

## Recommended Reading

### Progressive Book Club Site Features Public Citizen Picks

You just can't go wrong when you buy a good book (at a discount!) and support a good cause at the same time.

The Progressive Book Club ([www.progressivebookclub.com](http://www.progressivebookclub.com)) allows you to do just that. The online club, formed earlier this year, serves as a central location to buy biography, history, politics, science, spirituality and fiction books of interest to progressive readers, as well as to have online discussions and interact with authors. Most of the titles will be discounted 10 to 30 percent from their list prices.

When you support the Progressive Book Club, you can support Public Citizen, too, because a portion of the proceeds from book sales is donated to progressive organizations you select. Simply go online, buy a few books, and choose Public Citizen from among the club's partners. We'll get \$2 every time you purchase a book of \$10 or more.

We also recommend books that we're interested in – and that we think you'll enjoy. Some of the books on the site we will review on *Public Citizen News*' Recommended Reading page.

All you have to do is join the Progressive Book Club by visiting its Web site. (Public Citizen will receive a \$3 donation right away when you designate us as your beneficiary).  
Happy reading!



# IT'S HERE!

### Congress Renews IRA Gift Opportunity Until 2010

Congress recently extended a wonderful charitable gift planning opportunity for IRA owners. Until Dec. 31, donors may make a direct charitable contribution from their IRAs to Public Citizen for calendar year 2008.

This contribution does not generate a tax deduction. Instead, donors can make a pre-tax contribution and avoid claiming the gift as reportable 2008 income.

To make a 2008 rollover gift, contact your trustee or custodian as soon as possible.

#### There are several important rules to consider:

- Most IRAs may be used for this type of rollover gift; there is an exception for a SEP-IRA or a SIMPLE IRA if an employer has made a contribution during the taxable year.
- The amount of your donation is limited to \$100,000 and must be made before Dec. 31. You may make another gift of up to \$100,000 in calendar year 2009;
- You must be at least 70 1/2 years old as of the date of the gift.
- Your gift must be made directly from your trustee to Public Citizen;
- Other restrictions apply.

For more information, please contact

Suzanne R. Whimmore at 1-800-999-1906

or by e-mail at [swhimmore@citizen.org](mailto:swhimmore@citizen.org).



To order the books recommended on this page, contact the publisher or visit your local bookstore or library.

### 'Our Daily Meds'

By Melody Petersen

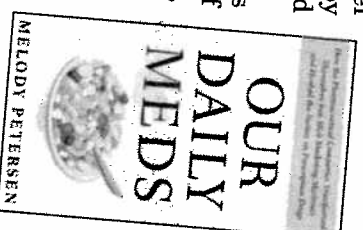
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
\$26

This book lays bare the incredible story of how the pharmaceutical industry has evolved from focusing on patient health to focusing on the bottom line, in the process obtaining vast control over the behavior of Americans by using clever advertising and promotion.

In the past, scientists often served as CEOs of drug companies. Today, business executives run these companies, and their main job is to sell as many drugs as possible.

The primary goal of drug companies is to create a "blockbuster" drug – a medicine that can bring in sales of \$1 billion or more per year, regardless of its efficacy or safety.

The companies devote billions each year to the marketing of these drugs. According to author Melody Petersen, who has written about the pharmaceutical industry for *The New York Times* and won the Gerald Loeb award for investigative reporting, the pharmaceutical drug industry spends \$58 billion each year on marketing, compared with \$30 billion for



research and development. Peterson delves into the way in which business-focused drug companies develop their drugs. It all begins with deciding what malady would sell the most drugs, even if that means dreaming up an entirely new disease. For example, incontinence – a condition that may occur with aging but that often can be managed by changing habits – was a problem for which low-priced drugs were already available. Nevertheless, executives of the drug company Pharmacia created the disease "overactive bladder" and launched an extensive campaign to promote the "disease"-treating drug Detrol. The company shelled out money to doctors to attend meetings discussing the drug's benefits and to have the proceedings published in a prominent medical journal.

To sell the drug to the public, the company paid movie star Debbie Reynolds to talk to a *Saturday Evening Post* writer about how the drug changed her life. It also paid for opinion polls and surveys questioning only those who were satisfied with their pills. Now, Detrol is among the top 200 prescription drugs sold in the U.S. It is frustrating to think how much money the health care system could save without this unnecessary expense.  
—Elizabeth Barbehenn

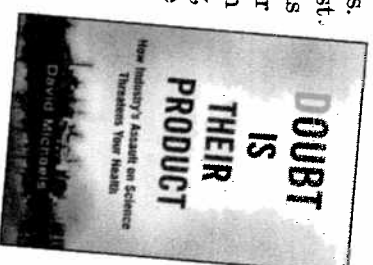
### 'Doubt Is Their Product'

By David Michaels

Oxford University Press  
\$27.95

In this informative work, David Michaels' "Doubt Is Their Product" explains the way corporations fabricate "research" aimed at creating doubt about whether known environmental pollutants – including cigarette smoke, asbestos and hexavalent chromium – actually are health hazards.

Michaels, an epidemiologist who served from 1998 to 2001 as assistant secretary for Environment, Safety and Health in the U.S. Department of Energy, describes the impacts of fake research generated by corporate scientists-for-hire, as well as federal regulators' reluctance to control risky substances, even when evidence of risk is present. It is striking how these research tactics employed by industry are similar whether the object is to keep a drug from being banned or to prevent an endangered species from being protected. For example, since 1895, instances of bladder cancer in factory workers who worked with dyes could be traced back to the chemicals used in making those dyes. But corporations continued to use these chemicals, and the federal government did not intervene.



In 1967, DuPont's scientists were still trying to cast doubt on the risks

posed by similar dyes. (Michaels credits Public Citizen's efforts as contributing to the eventual regulation in the 1970s of the exposure to these chemicals. Corporations have now discontinued the use of these hazardous chemicals.)

Perhaps most important, Michaels notes that the U.S. Supreme Court's 1993 decision in *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals* gives this fake research more weight in product liability lawsuits than it merits. *Daubert* calls upon judges to determine the admissibility of research in these cases. But corporate-paid research often is given the same weight as the scientifically sound research, leaving a judge uncertain about whether the pollutants in question really harm people. As a result, Michaels says, attorneys representing consumers or workers harmed by these pollutants are reluctant to bring scientific evidence before courts.

Michaels provides an excellent look into tactics corporations use to plant doubt about the risks posed by environmental and occupational pollutants. This book can help train regulators and the public to be more skeptical, and hopefully, reduce the effectiveness of these tactics.

—Lena Pons