

SEJ Journal

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Covering Cairo

The issue diverges at the U.S. border

By TOM HARRIS

Every population junkie in the known universe is trying to push your button, yank your chain on exponential this and sustainable that.

The Cairo population conference is here. That also means the onset of pack journalism at its best ... or worst.

I know the herd instinct is overwhelming. The fear that something big and juicy and important will be said in Salon A while you're a block away in Grand Ballroom B is as disquieting as it is unavoidable.

As I've been solicited to pass on some advice or caution, here it is:

If you're covering the conference from Cairo, I must assume you prepared
(Continued on page 7)

Some basics of the population debate

By ROBERT ENGELMAN

The argument that population growth contributes to environmental problems seems intuitively almost obvious to many reporters—especially to many who wrestle daily with local, national and global environmental stories.

A theme emerges. Logic and a stack of reporter notebooks suggest that more people means more resource use, more waste, more pollution, more stress on the environment and the finite natural resource base.

As a first-take approximation of the population-environment relationship, this argument may not be too far off. But skeptical reporters not content
(Continued on page 8)

Q&A: Roberts tells journalists to stand up for their principles

By JIM DETJEN and BETH PARKE

For environmental reporters who are struggling to do journalistic projects in lean economic times, Gene Roberts, the new managing editor of *The New York Times*, has this advice: Share less of your planning with editors.

"I know this is going to sound like sedition," he said with a chuckle during an interview with the SEJournal. "But if you walk up to an editor's desk and say, 'I'm thinking of doing the following story but to do it I've got to have room and space' and all of that, the chances

are greater that the editor is going to say no or try to steer you away."

Roberts recommended instead that reporters figure out how to do the story anyway and then present it to the editor. "The editor is then dealing with a reality rather than conjecture or speculation and if he kills the story he's sort of at that point killing a living, breathing thing," he said.

Roberts said he used this approach when he was a reporter in Raleigh, N.C. and he wanted to do a story on race. He

(Continued on page 12)

Roberts joins SEJ advisory panel

By JIM DETJEN

I'm delighted to announce that Gene Roberts, the new managing editor of *The New York Times*, has agreed to join SEJ's advisory board.

Roberts, as many of you know, is a near legendary figure in modern American journalism. He took over the helm of a then mediocre newspaper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, in 1972 and transformed it into one of the nation's best dailies. During his 18-year tenure as executive editor the paper won 17 Pulitzer prizes and more than 100 other national journalism awards. He is a champion of aggressive investigative reporting and journalistic enterprise.

He is also a strong supporter of environmental reporting, which by its very nature often involves journalism projects. Environmental stories are often complex, involving the interplay of science, law, business, politics and other fields. Both time and space are needed in the media to fully explain the issues.

SEJ is in the process of setting up an advisory board that will assist the society in helping to foster quality and accuracy in environmental journalism. The advisory board will meet with the SEJ board from time to time to offer suggestions on programs, fundraising, and long-term planning.

Our hope is that it will be filled with distinguished journalism leaders, such as Gene Roberts, who can offer wise counsel as the society grows and matures. We also hope that our interaction with these individuals will be beneficial to the field of environmental journalism.

Other journalism organizations, such as the Knight Center for Specialized Journalism at the University of Maryland, have found advisory boards to be very valuable in deciding upon future programs, getting ideas for speakers and developing long-term strategies. We are in the process of approaching a number of distinguished editors and journalism leaders. If you have suggestions or ideas, please call either me (215-854-2438) or Beth Parke (215-247-9710).

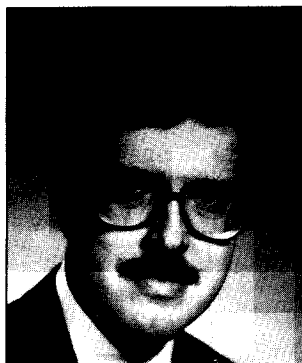
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A MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE —

SEJ's membership climbed above 1,000 in August and continues to grow at a slow but steady pace. The 1,000 level is more than three times the number of members we hoped for when the society was set up in 1990. I think the 1,000 figure is evidence that environmental journalism is a healthy and growing field and that its practitioners are serious enough about their work to join a non-

Report from the society's president

By Jim Detjen



profit journalism organization. Thanks for helping to make SEJ a success.

■ ■ ■

REGIONAL EVENTS — An SEJ seminar on covering population took place August 8th at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Look for a publication based on this event later this fall. Mid-Atlantic members will be exploring Chesapeake Bay issues on September 10th on a sailing expedition organized by Mitzi Purdue and Sara Thurin Rollin. Lee Chottiner and Scott Powers have organized a regional conference on covering "Backyard Environment" issues, Oct. 14 - 15, in Morgantown, West Virginia. And a conference co-sponsored by SEJ and the Environmental Law and Policy Center of the Midwest is set for Nov. 11 and 12 in Chicago. That agenda includes issues of air quality, transportation, agriculture and forestry. SEJ contact for the Chicago event is Kevin Carmody. For more information call Rollin at 202-452-4584, Powers at 614-461-5233 or Carmody at 312-871-8911.

■ ■ ■

1996 NATIONAL CONFERENCE — The SEJ board of directors has selected Washington University in St. Louis as the site of our 1996 national conference to be held from Oct. 17 to 20, 1996. The St. Louis area is the home of many top environmental experts including Peter Raven, an expert on the preservation of tropical rainforests. Among the other attractions are the Missouri Botanical Garden, the St. Louis Zoo and the St. Louis Science Center. Sessions will focus on issues including the environmental impact of the 1993 flooding of the Mississippi River; dioxin contamination in Times Beach, Mo.; genetically-engineered field crops; rehabilitating wolves, raptors and other endangered species; Midwest earthquakes and other issues.

■ ■ ■

IFEJ MEETING — The International Federation of Environmental Journalists will hold an international congress at UNESCO in Paris on Nov. 3 and 4, 1994. The meeting will run jointly with the 13th International Festival of Environmental Films. About 200 journalists from 50 to 60 countries are expected to attend, including some SEJ members. IFEJ's leadership hopes to approve a set of statutes, discuss ways to improve the worldwide exchange of environmental information and examine issues such as energy, nuclear power plants, ecological training and other issues. For more information call the SEJ office or write to Claude-Marie Vadrot at IFEJ, 8, rue de la Harpe, 75005 Paris, France. Telephone: 33 1 43 70 51 69.

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ON-LINE FORUMS — In recent months SEJ members who are connected to the SEJ Forum on America Online have been able to "chat" live via computer with Donella Meadows, an environmental studies professor at Dartmouth College and co-author of "Beyond the Limits," and Stuart Pimm, a zoologist who is an expert on biodiversity. In October George Rolofson, a vice president at Ciba-Geigy, will "chat" about pesticides. SEJ hopes to expand this experimental program.

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Calendar	Janet Raloff
Greenbeat	Kevin Carmody
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SEJournal will accept unsolicited manuscripts. Send story ideas, articles, news briefs, tips and letters-to-the-editor to Adam Glenn, 381 Harvard St., #1, Cambridge, MA 02138, phone (617) 441-2906. Send calendar items to Janet Raloff, Science News, 1719 N St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036. To help with Greenbeat, contact Kevin Carmody at 1447 1/2 W. Fletcher St., Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 871-8911.

For inquiries regarding the SEJ, please contact Executive Director Beth Parke at the SEJ office, P.O. Box 27506, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118 Ph: 215-247-9710. The street address is 9425 Stenton Ave., Suite 209. SEJ Office Internet address: SEJOffice@AOL.COM

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The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality and accuracy of environmental reporting. SEJ works through a variety of programs and services to encourage information sharing and discussion among journalists, scientists, educators, government officials, industry representatives, environmental advocacy groups and concerned citizens regarding important environmental issues. SEJ's purpose is to enable journalists to better inform the public about critical issues concerning the environment. SEJ's membership of more than 1,000 includes journalists working for newspapers, television and radio stations, broadcast and cable networks, magazines, newsletters, wire services and photo agencies, as well as educators and students. Non-members are welcome to attend SEJ's conferences and to subscribe to this quarterly publication.

SEJ Board of Directors: President, Jim Detjen, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (215) 854-2438; Vice President, Rae Tyson, *USA Today*, (703) 276-3424; Vice President, Emilia Askari, *Detroit Free Press*, (800) 678-6400; Secretary, Kevin Carmody, (312) 871-8911; Treasurer, Steve Curwood, NPR's *Living On Earth* (617) 868-8810; Teya Ryan, Turner Broadcasting, (404) 827-3987; Marla Cone, *The Los Angeles Times*, (800) 528-4637, ext. 73497; Julie Edelson, *Inside Washington Publishers*, (313) 769-7780; Randy Lee Loftis, *Dallas Morning News*, (214) 977-8483; Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, (313) 761-6927; Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-4414; Wevonneda Minis, *Charleston Post & Courier*, (803) 937-5705; Dave Ropeik, WCVB-TV in Boston, (617) 449-0400.

SEJournal is printed on recycled paper.

Reporting awards out

Jane Kay, environmental reporter for the San Francisco Examiner, was awarded the National Press Club's Robert L. Kozik Award for Environmental Reporting for her series on San Francisco Bay, while John Dougherty of New Times, Phoenix, won the Best of the West Award for environmental reporting for his coverage of plans by the University of Arizona to build a series of telescopes on Mount Graham.

The judges called Kay's "Bay in Peril" a "splendid example of detailed explanatory journalism, compellingly presented" with "graceful writing and well-conceived" graphics.

Awarded honorable mention in the Kozik contest were "Race and Risk," a series by Craig Flournoy and Randy Lee Loftis of The Dallas Morning News and two stories on breast cancer and pesticides by Dan Fagin of Long Island Newsday.

The Best of the West contest includes entries from 13 Western states and has a category for environmental and natural resources reporting.

Second place went to Jim Lynch, J. Todd Foster and Julie Titone of the Spokesman-Review, Spokane. The package of stories examines the battle between the timber industry and environmentalists over the future of the national forests.

Kay took third place for "Bay in Peril."

Letters

A free-market leap of faith

To the Editors:

The assumptions that Bill Lash seems willing to make in his opinion piece in the Summer 1994 SEJournal - that free trade will in and of itself promote better world environmental standards - seemed to me to be a bit simplistic in its exposition.

I was present at some of the PrepCom debates at the UN prior to the Earth Summit. I wish you had been there to hear the attitude of many developing countries towards any substantive agreements to safeguard the environment. I am thinking specifically of the Malaysian delegate, an extremely well spoken woman from a country that is destroying its rain forests at an alarming rate, with little or no thought to the environmental impact of their logging policies (most contracts are controlled by a few wealthy and corrupt ministers) or the effect of habitat destruction on several indigenous tribes who have lived in the forests for thousands of years.

I hesitate to use the word naive to describe a man as learned as yourself, but I can only wonder at the leap in faith required to assume that funding is the only thing that stands in the way of developing countries implementing sound environmental practices. I think greed might be a word that has a role to play in this debate, which might also benefit from a run by the Native American tradition of "Seven Generations" - to consider the benefits/detriments of any decision made on one's children's children's children's children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ley

Executive Director/Editor, Crayon Power

Expect Western flavor for SEJ's conference in Utah next month

By MARLA CONE

Looking at a photo of Utah, with its trout streams and alpine forests, some SEJ members may wonder if the 1994 national conference offers a serious educational pursuit or merely a nice chance for a vacation. What, they may wonder, could a trip to Utah this October possibly do for me? The answer: plenty.

This year's SEJ conference is packed with the same variety and in-depth sessions and workshops as previous conferences. The SEJ board consciously chose the Provo, Utah, site to get away from the strictly academic settings of the past and to spend more time exploring the actual resources that our members are covering. Many members have been clamoring for more attention to beyond-the-Beltway topics, and they will get it this October.

Wonder why there's such a fuss over hazardous waste incineration? Or what happens at a testing site for biological warfare? What it means to "chain" a forest? Or how experts restore a dying fishery? See it for yourself, and hear perspectives from all sides.

The Saturday events are more than just field trips — they are "workshops on wheels," in which participants will hear the full range of issues at stake. Instead of reviewing a dry Congressional report on mining, members will see a copper mine at work and discuss with mine operators, health officials and environmentalists the issues they face regarding hazardous waste and air quality.

The thrust of many of the sessions

is: How can the nation balance management of its public resources with the private rights of landowners? These issues are heating up across the nation, and virtually every SEJ member will find them relevant to his or her beat and

of ranchers vs. treehuggers. The conference will even offer a hands-on session demonstrating how experts use computerized data to create maps that display a region's habitat types and biodiversity — maps that may be great for producing graphics.

Conference highlights

Confirmed speakers at the Oct. 6-9 event include the following: Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt; EPA Administrator Carol Browner; Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary; U.S. Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Mollie Beattie; Eileen Welsome, 1994 Pulitzer winner and former Albuquerque Tribune reporter; authors Terry Tempest-Williams, Andy Revkin, and William Least Heat-Moon; Tom Winship, former executive editor of the Boston Globe and chairman of the Center for Foreign Journalists; John Hughes, former editor of the Christian Science Monitor and director of the International Media Studies Program at Brigham Young University; F. Sherwood Rowland, the University of California scientist renowned for discovering the link between chlorofluorocarbons and ozone depletion; former EPA administrator and current Georgia-Pacific Vice President Lee Thomas; Ana Sittenfeld of the Institute for Biodiversity in Costa Rica; Kenneth Newcombe of the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility; and many, many others.

If you haven't already registered and booked travel plans, you'll need to do so right away. Call Chris Rigel at the SEJ Office (215-247-9710) for registration info, and call Murdock Travel (800-990-4146) for all travel and accommodation info. Southwest Airlines is offering free companion fares; Delta Airlines has discount fares.

As usual, SEJ is trying to bring you access to as many high-level Administration officials as possible, since most members are unable to interview them on a regular basis. But we are also reaching far beyond Washington, bringing speakers from across the country on the hot topics of environmental hormones, a potential chlorine ban, radiation safety, safe drinking water, trading pollution credits, bioprospecting the rainforests, population and consumption, and others.

On Sunday morning, writing coach Don Fry will help members hone a skill that SEJ has until now ignored: How can we get our information across to the reader in effective and creative ways?

Finally, our plenary features debate on the topic that all of us are talking about: Is news of substance getting a fair shake in the media? Does ozone deserve as much coverage as O.J.?

At this year's conference, don't expect the usual. For three days, you'll be challenged to explore some new issues — many with a Western flavor — and regardless of your locale, you'll find that they are relevant to your own readers and viewers.

Marla Cone is the 1994 SEJ Conference Chair and environment reporter at the Los Angeles Times.

locale.

For members west of the Mississippi, such issues as range management, mining and ecosystem planning are not exotic — they are the issues we encounter every day. And for Eastern and Midwestern members, some of this year's sessions, in particular the "Changing Face of the West" panel, will dig beneath the caricature of the West as a land

Nerve gas plant promises close shave

By **BOWMAN COX**

There comes a time when it must go. I'm talking about the beard, that badge of the intellectual, independent-minded, nearly subversive men drawn to the ranks of environmental journalism.

For the women and the baby-faced, it's no problem, of course. But none of the bearded will get to join this year's SEJ conference tour of the Tooele Army Depot, its cache of nearly half the nation's chemical weapons and the incinerator built to destroy them. Or should I say, none but those with the guts to shave it off.

The reason is simple: to ensure a tight fit in case you must use your gas mask—or die.

As a follower of the chemical weapons program, I can assure you this is one tour you won't forget. But as a bearded journalist, I can't assure you I'll be there, for my bravery ends where the swath of the straight razor begins.

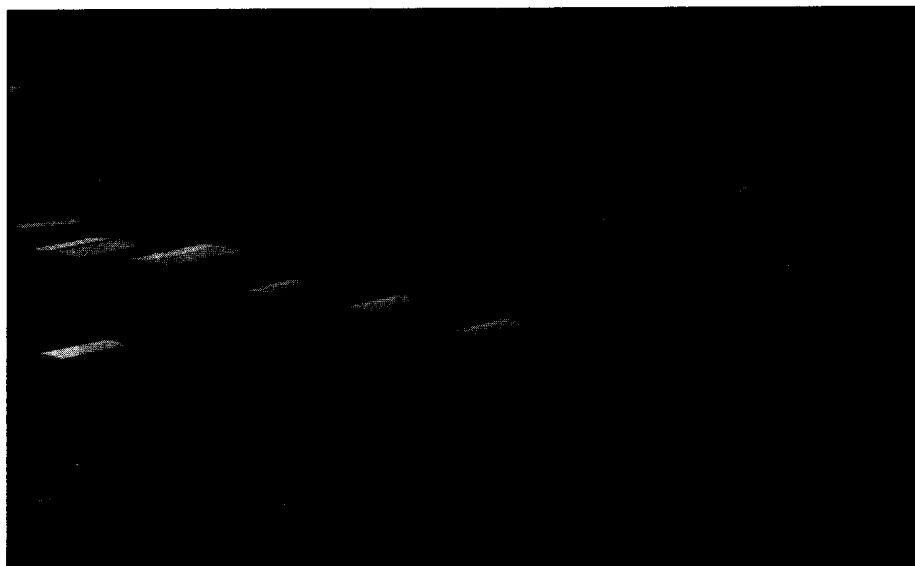
Here's why, if you have what it takes, you should be sure to visit the chemical agent destruction system at Tooele Army Depot while you're at SEJ's annual meeting in Utah this fall:

- The system's incinerators were built to destroy the largest stockpile of the most dangerous chemicals in this land. A mistake could be catastrophic.

- Environmental groups say the incinerators are too dangerous to use, that the Army should come up with a safer alternative. But the Army contends that would mean storing aging munitions longer, increasing the risk of a leak or other storage-related accident. At Tooele, you can see yourself what safeguards are in place for both incineration and storage.

- The chemical demilitarization systems are coming to a community near you. Seven others are planned for: Aberdeen, Md., Anniston, Ala., Lexington, Ky., Newport, Ind., Pine Bluff, Ark., Pueblo, Colo., and Umatilla, Ore.

- In addition, the Army last year identified 215 "non-stockpile" sites in 33 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands where chemical munitions were buried long ago (for a com-



The Tooele Chemical Disposal Facility has four incinerators.

plete listing, ask for the November 1993 "Survey and Analysis Report"). How or where these will be treated has not been decided fully.

- Finally, as cleanup programs go, this one will consume a lot of tax dollars. The stockpile program's projected bill is \$8.6 billion and rising fast. The non-stockpile program may cost another \$17.7 billion.

Not least of the industrial revolution's aftermath was the two world wars, in which modern science and capital investment caused death and destruction such as had never been dreamed of.

And not least of the terrors of those wars were poison gases — cheap and easy to mass produce, revolting to use.

Thousands of World War I soldiers died horribly, their lungs corroded by phosgene or eyes blinded by mustard.

During World War II, the chemical industry and the military invented nerve agents that could, like snake venom, halt the signals that order the body to fire a gun, run for cover and breathe.

The nerve gas researchers spawned an entire industry for killing bugs dead, which in turn sparked the genre of environmental journalism with Rachel Carson's 1962 classic, *Silent Spring*. Carson advanced the argument that the benefits of these fast-acting household chemicals were outweighed by their long-term unintended consequences. The

environmental movement has stuck to this position — even to the point of slighting more immediate, more intended risks.

Today, most nations have agreed not to wage chemical warfare and to destroy their chemical agents.

Although early on, the Army tried chemical neutralization, it later settled on incineration as the way to destroy its stockpile. The Army came to this view with advice from the National Academy of Sciences in the 1970s, the heyday of incineration's popularity. Environmentalists have since fervently campaigned against the technology.

The Army built a prototype incineration system on Johnston Island, a Pacific atoll long enough for planes to land on, and has been operating it since 1990. Although the system has suffered cost overruns and repeated delays, a series of rigorous test runs was completed in March. However, the system leaked a little nerve agent just after the test. This happened once before, too, in 1991 right after a successful trial burn.

The Army hopes to begin running live munitions through its second unit, built at Tooele, early next year.

