a second charge after their young daughter was reportedly found last month running naked on a borough street.

Brittany Lynn Whipkey, 30, and Leonard Weiser, 22, both of 136 Center Ave., will be charged by McDonald police after a resident reportedly spotted the 4-year-old girl on Center Avenue June 23.

The witness told police she was driving in the 100 block of Center when the girl jumped out from behind some bushes. The woman told police she almost hit the girl with her car. She told police the girl was not wearing any clothing and she was not being supervised.

The witness then saw the door open at 136 Center. She yelled inside but no adults came to the door. She also tried knocking on several other doors at neighboring homes. She also tried to get

the girl to come to her, but she ran away, police said.

Police went to the home and saw several children standing in the doorway. The children told police their parents were home.

Whipkey and Weiser told police they were watching their children from inside the living room. Whipkey told police she let the 4-year-old go across the road to get diapers from her vehicle and that she was watching the girl.

Whipkey's 7-year-old daughter told police her younger sister did run out onto the road and that she had just put clothing on.

The two were charged last September after the three girls were seen unsupervised on the street. One of the young girls was wearing only a diaper. Whipkey, at the time, told police her oldest daughter unlocked the door and the younger two followed her out. She also told police she was not sure what time she woke up but admitted that she had not checked on the children. Weiser told police he was sleeping and not aware the girls left the house.

The two were ordered held for court in May on the September charges. The new charges will be filed at the office of District Judge Gary Havelka.

# Air

Continued from Page One

Indoor pollutants – such as cooking with oil, or vacuuming – also could be contributing factors. Grode said the group is more interested in the prolonged spikes, especially ones that occur overnight when most people are sleeping. He said, for example, a spike above 4,000 that lasts for six hours likely indicates an outside pollutant.

The group said its primary goal is to address public health. A nurse practitioner on staff visits any participating residents with medical concerns. The group also recommends the use of air purifiers to keep homes free of pollutants.

David Brown, a public health toxicologist with SW-PA-EHP who works in Connecticut, said the group is looking at different factors in relation to natural gas drilling. Brown said he is comparing particulate readings near different Marcellus Shale facilities, and also analyzing variables such as proximity to industry activity and the time of day spikes occur.

"There are clearly exposures to people living near the wells, and certain well types seem to be causing more health effects than others," Brown said.

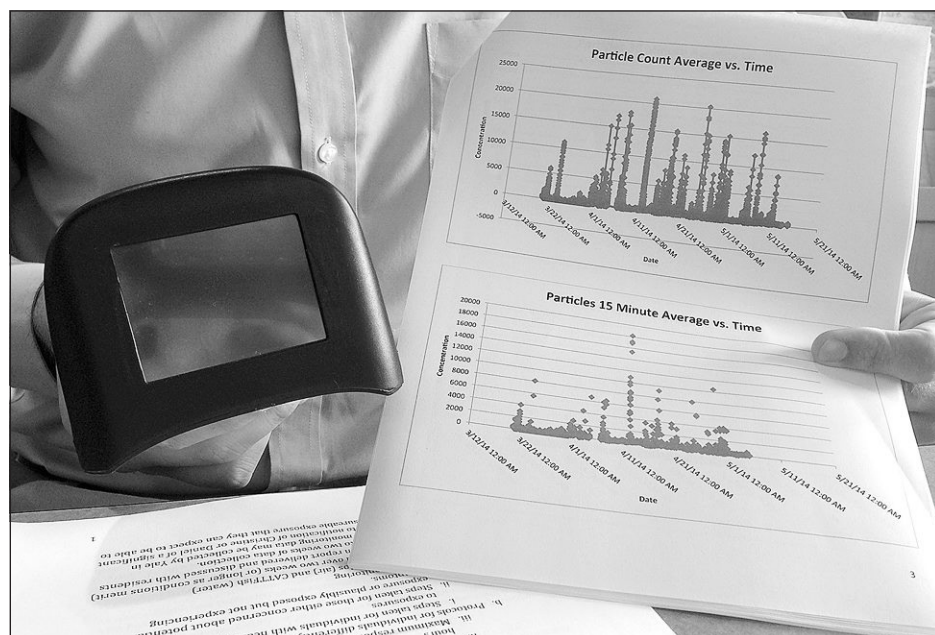
Patrick Creighton, spokesman for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said members of the industry see it differently.

