

# SEJ Journal

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## Beware of “green” firms

By JON ENTINE

“Nuclear-free electricity,” boldly proclaimed Working Assets Green Power (WAGP), one of thirty power marketers competing in a New England electricity deregulation pilot project. It was the first marketing volley in what is shaping up as a brutally competitive battle over the country’s estimated \$330 billion a year electricity bill.

It’s also brand marketing at its best: take a commodity product (electricity, shampoo, ice cream, tea, toothpaste), slap on a green label, jack up the price to create some of the highest profit margins in business, and watch as the real green stuff rolls in. These promotions have struck a spending chord with image-obsessed boomers, who have long since traded in their VW Beetles for BMW’s. Surprisingly, much of the blame for this

cynical turn rests not with mainstream companies jumping on the social responsibility bandwagon but with New Age entrepreneurs who use self-proclaimed good intentions for all kinds of well-intentioned but frequently reckless promotions. It’s a story that many journalists are missing, perhaps because of their desire to see those advertised green practices come to fruition.

Working Assets Long Distance (WALD), which owns WAGP, is a classic green shell. The San Francisco-based company, which promotes itself as a “socially responsible” alternative in the telephone long-distance business, has made a name for itself with relentless cause-related marketing and for donating one percent of billings to activist social causes. It has become a favorite of liberal-leaning journalists who seem all

too willing to overlook that its stable of commodity products—green-branded phone, credit cards, Internet and paging access—are priced well above the competition.

“Our customers have made a decision to buy a product that is better for the environment, for human rights, economic justice,” boasts CEO Laura Scher in a glowing article in the *San Francisco Examiner* about its green energy marketing experiment. Working Assets hopes to offer its customers “100 percent renewable energy,” Scher is quoted in another piece. It banged the social justice hot-button in pilot projects in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and is now doing much of the same in California which faces total energy deregulation come January.

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### Acadian Institute

## Face to face with the issues

By GEORGE HOMSY

Twenty-five years ago, Jack Merrill was a different man. He wore a suit, worked in an office and spent too much time commuting along Route 128, one of metropolitan Boston’s most congested highways.

Then he moved to Little Cranberry Island, off the coast of Maine, and now has his own boat and almost 800 lobster pots, earning anywhere from \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year. Over two and a half decades he has transformed himself into the model of a self-employed, independent-minded, rural Mainer.

This cold, drizzly morning Jack Merrill’s lobster boat and others like it are boarded by an army of journalists.

Captain Merrill pilots a writer from the Pacific Northwest and me around the early morning Maine waters. We learn how to change bait, band lobsters, and most importantly, we learn that the fishermen here have the same rural mindset as western ranchers. They see themselves as the guardians of a public resource and believe they are better stewards of that resource than any government agency.

Lobster fishing is just one of the many hands-on “workshops” of the Acadian Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources, a Maine program that puts reporters face to face with issues they may otherwise only research

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# Challenges, no changes for SEJ

One very short year ago, in this space, Rae Tyson outlined his goals as SEJ's new president.

One of the cornerstones of this organization, Rae resigned the presidency July 1 after leaving *USA Today* and joining a publication whose members aren't currently eligible to hold a voting seat on the SEJ board. Last month, he informed us he was leaving journalism altogether for a post with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Just as our professional or personal lives may take unforeseen turns, an organization like SEJ will constantly face new challenges as it matures. In his first column, Rae reported that SEJ's financial condition was solid, and he intended to concentrate on expanding the programs SEJ offers with the intent of improving the quality, accuracy and visibility of environmental reporting. Three years ago, Emilia Askari's inaugural president's column struck much the same tone, along with an appeal for members to get more involved.

I could still report similar financial news—if I took a short-term view of SEJ's finances. We are flush through early next year and have significant grant proposals pending with numerous foundations.

But the SEJ board, executive director Beth Parke, and I feel we must now take a different, long-term view. We fully expect some of those pending foundation grants to come through, funding SEJ for another year at an annual budget somewhat below the \$350,000 we've been averaging. But, if unlucky, we could find ourselves needing at a minimum to trim two staff positions, while managing (with increased volunteer help) to continue most of the programs you have come to expect.