Bowman Cox is editor of Pasha Publication's Defense Cleanup newsletter. He was a founding member of the SEJ board.

Society of Environmental Journalists Fourth National Conference at Provo, Utah, October 6-9, 1994

Please print legibly or attach a business card.

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 Check here if you've been engaged as a conference speaker.
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REGISTRATION FEES

SEJ members: \$125
 Non-members: \$350

Check if you plan to attend the Thursday p.m. Reception.
 Please add \$20 to your registration fee. Space is limited; register early!

Amount enclosed: \$ _____
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- A Utah as a Dumping Ground/Managing Rangelands
- B Post-Cold War Environmental Issues
- C Mining and the Environment
- D Greening the Olympics/Recreation Impacts on National Forests
- E Endangered Fisheries/Environmental Management of Military Reservations

FEES INFORMATION

(U.S. Funds only)
 For registrations postmarked before 8/5/94:
 \$95 (SEJ members) \$275 (Non-members)
 For registrations postmarked after 8/5/94:
 \$125 (SEJ members) \$350 (Non-members)
 Single day rate (Friday only):
 \$50 (SEJ members) \$125 (Non-members)

Journalists, educators and students in the process of joining SEJ are eligible for the member rate. Office clearance must be obtained prior to registering. Call Christine Riegel at (215) 247-9710.

Cancellation Policy: Full refund until 9/15/94.
 \$35 administrative fee after 9/15/94.

THURSDAY EVENING RECEPTION

- Add \$20 to your conference fee.
- Check the appropriate box on the registration form.

Call Murdock Travel for reservations at
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SUNDANCE

Space limitations make it necessary to restrict reservations at Sundance to SEJ members and guest speakers.

- Standard Room** \$77
 Queen bed or set of twins, full bath
- Deluxe Room** \$110
 Queen bed, stone fireplace, full bath, breakfast nook with a kitchenette
- Junior Suite** \$110
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- One Bedroom Suite** \$198
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For lodging alternatives other than Sundance or Provo Park Hotel, call Murdock Travel: (800) 990-4146

Please note that transportation will be provided to conference events from Sundance and Provo Park Hotel only.
 SEJ's 1994 educational programs are made possible in part by grants from the following sources:

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- W. Alton Jones Foundation
- Scripps Howard Foundation
- Turner Foundation, Inc.
- George Gund Foundation
- Town Creek Foundation
- Hearst Corporation
- Salt Lake Tribune

Population ... (from page 1)

well before you left. In that case, you could trust yourself and your own instincts and judgements, and file with confidence.

The preparation likely meant reading everything you could get your hands on about this issue. The tough part would be the painful, private, judicious thinking as the pack stampedes past you to this lecture or that demonstration.

But whether or not you got to Cairo (or might still fly there to attend the final days), there's plenty of reporting and analyzing to be done back home, both during this conference and afterward. Journalists, Americans especially, need to do some heavy pondering on this particular issue before they leap into the fray.

No even minimally sentient being would deny that population growth is enormously important ... on a global basis.

But what plays well in Bombay may be less applicable in Boston. What serves as a crisis in Calcutta or Kenya does not necessarily hold true in California or Kentucky. The planet may be growing at an astonishing 10,000 people an hour — 92 million a year — as Denis Hayes of the Bullitt Foundation says. But not in America.

The U.S. birth rate (at 2.1) remains above the ideal 1.5 children per family and immigration continues to swell the population by numbers only a soothsayer could summon. But it will be centuries before our blessed but gluttonous nation gets overpopulated.

No one who has flown over America more than a few times or driven through more than a handful of states can dispute that there still is an abundance of open space ... wide open space.

No. Ours is a more pressing crisis, as much moral as material. I don't have to recite the litany. In the land of designed obsolescence, where "disposable this" and "throwaway that" still is so much a part of our marketing mindset, where resource exploitation is taken by too many as fated and deserved, the real

crisis is consumption.

Until we get our greed, luxury and planetary indifference in hand, we can ill afford to preach to anyone else about the very private matter of how they should construct so basic and critical a societal building block as a family.

Please don't come rushing into print about how we are about to overpopulate the U.S. Not yet. Not this century. Nor,

At the U.N. International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Sept. 5-13, environmentalists will try to draw a connection between population growth and environmental degradation. Many will argue that in the U.S. this connection is as strong as or stronger than in developing nations, as Americans are among the heaviest consumers of energy and raw materials. Tom Harris thinks differently.

probably, the next. What that coverage needs to stress, from a purely nationalistic perspective, is the rate at which our country is depleting things ... all the stuff out of which all our things are made. And we are depleting at least as much of other nations' stuff as we are our own. That cannot last for long.

The people who dig and cut and box and make and merchandise the things of our life still don't get it. There just isn't enough stuff left to keep doing things this way.

And the people who buy and use and too often waste the things we make from all that stuff (you'll just have to pardon all this high-tech, scientific language) must be fed — force-fed, if necessary — a full and steady diet of using less but using it better.

Don't tell them to conserve. They'll have a cow. Tell them, instead, that their new refrigerator gets a better job done now on 975 kilowatt-hours a year instead of the 1,855 kw/hr they used to pay for. Or, tell them that a new natural-gas water heater can do the job with only 200 therms a year, not the 305 that the creaky, rusted 1970 model used ... or does. Natural-gas furnaces now get space heating chores done on 350 therms a year, not 750.

Since this is a society given to mantras about making bucks, maybe more of them will buy into making them by saving them; living better by consuming less. If we can't appeal to their greed, let's appeal to their desire to have the best...to get more efficiency for their buck.

California force-fed the nation on appliance efficiency standards, and did more than its fair share of driving us toward higher mileage vehicles. Okay. Sure. Since we Californians drive more than anyone else, it was our duty. Granted. But it works.

Since the appliance standards have gone into effect, the California State Energy Commission estimates electrical and natural gas savings at \$11 billion. By 2013 — just 19 more years — the savings will be \$43 billion, as appliances even more efficient are marketed.

Now, if we could just get the makers of all our stuff and things to build them to last longer than the day after warranty expiration date, we'll have a right to tell others about having fewer children.

Wiser choices about resources use can carry us a long way, and purge our souls of much guilt we feel about displacing and mistreating other species on our shared planetary home.

Much is made about my state's water shortages, now almost a yearly rite of passage because of population growth. But it can get by nicely for a very long time simply with wiser use. Because agriculture uses so much n about 85 percent n every small bit of conservation frees up large amounts for cities.

So, we quit growing cotton n a subsidized crop, yet n and hay in the desert. Big deal.

Ultimately, of course, conservation and efficiency have their limits. Uncontrolled reproduction will drive us beyond any supportable, much less sustainable, lifestyle.

Tom Harris is retired as environment reporter at the Sacramento Bee.

Engelman ... (from page 1)

with approximations and first takes will quickly rise to the occasion. Among their tough questions:

- Doesn't this worry go back to Paul Ehrlich in 1968, or even further to Thomas Malthus in 1798, and haven't their predictions been embarrassingly off the mark?

- Don't wealthy people consuming high on the hog use more resources and create more waste and pollution on a per capita basis than poor people who are struggling to survive? And aren't wealthier nations growing a lot more slowly, if at all, than poor ones?

- Isn't history filled with cases where human innovation got around environmental and resource constraints? The iron plow, the Green Revolution, the catalytic converter, low-flow toilets. We're not lemmings; when the going gets tough, the tough get *patents*. And haven't we done this more effectively with our billions of people than ancient peoples did with their mere millions? Maybe we *need* a critical mass.

- So people cause environmental problems. What are we gonna do, go extinct? Let's get real here.

Good questions, all. Let's evade them for the moment and present a few basics of the population-environment case.

All human beings have impacts on the environment. We're big mammals, so the impacts would be significant even if we didn't order nature around and use every technology we can invent and afford. It doesn't help that some of us do this on scales that are orders of magnitude above those of others.

We all process gallons of water a day, turning it into waste materials that we insist the environment assimilate. This waste doesn't trouble the woods when the bear does what she does. But it can suffocate rivers and estuaries when umpteen million people are flushing toilets in a watershed.

We all compact soil when we walk on it, or we cover it with pavement and houses. Grizzly bears and other large animals (and quite a few small ones) cannot stay where we want to be. And

we all need some minimum amount of arable land to grow the food that keeps us alive.

None of these activities necessarily creates problems that cannot be solved—if we address the problems, if we think our way out of them, and if we can agree on the appropriate legislation, regulations, best available technology, etc., and come up with the needed money. But all of these activities tend to push against natural resource constraints as their scale increases beyond certain thresholds that are rarely predictable in advance. Population growth is one major factor, sometimes *the* major factor, increasing that scale.

And, yes, Malthus and Ehrlich had a point, though they woefully misjudged some of the particulars: Where critical natural resources are finite, human exponential growth cannot continue forever. Ehrlich, often derided for predicting famine in India by the 1970s, nonetheless deserves credit for popularizing a basic equation, called $I=PAT$, for *environmental impact (I) equals population (P) times consumption or affluence (A) times the polluting effect of the technology used (T)*.

The equation is only occasionally helpful in actually quantifying the population-environment-consumption connection. Its true value is that it makes the critical educational point that population interacts, as a multiplier or scale factor, with consumption and technology to influence the environment.

The key questions are: Can pollution and other hazardous environmental impacts be eliminated (a strategy Barry Commoner proposes)? Or must we settle for merely diminishing them on a per capita basis? And if we do the latter, how long will it be before continued population growth (often supplemented by consumption growth that accelerates the impacts even faster) makes the problem re-emerge? This is essentially what happened after catalytic converters became common in automobiles in the 1970s. Improvements in air quality were soon overwhelmed by the subsequent upsurge in vehicle miles traveled.

Moreover, population *growth* is hardly the only issue. Population *distribution* is also a critical environmental factor, as evidenced by such issues as coastal pollution and environmental stresses in Americas growing exurbs.

And population *size*—well, what can you say about a population (that of the industrialized world) whose use of aerosol sprays prior to the mid-1970s set off a chain of events that led to alteration of the stratosphere over Antarctica? Obviously, today's world population of 5.6 billion already is exerting major stresses on ecosystems and natural resources bases, stresses that even instant population stabilization would not come close to resolving.

From a policy perspective, of course, there's nothing you can do about population size—except to understand, perhaps, that today's population growth becomes part of tomorrow's population size, and so on the next day and the next. And recall that population continues to grow at a 1.1 percent annual rate in the third most populous country in the world, the United States.

Those who believe that some environmental problems are serious generally agree that population dynamics—size, distribution, age structure and growth—influence these problems. But how large is this influence in relation to others? And how amenable is it to policy prescriptions?

The answer to the first question requires a close look at individual environmental and resource issues, because population can act differently in each. The answer to the second is more straightforward.

Abundant evidence suggests that population dynamics do respond to policies. And they respond best to the best policies, especially those aimed not at "controlling" population, but at enhancing human development and individual choice, especially reproductive choice. These are policies—improving educational and employment opportunities for women, improving access to safe and effective contraceptive options—that would make sense even if population

growth didn't threaten the environment or anything else.

Ultimately, however, the degree of importance one assigns to population as an environmental factor is a personal judgment, based on experience and values. There is no textbook, no scientific reference that spells out even the basics. One role environmental journalists might play is at least to try to stimulate some public debate. There isn't very much debate today about population. Yet there may be a fair amount of common ground we don't know about for fear of the conversation.

In my own judgment—and it is a judgment—the available scientific evidence suggests that early stabilization of world (and, for that matter, U.S.) population, at numbers not too much higher than today's, would improve the chances of achieving a number of worthy goals. Among them:

- Reducing the likelihood that natural resource shortages and constraints will threaten health, hamper human development, feed social divisions and contribute to conflict and governmental failure.
- Preserving as much as possible of the planet's wealth of living species and at least a modest variety of remnant natural areas.
- Halting future changes in climate within a range human beings have evolved to tolerate.
- Maintaining soil and water resources in sufficient quantity and health to sustain indefinite generations of human beings to come.
- Assuring that future technological advances will not have unintended environmental impacts that owe more to the massive scale of their use than to their inherent unsafety on small scales.
- Building societies that are characterized by mutual tolerance and individual freedom, including the freedom to decide when to have a child.

Robert Engelman, a founding officer of SEJ, for many years covered science, health and the environment for Scripps Howard News Service. He now directs the population and environment program of Population Action International, a non-profit based in Washington.

Population among the issues explored during on-line forum

Last June, a handful of SEJ members conducted an online computer interview about population and environment with Donella Meadows. Meadows, a trained scientist and system analyst with the Environmental Studies Program at Dartmouth College, is principal author of the controversial 1970s text, "The Limits to Growth", along with its 1992 followup, "Beyond the Limits."

Participating in the electronic forum

were Timothy Wheeler of the Baltimore Sun (who led the initial interview), Emilia Askari of the Detroit Free Press (and an SEJ executive board member), Amy Gahran of Chilton Publishing, metro Philadelphia, Bruce Ritchie of the Gainesville, Fla. Sun, Don Rittner of WNYT-TV New York, Washington state freelancer Jay Letto and Beth Parke, SEJ executive director. An edited version of the discussion follows.

Wheeler: What do you expect in Cairo?

Meadows: As usual in these meetings, I expect all the interesting action on the NGO side. I hope the media won't focus in on the Pope and report as if the central issue were abortion. I see GREAT progress from the PrepComs on defusing abortion by focusing on the welfare of women and children. The dominance of women in this conference has given it a whole new "feel" at least in the PrepComs. One more thing — there MAY be an official statement setting a world population target of 8 billion. Which is terrifically important, and hard to achieve, but a good target.

Wheeler: Do you agree with David Pimentel of Cornell that world -and US- population really should shrink?

Meadows: Yes, emphatically.

Wheeler: Elaborate, please, (regarding) shrinking the population...

Meadows: ...The hardness of talking about it is the central problem in doing it. I watch scientists in meetings say they agree with Pimentel but wouldn't dare say so in public. You have to talk about shrinking the population over a century or more. Otherwise you trigger awful discussions about who should be eliminated right now, and no one wants that genie out of the bottle.

Wheeler: Given most scientists' uncertainty about just what are the limits to

growth, wouldn't it be more reasonable to argue, as many do, that the world should focus on stabilizing population, rather than reducing it? Especially given how tough it is just to slow the growth?

Meadows: I'd settle for stabilizing, though I fear it won't be enough. The whole discussion, stabilizing or reducing, has to be held in a firm context of equality and justice, of ending poverty, of containing the overconsumption of the rich — or there can be no discussion of it..

Askari: What about these theories that AIDS is going to reduce population? Also, can you recommend some success stories in pop growth in different countries around the world?

Meadows: AIDS is a minor factor in population growth now, believe it or not. We add 92 million per year, and AIDS kills less than a million, I believe. Many ecologists would say that one way nature will enforce the carrying capacity (and nature will!) would be through some sort of pandemic — a more infectious AIDS or Lassa fever, or some such. It could happen. Success stories, there are lots — Singapore, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, China, Costa Rica, several others where birth rates have gone down fast. Interestingly, they're all different — capitalist, communist, democracy, dictatorship. The common element seems to be widespread literacy, health care, and meeting of basic needs plus family planning in some form.

Cover Story

Gahrn: As far as I understand it, raising the status of women and protecting their rights is crucial to curtailing population growth. However, in many countries cultural constraints, especially religious fundamentalism, make this very difficult. How can the status of women be improved in countries where the culture/religion makes that difficult?

Meadows: You said the magic word, "culture." It takes a cultural transformation for birth rates to go down. Industrialism, advertising, the consumer culture usually provides it. Meeting women's need is the current mantra; before that it was family planning; oh, I forgot, in the middle was plain old development. ALL are necessary, and ALL require a cultural transformation. There's no easy or fast way to get it, unless you're a cultural dictator, like Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore.

Ritchie: Florida's huge population growth seems to be from people coming here from other states. Is control of human movement, i.e. immigration, an answer? Or at least seen as one?

Meadows: Immigration control is sure *seen* as an answer in the U.S. It's just about impossible to enforce. And the worse things get in the rest of the world, the harder it will be to enforce. That's one reason why the average U.S. citizen should care about population growth and poverty in the rest of the world. It won't *stay* over there. We can't build walls high enough.

Askari: Regarding religion as a stumbling block to women's rights and population control: As a person who by heritage is half Islamic, I think we in the U.S. sometimes make the mistake of thinking that "foreign" religions do not respect women's rights, by definition. Speaking of Islam, this is not the case. There are Islamic feminists.

Meadows: With this issue when people say "religion" they usually mean "Catholic" but Italy and Poland have some of the lowest birth rates in the world.

Wheeler: You cited Costa Rica for lowering its birth rate, but at same time there was tremendous deforestation. Isn't the problem as much with development patterns, and government policies that promote them?

Meadows: Costa Rica is not out of the water. It has slashed its basic needs programs, and its birth rate is going back up, and its environment has been greatly eroded. But it's now the most conscious country on that score I know.

Askari: Regarding China, how long can that kind of population control last?

Meadows: China — I think the population control will last there, because there have been good education programs, and the overpopulation there is evident to everyone. It's hard to imagine the China model working anywhere else, though.

Wheeler: Your '92 book "Beyond the Limits" warned of economic collapse unless the world throttled back. Anything since to change your views?

Meadows: No, nothing has changed that analysis, nor are we showing signs of throttling back.

Wheeler: What about recent reports of declining birth rates in developing countries?

Meadows: They're in our analysis. They're a blessing, but not enough. And a number of them stopped or reversed in the '80s.

Wheeler: Many scientists say they're worried about the same trends you are, but not as sure there is a definable "carrying capacity" for the planet. What makes you more willing to say that?

Meadows: There *is* a carrying cap., whether we know how to define it or not. We're more willing (more worried) because our analysis is dynamic — looking at the exponential growth with the feedback delays, which makes a virtually unmanageable system — unless the growth is slowed and the delays foreseen.

Wheeler: Critics, like Lawrence Summer, economist at WorldBank, say your computer models flawed, prone to reflect assumptions of model designer.

Meadows: That's a long, lovely discussion hard to have in this format. Basically what those critics are saying is that *we* don't model the way *they* model, which is true. It's a lot like the climate question in terms of scientific disagreement, which is peripheral to some underlying truths obvious to everyone. You can't grow forever on a finite planet. Resources are being drained down everywhere. Pollution is building everywhere. (I'm sweeping past a few clear exceptions.). We can't go on like this very much longer. Nearly everyone senses that, but nobody likes it, so few people dare say it.

Wheeler: Many scientists agree with you in concept. What troubles them, and incites your critics, is the scary stuff about how we're already past our limits.

Meadows: It scares me too. But I think the evidence is undeniable, so I have to say it. If the forests are going down, and the soil is eroding faster than it forms, and the groundwater table is dropping, and the CO2 is building in the atmosphere — what clearer sign could there be that we are beyond the limits of those sources and sinks?

Wheeler: Isn't the record to date — at least in U.S. — longer lives, better standard of living, and less pollution, while the population grows (admittedly slower than the developing world)?

Cover Story

Meadows: Yes, except for the "less pollution," But notice that those are different indicators than the ones I cited — they're "following" indicators in economic language, while the declining resources are "leading" indicators, telling us about the future. The issue lies in the DELAYS INFORMATION about where we are relative to our limits. We can overshoot them. We can even keep growing for a while. But as we grow, we tear down the carrying capacity.

Wheeler: How do you convince the American public it should worry about population growth and (all th) attendant problems when to most Americans it seems like another country's problem?

Meadows: I wish I knew! Most of the time I talk about more local manifestations. If we recycle 50% but double the town's population, we still need as much landfill space. If we cut car emissions but double the number of cars, the air doesn't get better. If we build a sewage treatment plant but increase the amount of sewage, the water is still polluted — which has been happening.

Letto: Many environmental issues come down to restricting individual benefits to protect public good. This is not a popular notion in U.S. today. What scenario can you envision to change today's mindset?