"It is a provable fact that over the past few years, through regulatory advancements and the adoption of new technologies, U.S. and regional air quality is sharply improving thanks to the increased production and use of natural gas," Creighton said in an email.

"According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, CO2 emissions are at 20-year lows, thanks in large part to natural gas development. In Pennsylvania, specifically, the updated GP-5 permit reduces emissions from compressor stations by 75 to 90 percent."

## Residents seek answers

It's not uncommon to hear



Ryan Grode, environmental health educator with the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project, holds an air quality monitor used to detect particulate matter and displays the results from one of the monitors placed in a participant's home.

residents at township meetings complain of a "rotten egg" smell, difficulty breathing and gas flarings that release black smoke into the air.

Gniadek and his wife, Sabine, never received a definitive answer as to what transpired that day in December. Gniadek lives directly across from the Trax Farm well site operated by EQT that he said has caused him and his neighbors grief in the past.

Gniadek and others on Cardox Road were offered \$50,000 from the company to resolve claims involving the gas company's operations, including damages, annoyance, inconvenience, nuisance and pain and suffering. Gniadek said he believes it was an effort to silence them.

Gniadek refused the money, and he and his wife continue to monitor and document the air conditions along their road. A video, taken by his wife, shows black smoke coming from the well site last month.

At a January township meeting, EQT officials said their next rig would be a dual natural gas rig that would run on 70 to 80 percent natural gas, fitted with a catalyst unit, to reduce emissions.

Gary Baumgardner, who also lives on Cardox Road and has an air monitor, said the smell of diesel fuel has been most problematic.

"In the middle of winter, it got into our house where it

was so bad that I called the fire department, and they wanted to put fans in our house and open the windows and (air out) our house," he said.

Residents living near the MarkWest natural gas processing plant in Chartiers Township also have complained of "routine" flarings that release thick black smoke into the sky.

Dan Bykens, who lives next to a MarkWest compressor station, went to the hospital last week because of respiratory problems and said he was recently diagnosed with asthma.

"Everyone out here seems to be having more issues than in the past," Bykens said, but he acknowledged he can't prove his health problems are directly related to industry activity.

His daughter, Hayley Martin, also has an air monitor in her home, located next to Allison Park Elementary School.

Martin's air monitor results just came back, and she said a string of spikes appeared in the results for last week, culminating in a spike of 23,653 particulates the day before her father was hospitalized. She said nearby road construction could be a factor, but many spikes occurred late at night when road work was halted.

"I can't tell you that's the direct result (of industry activ-

ity)," Martin said. "I can't tell you, the doctor can't tell you, but it's kind of weird."

## Future of the project

The Environmental Health Project recently set up a new protocol in conjunction with Yale University to study the air quality during emergency situations, such as the incident in May when lightning struck the MarkWest plant and caused a gas leak.

Grode said the group will temporarily install air monitors capable of measuring smaller particles – volatile organic compounds – near industry sites during incidents such as leaks or explosions. The results will then be taken to a lab for analysis.

"Whenever there's an event, we'll try to get out as soon as we can and get those monitors out," Grode said.

The group also plans to continue its Speck air monitor program, focusing primarily on Southwestern Pennsylvania, even though the group has received many requests to expand.

"We've had a lot of requests actually, all over the United States – Colorado and Louisiana," Grode said. "There's a lot of states that are contacting us, asking what we're doing and how we're doing it, trying to start their own health organization. It's exciting for us to be part of something like this."

# Lotteries

## LATE FRIDAY DRAWING

Mega Millions... 5-8-59-65-72 MB:3

## SATURDAY DRAWINGS

### PENNSYLVANIA

Daily Number (day).....3-3-8

Daily Number (night).....4-2-3

Big Four (day).....2-8-9-8

Big Four (night).....6-9-2-0

Quinto (day).....1-6-4-2-2

Quinto (night).....0-6-0-2-9

Treasure Hunt.....1-11-16-18-20

Cash Five.....5-13-19-26-34

Powerball.....LATE

### OHIO

Pick Three (day).....9-7-2

Pick Three (night).....7-4-4

Pick Four (day).....5-4-2-9

Pick Four (night).....4-6-4-3

Pick Five (day).....5-5-4-7-8

Pick Five (night).....1-0-8-7-4

Kicker.....4-9-0-1-6-1

Rolling Cash Five...9-18-26-27-33

Classic Lotto.....2-4-14-23-45-48

### WEST VIRGINIA

Daily Three.....0-5-5

Daily Four.....6-2-9-6

Numbers are unofficial; readers should confirm with lottery agencies.