Meadows: I think it's up to us in the information business. We are incredibly quick to play up the individual costs and to distrust or play down or even not communicate the common benefits, which often outweigh the costs enormously. One example: the energy tax, one of the better ideas around. We

heard only about jobs lost, not jobs gained, not environmental improvements, not better balance of payments. The media love to find the wailing victims and dramatize their plight. I guess the common benefits are not so dramatic. It's harder to depict them. I know, because I struggle with how to do it every day.

Rittner: Isn't one major problem, at least in the U.S., the lack of basic ecological education in K-12? If you don't UNDERSTAND ecology and the process of nature, how can one learn to live in harmony with it?

Meadows: I think so, though the grade schools around me do very well. I'm afraid the problem is the great diversity of education in this country, its great deficiency in so many places, and TV as a substitute — whose messages about the environment and lifestyles and personal responsibility are mostly pernicious.

Parke: Any parting advice to local enviro reporters trying to see, sell & tell population-related stories locally in the U.S.?

Meadows: Just that the population angle is always there, under everything else. When I report on the argument about disposable vs washable diapers, I always point out that the BIG decision was having the baby. Whatever the issue, I back off to the long-term view: what will this road improvement or whatever do to population growth, and will it stand up to population growth. Also, for a rich country, I always make the issue population AND consumption. It's not how many people, but what impact those people are having on the environment.

Transcripts available of SEJ population seminar

Copies of the transcript of the SEJ seminar on "Covering Population: Local and Global Dimensions" at the National Press Club in Washington are available free by calling the SEJ office.

Co-sponsored by the Press Club, the seminar was held Aug. 8 and moderated by Bob Engelman, director of the Population and Environment Program, Population Action International, former science correspondent, Scripps Howard News Service and founding secretary of SEJ.

The program included opening remarks from Tim Wirth, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

Journalist views on "seeing, selling and telling the story" came from Tim Wheeler, reporter, Baltimore Sun; Rae Tyson, environment editor, USA Today; and Roy Beck, Washington editor for quarterly journal, The Social Contract.

The resource panel for the seminar featured Patricia Waak, director of Hu-

man Population and Resource Use, National Audubon Society; Phil Sparks, co-director, Communications Consortium Media Center, Global Stewardship Initiative Project; Jodi Jacobson, Director, Health and Development Policy Project; Dr. Christopher D'Elia, vice-provost and vice president for academic affairs, University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute; and former director, Maryland Sea Grant; and Martha Riche, director of Policy Studies, Population Reference Bureau.

SEJ HAS A NEW MAILING ADDRESS ... AGAIN

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Gene Roberts: How serious stories can replace the fluff

Jim Detjen: There is as you know a lot of anxiety in newsrooms across the country, with resources shrinking, wages stagnant, in some cases declining, some very good reporters and editors leaving the business out of frustration. Do you think newspapers are dying?

Gene Roberts: No, I don't think they are dying, but I agree with everything you've just said. I think that it's certainly a tough time to be in a lot of newsrooms.

Detjen: Do you think it's going to get better? A lot of people were thinking, well, we're in a serious recession and when we come out of the recession a lot of these resources will come back. Now it seems we are emerging from a recession and the resources are not coming back. In a lot of newsrooms it seems the resources are just tightening up further.

Roberts: For a few papers they're coming back to some degree. I don't know of any survey that's been done, but certainly large numbers of newspapers are not restoring cuts they made.

Detjen: Can you give examples of papers where the resources are coming back?

Roberts: *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, I know some independent papers in North Carolina for example, where they never really cut back. In fact they added on because at the state capitol paper there was a financial rearrangement where one part of the family was buying the other out, and the Raleigh paper cut out-state circulation. This was a couple of locally owned newspapers — all this was a lifetime opportunity to get the state capitol paper's circulation during a tight period. They did the smart thing and invested in the future. And that's what I think the argument is all about, that many, many chain

newspaper operations have gotten so short-term profit oriented they are gambling away the future by failing to invest in the newsroom. How many of them will finally see the light, I don't guess there's any way of telling that. Some have woken up, but I don't see any evidence that would cause you to break out the champagne on a massive basis.

Interview ... (from page 1)

knew his editor would resist because of staffing problems, but he went ahead and did the story.

"When I turned it in they acted just like I thought they would, honorably, and it went right into the paper without hardly a whimper because they thought it was a solid story and worth the space," he said.

On another occasion, Roberts wanted to do a story on atomic energy but was afraid his editor might say no. But he figured out that his editor liked animal stories and decided to write his story with a dog in the lede.

"Don't forsake substance. Just serve it up in the most appetizing way," he said.

These clever — some might even say crafty ideas — were suggested by Roberts during an interview he gave to SEJ executive director Beth Parke and SEJ President Jim Detjen. The interview was conducted at Roberts' home in Washington, D.C. just a few weeks before he moved to New York City to take over his new job at *The Times*.

During the interview Roberts acknowledged that cutbacks in newsroom budgets have made it more difficult for environmental reporters to do their jobs. But he said environmental reporters should keep in mind that they're "not the only ones being picked on."

Roberts said "it's certainly a tough time to be in a lot of newsrooms" and he criticized the corporate mentality that requires a never-ending stream of profits, even during hard economic times. He said "project reporting or enterprise isn't dead by any means, but it's finding tougher and tougher going."

Despite these problems, he urged reporters and editors to "fight and to stand up for basic values" and to use resourcefulness and fine writing as a way to get their stories into print or on the air.

An edited transcript of the interview starts above:

Beth Parke: Do these papers that are investing in the newsroom see it as good business, or does it relate to a sense of mission of the press?

Roberts: They see it as good business, very much so. And in my opinion it is good business. But a lot of newspaper organizations are in the hands of professional managers who feel they are being judged on what they are doing with their administration, and not particularly what kind of shape they leave the paper for future generations. They feel that if they don't make an impressive operating return this quarter and this year, it doesn't particularly matter what happens six or eight years down the road because they're not going to be there. They have a lot of corporate pressure on them. I think that is not a sound way to run newspapers that are parts of communities, and people come to rely on them. There are many, many different parts of newspapers. Every time there's a cutback, something goes that's very important to some of your readers, and you start loosening your hold on the readers. And I think that's a bad thing.

Detjen: Many journalists of my era got into journalism in the '70's because they really did see it as a public service, as a calling, a way to improve society. And that's also part of the anxiety that's going on now in newsrooms. It seems as if the emphasis is on much more style than substance: having good writing, but they don't really care about the reporting so much. So the other question is, do you see public service journalism dying? Is it diminishing?

Roberts Interview

Roberts: Well, I was chairman of the public service jury in the Pulitzers this year and there were some very good public service entries. There was a certain faddism involved in it and it wasn't nearly as broadly based as I would like. But, a heavy degree of the entries involved crime, violence and children. I hesitate to quarrel with that because this was a real crisis in many communities. I think it would be a distinct problem if papers weren't moving on that and covering the story, which a good number of them were. But I would have hoped to see maybe 35, 40, 50 different subjects covered because I think American communities are very diverse and there wasn't (that diversity). The great bulk of the entries fit in about three categories.

Detjen: I'm sure you have judged contests before. Can you contrast that with perhaps what you saw 5 or 10 years ago?.

Roberts: Five or 10 years ago I was involved with the Pulitzer, but at the board level. So I saw the final three or so, but I didn't see the mass. It is encouraging that people are out there doing things. Again, I thought that it was very encouraging the kind of reporting we got out of Albuquerque, Eileen Welsome's series, from a small paper. That was an extremely impressive piece. It sort of gives you hope that somehow, some way, even small papers can do a great job. I read a story that quoted the editor as saying they could only do one thing a year of that magnitude. But those kind of things are important. I don't think project reporting or enterprise reporting is dead by any means, but it's finding tougher and tougher going. One reason it isn't dead is that over the years a lot of reporters and editors have sprung up who believe in it and one way or another are going to get it done. But it's harder for them every year than it was the year before.

Parke: I'm wondering about people, talented, creative people, being nurtured by the system and staying in the profession. My background is in local public broadcasting, where some of the same pressures from the business office, the era of demographics and audience research, have driven some of those people motivated by creativity and public service out of the system over the last 10 years. Thinking about the community role of the press vs. press as business, where do you think we are now, in terms of press history? Will creative people motivated by public service continue to be driven out?

Roberts: I think the answer is mixed on that. There are a large number of newspapers now that in my opinion don't do anything. For the most part these are small- and middle-sized

papers, and two or three organizations that are kind of notorious for going into a community and peeling down to one wire machine. So you have that phenomenon, which is pretty scary. Then you have the phenomenon of organizations that have much, much better traditions than that, but feel that because they are stock companies, they are under certain kinds of pressures that other companies are not and that if they have a bad quarter it's terrible. The basic danger and problem is that they're trying to breed the cyclical out of what is basically a cyclical business. And there's nothing that's more consumer sensitive than newspapers because we depend on advertising and when people don't buy there's a lot less advertising. Because Gannett went through some huge amount of quarters without ever having a down quarter, this has become something the industry is trying to emulate. It inevitably means that every time there's a down-turn, if you want to keep earnings up you start gouging into the bones of the newspapers. When it first started, newspapers could roll a little, they had a little more cutting room. When you get into a four to five year period like we've had in the industry, the operating flexibility in the newsroom is probably gone by the end of the first year if the paper had any at all and certainly if you've had two, three, four, five years of cuts and things aren't put back in a major way. I worry because



Roberts

I think in some cases editors get so battered that down starts looking like up, and they sort of adjust permanently to a bad news hole situation for a paper. I have a habit of reading papers when I'm passing through a town and many, many American newspapers are just too thin. It deprives them of the very scope and appeal that would, I think, be the best insurance policy to have against television and cable and whatever is coming down the pike. Interestingly, one organization I have left out of the list of exceptions which I do think is encouraging is Newhouse. They've made major editor moves in Cleveland, Portland, New Orleans, and have got a very strong person in their Washington bureau. The whole organization seems to be coming alive. It historically hasn't been, in news terms, a very vibrant set of newspapers, so the editors have their work cut out for them. But things are beginning to happen and I think it's one of the most exciting things going on in newspapers right now. Also, they have an interesting marketing approach in which they go after large quantities of advertising and keep the price of it lower than some news organizations do. And they also keep the circulation price low. And because they're going after large quantities of advertising and trying to do it through volume instead of pricing, which many chain organizations do. It forces news hole, which is a good thing. When you look at those papers they look very fat in news hole compared to their competitors. Not too fat in my opinion at all,

Roberts Interview

but about the way American papers in those markets used to look.

Detjen: I want to talk a little bit about some of the environmental news. You've talked about cycles and economics. Clearly coverage of the environment has gone in cycles. In the 1970s it increased, then with the coming of the Reagan era it declined through the mid '80s and then for a variety of factors it increased in the late 1980s maybe peaking at Earth Day in 1990. It seems in the last few years there's been decline again as interests on other things, economics, health care, have come to the fore. The problem is also reflected in newsrooms in the number of reporters assigned to cover environmental topics. Many papers have cut back on their number of journalists covering environmental issues. And the net effect is that there is a real inconsistency in how much environmental news is going into newspapers and the media. I wanted to ask you your thoughts and concerns about that and how you counter that, if you can.

Roberts: I am concerned and I think what you are saying about it is right. I think part of the problem is that some of the papers got into it for the wrong reasons in the first place. It became trendy at some point to get into environmental reporting and papers felt like they should have it because the Jones had it without really thinking through in the first place how it could be integrated in a meaningful way with their local coverage policies. Having said that, another reason that environmental reporters are having problems is that a lot of it almost by definition has to be project reporting. And there are not great wads of people calling press conferences to announce an environmental problem. You have to pull all the pieces together and do the story. And because a lot of the news hole that was cut has not been restored in newspapers, and because travel budgets have been cut and have not been restored, it is harder to do projects. No matter what the beat is. And it's forcing editors to make choices. If you've got a limited pie to deal with and you know that you are not likely to have a news hole month after month, there's a tendency to spread it around and get a number of things covered as opposed to environment.

Parke: I agree with what you are saying there in that many environmental stories are the classic stories — those that ooze out — increase in soil erosion, loss of species, things like that where there are not press conferences called. I'd also say that the things the media does cover are the big disasters like the Alaskan oil spill. But the continuing problems of hundreds if not thousands of smaller oil spills don't get any coverage at all

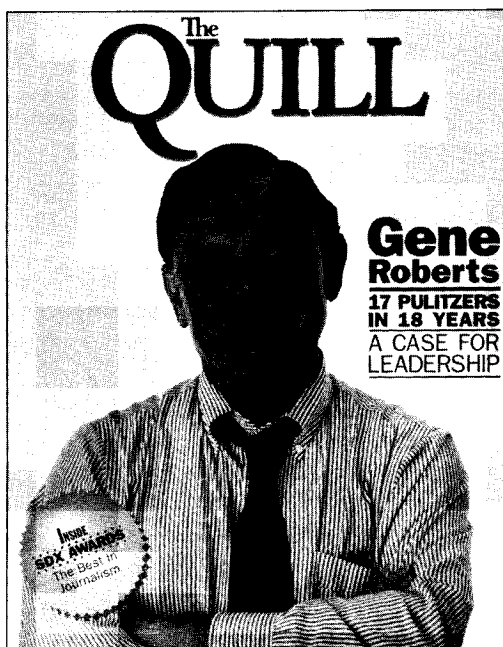
and cumulatively they may have an even greater impact. I guess it comes back down to the same question. Is there any way to counter this tendency? If there is a cutback going on in project reporting, how does a journalist who's frustrated deal with that?

Roberts: I don't know that I have an overall permanent solution, unless newsrooms budgets return to a more realistic level than they are in many cases, but there are some first aid measures that you can take. One of them is to — because you know going in that editors are trying to spread things around — share less of your planning with the editors. Because if you outline — I know this is going to sound like sedition (laughs) but if you walk up to an editors desk and say "I'm thinking of

doing the following story but to do it I've got to have room and space" and all of that, the chances are greater that the editor is going to say no or try and steer you away. So if it's a story you really care about, then I'd go ahead and do it, and then present it to the editor. And a number of things happen. If it's as good as you think, it's going to be harder for him to resist. The editor is then dealing with a reality rather than conjecture or speculation and if he kills the story he's sort of at that point killing a living, breathing thing as opposed to reining in an idea. And that's nothing new. I had a story in 1961 that I particularly wanted done. I thought it was sensitive and I thought it was going to turn into maybe a three-part series, which it did. It was on a substantive topic, which was race. We had a short staff and we were a little better with news hole. This was in Raleigh. And I had a great editor. I liked all the people. I

thought it was a sound organization. But I knew that if I went in and talked about a huge story in a tight staffing situation, everybody was going to say, well "great idea, maybe we'll get another reporter and maybe this summer or something, maybe." So I just figured out a way to do the story. When I turned it in they acted just like I thought they would, honorably, and it went right into the paper without hardly a whimper because they thought it was a solid story and worth the space. So to some degree you can set your own priorities by the way you structure your beat and do your own operating and the way you develop your own operating style. In periods of crisis like this I think you have to fall back on deciding what is important and what at all costs you're going to get done. Do the things that in your judgement would prevent the story from getting derailed if it has a chance to compete on its own two feet.

There's one other kind of band-aid you can use. Reporters sometimes don't like to be reminded of this, but one of the saving graces of the current situation is that there is more emphasis on writing. Good writing. Editors want people to



SPJ's Quill featured Roberts on its cover in 1991, before his departure from the Philadelphia Inquirer.

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continue reading the paper even though they have less flexibility than they did before. I think the emphasis on writing is a good thing, not a bad thing. I've worked for another paper which shall be nameless, years ago, and it was having space problems and things like that. I discovered that one or two of the editors loved animal stories. I figured out that I could write about atomic energy if I could figure out how to lead with a dog. As long as you have a little nippy, warm and cuddly lead on this substantive story. . . Now, you can take it out the window and make a bad thing out of it, but, I think fixing a story so it works is a desirable thing. I also think that going over and over a project so you're absolutely sure it reads, quite apart from solving some of the editing problems, and getting you in the paper ahead of other things, sort of guarantees that more people are going to get into the story and stick with it. I think that one thing you can do as an organization is discuss good writing and good approaches to stories. I hope environment hasn't become a bad word on the editing desk right now. But let's assume for a moment that on some desks it has. In my opinion the way to overcome that is not to give them a lecture on environment, because they're probably steeled against it if they feel that way in the first place, but just to demonstrate that very important, readable stories can come off the environmental beat. If they should choose to classify them in their own mind as a dog story, or warm and wonderful or something like that, as opposed to an environmental story. I think on a short term basis I think you can live with that. Two or three years down the road it might be more of a career problem. Hopefully if we buy a couple of years maybe some people will start coming to their senses.

Parke: What about public service, where we say "environment is important out in the real world, it's something people need to take in?"

Roberts: My point is that you can do public service, and should do public service, and can do substantive stories and should do substantive stories. But if you go to an editor these days, one that's particularly embattled, and say "you know it's time to a public service story or a substantive story" you know what's going to happen. I would say, do the substantive story but make sure it reads and make sure it has an inviting lede. And if you have to sell it as an animal story, as long as it gets in the paper and as long as it meets your definition of what substance is and what public service is, you're doing public service. I just say don't forsake substance, just serve it up in the most appetizing way and buy some time.

Parke: We've had a lot of talk in our organization about what role we can play in reaching the editors — saying "okay, when you are dividing up your limited pie, environmental issues are an important part of the pie." We look at the role of advocating collectively for environmental journalism, and supporting

people so that when they do do what you're describing it's easier for them. But we are wondering about what you think about the role of SEJ, the organization, in this kind of process. Do we risk certain things when we become advocates for the beat? The common assumption is that we're environmentalists and that's what we're all about and that brings up the natural defenses. So when we go to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, say, and suggest that they treat environmental coverage in their convention agenda, does that make us outcast advocates as an organization?

"Stay away from the easy but superficial, sometimes even misleading story. It's almost an article of faith with me that a quickie story in the environmental field is asking for trouble because the issues are almost invariably complicated."

Gene Roberts

Roberts: No. What I was outlining was a prescription for a day-by-day reporter who's got to live with an editor on the firing line. Meanwhile I think you ought to go after editors and publishers at meetings and conventions and I don't see anything wrong with that. I see everything right about it.

Detjen: The public often is confused about environmental issues because of the tendency of the media to focus on extreme views, often very vocal extreme views. If it's radiation, reporters go to the environmentalists on one side and the industry on the other, and there's this large gap in the middle and the public is left wondering "What's really going on? We're hearing totally different things from each different side." Some people feel that these days, in order to get a story on page one you have to have conflict and drama. In order to get a story on the network news you have to have conflict and drama. The net result is the stories that are coming out are very confusing to readers and listeners. They don't know what is going on. I wonder, are there ways to counter this tendency. Do you see this as a problem?

Roberts: Yes, this is a problem. I think because of the sort of trendy element of environmental reporting, not only did some papers get into it for the wrong reasons, some reporters got into it for the wrong reasons. But I also know that the vast majority of the environmental writers I know are very strong newspaper people, and the best of that group are as good journalists that exist in the business. So I think you've got that working for you. I think it's a mature subject area with a lot of mature reporters on it as leaders. I think it's a question of taking the role models that are really good and extending their reach so that more environmental writers learn from them. Stay away from the easy but superficial, sometimes even misleading story. It's almost an article of faith with me that a quickie story in the environmental field is asking for trouble, because the issues are almost invariably complicated. Which is not to say that there aren't some simple things you can do. One nice thing that's come out of the tendency on newspapers to have charts and graphs and emphasize weather maps and things like that, is that things like air

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pollution get written into the system on a day-by-day way. And you get told every day the quality of air. I think those kinds of things are good things. Environmentally, in that sense, there have been some real improvement with newspapers. But as in all things, you have to be constantly raising the standards. I think you've certainly done that as an organization, but that's certainly a fertile area.

Detjen: In many environmental stories there clearly is a scientific component: acid rain, loss of species, toxic chemicals.... And you have to explain some of these scientific concepts to readers. Yet there is also a tendency at many newspapers, by editors, to say, "oh science is boring, let's cut it out." Very often the first thing cut out of a long piece on environmental topics is the scientific component. Yet all the polls show there's great scientific illiteracy in the country. People just don't understand basic concepts. I wondered if you had any thoughts on that. How do you counter this tendency by many editors trained in liberal arts and struggling to understand these things to cut out the science because they see it as boring?.

Roberts: I happen to think science is interesting and exciting, although I certainly couldn't prove it by my college track record in science. I think if the science is carefully integrated into the story, that an editor has a real problem cutting it out. Again I would say if you carefully compartmentalize the science and just say I'm going to give two paragraphs to science, it may loom out there as an easy chop for the editor. But if you kind of interweave it, then they have to go in and systematically weed out the science and most editors aren't that smart that they could figure out how to do it. So I think sort of the best defense on that is a good offense.

Detjen: Let me ask you how do you use science sections. Clearly you're going to *The New York Times* which has the best science section in the country. At the same time, studies show that since the recession occurred the number of papers with science sections or science pages has plummeted from something like 90 to 50 in the last five years. Do you favor science pages or sections? Or do you think that's the wrong way to go?

Roberts: Yes, I do favor them, particularly when you have enough resources that they can be well done. Some of the, maybe *the most* interesting stories I've read all this week were in *The Times* Science section. They had a story on what people are finding out about the importance of breast feeding and it was well done. I think that would have worked in any newspaper in America. I thought the story that they had on Darwin's Finches Beaks was one of the most interesting

stories I read, but it probably wouldn't have worked in a lot of papers in the U.S. But I don't think you could justify it in a major way because you're going to end up talking about conceptual evolution theory and in some papers, you might have five people who are going to be with you on that kind of story. It's an important and interesting story and certainly deserves an audience far beyond *The Times*.

Detjen: The problem is that science sections or pages have cut back. Those are places where you can do some of the more thoughtful environmental pieces because you don't have to focus immediately on the conflict. It can just be an interesting background story on some ongoing development that might not make page one but it has a home in a science section. So the frustration is that with cut backs, the homes for the more thoughtful, non-conflict stories are becoming fewer and fewer.

Gene Roberts

Parke: . . . As well as the investment in the writers to be able to do science pieces with any kind of authority. I'm wondering what you thought about the importance of editors investing in education of their reporters so they can do science properly.

Roberts: I think it's very important. And there are more papers that will participate in it. I'm connected with the Woods Hole Fellowships in the summer and I think that's a very good thing. And more straight science reporters are involved in that than environmental, although some are. I would like to see more applications from environmental reporters because working directly with scientists can fill some gaps for environmental reporters and make better environmental reporting. At the Knight Fellowships in specialized journalism at Maryland we've had one environmental program. It was well-attended and they had more applications than they could accommodate. My guess is that Howard Bray, the director, is very open in this field and if environmental reporters bring special gaps to his attention or your organization says there's a need for a seminar that's going to concentrate on this or that, he would be very responsive. He has the flexibility to do anything from three days up to three weeks.

Parke: SEJ could do more in partnership with universities.

Roberts: And then there is a longer term one, the Knight Fellowship program at MIT, which again some environmental reporters have attended but I wish more were inclined to. We do have environmental reporters who have been through the MIT program. Even more would be a good thing.

Parke: Perhaps we could wind up with the subject of the plenary we plan to do at our Utah conference: the tabloidization

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of news and the fact that more substantive and serious news — stories that many traditional news people feel are very important — are often shunted aside or not given much emphasis. We can labor forever helping reporters do a better job, but if there's no space or airtime. . .

Roberts: Yes, I share all your concerns about tabloidization. News on that front, I think, is that *USA Today*, which ushered a lot of that in. . . I find getting more substantive and doing things that it wouldn't have thought of doing when it was first founded. You're having more and more half-page units of stories. They don't seem to be ready to go to full-page units yet, but they are making up for some little short cuts. Sometimes they have two-half page units on the same story. So if you add them up together you've got something. And they are tackling some things. I think the audience out there is telling them something — that it's dangerous for a paper to be all dessert at moments of national crisis. At a very minimum it turns off even the most frivolous readers who pick up on the story and want something more meaty. One of the crazy things is the fact that at the very moment that other newspapers were at the height of the frenzy to imitate *USA Today*, *USA Today* was beginning to swing the other way. It sort of went over all the imitators' heads, but it's happened and I guess you can get into arguments about whether they are swinging enough, but at least some substance is taking place in *USA Today*.

Parke: You say that lack of substance in reporting is dangerous to the business of news, but what would you say to say to someone like a Paul Ehrlich, the biologist, who would say it's dangerous to the survival of our species?

Roberts: I would certainly agree with him. And I worry on the subject of foreign news. You have editors and newspapers who never ran it in the first place, declaring war on it in the second place at the very time in the history in our nation when we are more influential in world affairs than others, because there is no Eastern Bloc to take us on. Yet on many, many papers we are having less about foreign news. I think as a nation and as a society that's dangerous. But again, this is sort of the short-term thinking that occurs on some papers. Africa may go down the tubes but if you don't run an African story, it's not going to affect the circulation of the Local Bugle.

Detjen: Do you see other cutbacks going on on the size of foreign staffs on papers across the country? Or are you not seeing that?

Roberts: I don't know. The *American Journalism Review* has been doing some surveys on that and are, I think, going to look at it on an annual basis. That's a good development because I

don't think that we've had annual benchmarks or ways of measuring systematically whether foreign news is going up and down, or whether environmental news is going up and down. We all know that it has, but we don't have really strong statistics on what it was.

Parke: one last question.. When we talk about the urgent concerns of a biologist like Paul Ehrlich and concerns about the role of the press as this all important thing, it reminds me of debates about the public schools. People assign this limited institution all kinds of roles: raising the kids and teaching them values and making sure that they get health care and eat their lunch and everything else. Do you feel that maybe we have too many expectations of the press? When it comes to society recognizing what issues are important, shouldn't we be talking about the political system, the education system, the family — all those things?

Roberts: I don't think we have too many expectations of the press. I think the problem tends to be that the expectations are too low rather than too high. The whole basic concept of our system is that the people

decide on issues and elect officials and so forth. If the papers aren't conduits for discussion and reporting on these issues, then the entire debate in society contracts and the business of government gets narrower and more frivolous rather than broader and more substantive. I think that's a real danger.

Detjen: Many of our members are worried about the cutback in the news hole, worried about the future of these papers (and magazines and news programs) just basically worried about doing their job, particularly the environmental reporters. Any last words or thoughts to these journalists that are struggling out there to try to do their job and feel they're undercut by editors?

Roberts: One thing I think environmental reporters should keep in mind, and I think most of them know it, is that unfortunately they are not being the only ones picked on. It's not only the science and environmental pages that have bitten the dust. There are other things important to papers and society and general readership that are biting the dust as well. And it's a much broader problem than environment, but environment is so important as a subject area, I think it would be a real danger, it would be a shame if environmental reporters got too complacent about it because it's happening generally. I think that's reason to be more worried about environmental coverage rather than to be less. I wish I had more practical solutions than I have, but I think the answer is increasingly to fight and to stand up for basic values, but do it in an intelligent way.

"I don't think we have too many expectations of the press. I think the problem tends to be that the expectations are too low. If the papers aren't conduits for discussion and reporting about these serious issues, then the entire debate in society contracts and the business of government gets narrower and more frivolous rather than broader and more substantive. I think that's a real danger."

Gene Roberts

Of flowing rivers and stories

By SUSAN Q. STRANAHAN

During more than two decades of reporting in Pennsylvania, I found myself along the banks of the Susquehanna many times. The stories that lured me there were dramatic and subtle: the accident at Three Mile Island, the squandering of \$2 billion in federal disaster assistance following the 1972 Agnes storm, the protracted effort to restore migratory fish to the Susquehanna, the bitter legacy of Pennsylvania's coal-mining heritage, and the struggle to resuscitate the Chesapeake Bay. Each time, the river served as a backdrop for the more immediate story, a secondary player in what seemed to be a larger drama.

Little did I realize what I was missing. The real story was the Susquehanna itself. The events I had chronicled for readers of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* were just small pieces of the river's rich and varied history.

The opportunity to pursue that larger, grander story arose a few years ago when I began work on a natural history of the river and those who live along it. Thus began a journey unlike any I have undertaken.

The Susquehanna is the longest nonnavigable river in North America, a fact that has been both a curse and a blessing. The river drains half of Pennsylvania and parts of New York and Maryland. It supplies the Chesapeake with half its fresh water — 25 billion gallons on an average day, enough to supply the needs of every U.S. household, with a billion gallons left over.

A century and more ago, poets, artists, and writers here and abroad celebrated the smallest details of the river. Today, few Americans could describe its course with accuracy.

The river's stunning resources — legendary stands of timber, huge reserves of coal and lush valleys of rich farmland — fueled this nation's growth from a

colony to a world power. The struggle over who would profit from its riches influenced the political landscape of Pennsylvania and Maryland for the century preceding the Revolutionary War. Blood was spilled in the quest to control its bounty.

In the end, the river was nearly destroyed by those who exploited its resources. That desecration, however,

inspired some of the first environmental legislation ever enacted in this country, regulations on forest conservation in the 1890s, clean water in the 1900s, and coal

first place. The river also boldly proclaims that the public's will can prevail and that environmental legislation can succeed.

The water of the Susquehanna is fishable and swimmable again along much of its length; the river flows through vast hardwood forests of extraordinary beauty and value; and the regulation of coal mining, while still erratic, has ended decades of flagrant abuses.

Today, the issues confronting the Susquehanna and its 27,500-square-mile watershed are the resource problems of the 1990s: Land use, population pressures, economic growth versus environmental integrity. The choices required for each are politically the most volatile of any waged along the Susquehanna to date. And, the choices made will determine whether or not the Susquehanna will provide enjoyment to future generations.

That's the Susquehanna's story — if I had just 10 inches or 400 words in which to tell it.

Instead, I had the time and freedom to read the journals of men who made Pennsylvania the logging capital of the world in the 1880s; to pour over letters written by Susanna Wright, the Quaker who built a thriving frontier outpost along the Susquehanna in the mid 1700s and was a confidante to Benjamin Franklin and others; and to examine the original receipts for the Susquehanna white pine that was used to build the President's House, as the White House first was known.

I spent a sun-dappled afternoon in an old cemetery listening to the stories of one of Pennsylvania's first environmental activists, a man who traces his roots on the Susquehanna back 250 years. And I whiled away several moonlit nights wait-



Susan Stranahan and her canine friend pause on a rock in the Susquehanna.

mining in the 1930s. These laws were enacted after citizens, deprived of the use and enjoyment of their beloved river, demanded that their government officials respond.

Indeed, the history of the Susquehanna mirrors much of national environmental policy — of belatedly repairing damage already done, a challenge far more complex and costly than preventing it from happening in the

"Rivers offer the perfect framework for a storyteller. They provide a beginning and an end with an obvious flow from one to the other. They neatly link people and events in history. They serve as paths of discovery and arteries of commerce. Not only can rivers be counted on for moments of great drama, but they also invariably attract their share of eccentric characters. So it is with the Susquehanna.

The Susquehanna is not simply a framework on which to hang a story, but the story itself. This river possesses an uncanny ability to fire the imagination, to stir the senses, to inspire dreams. It is a living thing, quirky and independent. No matter how frequently you travel beside it, or how patient a vigil you maintain on its edge, the river is ever-changing, a source of constant surprise, revealing or concealing intriguing bits of information, drawing you along with its ceaseless movement, urging you to take up the journey. The Susquehanna is a writer's wellspring — generous, beckoning, majestic."

from "Susquehanna, River of Dreams"
By Susan Q. Stranahan

Looking for answers to the chlorine mysteries

BY IVAN AMATO

I have a box at home that's brimming with 20 pounds of coffee-stained research papers, conference schedules, news reports, faxes, interview notes, Post-Its scrawled with phone numbers, press releases, PR videos, policy documents, commissioned reports, and sundry other items— all of which have to do with the controversy over the use of chlorine as a staple in industrial processes. From this mass I have produced a couple of articles, each a few thousand words long, attempting to make responsible sense of it all.

Although the controversy has been brewing for years, it was a feature article last year in *Chemical & Engineering News* that opened my eyes. The cover depicted the chemical symbol for chlorine — Cl — in a circle with a diagonal line slashed through it, like a "No smoking sign." I persuaded my editors at Science that I should look into it. It didn't take long for me to realize that I had committed myself to a crash-course in environmental reporting, a realm I had visited only intermittently during my six years as a science writer.

I soon developed an appreciation for the mind-numbing ambiguities that environmental reporters confront all of the time. As in many other environmental stories, the stakes in the chlorine debate appear huge: Each side contends that a global catastrophe will follow unless their prescribed actions are adopted. The two camps often rely on the same data to argue for opposite conclusions, which, in turn, they use to push for diametrically opposed public perceptions and policies.

The situation reminds me of the story in which a rabbi hears one argument and declares it is right. Then he hears a sec-

ing for young shad to make their first trip to the sea, standing beside a biologist whose entire career has been spent restoring the migratory cycle of these beautiful fish.

My travels took me along the 448 miles that separate the source of the North Branch of the Susquehanna in Cooperstown, N.Y., from its mouth at Havre de Grace, Maryland. I explored most of the 240-mile-long West Branch of the river, too. I became immersed in the rich history of the state where I have spent most of my life.

The focus of my research was as diverse as the Susquehanna's terrain, including farming, nuclear development, flooding, pollution and geology. My time frame, Michenerian in scope.

Yet, despite the wealth of material, the breadth of subject matter and the span of centuries, I never lost my way, for the Susquehanna was the common thread, tying together the people and events no matter when or where they occurred. The Susquehanna was a place, not just on a map, but in the lives of everyone I encountered and eventually wrote about.

Almost without exception, the words "Hello, I'm writing a book on the Susquehanna" was all the introduction I needed. The generosity and sincerity of those I met on the project surprised me; few journalists are accustomed to such

treatment.

Late one afternoon, as I prepared to leave a small library where I had discovered a cache of local river histories, the librarian — who had allowed me to stay long after closing time — explained the outpouring of enthusiasm about the book project.

"You are doing what all of us who live along the river have wanted to do all our lives," she said. "You are preserving the stories and the history we know and love. You're reaffirming our belief that this is a special place." The Susquehanna seizes your soul as quickly as it grabs the prow of a canoe on a bright June morning.

That the river could exercise such power should have come as no surprise. I had read its history, traveled its length, and talked with those who know it well. I had listened and thought I understood its lure and its ability to inspire grand dreams.

But now, pushing off into the fast-moving water, a new voice is heard. The river itself is speaking to me. And I hear it with my heart.

Susan Q. Stranahan, author of "Susquehanna, River of Dreams," is a staffwriter at The Philadelphia Inquirer, and has written about regional and national environmental issues for more than two decades.

ond argument with an opposite conclusion and declares it is right. When an observer points out that both arguments can't be correct at the same time, the rabbi declares that to be true too.

A similarly maddening logic underlies the chlorine arguments. First listen to the detractors—several environmental groups prodded into action by Greenpeace. They rattle off high-profile chemovillians such as dioxins, PCBs, and DDT. These compounds share one feature: chlorine atoms. No one would argue with that, mind you. But then the environmental groups make a big inference that is the crux of the debate. These chemical bugaboos have been documented to be so dangerous, they say, that it's prudent to assume that many of the thousands of other chlorine-containing chemicals on the market—or those created in the environment after synthetic and natural compounds mix—are dangerous too.

Moreover, environmentalists say, since it's impractical to think that each of these compounds could be individually assessed for environmental and public health risk, then all chlorine-containing compounds ought to be regulated as one huge class. In fact, they argue—and this is the sticking point—that the only way to prevent these compounds from escaping into the environment is to crack down on the mother of them all, elemental chlorine. "No chlorine in, no chlorine out" is their motto.

Chemical manufacturers and other

defenders acknowledge that the use of toxic chlorine chemicals must be regulated. But they insist that not all chlorine-containing compounds were created equal. Some persist in the environment, others don't. Some accumulate in the body, others don't. Some are toxic. Others aren't. Ergo, the defenders conclude, chlorine compounds ought to be regulated on an individual basis. Furthermore, they argue that banning chlorine would deprive society of many

Science Survey

Ivan Amato and Rich Stone of Science offer a review of selected environmental science and policy issues in the news.

useful and important products, such as drinking-water disinfectants (see sidebar). The resulting product substitutes, they point out, could easily be more dangerous than the chlorine-laden originals.

That's my take on the controversy. Both sides offer compelling arguments even as they label each other's arguments so ridiculous that a doorknob could recognize the flaws.

If you assume, as I do, that there is some merit to both arguments, then you set yourself up for the challenge of trying to assess the evidence in order to ferret out the strengths and weaknesses of the respective arguments. The chlorine detractors will wrestle you to one side of the mat with often pre-inter-

preted toxicological, epidemiological and anecdotal data. The chlorine defenders employ similar maneuvers to spin you in the other direction. However, when you press either of them to the mat, they admit there's insufficient data to scientifically settle the dispute.

Unfortunately, it doesn't really matter who you call or how impressive a source's curriculum vitae is. You still won't get the black-and-white "scientific" conclusion that would make life simpler. Both sides acknowledge this. To environmentalists, however, ambiguity demands action. Better safe than sorry, they say. To industrialists, meanwhile, ambiguity calls for "more study" to avoid hasty decisions that could cost money and perhaps turn out to be unfounded.

What are the consequences of this data deficit? public relations and polemics, rather than data analysis, rule the day. What do reporters do in this situation? I have seen two kinds of articles—those by writer-advocates who make little attempt to present how murky the issue is, and those by writers who attempt to mine their 20-pound mountains for informative articles that, when they work, leave readers scratching their heads about what should be done with chlorine-containing compounds. Two ugly options, perhaps, but only one choice for objective journalists. To the policy makers and legislators who must pass judgment on chlorine, I offer sympathy.

EPA tries to balance chlorine, bacteria risks

Chlorine in Drinking Water: How Much is Too Much? Even as the EPA grapples with chlorine (see main story), it has begun to take steps to reduce the public's exposure to chlorinated chemicals formed during disinfection of drinking water. But the EPA is learning just how hard it will be to rid the world of chlorine without endangering public health.

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA must set limits on the amount of hazardous substances in water. Chlorine enters the scene as chlorine dioxide, a disinfectant, as well as disinfection byproducts (DBPs) such as chloroform

and trihalomethane. Taken together, epidemiological studies verify a weak link between these chemicals and bladder and rectal cancer. Experts dispute just how great this threat is: Estimates range from zero to 10,000 cancer cases a year.

However, chlorine dioxide and other disinfectants purge water of known health hazards such as giardia. So EPA had to balance the real threat of giardia against the statistical, yet unproven, cancer risk.

By law, EPA must reduce exposure to DBPs, and the agency published such guidelines in the Federal Register a few months ago. But in a second drinking-

water rule, EPA warned that the DBP rule "may potentially undermine pathogen control" and "result in a substantial increase in waterborne illness for systems using a poor-quality source water." EPA estimates that by lowering exposure to trihalomethane alone, the incidence of giardia-induced illness could increase by as many as 10,000 cases per million people each year.

The new rules are not a *fait accompli*. EPA is gathering public comment and intends to publish revised rules later this year.

—Richard Stone

Students had 'lots' of ideas

By NAT BULKLEY

When four University of Michigan students and I first walked through the doors of Detroit's Southwestern High School last year, we had no idea what to expect. Neither did the 15 journalism students we met that day. When we told them our mission was to help them cover environmental issues, they had no idea how to react.

That they eventually called the environmental newspaper they decided to produce "I Have No Idea" didn't reflect a shortage of story ideas. Instead, it reflected a process of discovery in which we helped the students address their concerns through journalism.

Our students soon saw their neighborhood as an urban environmental reporter's paradise, offering a wealth of stories on traditional environmental issues like air pollution and dumping as well as less traditional environmental issues like gangs and crime.

Our project involved spending one hour a week at Southwestern High School for nine months. It was one of four pilot programs in urban environmental journalism sponsored by the National Consortium for Environmental Education and Training (NCEET). The consortium, headquartered at the University of Michigan in 1992 with a \$4.8 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, works to enhance and extend environmental education nationally.