## Poll question presented by

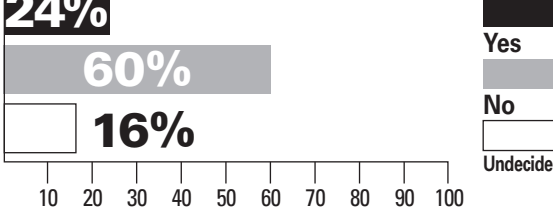
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## Observer-Reporter Results as of 10 p.m.

# Poll Question of the Day

Do you agree with the U.S. Sentencing Commission's early-release plan for federal inmates serving time for drug charges?



To submit poll questions for consideration, email: Comments@observer-reporter.com

# Ukraine

Continued from Page One

treated properly, has really created a shock in the Netherlands," Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans told the Ukrainian president in Kiev. "People are angry, are furious at what they hear."

Timmermans demanded the culprits be found. "Once we have the proof, we will not stop until the people are brought to justice," he said.

An angry Dutch prime minister told reporters Saturday that he was "shocked by images of completely disrespectful behavior" of rebels picking through the wreckage and personal belongings of victims at the crash scene. Mark Rutte said he had an "extremely intense" telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin in which he urged Putin to "show the world he intends to help" in the investigation.

Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed Saturday in a phone call that an independent commission led by the International Civil Aviation Organization should be granted swift access to the crash site, according to the German government and the Kremlin.

The commission should examine the circumstances of the crash and recover the victims, German government spokesman Georg Streiter said.

Russia has "a key role to play" through its influence on the separatists, "and the world's eyes will be on Russia to see that she delivers on her obligations," British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said.

In the Netherlands, forensic teams fanned out across the country Saturday to collect material, including DNA samples, which will help identify the remains of the 192 Dutch victims.

Police said in a tweet that 40 pairs of detectives from the National Forensic Investigations Team would be visiting victims' relatives over the coming days.

The location of the black boxes remains a mystery, and the separatist leadership insisted Saturday that it had not located them.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's monitoring mission in Ukraine, which has a 24-member delegation that was given limited access to the crash site, said it too had received no information on the boxes' whereabouts, according to a spokesman.

Aviation experts said,

however, not to expect too much from the flight data and cockpit voice recorders in understanding how Flight 17 was brought down.

The most useful evidence that's likely to come from the crash scene is whether missile pieces can be found in the trail of debris that came down as the plane exploded, said John Goglia, a U.S. aviation safety expert and former National Transportation Safety Board member.

The operation of Flight 17 does not appear to be an issue, he said.

Obama called the downing of the plane "a global tragedy."

"An Asian airliner was destroyed in European skies filled with citizens from many countries, so there has to be a credible international investigation into what happened," he said.

At an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council Friday, the United States pointed blame at the separatists, saying Washington believes the jetliner was probably downed by an SA-11 missile and "we cannot rule out technical assistance from Russian personnel."

According to U.S. officials, American intelligence analysts are still going over data to determine more precisely who fired the missile and where the attackers got the

SA-11 surface-to-air system.

Analysts would likely be reviewing sensor and radar data and possibly satellite imagery from around the time of the strike, as well as from previous days. Although both Russian and Ukraine have the systems in their weapons inventory, U.S. officials said they do not believe the Ukrainian government had any of the SA-11s in that region.

Instead, analysts are looking more closely at whether Russian backers gave the missile launcher to the separatists and moved it across the border into Ukraine, or if this was something captured by rebels from the Ukrainian military.

Malaysia Airlines, meanwhile, said Saturday it has no immediate plans to fly victims' relatives to the crash site in Ukraine because of security concerns.

A spokesman for the airline said next of kin are being cared for in Amsterdam while a team from the carrier, including security officials, was in Ukraine assessing the situation.

In the Netherlands, travelers flying out of Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport laid flowers and signed a condolence book Saturday before boarding their flights, including those on the latest Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 to Kuala Lumpur.

## NEWS

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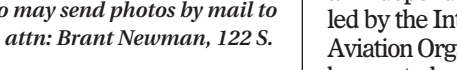
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