I took a job with the consortium last year after spending two years as a general assignment reporter on a suburban Chicago daily.

My year at Southwestern was rewarding - and full of lessons for working environmental journalists who'd like to mentor local high school students, an activity that the Society of Environmental Journalists is trying to encourage.

Here are three ideas to keep in mind if any of you walk into a high school classroom as a mentor:

● Teaching means selling. Remember the most urgent concerns you had in high school — chances are they had

more to do with finding the best parties that weekend than anything the teacher would say.

By trial and error, we found ways of getting and keeping students' attention. We eventually learned to start every class with a game. One day, we chose a student to be a grizzly bear and everyone else to be trees frozen in the forest. Without touching the trees, the grizzly

In Education

is a periodic feature of SEJournal, offering a look a developments in the teching of environmental communications.

bear had to get the trees to move, once they did, they too became grizzly bears until the whole class was converted.

Our games also included role plays, music, and storytelling. Many offered more educational value than the grizzly bear game, but the goal was still the same. For the first five minutes we got students out of their seats and involved, making them leave their everyday concerns at the door. After that, we could get down to work.

● Define and redefine your goals. Everything we did at Southwestern could be seen on a number of levels. We were teaching both environmental content and writing and journalism skills and doing it cross-culturally. We also hoped that through journalism, we would show students ways they could work to change their environment for the better. It was an ambitious goal for one hour a week over the course of a year.

One of our breakthroughs occurred spontaneously at the end of the first semester. In this class, we planned to critique articles as a way of focusing on writing skills. The students had other ideas. They wanted to know, "what did a bunch of white upper-middle class university students know about the problems they faced?" Not much.

Our compromise was to have them write letters to the editor on the subject that most concerned them about their

environment. We got them to write. They saw that we were honest about treating them as adults and encouraging them to speak their minds. The letters gave them ideas for longer pieces that eventually ran in their class environmental newspaper.

Having a class paper was also one of the students' ideas. After we finished one edition of the paper, we convinced Southwestern administrators to cover the costs of printing copies for each student in the school.

● Leave plenty of time to listen. Many of the best learning experiences came when we acted more as facilitators than teachers, helping students think their way through problems.

We threw away a lesson plan a second time after students came to class upset over a spot weapons search. By turning the class into a discussion, and involving their regular journalism teacher, we clarified ways they could write about the search and problems of urban violence without being censored.

Other useful discussions flowed from class exercises. In a role play, based on a recent newspaper story about an oil spill on the Detroit river, we gave students ten minutes to do interviews and five minutes to write a lead. Afterwards, we discussed ways of handling the discrepancy between accounts given by our mock irate neighbor and city officials, as well as dealing with the time pressures and incomplete nature of spot news.

Another exercise had students retell a story for different audiences. This led them to talk about the real audience for their school paper. Was it the students or the teachers and the administration or maybe a little of both?

Eventually, NCEET's urban environmental journalism program plans to develop a curriculum for teaching environmental journalism aimed at urban schools. It will draw on experiences at Southwestern, as well as those in other pilot programs in New York, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

But it is certainly not necessary for

(Continued on page 31)

Getting some good advice

Advisory boards help expand the enviro beat

By Roger McCoy

It's a big universe out there, the environmental reporting beat. But how often do we stay close to home where ideas, debates, issues and sources on the E-beat are familiar? More often, I'm afraid, than many of us care to admit.

So take a deep breath and consider an environmental advisory board.

No doubt about it, environmental journalists are generally quite good at turning out stories. But that's just one part, generally a reactive part, of covering your beat.

An advisory board can give a new dimension to environmental reporting. An interactive group of professionals and lay people involved with the environment on a professional or personal basis, it provides a venue for fellow workers to become involved with environmental projects; chances to make your environmental reporting more informed, balanced and in-tune with the issues; high-visibility community relations that sends a message to board participants, readers, listeners and viewers that your paper or station cares enough to give the environmental beat the very best; and a less stressful forum, away from the pressures of deadline, to meet with dozens of informed sources at the same time.

In 1989, I chaired what I believe is America's first television environmental advisory board at my former employer, Fox-affiliate WKBD-TV in Detroit, Mich. As a news anchor and reporter, I was asked by station management what area I wanted to become involved with in the community. One look around heavily industrialized southeast Michigan convinced me the environment beat was begging for a higher profile.

With the backing of station general manager Duane Kell, WKBD established a weekly environmental feature and nightly environmental facts that aired

within our 10:00 p.m. newscast. We called it "Earthwork." We also established the "Earthwork Environmental Advisory Board."

The board included invited representatives from mainstream environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club and The Audubon Society, grassroots environmental groups such as Downriver Citizens for a Safe Environment and the East Michigan Environ-

board.

After our first advisory board meeting in 1989, we stood back and watched nervously to see what would happen next.

So did many of our new board members. "We were apprehensive at first. We didn't know what TV-50 had in mind," said board member and GM environmental education and outreach coordinator Lori Wingerte.

Then the floodgates opened.

Talk about input. Three months after our first meeting, the station was deluged with outstanding tips and tip-offs for all kinds of environmental stories. Stories about illegal wetlands destruction, plastic recycling, alternative fuel developments, fish kills,

fruitless efforts to site a regional nuclear waste repository, government delays on Superfund sites cleanups, the invasion of the zebra mussel.

SOCRRA board member Lillian Dean says TV-50's environmental advisory board is different than other advisory boards. "It exists for the media," she says. "What a wonderful opportunity to have this kind of media access and this kind of diversity. To me it communicates that the media sincerely wants to reach out in a direct, honest effort."

In its first year, TV-50's Earthwork averaged twice as many environmental stories than we had set out to cover. Our datelines covered the state from Detroit to the western tip of the Upper Peninsula.

One primary reason? The advisory board.

Our efforts to reach out and include different groups, organizations, agencies and individuals paid heavy dividends. More times than not, board members called us with worthy story ideas or tips. When we needed experts or

"What a wonderful opportunity to have this kind of media access and this kind of diversity. To me it communicates that the media sincerely wants to reach out in a direct, honest effort."

Lillian Dean

TV-50 advisory board member

mental Action Council, and conservation groups such as Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation and Michigan United Conservation Club.

From government, the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Southeast Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCRRA), Democratic Sen. Carl Levin's office, and four other agencies joined the board.

We also had representatives from the businesses including General Motors Corp., Plasti-Pak and K mart.

Teachers, students and lawyers were all members of the board too during my four years as chairman.

The philosophy behind the board's existence: to bring together on a quarterly basis roughly 35 men and women representing all types of thinking on the environment to discuss ways to make my station's environmental reporting as effective, creative and timely as possible. The station kept editorial control, but sought as much input and feedback as possible from our diverse

contacts on tight deadlines, our board members rarely failed to come up with suggestions, sometimes even volunteering to make phone calls themselves. (We gratefully insisted on doing our own dialing.)

TV-50's public relations coordinator and indispensable advisory board secretary, Nancy Pushee, notes another unique board characteristic: "It gives board members a chance to network with each other."

"It's common ground for corporations, environmental groups and government agencies that isn't necessarily adversarial," added GM's Wingerter. "They (fellow board members) had a chance to see that GM was made up of real people who live in the community and care about the environment too. We're not just out there polluting and being the bad guys."

Most board members also understood there were times when we simply passed on their ideas. But they were included in the process, and saw visible signs that TV-50 had taken the extra step to include them in our reporting.

"This was the environment for its own sake," says Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation director and board member Dennis Fijalkowski. "It convinced me your television station wasn't covering the environment just because it was the news of the day. TV-50 is putting it on the air because the environment is important all the time."

We saw something else. TV-50's audience research showed viewers increasingly frustrated with environmental reports that chronicled problems but gave few if any suggestions on ways to remedy them. Our reporting emphasis shifted more toward informing and empowering viewers. We wanted to give them the information to choose to recycle, cut waste or give a piece of their minds to elected officials.

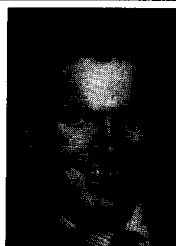
Again the advisory board was helpful. One board member provided expert information so we could print and distribute to thousands of viewers a free brochure on ways to reduce yard waste. The brochure drew requests from as far away as Las Vegas, Nev.

Several other board members helped us publish and distribute a free directory filled with environmental facts and figures and phone numbers for government agencies that monitor and investigate illegal dumping and spill.

"It was important for us to understand the inner workings of TV news too. The advisory board gave us a chance to see how the television editorial process works from the inside," said Dean.

TV-50's Earthwork Advisory Board

If your professional credibility is based on improved reporting that moves issues forward while building stronger community ties, an environmental advisory board may be a journalistic concept whose times has arrived.



McCoy

still is intact, though it was inactive this summer, Pushee says. Despite two years of changing ownership, loss of the Fox affiliation and a tighter news budget, the Earthwork program continues to be a visible part of the station's identity with viewers.

I left TV-50 last year after chairing the board for four years. I now anchor and report in Lansing, Mich., for NBC affiliate WILX-TV. And yes, we have plans to start our own environmental advisory board in the coming year.

Papers explore advisory boards

Other media outlets across America have also dabbled with the concept of environmental advisory boards. "My dream is to get someone on board so we can delegate and get an environmental advisory board," says Linda Wienandt, Lifestyles editor of the American-Statesman in Austin, Texas.

Ms. Wienandt says that when the American-Statesman began its Project Earth section three years ago, it included plans for an advisory board.

The "Project Earth" section is "really thriving" with the paper's readers, says Ms. Wienandt. "We got a lot of reader input. We focus on everyday

folks. John and Jane Does who want to make a difference and get down to practical things: How do I make compost? How do I recycle?"

Ms. Wienandt says the environmental advisory board hasn't materialized. "Structural changes in the newsroom kept it from happening and it really kind of fizzled."

In Paonia, Colo., the biweekly High Country News has a board of directors made up mainly of environmentalists and others concerned about communities and the environment in the West.

While it's not an environmental advisory board per se, Jon Christensen, Great Basin Regional Editor, says the board is news oriented and meets four times a year.

"At every meeting they have a time when they discuss environmental issues that they think should be covered. In that role the board is advisory. It doesn't have any

direct editorial control," Christensen says. "Nonetheless, the board members, people from the communities around the West, often have very good ideas and suggestions that do translate into stories eventually."

Like I said, "It's a big universe out there." Is it expanding or collapsing? In the past 20 years, journalists and the companies we work for have gone from being among America's most trustworthy to among America's least trustworthy information source.

Most of us worry about this situation. Some of us even call it a crisis. If it is, it's a crisis with risk and opportunity. If your professional credibility is based on improved reporting that moves issues forward while building stronger community ties, an environmental advisory board may be a journalistic concept whose times has arrived. Little risk, big opportunity!

Roger McCoy, News Anchor for WILX-TV, Lansing, Michigan is a charter SEJ member. McCoy is this year's Michigan winner of the Emmy Award for "Outstanding Reporter Talent," and recipient of the 1991 and 1993 Ben East Awards for environmental reporting.

West's issues need longer look

By **BOB ARMSTRONG**

The most important thing to remember about covering Western resource issues is that you can't cover them without getting dirt under your fingernails. It is impossible to understand the landscape or its people unless you're willing to spend time listening to different perspectives on resource management.

Too often, however, news coverage makes the mistake of looking at western landscape issues with a political scorecard that assigns winners and losers on a day-by-day basis. This is a mistake: Consensus-building doesn't lend itself to good guy-bad guy or winner-loser outcomes, but depends on a process that incorporates the views of an increasingly diverse group of local people who have a stake in policy decisions.

Westerners have a great deal in common, whether they have been there for generations or are newly arrived: they love wide open spaces, wild rivers, clean water and crisp, clear air. At the same time, however, the West faces a demographic explosion. Many urban centers are growing at a rate of more than 1,000 new residents a month. This has created tremendous pressure on surrounding rural areas with fragile, arid ecosystems and scarce supplies of water. Population growth in the West creates almost all of the challenges to resource management that we now face.

In trying to address these challenges, this administration has found itself bound by regulations and laws that date to a bygone era when it made sense to provide incentives and subsidies to "settle the West." The 1872 Mining Law, for example, still provides a giveaway to those who find gold, silver, or copper on public lands, even though the lonely prospector and his mule have long since given way to multinational mining corporations. In their wake, land is often left unreclaimed,

water supplies polluted, and land converted for uses that have no public return. These are the real issues that people care about.

In the East it's a different story. There, mining reform is often framed as a way to provide taxpayers with a fair return for the use of resources that they, as citizens, own. Mining companies now pay no royalties for the extraction

Viewpoints

is a regular feature of SEJournal, offering a forum to non-journalists who deal with environmental issues and the media.

of hardrock minerals, while oil, gas and coal producers pay a 12 1/2 percent royalty. East-West or commodity-preservation perspectives are inherently different, whether in Congress or on the ground out West.

In order to create a lasting process for meeting these land reform challenges, at least two ingredients are necessary: first, there must be an open and often lengthy airing of diverse opinions; second, that debate must serve a consensus-building process that fairly represents all the views at the table. Neither of

is often to look for immediate newsworthy results, and too often when they're not there the story is reported as a failure of policy rather than what it is: steps in a long process.

The crux of the Interior Department and the Clinton Administration's mission is to consider resource issues on a broader scale than they have been considered in the past. Some call it ecosystem management; I call it common-sense resource management. Resource problems cannot be solved 40 acres at a time, and rarely can they be corrected within the boundaries of a national park or refuge. Ecosystem management celebrates the Western tradition of sustaining wide-open spaces: a big fish cannot survive without proper management of stream banks and riparian areas. Migratory birds need streams, wetlands and healthy riparian areas, and preserving them is fundamental to the administration's rangeland proposal. Clean water, which people as well as critters depend on, is both a necessary policy goal and a good test of ecosystem health.

Of course, consensus is rarely unanimous, and there are always those whose only role is adversarial and who find it hard to compromise. Unfortunately, in an effort to appear objective, there is a temptation in the media and in politics to seize upon the rhetoric of the extremes rather than to watch consensus develop slowly. Beneath the hype and factional politics, however, is common ground that almost always leads to better and longer lasting resource management.

Our challenge, not just for four or eight or 12 years, is to develop a model for the consensus-building process, one that will lead to more effective resource conservation and care of the landscape. It's not pretty, quick or sexy, but it will deliver results. And our children will think it's worth our combined efforts to achieve those results.

Editors' Note

As the SEJ's annual convention will meet under the West's big skies next month, we asked two principals in the debate over public lands and resource management, Utah Governor Michael Leavitt and Assistant Interior Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Bob Armstrong, to answer this question: *What three things do reporters consistently misunderstand or get wrong when they write about public land use?* These two pages contain their replies.

these ingredients is particularly well-suited to media coverage, which must respond to the daily demands of readers, listeners and viewers. The assignment

Rule of politics plays a role

By GOV. MICHAELL O. LEAVITT

In general, reporters do a good job of reporting on public lands issues. I am not aware of three specific things that they consistently misunderstand or get wrong. But I would note three general concerns.

1. There is a lack of perspective, context, balance and basic fairness in some stories. I recognize that it is impossible to provide background, balance and context in every story because of deadline pressures and lack of news hole and air time. But over a period of time, and over the life of an issue, I believe media outlets have an obligation to report all sides of an issue in depth and detail, and in a fair context. Public lands issues are very difficult, complex, and often emotion-charged. It is easy to tell a story from one perspective or the other, especially with compelling quotes and sound bites willingly offered by the partisans. It takes more time and effort to convey to the public the nuances and subtleties of both sides of the issue. Sometimes, to produce a quick story or because of space limitations, an issue is not fully explored in the press, and the public does not understand the interplay between fact, policy, opinion and analysis. Instead, the complexities of an issue get compressed into a huge generalization, and the generalization becomes the

"fact" upon which the story is based. It is a pleasure to read or view an in-depth story on a public lands matter where it is clear the reporter understands the issues involved and fully presents both sides of the controversy. It is disheartening to read one-sided accounts that constitute propaganda for one side or the other.

2. It is a mistake to believe that "politics" is a dirty word in wildlife and public lands decisions. Some writers and interest groups argue that wildlife biologists and other scientists should make natural resources decisions without interference from politicians. They forget that in our democracy elected officials, ultimately, are best positioned to make decisions regarding public resources and the expenditure of public dollars, and are responsible for doing so. No one would seriously argue that health care reform should be handled only by doctors, or economic decisions only by economists. Why should natural resources policy be determined only by scientists? Key decisions should be made by someone accountable to the voters in the next election. Delegating decisions to some board or commission that is supposedly free from politics only moves the politics to a different level, a level not accountable to voters. The politics still remain: the pushing and pulling of stakeholders like hunters, farmers, de-

velopers, fishers, animal rights activists, backpackers, and so forth. And who appoints the board? And how is the board balanced among the interest groups? In a democracy like ours, every decision is in a sense a political decision. Ultimately, the best policy emerges when a politician measures what interest groups want against what the general public wants, and then strikes a balance. In the struggle between preservation/protection of natural open spaces and the need to produce the necessities of life, it must be elected officials, accountable to voters, who make the final decisions.

3. The role of public officials in public lands and wildlife debates is often not fairly conveyed to the public. For example, a story might one day quote an animal rights activist blasting a state wildlife official for supporting the hunting and killing of animals. A few days later, a story might quote a hunters' representative criticizing the same official for spending public money on non-consumptive uses or for not promoting hunting interests. The fact that the wildlife official is caught in the middle of the angry combatants is often lost on the public. More perspective and balance in reporting would help the public understand the role of government in these controversies.

New Members

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from May 14 through Aug. 11, 1994. Memberships recorded after Aug. 11 will appear in the SEJournal's Vol. 4 No. 4.

ARKANSAS

- Robert McAfee (Associate), Waterworks PKI, EcoHelp/EcoPublishing, Hackett

ARIZONA

- Tony Paniagua, News Department, KVOA-TV, Channel 4, Tucson

CALIFORNIA

- Tammy A. Craven, Earth to Earth Productions, Burbank
- Michael Gougis, San Gabriel Valley Tribune, San Gabriel Valley Newspapers, Pasadena

- Susan Ives (Associate), Land and People Magazine, The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco

- Gary Polakovic, The Press-Enterprise, The Press-Enterprise Company, Hesperia

- Leslie Salzmann (Academic), San José State University, San José

COLORADO

- Cheryl Frost (Academic), Ute Language Department, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ignacio
- Pattye A. Volz (Associate), EnviroTech Development Program, Iowa State University/Ames Lab, Pueblo

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Dr. Adam M. Finkel (Associate), Center for Risk Management, Resources for the Future
- Susan Follett, Compliance Strategies Review,

Fieldston Publications

- Gary Lee, The Washington Post
- Laura Litvan, Nation's Business
- Michael Weber (Associate)

FLORIDA

- Kathleen Beeman, Tampa Tribune, St. Petersburg
- Anne Boles, Tampa Tribune, Dade City
- Cynthia L. Harger, Tampa Tribune/Hernando Bureau, Brooksville
- Christine Hawes, Sarasota Herald Tribune, Port Charlotte
- Dr. John Paling (Academic), Center for Enviro Toxicology, University of Florida, Alachua

GEORGIA

- Jay Bookman, The Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta

New Members

• Diane Hawkins-Cox, CNN Environment Unit, Cable News Network, Atlanta

IOWA

• Judy Polumbaum (Associate), School of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Iowa, Iowa City

IDAHO

• Brenda A. Abraham, Council Fires, Coeur d'Alene Council Fires, Plummer

ILLINOIS

• Anita Povich (Associate), University of Illinois, Champaign

KANSAS

• Frank Lingo (Associate), The Gnu Yak Thymes, Lawrence

KENTUCKY

• Mark Pettinger, News Department, WAVE-TV, Louisville

LOUISIANA

• Jennifer Zeppelin, Our Earth, KTBS-TV, Shreveport

MASSACHUSETTS

• Scott Allen, The Boston Globe, Boston
• Andrea Cohen (Academic), MIT Sea Grant College Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
• Jeff Latham, News Department, WGGB-TV, Springfield
• Carolyn Levi (Academic), MIT Sea Grant Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lexington
• William H. MacLeish, Charlemont

MARYLAND

• Elaine Friebele, Cheverly
• Margaret Kriz, National Journal, Bethesda
• Deborah A. Potter, CNN, Chevy Chase
• Debra Trione, Middy, Chicago Public Radio WBEZ, Chevy Chase
• Patricia Villone, Prince George's Today/Blue Horizons, Prince George's Community TV, Landover

MICHIGAN

• Claudia Cuda (Academic), College of Journalism, Michigan State University, Lansing
• Jacqueline Long, The Times Herald, Port Huron

NORTH CAROLINA

• William A. Bake, Boone
• Bruce Henderson, The Charlotte Observer, Knight Publishing Company, Davidson
• Bill Jensen, WRAI News, WRAI TV Capital Broadcasting, Raleigh
• John S. Manuel Jr., Durham

NEW HAMPSHIRE

• Bill Birchard, Amherst
• Steven Maviglio (Associate), Concord

NEW JERSEY

• Richard Degener, The Press of Atlantic City, Cape May Court House

NEVADA

• Kit Miller, Carson City

NEW YORK

• Clarence D. Bassett, New York Business Environment, Clifton Park
• Terry Collins (Associate), United Nations Environment Programme, New York
• Dan Fagin, Newsday, Melville
• Peter Fairley (Academic), Chemical Week Magazine, Chemical Week Associates, Brooklyn
• Michael B. Gerrard (Associate), Environmental Law in New York, Berle, Kass & Case, Chappagua
• Carol Kaplan, Channel 2 News, WGRZ-TV Channel 2 (NBC), Buffalo
• Jean Kessner, WIXT-TV, Syracuse
• Corinne McIntosh-Douglas (Associate), Salomon Brothers U.S. Equity Research, Salomon Brothers, Inc., New York
• Kathryn Winiarski, Gannett Newspapers, New Rochelle

OHIO

• Heather Conway, The Madison Press, London
• Dean Norman (Associate), Endearing Species, Beaver Creek Environment Cartoon Features, Cleveland
• Susan Schwartz, Portsmouth Daily Times, Portsmouth
• Walter S. Topp, Elyria Chronicle-Telegram, Elyria

OREGON

• Orna Izakson (Academic), Willamette Week, University of Missouri School of Journalism, Portland
• Jerry Powell, Resource Recycling, Magazine Portland

PENNSYLVANIA

• Don Hopey, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Pittsburgh
• Charlotte Kidd (Associate), The Treebune, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia
• Julie Lalo (Associate), Center Hall

RHODE ISLAND

• Carole Jaworski (Academic), Nor'easter, Magazine of the Northeast, Sea Grant Programs, University of Rhode Island, Wakefield

SOUTH CAROLINA

• Melinda Gladfelter, The Greenville News, Greenville

TENNESSEE

• George A. Everett (Academic), School of Journalism, University of Tennessee, Knoxville,
• Sally A. Guthrie (Academic), University of

Tennessee, Knoxville

TEXAS

• Christopher Anderson, San Antonio Express-News, San Antonio
• Amy Broussard (Academic), Sea Grant Program, Texas A & M University Galveston
• James A. Cullen, Texas Observer, Austin
• Dawn Drennan, Environmental Protection Magazine, Stevens Publishing Company, Inc, Waco
• Ron Mader, Enviro Mexico/TX Enviro News, Austin

UTAH

• Michael Nakoryakov, City Desk, The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City
• Pepper Provenzano, The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City
• Barry Scholl, Catalyst Magazine, Salt Lake City

VERMONT

• Kathleen Fitzgerald (Associate), Wild Earth, Cenozoic Society, Richmond

WASHINGTON

• Rita Cipalla (Associate), Cipalla Communications, Seattle
• Carmi Weingrod (Associate), Renton

WISCONSIN

• Harvey Black, Madison
• Timothy Steller (Academic), Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin, Madison
• Mary Thompson, The Daily Press, Ashland

PUERTO RICO

• Vanessa Vargas (Academic), Las Lomas Rio Piedras

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

ARGENTINA

• Daniela Blanco, Revista Noticias/Diario La Nacion, Buenos Aires

BANGLADESH

• Shyamal Dutta, Daily Bhorer Kagoj, Dhaka-1000

CANADA

• Michael Karlberg (Academic), School of Communication, SFU Burnaby, British Columbia
• Emma Walker (Associate), London, Ontario

GHANA

• Mike Anane, The Triumph League of Environmental Journalists, Accra

HUNGARY

• Anna Várkonyi, Noé Newsletter, Herald Agency, Budapest

THAILAND

• James Fahn, The Nation, Bangkok



Application for Membership

Society of Environmental Journalists

Instructions:

1. Fill out application as completely as possible. Attach additional pages if necessary.
2. If available, attach a current resume or brief biography.
3. Mail to: **Society of Environmental Journalists**
P. O. Box 27506
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Please include \$30 with your application. Payment options are noted on the back.

A. To be completed by all applicants.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Employer: _____ Work Phone: _____

Title of Publication/Show/Dept.: _____

Work Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Fax Number: _____ Home Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City State Zip

VERY IMPORTANT: SEJ mail should be sent to your Home Work address.

(Note: Students should provide address and phone during school year and date of graduation.)

Primary Area of Employment (Check only one): Newspaper News Service Newsletter
 Magazine Television Radio Freelancer Educator Student Photographer

Describe duties (students may describe goals): _____

When did you start current position (date)? If less than two years, summarize work history: _____

If you own or have access to a computer, is it: Apple/Macintosh PC-compatible Windows
Disk drive size: 3.5-inch 5.25-inch Does it accept high-density disks? Yes No

Check the category of membership (as defined by SEJ Bylaws) for which you believe you are eligible:

- Active** Persons primarily engaged in the gathering, reporting, editing, photographing, producing or cartooning of news for dissemination by regularly published, general circulation newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, as well as radio and television stations and networks, news services, and other media available to the general public.
- Academic** Persons on the faculty or enrolled as students of an accredited college, university, or other school who have an interest in environmental issues.
- Associate** Those individuals, such as part-time freelancers, who do not qualify for Active or Academic membership but who, in the majority opinion of the SEJ board, will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the SEJ. (See section "C" of application.) Applicants must be substantially engaged in journalistic pursuits.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the membership status granted.

A. (continued)

Have you done any freelance or similar work during the past year, either paid or as a volunteer, for any organization, business or movement not primarily engaged in journalistic or academic pursuits as described in the "Active" and "Academic membership categories described above? Yes No

If yes, provide details and dates: _____

Have you done any lobbying or public relations work in the past two years? Yes No

If yes, for whom? _____

B. To be completed by applicants for active or associate membership.

Is your employer or organization supported by or affiliated with any organization or movement not principally in the business of conveying news to the general public? Yes No

If yes, what organization or movement? _____

Is your organization supported by: advertising paid subscriptions membership dues other

If "other", please specify: _____

C. To be completed by applicants for associate membership.

How would your membership in the Society of Environmental Journalists contribute to attainment of the Society's goals(i.e., enhancing the quality and accuracy of environmental reporting)?

D. To be completed by all applicants.

I hereby apply for membership in the Society of Environmental Journalists. I understand the Board of Directors retains sole authority in determining eligibility for membership in any category.

Signature Date

E. Payment Information:			
Please make your check or money order out to the <i>Society of Environmental Journalists</i>			
VISA <input type="checkbox"/>		Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/>	
Account Number: _____		Expiration Date _____	
Do you know someone who should be a member of SEJ? We'll send them details and an application:			
Name: _____		Organization: _____	
Address _____			
Street	City	State	Zip

Even more government databases

Federal bureaucrats demonstrate their greatest skill

One might debate how well our nation's environmental regulators are doing at protecting the environment. But there should be no debate over their skill at generating computer data. They produce a ton of it.

What follows, then, is a list of environmental databases and on-line services that are available to the public and useful for environmental reporters. The list comes from two reporters with vast experience at covering the environment — Jane Kay of the San Francisco Examiner and Dave Davis of the Plain Dealer in Cleveland. Both SEJ members originally presented the information at a recent IRE conference.

“U.S. Government Environmental Datafiles and Software: Microcomputers and Mainframes.” A 55-page catalog of databases on air and water quality, hazardous substances and health effects. Order from National Technical Information Service, (703) 487-4650.

“Access EPA.” A 600-page document that lists EPA information services, contacts and products, including databases. Order from U.S. Government Printing Office, (202) 783-3238 (ask for publication number EPA/220-B-93-014). Also available from NTIS, or via the Internet at gopher:epa.gov.

“Nuclear Documents System (NUDOCS).” Dial-up database with two million records from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, other federal and state agencies, companies, environmental groups and individuals. Includes inspection reports, violation notices and other records for the nation's 100 nuclear power plants and 23,000 hospitals, universities and businesses that are licensed to use radioactive materials. To use, get a password from Gerald F. Cranford, Office of Information and Resource Management, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, MNBB6219, Washington, D.C. 20555.

“TRANSNET.” Dial-up database of shipment and accident reports for nuclear wastes and materials from 1971 to present. Also offers routing models that allow users to plan the safest highway and rail routes for shipping radioactive materials. To use, get a password from Jonathan W. Cashwell, division 6321, Sandia National Laboratories, P.O. Box 5800, Albuquerque, N.M. 87185.

“Toxic Release Inventory.” Contains names and addresses of facilities that release large amounts of toxic chemicals to air, water or land or transfer to waste sites. Updated annually. Buy 1987-91 data from NTIS on CD-ROM for \$48 or in other forms at higher prices. Or download it from the Internet at gopher:epa.gov, request it from your state environmental agency, download from Toxnet, Nexis or another commercial service, or from RTK-Net (call 202-234-8494 for a free account).

“TOXNET.” The toxicology data network of the National Library of Medicine. Dial-up service containing nine separate databases on toxic substances and their effects on people and the environment. Includes the EPA Toxic Release Inventory. To use, get a password and user ID from NLM's MEDLARS service at (800) 638-8480.

“NEXIS.” This dial-up service's environmental library contains dozens of databases with environmental information, including federal regulations, pending legislation, the Superfund National Priority List, the EPA Toxic Release Inventory and EPA administrative decisions. To use, get an account from Mead Data Central, (800) 543-6862.

Biennial Reporting System (BRS) Data: Generation and Management of Hazardous Waste, 1991.” National database focusing on volumes of wastes generated and managed at facilities. Order from

NTIS for \$300, or obtain selected data via FOIA.

“Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS).” Tracks administrative progress of regulating facilities, including inspections, permits and enforcement. Order from NTIS for \$800 or obtain selected data via FOIA.

“Toxic Substances Control Act Test Submissions.” Includes case reports, accidents and studies on tests on chemicals submitted by industry. Order from NTIS.

“CERCLIS Site Location Extract.” Contains potentially hazardous waste sites for Superfund listing; tracks progress of NPL. Contact a EPA regional office to order.

“Aquatic Toxicity Information Retrieval Database (AQUIRE).” Quick access to computerized compilation of aquatic toxicity data. Contact a EPA regional office to order.

“National Ambient Volatile Organic Compounds Database, 1970-1987.” Contains 175,000 concentration records of 320 organics in outdoors, indoors and individual monitors, 1970-1987. Contact your EPA regional office to order.

“EPA Civil Enforcement Docket.” Tracks civil judicial cases filed from 1972 to present, including violations and penalties.

“Permit Compliance Systems (PCS).” Record of EPA's regulation of Clean Water Act water quality discharge permits. Tracks all facilities, discharge limits on permits, inspections and monitoring. Contact an EPA regional office to order. FOIA request required for information on violations.

“Oil Spill Case Histories, U.S. and International, 1967-1991.” Contact the U.S. Department of Commerce to order.

Online Bits & Bytes

Is a regular feature of SEJournal, offering tips on computer resources for journalists covering science and the environment.

The Book Shelf



Kathy Sagan offers thumbnail reviews of books of use to science and environmental journalists

A history of the backlash

THE WAR AGAINST THE GREENS: The Wise Use Movement, The New Right, and Anti-Environment Violence by David Helvarg (Sierra Club Books, October 94, \$25).

Helvarg traces the rise of the anti-environmentalist movement and its players, inside the Beltway and beyond, from Ron Arnold and Wise Use to institutional opposition such as the NRA and the Texas Farm Bureau and Cattleman's Association, conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and sympathetic media like *The Washington Times*. He delves into the rise of backlash violence as well, describing individual cases, from the car-bombing of Judi Bari of Earth First, to the arson of the home and office of Greenpeace's Pat Costner, and the assault on Stephanie McGuire in Taylor County, Florida, active in publicizing Procter and Gamble pollution. Arnold, trolling for a grassroots movement to help industry's fight for its goals, is attributed with giving the movement its "wise use" name and formalizing a 25-point agenda. Peggy Reigle, a big property rights proponent (her personal real estate investment was declared a wetland and barred from development), however, has done much to give the movement its "mom and pop" image. In general, the platform is loosely based on the belief that there's been too much wilderness protection and environmental hysteria and not enough clear cut logging, mining on federal lands, pesticide

spraying or general development — natural resources are, after all, there to be used. Meanwhile, interspersed throughout his narrative, Helvarg serves up mini-histories of the wobblies, the EPA and environmentalism, and provides detailed accounts of individual hot spots from Washington state to New Hampshire, Montana to New York's Adirondacks — covering issues of logging, mining, pulp mills effluent, etc. He also pinpoints some media bias, as within *The New York Times*, where two reporters differ in opinion on importance of wise use as an emerging trend. All in all, a useful and interesting potpourri of fact and anecdote that sheds light on the environmental backlash that is being felt today.



How children face most risk

RAISING CHILDREN TOXIC FREE: How to Keep Your Child Safe from Lead, Asbestos, Pesticides and Other Environmental Hazards by Herbert L. Needleman, M.D., and Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., foreword by T. Betty Brazelton (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, September 94, \$18).

Needleman and Landrigan bring their book with an overview of the science of how chemicals can affect reproductive development, especially when a fetus is exposed prenatally, along with recent findings on the effects of neurotoxins on behavior and development. Because their systems and organs are still maturing, children are the most sensitive to side effects of chemical exposures. A more detailed discussion then follows on specific toxins: lead, mercury, asbestos, pesticides, radiation, tobacco (including passive smoking), solvents and PCBs and, finally, air pollution. For each, we learn the history of the toxin, how it has made its way into our home environment and extent of the dangers from exposure. The authors also provide advice on how to minimize contact. From the history of dementia caused by mercury poisoning reaching back to 19th century hat makers who used mer-

cury in shaping felt (hence Lewis Carroll's reference to the "mad hatter") and now released through municipal incinerators, to the dangers of pesticides in our diet (again, especially for children, who eat proportionately more fresh fruits and vegetables than adults and are more susceptible to their harmful effects) and the increase in risk of cancer and heart disease from passive smoking, the book provides up-to-date information on how our home environment can subtly erode the health of our children. Finally, the book provides a household inventory that highlights hidden dangers at home and how to avoid them. Although one really needs to go back to the text for more thorough information, the inventory is a good focusing point. Resources from environmental and government organizations to reading materials are listed at the end.



The grassroots grow in color

DEEPER SHADES OF GREEN: The Rise of Blue-Collar and Minority Environmentalism in America by Jim Schwab, foreword by Lois Gibbs (Sierra Club Books, September 94, \$30).

By now, few can dispute the role of environmental racism in the siting of so many toxic facilities — hazardous waste landfills, incinerators, and industries that pollute, such as petrol and plastics — in poor and rural neighborhoods. The theory has been, the less educated and economically well-off a community might be, the less likely they will be organized enough to protest. Jim Schwab's compendium of case studies of important environmental fights around the country shows just how wrong-headed some of that thinking has eventually turned out to be. Although not all such communities have been successful in fending off their polluters, in each of the situations Schwab reports on, local resistance emerged, became organized and at least gave the polluters a run for their money — even when it meant a loss of revenue for their

The Book Shelf

own communities. Not everyone was willing to barter their health for economic gain. In Robbins, Illinois, opposition to an incinerator was spearheaded by two sisters, even though the mayor of the town openly endorsed it. In East Liverpool, locals protesting a commercial hazardous waste incinerator received the attention of movie stars and the White House (unfortunately without ultimate success). And along cancer alley in Louisiana, poor residents whose livelihood depended on the very companies that polluted their air and water, finally said they had enough, brought lawsuits and won. In these and other stories here it is the strength of character and community that emerges above all else. Schwab has conducted an impressive number of interviews, all listed in the back of the book. These alone are a good source. But the book is valuable not just for its wealth of information about individual community battles, but also because Schwab attempts to offer some solutions on how American business can clean up its act.



Essays revisit Wingspread

CHEMICALLY-INDUCED ALTERATIONS IN SEXUAL AND FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT; THE WILDLIFE/HUMAN CONNECTION, edited by Theo Colborn and Coralie Clement (Princeton Scientific Publishing Co. Inc., \$65).

A work session was held at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, on July 26 to 28, 1991, in which a multidisciplinary group of experts—endocrinologists, toxicologists, biologists and others—shared information about what they had been observing in their respective fields, namely that there was clear evidence that certain wildlife had been experiencing disruptions in their normal sexual and functional development as the result of exposures to certain chemicals. This collection of scientific essays explores the wildlife evidence, the laboratory evidence and the human evidence, along with evidence of exposure pathways.



A selective encyclopedia

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK OF SCIENCE LITERARY VOLUME II: THE ENVIRONMENT FROM OUR BACKYARD TO THE OCEAN FLOOR (Random House, \$25).

Every Tuesday, New Yorkers stuck in a natural world of sickly street trees, pigeons and eccentric cats escape for a few minutes into the oasis of the science section of *The New York Times* to learn about sea turtles and giant clams, deep sea squids the size of buses and aye-aye-primates that resemble movie gremlins. But read back-to-back, these elegant articles, now collected, tell the darker tale of our planet's many ecosystems being transformed and sometimes trampled

by humans. The stories remind us of how much we can still learn about things ranging from butterflies to the spread of mercury poison in our lakes and rivers. The book is not as complete as an encyclopedia, but it gives a much livelier synopsis of dozens of important issues.

(Reviewed by Will Nixon)



Is what you eat really green

IDENTIFYING AND HARVESTING EDIBLE AND MEDICINAL PLANTS In Wild (And not so wild) Places by "Wildman" Steve Brill with Evelyn Dean (Hearst Books, \$17.95).

Steve Brill has been leading parks and woodlands tours for over 12 years, showing people how to find edible and medicinal plants. His book shows readers how to find, identify and prepare over 500 different plants for nutritional and medicinal purposes.



Editors' Note: This issue of SEJournal offers a brief roundup books of interest about environmental topics that were published this summer or are about to be published. Anyone interested in reviewing a book for SEJournal should please contact Kathy Sagan at (212) 463-1240. Send galleys or books for review to her attention at Family Circle, 110 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10011.

Education ... (from page 21)

journalists to have this kind of formal affiliation to reach out to local high schools and help future journalists. Even an hour a week spent as a mentor can pay big dividends. You have no idea what can happen unless you try.

Nathaniel Bulkey reported for the Northwest Herald in Woodstock, Ill., before joining the National Consortium for Environmental Education and Training. Although travelling extensively as part of his duties, this fall Bulkey again will spend one day a week working with students at Southwestern High School in Detroit to help them learn about environmental communications.

Editors' note: This is the first installment of a SEJournal feature about teaching environmental journalism. In this space, SEJournal will periodically offer tips about teaching our trade—in colleges, high schools, seminars with working journalists and perhaps in other contexts as well. If you teach part-time, full-time, on occasion or if you mentor students and have lessons to share, contact Detroit Free Press environment writer Emilia Askari at 800-678-6400 ext. 4536. Her internet address is askari@det-freepress.com and her America On-line address is emiliaa

Forestry sources abound

By STEPHANIE OCKO

Exactly how much of the more than 10 billion acres of forests on earth have disappeared is debatable. But aerial photos reveal dramatic blanks not only in the tropical rainforests in Central and South America, Africa and Indonesia, but in the temperate forests in Europe, China, North America and Australia

The loss is serious because forests do critical things: control the temperature of the earth by absorbing CO₂, anchor soils and protect rivers and ocean reefs from silt, and provide habitat for the majority of the species in the world, which thrive together in complex ecocystems

Much deforestation is due to increased populations using wood for cooking and warmth; or slash and burn farmers doing what their fathers did, moving on from one new clearing to the next.

But cattle-ranching, oil explora-

tion, and clearcuts for timber — often done with foreign-aid bulldozers in government projects — are creating ecological havoc. What locals don't cut, thieves do, often bagging their bounty across national boundaries

Meanwhile, pharmaceutical com-

Reporters' Toolbox

is a regular feature of SEJournal, in which reporters and others provide tips on gathering news about environmental issues.

panies fine-comb the forests for potential drugs. Many train locals to collect specimens, and use local shamans to provide information on their use.

That raises legal questions: If a pharmaceutical company finds a cure for cancer or AIDS, will the profits be shared equitably? And with whom? With the people or with

an oligarchic government? What happens to intellectual rights among local shamans? Do locals own the land on which plants grow?

Preservation efforts raise other questions. How does someone tell a local farmer that his land is padlocked because it's being "preservd"? How does a slash and burn farmer become a nut marketer? Do trade sanctions on wood increase local poverty and augment private profits? Covering this complex story requires clear thinking. Each forest group has its own interests and spends differing amounts of money on public information. And the groups don't always talk to one another, even when they're working on the same problem. Statistics flow with suspicious ease, as scientists hurry to catalog species, identify areas of abuse, and make projections about the future. Here's a list of the major organizations dealing with forest issues:

INDUSTRY GROUPS:

Oregon Lands Coalition, 247 Commercial St., NE, Salem, OR 97301, (503) 363-8582. Contact: Jackie Lang. Opposes land preservation and other environmental actions that prohibit timber development. The Lands Coalition is one of the original "wise use" organizations and utilizes a national mailing list.

Blue Ribbon Coalition, Box 5449, Pocatello, Idaho (208)237-1557. Contact: Clark Collins; or Adena Cook at (208) 522-7339. Advocates unrestricted public access to public lands.

Yellow Ribbon Coalition, 655 North A St., Springfield, OR 97477, (503) 747-5874. Contact: Merrilee Peay. Grassroots organization fights loss of jobs, wants to maintain present rates of timber cutting in Pacific Northwest.

Merck & Company, Inc., P.O. Box 100, Whitehouse Station, N.J. 08889, (908) 423-4341. Has worked since 1991 with National Institute for Biodiversity in Costa Rica on a project that reverts some drug industry revenues to locals.

American Forest and Paper Association, 1111 19th St. NW, 8th floor, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 463-2700; (800) 878-8878. Contact: John Easton or Barry Polsky. National trade association for forest and paper industries; research, communication, and lobbying on all related issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS:

Conservation International, 1015 18th St NW, Suite 1000, Washington DC 20036, (202) 429-5660. Contact: Patty Reilly—Develops conservation models in 15 global tropical rainforest hot-spots. Uses a "people-centered" approach starting with scientific assessment, then develops appropriate conservation tools. Helps market forest products, creates parks with education resources, and arranges financing for debt-for-nature swaps. Employs indigenous people in foreign offices.

Cultural Survival, 215 First Street, Cambridge MA 02142, (617) 621-3818. Contact: Marchell Wesaw. Works with indigenous people and ethnic minorities to understand problems. Created the "People's Data Base," a multimedia sourcebook of indigenous people around the world, and "State of the Peoples," a comprehensive report on indigenous people. Cultural Survival Enterprises oversees manufacture and marketing of rainforest nuts and banana chips.

Defenders of Wildlife, 1244 19th St NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 659-9510. Contact: J. Moody or J. Wyerman. Involved principally with habitats and endangered species, including the northern spotted owl

Reporters' Toolbox

in the United States, and biodiversity. Uses satellites to identify unprotected land in its Gap Analysis Project. Will sponsor a forum on Wildlife Law this year.

Environmental Defense Fund, 257 Park Ave. S, New York, NY 10010, (212) 505-2100. Tropical rainforests contacts (Washington, D.C.): Lisa Swann, Peter Cleary (202) 387-3500. Protects rainforests by working to reform World Bank and other financial institutions and by helping to organize indigenous groups.

Global Forest Policy Project, 1400 16th St. NW, Suite 502, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 797-6560. Contact: Bill Mankin. A coalition of the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and the National Wildlife Foundation. Lobbies to influence government policy on timber accords. Lobbied for the passage of the United Nations-brokered International Tropical Timber Agreement, signed in January. Expects to play a role in timber policy in the 1995 U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development.

Greenpeace, 1436 U St., NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 462-1177. Contact: Sierra Garrett. Involved with both temperate and tropical rainforests around the world. Current projects are Clayoquet Sound in British Columbia and lobbying Congress to pass the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups Program, Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health, Bldg. 31, Rm. B2C32, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 496-4000. Contact: Francesca Grifo. Setting up legal standards and managing government grants to universities, environmental groups, and pharmaceutical companies that are prospecting for rainforest medicinal plants (including Bristol-Myers, Squibb, Monsanto, and American Cyanamid).

Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St Louis, MO 63166. Contact: Janine Adams (314) 577-9540. Inventories and conserves tropical plants, and has the world's largest computer botanical database.

TROPICOS. National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022, (212) 979-3026. Contact: Susan DeVico. Pacific Northwest forests contact: Brock Evans (202) 547-9009. Focus is on habitat preservation with sanctuaries in ancient forests.

National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th St. NW, Washington DC 20036. (202) 797-6862. Contact: Fran Hunt. Temperate forests. Lobbies to protect ancient forests in Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

Natural Resources Defense Council, 40 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011 (212) 727-4408. Contact: Karen O'Malley. Does research, advocacy, litigation, and lobbying. Temperate and tropical forests a high priority. Current focus is on Clayoquet Sound in British Columbia and the forests of Hawaii.

Nature Conservancy, 1815 North Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 841-5300. Contact: Devlyn Flack. Believes in creating "islands of biodiversity" to preserve and protect flora and fauna. Buys acres through debt-for-nature swaps that forgive national debts in return for protection of pristine acreage, or through "Adopt-an-Acre" program in which individuals buy an acre of threatened forest. Among the organization's other activities, it builds ranger stations, hires locals, educates those who live on periphery.

Rainforest Action Network, 450 Sansome St., Suite 700, San Francisco CA 94111, (415) 398-4404. Contact: Camilla Fox. Works to stop import of tropical hardwoods; promotes forest products; supports indigenous peoples' rights. Is targeting Mitsubishi Corp. in rainforests and a power project on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Rainforest Alliance, 65 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10012, (212) 677-1900. Contact: Paul Ewing. Encourages constructive social uses of rainforest in five programs: Smart Wood Network gives green seal for consumers on products from companies using low-impact forest management; Ec-K-O Banana project monitors banana plantations; Amazon River project conserves fish resources; Natural Resources and Rights project insures local cultures benefit from pharmaceuticals; and sponsors Conservation Media Center, Costa Rica, a clearinghouse for Latin American stories.

Sierra Club, 730 Polk St., San Francisco CA 94109, (415) 776-2211. Lobbies to protect ancient U.S. forests in the Pacific Northwest. The separate Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund also focuses on Pacific Northwest old growth forests.

The Wilderness Society, 900 17th St. NW, Washington DC 20006, (202) 833-2300. Contact: Mike Francis. Monitors federal management of ancient forests of Pacific Northwest and Alaska, and forests of the southeastern U.S. and New England. Also seeks to reform the U.S. Forest Service.

Wildlife Conservation Society, 100 85th St. and Southern Blvd., Bronx, NY 10460, (718) 220-5197. Contact: Janet Rose. Is working on 100 projects in 45 countries. Sponsors scientific field work in tropical and temperate forests to define problems of conservation; trains local natural resource managers; and identifies new areas for protected habitats.

World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th St. NW, Washington DC 20057, (202) 293-4800. Sponsors global scientific research, such as the Minimum Critical Size of Ecosystems Project in Brazil and the study of indigenous botanical lore; develops rainforest products; educates locals; and finances with debt-for-nature swaps. Advocates including temperate forests in the International Tropical Trade Agreement.

Green Beat Correspondents

Contribute to Green Beat

The Green Beat is designed as an idea exchange for environmental journalists and educators. It relies on information submitted by reporters about important issues, outstanding coverage, and developments in environmental education and the communications profession — on a state-by-state basis. To submit ideas or copies of series for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state(s). They are:

Alabama — Vacant.

Alaska — Vacant.

Arizona and New Mexico — Tony Davis at the Albuquerque Tribune, P.O. Drawer T, Albuquerque, NM 87103, (505) 823-3625, fax (505) 823-3689.

Arkansas — David Kern at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, P.O. Box 2221, Little Rock, AK 72203, (501) 378-3862.

California:

Northern California — Laura Mahoney, BNA, 770 L St., Suite 910, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 552-6502.

Bay Area/San Jose — Jane Kay at the San Francisco Examiner, Box 7260, San Francisco, CA 94120, (415) 777-8704.

Southern California — Marni McEntee of the Los Angeles Daily News, 28 E. Ramona St., Ventura, CA, 93001, (805) 641-0542.

Colorado — Vacant

Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts

— Bob Wyss at the Providence Journal, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902, (401) 737-3000.

District of Columbia — Cheryl Hogue, BNA, Daily Environment Report, 1231 25th St., N.W., Room 361-S, Wash., DC 20037, (202) 452-4625, fax (202) 452-4150.

Florida:

North Florida — Bruce Ritchie at the Gainesville Sun, P.O. Box 147147, Gainesville, FL 32614, (904) 374-5087.

South Florida — Kirk Brown at the Palm Beach Post, 2751 S. Dixie Hwy., West Palm Beach FL, (407) 820-4400.

Georgia and South Carolina — Ron Chepsiuk, 782 Wofford St., Rock Hill, SC 29730, (803) 366-5440.

Idaho — Rocky Barker of the Post-Register, 1020 11th St., Idaho Falls, ID, 83404, (208) 529-8508 or Julie Titone of the Spokesman Review & Chronicle, (509) 459-5431..

Illinois — John Wasik at Consumers Digest, P.O. Box 51, Wauconda, IL, 60684, (312) 275-3590.

Iowa — Perry Beeman at the Des Moines Register, P.O. Box 957, Des Moines, IA 50304, (515) 284-8538.

Hawaii — Peter Wagner at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, P.O. Box 3080, Honolulu, HI 96802, (808) 525-8699.

Kansas — Mike Mansur at the Kansas City Star, 1729 Grand Ave., Kansas City, MO 64108. (816) 234-4433.

Kentucky — Vacant.

Louisiana — Bob Anderson at The Morning Advocate, Box 588, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (504) 383-1111.

Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont — Robert Braile, Boston Globe correspondent, at P.O. Box 1907, Exeter, N.H., 03833, (603) 772-6380.

Maryland and Delaware — Tim Wheeler, at The Sun., 501 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21278, (301) 332-6564.

Michigan — John A. Palen, at Central Michigan University, Journalism Dept, Anspach 36, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859, (517) 774-7110.

Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota — Tom Meersman at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, 425 Portland Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55488, (612) 673-4414.

Missouri — Bill Allen, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 900 N. Tucker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63101, (314) 340-8127.

Montana — Mike Millstein of the Billings Gazette, P.O. Box 821, Cody WY 82414, (307) 527-7250.

Nebraska — Al J. Laukaitis at the Lincoln Journal, 926 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68501, (402) 473-7257.

New Jersey — Todd Bates at the Asbury Park Press, 3601 Hwy 66, Neptune, NJ 07754, (908) 922-6000, ext. 4361..

New York — Vacant.

Nevada — Mary Manning at the Las Vegas Sun, 800 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, (702) 259-4065 or Jon Christiansen of High Country News, (702) 885-2023.

Ohio and Indiana — Charlie Prince at Ohio Environmental Reporter, 516 Ludlow

Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220, (513) 221-0954.

Oregon — Terry Novak at the Salem Statesman-Journal, 280 Church St., NE, Salem, OR 97309, (503) 399-6737.

Pennsylvania — Vacant.

Puerto Rico/Caribbean Islands — Albi Ferre at El Nuevo Dia, Box 297, San Juan, PR 00902, (809) 793-7070, ext. 2165.

Tennessee and Mississippi — Debbie Gilbert at The Memphis Flyer, 460 Tennessee St., Memphis, 38103, (901) 521-9000.

Texas and Oklahoma:

North Texas and Oklahoma — Randy Loftis at The Dallas Morning News, 508 Young St., Dallas, TX 75202, (800) 431-0010.

Central and West Texas — Robert Bryce at The Austin Chronicle, P.O. Box 49066, Austin, TX 78765, (512) 473-8995.

East and Coastal Texas — Bill Dawson at The Houston Chronicle, Box 4260, Houston, TX 77210, (713) 220-7171.

Utah and Wyoming — Rod C. Jackson, KTVX-TV, 1760 S. Fremont Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84103, (801) 975-4418.

Virginia and North Carolina — Mark Divincenzo at The Daily Press, 7505 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA 23607, (804) 247-4719.

Washington State — Rob Taylor of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer at 18719 S.E. 58th St., Issaquah, WA 98027, (206) 488-8337 and Julie Titone of the Spokesman Review & Chronicle, Box 2160, Spokane, WA 99210-1615, (509) 459-5431.

West Virginia — Ken Ward at the Charleston Gazette, 1001 Virginia St. East, Charleston, WV 25301, (304) 348-1702.

Wisconsin — Chuck Quirmbach of Wisconsin Public Radio, 111 E. Kilbourn Ave., #1060, Milwaukee, WI 53202, (414) 271-8686 or (608) 263-7985.

Please note openings for correspondents for several states. If you are interested in filling one of these volunteer positions, please contact Kevin Carmody at (312) 871-8911. Correspondents should be working journalists or educators. Additional information about the expansion of the network of Greenbeat correspondents was printed on page 17 of the Summer issue of SEJournal.

The Green Beat

ARKANSAS

► EPA is negotiating with Aptus, a subsidiary of Westinghouse Electric Corp., to burn 3,200 drums of high-level dioxin waste from the Vertac Superfund site in Jacksonville, Ark. Aptus would burn the waste at its commercial incinerator at Coffeerville, Kan. EPA Region 6 officials say Westinghouse intentions to sell Aptus to Rollins Environmental Services Inc. will not affect negotiations. At the Vertac site, Vertac Site Contractors are burning hazardous waste containing low levels of dioxin, but continue to meet questions about safety and adequacy of its equipment. Aptus operates the only commercial incinerator certified to burn dioxin wastes. For more information, call Sandy Davis, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 501-982-3936.

► Arkansas officials urge Southern states to band together to prevent Northern states from dominating national policies devised to solve mercury pollution problems. At an Aug. 25-26 conference at Little Rock, experts said causes of mercury pollution in the South may differ from causes in the North. Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker said he fears Congress may impose costly measures, including air pollution control equipment, that may not correct Southern problems which appear to be linked with Mercury-laden soil. For more information, call David F. Kern, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 501-378-3862.

CALIFORNIA

► The mighty migration of Chinook salmon on the Shasta River has fallen in numbers because of damming and diversions for irrigation and other uses, Glen Martin reported in a story in the San Francisco Chronicle. For more information, call Martin at the Chronicle, 707-778-6022.

► A loophole in the state's forest law allows property owners to log up to three acres of trees with virtually no regulation, according to reports in the San Francisco Examiner. As timber

prices rise, the total cut reached 17,000 acres in the last three years, triple the amount in the previous three. People are coming home to find neighboring groves clearcut. Call Jane Kay at the Examiner, 415-777-8704.

► The Los Angeles Times published a series revealing how nutrient flows and algae blooms are taking an ever-more serious toll on marine life. Written by Marle Cone, the package kicked off May 19 on page one under the headline: Slime turns Bays into Cess-pools: Toxic algae is choking marine life and thickening crystal waters into pea soup. Spawned by sewage and fertilizer runoff, the problem could swell into a global epidemic. Call Cone at 1-800-528-4637, ext. 73497.

► The Wilson administration's state Department of Fish and Game was investigated by two Assembly committees for allowing creosote-treated pilings in the Delta. A county district attorney's office filed charges against an agency supervisor for ignoring his employee's warnings against it and trying to fire him. Call Glen Martin at San Francisco Chronicle, 707-778-6022.

► The deputy director of the state Department of Fish and Game orchestrated a version of a bill that would have gutted protections under the state Endangered Species Act. Call Paul McHugh at San Francisco Chronicle, 415-777-7247.

► San Diego Union-Tribune Environment writer Steve LaRue broke the mid-June story that Africanized honey bees — the invading killer bees from Brazil — were not flooding into Southern California's agriculturally rich Imperial Valley, as expected. Instead, they've stalled along the Arizona border, just as they are stalled in Texas, well short of the lush country of Louisiana. Entomologists believe the bee, which is adapted to thrive in tropical climates, may have run out of biological steam and been stopped by North American deserts as they were stopped by the temperate climate north of Buenos Aires, Argentina. For a copy

of the story, call LaRue at 619-293-1239.

► For six years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has sued, threatened and otherwise attempted to force the City of San Diego to install a \$5 billion-plus secondary sewage treatment system to comply with the Clean Water Act. Now, the agency has drafted legislation that could exempt the city from the costly requirement, reporter Kathryn Balint reported in mid-August in the San Diego Union-Tribune. The city's case had been boosted by experts from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who testify that treating sewage to meet secondary standards does not improve the environment near the ocean floor where the treated sewage is pumped. For copies, call La Rue at 619-293-1239.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► Historic preservation of a civil war battlefield is not the only rallying cry for opponents of Walt Disney Co.'s planned historical theme park in Virginia, just west of Washington, D.C. There's an environmental angle too. Opponents mainly are against the development of the rural community but they also do not want I-66 — the highway connecting them to Washington — to be widened. The increased traffic it would carry means more air pollution. The site for the proposed Disney American theme park is near the Shenandoah National Park. Visibility in the national park is already impaired due to air pollution from power plants and vehicle traffic. There's another twist — Virginia is required under the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act to get its vehicle inspection and maintenance program up to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standards. If the Old Dominion fails to do so, new projects (like road widening for the planned theme park) will be deemed by EPA as not conforming to long-range plans to control and reduce air pollution in the Washington area. Sept. 21 is a key deadline — that's when the Washington metropolitan Council of Governments transportation planning board meets

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to discuss future transportation projects. Virginia's highway plans will be stymied, EPA warns, if its inspection-maintenance program isn't up to par. The issue is getting heavy coverage, especially in newspapers. The reporters on the story include Spencer Hsu of the Washington Post, 703-670-5877; Susie Bruninga of BNA's Daily Environment Report, 202-452-4625 and Alicann McGloin of the Potomac News, 703-878-8063; and several staffers from the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Source contacts are Becky North Dunlop, Virginia's secretary of Natural Resources, at 804-786-0044; Gail Tyndell of EPA's Region III office in Philadelphia at 215-597-1229; Diane Maple or Paul Billings of the American Lung Association at 202-785-3355; and the Piedmont Environmental Council at 703-347-2334.

► The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has launched a nationwide campaign to create a wildlife diversity initiative. IAFWA strongly favors adding a modest surcharge onto outdoor recreational equipment, similar to those surcharges hunters and anglers have long paid on their equipment and accessories under the Sport Fish & Wildlife Restoration Acts. The initiative's target is at least \$350 million a year. The money would go to conserve both fish and wildlife while upgrading facilities such as trails and nature centers. The group says the conservation of 1,800 different types of songbirds, herons, fish, turtles, butterflies, and other species is seriously underfunded precisely because they are neither hunted nor fished nor listed under the federal Endangered Species Act... IAFWA represents public fish and wildlife agencies from all 50 states, Mexico and Canada. For more information or a contact in your state's fish and wildlife agency, contact Naomi Edelson, Wildlife Diversity Director, IAFWA in Washington at 202-624-7890.

► Helene Monberg ended three decades of covering western resources policy for her Washington newsletter in July. Monberg, 75, blamed exhaustion, bad knees and a liver problem. "I decided a

long time ago that when I could no longer carry the ball, I'd take myself off the playing field," she wrote in a letter to subscribers of Western Resources Wrap-Up. Monberg has been in the news business since she was 17. She says she wants to continue working part-time or freelance. As for her newsletter, she wants two reporters — one in Washington and one in the West — to take it over. Easterners need not apply.

FLORIDA

► The Associated Press on Aug. 21 released a six-part series along with photos and graphics on environmental problems in Florida. AP also promised smaller, in-depth reports about every six weeks throughout the year. "Florida's environment — from its beaches and lakes to its mineral springs and fertile land — is arguably the state's most precious resource," the AP editors wrote. "The environment fuels Florida's top two industries — tourism and agriculture — by attracting visitors to the state and enabling farmers to grow a bounty of crops. But these days, Florida's environment is under siege, imperiled by the very industries that thrive on it. The problems run the length of the Florida peninsula."

► The St. Petersburg Times has written several articles during the past year highlighting environmentalists' criticism of Gov. Lawton Chiles and Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Virginia Wetherell. Environmentalists supported Chiles in 1990 when he defeated incumbent Gov. Bob Martinez, but some have been unhappy with his merger of two environmental agencies to form the DEP. An Aug. 8 article told how Wetherell and her politician husband had filled in wetlands at her home to create a pond. A water district official said the Aug. 8 article contained errors, but a newspaper editor wrote an Aug. 17 response that stood by the story.

► One-third of sharks tested in a recent Florida study contained potentially unhealthy levels of mercury in their flesh. The Tampa Tribune reported.

During the past five years, widespread mercury contamination has been discovered in largemouth bass and other freshwater fish across Florida. Scientists suspect air pollution may be the leading cause of mercury in freshwater fish, but they disagree whether mercury in marine species results from pollution or is natural. The study was conducted by the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota. The mercury content varied among shark species, which could have an impact on seafood markets that sell the fish without specifying the species. For more information, contact Booth Gunther at the Tribune, 813-259-7600.

► The state's top environmental regulator in South Florida has been given a transfer to Tallahassee and \$4,453 annual pay cut. Environmentalists had lauded Mary Williams for cracking down on sewer problems threatening Biscayne Bay and hastening the cleanup of toxic waste at Miami International Airport, according to a story written by Palm Beach Post environmental reporter Kirk Brown. Her supporters said that pressure from Dade County officials and developers led to the transfer of Williams, 31, from her post as director of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's southeast regional office. But DEP Secretary Virginia Wetherell said she moved Williams because of poor management skills that included problems in returning phone calls.

IDAHO

► The sordid environmental history of 100 years of North Idaho mining soon will be hitting congressional ears. Rep. Larry LaRocco, D-Idaho, introduced in August two bills aimed at cleaning up the 3,700-square-mile Coeur d'Alene River Basin. One is an amendment to the Clean Water Act reauthorization; he expects they'll eventually be merged. Wastes from lead and silver mines cover the shores and bottom of the Lake Coeur d'Alene and its tributaries; estimates for cleanup are as high as \$1 billion. While few people expect to pry that much money out of the tight federal budget, LaRocco and others are encouraged by the support of

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House Speaker Tom Foley. Some of the heavy metals flow into Foley's Eastern Washington district via the Spokane River. For details, contact the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Project, 208-769-1448; or Julie Titone at The Spokesman-Review, 208-765-7126.

ILLINOIS

► Cook County — the most populous county in Illinois — had the dubious distinction of leading the Great Lakes Region with 342 chemical accidents, according to the watchdog group National Environmental Law Center. The group's study analyzed chemical spills reported to the Emergency Response Notification System. Ironically, both major Chicago papers missed the story, although the Chicago Sun-Times carried David Goodman's AP story inside the paper, Page 8, on Aug. 21.

► The Chicago Tribune (carried an enlightening piece on the greening of a local golf course headlined "Harmony Reigns Amid the Birds and the Bees." Published Aug. 22, the highlight of Marcia Smith's piece, however, was the explanatory color graphics explaining particulars such as vegetation, wetlands preservation and habitat conservation.

IOWA

► Des Moines Register reporters Jerry Perkins, Jay Wagner and Dirck Steimel launched with a late-May series an on-going examination of the environmental and business implications of a boom in corporate hog farms in Iowa, which already leads the nation in hog production. Many Iowans fear a worsening of odor problems, and some farmers fear they'll be put out of business by the large developments.

Register reporter Perry Beeman's Aug. 7 package took an in-depth look at whether Iowa, which by some accounts has the 10th-best wind resource in the country, will build on a string of small projects to launch a major wind-energy industry.

► On June 26, The Register exam-

ined the mixed reviews Iowans give to the Galloway report's proposed changes in flood-plain management. For more information about either story, call Perry Beeman at 515-284-8538.

KANSAS

► Congress is expected to soon approve adding to the National Parks system an old cattle ranch, once known as Spring Hill Ranch, located in Chase County, about 100 miles west of Kansas City. Although plans are still being developed, the ranch would become a national prairie preserve with more than 10,000 acres of the distinctive Flint Hills restored to tallgrass prairie. Bison, elk and pronghorn antelope may be reintroduced. Prairie ecosystem is barely represented in the National Parks system, so prairie promoters laud the Chase County addition. Interestingly, the park will not be owned by the National Parks system in a compromise to avoid resentment against federal ownership. For more information, contact Ron Klataske at the National Audubon Society in Manhattan, Kan., 913-537-4385 or Kathy Westra at the National Parks and Conservation Association, 202-223-6722.

MICHIGAN

► High fecal coliform counts and rotting seaweed closed a popular Detroit-area beach on Lake St. Clair for most of the summer season. Downpours and overloaded sewage plants were blamed, but there was also suspicion of illegal bypassing of treatment plants by new subdivisions, reported Robin Fornoff in the Detroit Free Press. Inland, coliform pollution twice closed Lake Lansing to swimmers. In Grand Rapids, health warnings on the Grand River were relatively few despite heavy rainfall. The city has spent \$156 million to separate combined storm and sanitary sewers and build a 30-million-gallon retention basin, according to John Sinkevics of the Grand Rapids Press. He can be reached at 616-459-1471.

► Great Lakes researchers gathered

in June to discuss whether newly crystal-clear Lake Erie "may have become too clean for its own good," reports Emilia Askari in the Detroit Free Press. Antipollution measures, algae-filtering zebra mussels, overfishing, ultraviolet radiation from the sun, and inadequate phosphorus levels all could be causing trouble for algae and smelt, while mayflies, perch, whitefish and bottom-rooted water plants appear to be doing well. The discussion took place at the annual meeting of the International Association for Great Lakes Research and the Estuarine Research Federation in Windsor, Ont. Askari's number is 800-678-6400.

► The Oakland Press has its first full-time environmental reporter, SEJ member Jeff Green. Previously Green covered the beat part-time for the 72,000-circulation Capital Cities/ABC daily in Pontiac. Among recent stories: Fecal coliform tests that led to the closing of beaches this summer may be an unreliable guide for making such decisions. Another story noted that his county's population growth is outstripping its ability to track toxic materials. Another, comparing contaminated sites with income data, reported that for the most part the county "appears to be an equal opportunity polluter." Call Green for details at 313-332-8181.

MINNESOTA

► Reports that became public in June indicate that the U.S. Army sprayed portions of Minneapolis, St. Louis and Winnipeg in 1953 with zinc cadmium sulfide. The spraying occurred as part of a national chemical and biological warfare research program to test how aerosol clouds would disperse in cities. Much of the spraying in Minneapolis occurred in an inner-city residential area near a public elementary school. Former students at the school, now in their late 40s and early 50s, suspect that the Army tests have caused sterility and other reproductive problems, and have asked for a major study by an independent scientific group to determine the health effects of the spraying. The Army conducted its own health-risk as-

assessment and says the amounts of the chemical sprayed were negligible and harmless. Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone has asked the Army for all documents pertaining to similar tests conducted in other U.S. cities. For more info, contact Tom Meersman, Star Tribune, 612-673-7388; or Bill Allen, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 314-340-8000.

► Minnesota officials have approved a new type of superfund agreement that will clean up a former waste oil recycling site near Duluth. Under terms of the agreement, 180 companies that sent oil to the site will pay \$22 million to clean up sludge, EPA's superfund will finance a \$13-million removal of contaminated oil, and Minnesota's Pollution Control Agency will contribute \$1 million to a groundwater pumpout system. The three-way agreement is the first of its kind in the region, and may become a precedent for other superfund cleanups across the nation where a large number of firms are able to be identified as responsible parties. The case involved more than 100 law firms, and has been used as a national example by those who argue that the current superfund system needs to be scrapped because too much money goes to lawyers rather than to cleanups. Contact Tom Meersman, 612-673-7388.

► Ontario authorities have agreed to allow the Lac La Croix Indian tribe to co-manage the western third of the 1.2-million-acre Quetico Provincial Park just north of Minnesota. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources agreed to the plan because of past injustices the tribe has suffered: It was not consulted when the park boundaries were established in 1913, several families were removed from traditional land, and the tribe has been restricted from hunting and prevented from visiting sacred ceremonial grounds in the park. Part of the new agreement allows tribal fishing guides to use motorboats on more lakes in the park, which disturbs Canadian and U.S. environmentalists who want the park to be managed as a wilderness without motors. Contact Dennis Lien, St. Paul Pioneer Press, 612-338-6872.

MISSOURI

► Biologists studying the nation's rivers reported in August that more than half of the 300 species of freshwater mussels are disappearing, making them the most endangered group of animals in the United States. A survey this summer of some Missouri rivers found that nearly all mussels have vanished. And like the canary in the coal mine, the mussel decline is a disturbing omen for America's waterways, Richard Neves, a mussel expert for the National Biological Survey, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Mussels are rivers' natural filters, removing sediment and pollutants. Contaminants such as pesticides and heavy metals may be building up to lethal levels in mussel populations. Contact reporter Tom Uhlenbrock at 314-340-8128, or Neves at 703-231-5927.

NEVADA

► Two lawsuits have been filed against federal environmental and defense agencies for failing to protect workers at the top-secret Groom Lake Air Force Base, also known as Area 51, northwest of Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Sun reported. The first suit, filed Aug. 2 in Washington, D.C., named the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for failing to monitor hazardous materials at the secret base where the high-speed U-2 spy plane and the F-117A Stealth fighter were tested. It was filed on behalf of six anonymous workers. Law professor Jonathon Turley, director of the pro bono Environmental Crimes Project at the George Washington University National Law Center, said the secrecy shrouding the base does not shield it from obeying environmental laws. The second suit, filed Aug. 15 in federal court in Las Vegas, names Secretary of Defense William Perry, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Air Force Secretary Sheila Widnall. The Las Vegas Review Journal reported on Aug. 20 that a federal judge moved the first suit to the Las Vegas court to make it more convenient for witnesses to testify.

► "Lines in the Sand," a five-part series by Shaun McKinnon exploring the "riddle of the Mojave Desert," ran June 26-30 in the Las Vegas Review-Journal. The stories paint a detailed picture of the desert ecosystem and endangered species and examine threats to the environment, including mining, grazing, suburban sprawl, military bases, air pollution and rampant recreation. It also provides history and background on the controversy over the new California desert park system. Contact Las Vegas Review-Journal, P.O. Box 70, Las Vegas, NV 89125, 702-383-0211.

► The mining trade magazines — Mining Environmental Management, Mining World News, and Mining Journal — are sponsoring an international Mining Environmental Management Conference, Oct. 16-19 in Reno, Nev. The conference features tours of Nevada gold mines, workshops on laws and environmental practices at mines in the U.S. and overseas, and sessions on bridging the differing agendas of mining companies and environmental groups. Contact Mining World News, 90 West Grove St., Ste. 200, Reno, NV 89509, 702-827-1115.

OHIO

► The City of Columbus' waste-to-energy plant has high tipping fees and high dioxin emissions. The tipping fees prompted the nation's first post-Carbene flow control case. The dioxin emissions have prompted cries to close the plant as a health risk. Scott Powers of The Columbus Dispatch has sorted out the claims and charges in a number of stories. He also completed a feature on the plant's costs versus rural landfilling. For more information contact Powers at 614-461-5233.

TENNESSEE

► The Commercial Appeal published an in-depth package exploring old-growth forests of the Mid-South on July 31. Containing photos, maps and more than 110 column inches of copy, the package reported that, contrary to popular belief, old-growth for-

ests persist in scattered areas across Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Kentucky, Missouri and other states. But these remnants of the area's natural history, in many cases, remain vulnerable to logging and development. To obtain a copy, contact environment writer Tom Charlier at 901-529-2572.

TEXAS

► The EPA is preparing to release its long-term Superfund cleanup plan for West Dallas, a lead-contaminated Dallas neighborhood. The plan will address a giant, abandoned lead smelter, a contaminated public housing project, hundreds of private homes where lead slag was used as fill and several areas where a smelter company dumped large amounts of slag. Residents of the mostly low-income, minority area, who have demanded a comprehensive cleanup for a decade, say what they've heard about the plan so far isn't to their liking. For more information, call Randy Lee Loftis, Dallas Morning News, 800-431-0010; E-mail address: 75107.257@compuserve.com.

► About 1,000 residents of the East Texas town of Commerce are suing a half-dozen companies over widespread arsenic contamination of their neighborhoods. The Hi-Yield Chemical Co. factory in Commerce, which made arsenic-based herbicides, has been closed for 22 years but hasn't been cleaned up. Residents of Commerce attribute a wide range of health problems to the arsenic, although public health officials say they haven't documented an unusual number of illnesses. Dallas Morning News staff writer Scott Parks detailed the fight Aug. 14. Call Randy Lee Loftis, Dallas Morning News, 800-431-0010; E-mail address: 75107.257@compuserve.com.

► Scores of cities nationwide are asking the EPA to delay or waive rules governing nitrogen oxide emissions, The Dallas Morning News reported Aug. 22. Some metro areas want EPA approval of highway plans that would reduce volatile organic compounds but raise NOx emissions, in effect cutting one pollut-

ant at the expense of increasing another. Sierra Club and others object, saying the government has no business ignoring a major component of urban smog. But EPA officials have been receptive to the requests, which require Administrator Carol Browner's signature. Call Randy Lee Loftis, Dallas Morning News, 800-431-0010; E-mail address: 75107-257@compuserve.com.

► A water-quality ordinance overwhelmingly approved in 1992 by Austin voters is failing to protect groundwater that feeds Barton Springs, a popular swimming hole widely regarded as the city's environmental crown jewel. According to an in-depth report published in the Austin American-Statesman, a related controversy concerns efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect a rare salamander found only in the Springs, as well as endangered songbirds found in dozens of Central Texas counties. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has visited Austin several times in the past 18 months to encourage development of a habitat conservation plan that would address these and other issues — a goal that has proven elusive. Meanwhile, the clash between environmental protection efforts and property rights is an issue in the gubernatorial race between Democratic incumbent Ann Richards and Republican challenger George W. Bush, son of the former president. For more information, contact Ralph Haurwitz of the Austin American-Statesman at 512-445-3604.

UTAH

► The EPA wants to put the "world's richest hole" — the Bingham Canyon copper mine near Salt Lake City — on the Superfund national priorities list. The biggest open pit in the world has been mined for more than a century and has contaminated drinking water under the city's suburbs. Kennecott Utah Copper — a subsidiary of the global mining giant RTZ — is spending more than \$200 million on clean up. A model consent decree could keep Bingham Canyon off Superfund, if EPA and Kennecott can agree. High Country News examines the

controversy in a May 30 report "Can Mining Come Clean?" Contact Jon Christensen, Great Basin Regional Editor, 6185 Franktown Rd., Carson City, NV 89704, 702-885-2023. An SEJ conference tour will visit the mine.

► An investigative series in the Private Eye Weekly — "Utah's Independent Newspaper" — has been taking a hard look at the financial and environmental downside of Salt Lake City's bid to host the 2002 Olympic Games. A look at the dark side of the "greening of the Olympics," John Harrington's "Downhill Slide" report July 20 examines conflicts of interest, lack of oversight, and construction problems at the Utah Winter Sports Park. Contact Private Eye Weekly, 68 West 400 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, 801-573-7003.

VIRGINIA

► Joe Coccaro, who covered the environment beat for The (Norfolk) Virginia Pilot and Ledger Star for the past two years, was recently promoted to business editor at the 238,000-circulation daily. During his tenure, Coccaro wrote extensively about the depletion of Chesapeake Bay fisheries and spent a summer traveling throughout Virginia to report on environmental problems from the points of view of residents in each affected region. He also wrote a series exposing the U.S. Navy's extensive toxic waste discharges and Chesapeake flows into the Atlantic Ocean. The newspaper, which has a history of supporting in-depth reporting on the environment, has launched a search for Coccaro's successor, according to Tom Boyer, specialty team editor.

WASHINGTON

► Rob Taylor in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer quoted fire experts as saying that thinning and prescribed burning could have reduced the severity of wildfires then blackening much of Central Washington. After the Aug. 1 story, Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas and his boss Jim Lyons agreed

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in interviews printed Aug 5, and called for a major expansion of thinning and prescribed burning to improve forest health and reduce fire risks across much of the West. Taylor's 1992 "Smokey's Plague" series foreshadowed the policy shift.

► Feminism and environmentalism meshed twice recently in Spokane, as the city was scene to two major forestry conferences. In both cases, there were few women speakers. Female foresters and scientists expressed disgust with the good ol' white boy network, suggesting that a lack of gender and cultural diversity is one reason the environment is in such sorry shape. At a forest fire conference in early September, only five of 45 speakers were women — and most of those were elected public officials. A lead agitator is Joy Belsky, the Oregon Natural Resources Defense Council, 503-223-9007, ext. 216. She's making a fuss about the issue regionwide. Or contact reporter Todd Foster, The Spokesman-Review, 509-459-5431

WEST VIRGINIA

► Chemical plants in the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia released their "worst-case" scenarios for accidents that could occur at their facilities. The

Charleston Gazette published a 14-part series detailing each of the accident predictions. The series included detailed maps and descriptions of each chemical involved and the potential health effects. Chemical companies planned their two-day June 3-4 program, at which the scenarios were released, in anticipation of a new federal law that requires such information to be disclosed. For information, call Ken Ward Jr. of The Charleston Gazette at 304-348-1702.

► The West Virginia Board of Public Works voted in late August to investigate how coal, timber and other natural resource properties in the state are taxed. The action of the board, which is made up of top statewide elected officials, came after Paul Nyden of The Charleston Gazette revealed that a tax department report, upon which natural resource taxes are based, was riddled with errors. Nyden's series showed the errors allowed natural resource property taxes to be lower than they should be. Call Nyden for information at 304-348-5164.

WISCONSIN

► Owners of lawnmowers and powerboats could trade in their gas- and oil-burning two-stroke engines for cleaner burning four-stroke models, un-

der a Wisconsin report unveiled in August. State officials hope the program could help Southeastern Wisconsin meet ozone limits under the Clean Air Act. It's unclear who would pay for the exchanges . . . perhaps industries that want to expand, but must first come up with pollution offsets. For more information, contact the Center for Clean Air Policy at 202-624-7709.

► More Wisconsin politicians have picked up on the ozone transport debate. A congressional sub-committee hearing in Racine this July featured several hours of testimony on a report that shows some of Southeastern Wisconsin's harmful ozone blows in from other parts of the country. Wisconsin Congressman Peter Barca says the EPA should look at nationwide ozone reduction laws.

► EPA Administrator Carol Browner stood atop a pumping station that sent Cryptosporidium into Milwaukee's water supply last year and urged congressional action on the Safe Drinking Water Act. During Browner's Aug. 8 visit to Milwaukee, she also toured a water treatment plant where breakdowns occurred last year. Milwaukee officials say the city's drinking water is now among the cleanest in the nation. But consultants are recommending additional safeguards.

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