SEJ has to date been far more financially stable than similar non-profit organizations, which tend to survive hand-to-mouth. But there is a limited pool of foundations whose staff and trustees understand and want to support what SEJ does, and we've already tapped many of them. Besides, that's no way for a group as efficient and vital as SEJ to operate.

Thus, the real quest for the next year is for the board, with member assistance, to make SEJ's operations more self-supporting so we can rely less on foundation

funding decisions that are beyond our control. (At the same time, we need more members to step forward to revitalize the tradition of volunteer work that has allowed SEJ to make its mark so quickly.)

SEJ treasurer Sara Thurin Rollin is heading the effort to come up with innovative ideas to increase income without sacrificing the organization's integrity. Increases in dues and conference fees won't do the trick, at least not alone. Dues account for only about 10 percent of the annual budget, paying for production of the *SEJournal* and about half the printing costs of the membership directory.

## Report from the society's president

By  
Kevin  
Carmody



As a short-term contingency plan, the board has tentatively agreed on cost-cutting options such as eliminating the experimental, fourth staff position in the SEJ office and printing the member directory every other year, while publishing a shorter update of new members in the off years.

On the income side, we may consider renting out an electronic mailing list service (a higher-price version of the SEJ mailing list), while offering members the option to remove their names. You might see classified ads on one page of the *SEJournal*. It's even been suggested that we consider enlisting celebrities to host a charity cocktail party in New York or Los Angeles, although I'm not yet sure if that would be a good fit for us.

There are many other options we may not have thought of. If you have an idea, please e-mail Sara at Rollinmail@aol.com or phone her at (202) 452-4584. Also, grant applications stand a better chance if accompanied by letters of reference from

big-name journalists, editor types, or other prominent people who know and appreciate what we do. Please contact me for sample letters and more details if you know someone you might approach, even if it's your own editor or publisher.

What will not change on my watch are the journalistic principles of independence and integrity that distinguish SEJ from some other journalism organizations. In evaluating any fund-raising initiative, particularly those such as the cocktail party proposal, I'm confident the board will not allow any strings to be attached or SEJ's good name to be compromised. I would resign from the board before I allowed that to happen.

SEJ does accept financial support from media companies, universities, and independent non-profit foundations so long as there is no quid pro quo for control of program content or any commitment to conduct programs on a topic of marginal public or journalistic interest (we've turned down funding in such cases). We do not accept funding from advocacy groups or, as the Society of Professional Journalist has, from non-media corporations. (I am an SPJ member and believe in its good work, but it operates with slightly different considerations).

Most of you may be aware that the *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 20, on its editorial page took a swipe at SEJ and the Radio & Television News Directors Foundation for accepting funding from the W. Alton Jones Foundation, an independent foundation that also has an interest in promoting discussion of endocrine disruptors (*see story, page five*). It was an uninformed cheap shot, as the Jones Foundation funding was unrestricted and not dependent upon SEJ conducting panels on the topic. Further, the principle scientific critic of that gender-bender theory, who wrote an accompanying piece in the *WSJ*, was on one featured panel we conducted and his peers have been on all the others. We would not have it any other way. (You may e-mail me at kpcarmody@aol.com for our full response to the *WSJ*).

For Beth Parke, the *WSJ* incident brought to mind a favorite line from *Star Trek-Next Generation's* Capt. Jean-Luc

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**The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization. The mission of the organization is to advance public understanding of environmental issues by improving the quality, accuracy and visibility of environmental reporting. We envision an informed society through excellence in environmental journalism. As a network of journalists and academics, SEJ offers national and regional conferences, publications and online services. SEJ's membership of over 1,100 includes journalists working for print and electronic media, educators, and students. Non-members are welcome to attend SEJ's national conferences and to subscribe to the quarterly SEJournal.**

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## New Faces on SEJ Board

### Changes in membership bylaws approved

In two key votes in Tuscon, SEJ members elected four new members to SEJ's board and approved changes in the group's bylaws that relate to membership.

The four members elected to SEJ's board for the first time are: Jim Bruggers of the *Contra Costa (Calif.) Times*, Peter Dykstra of *CNN*, Ann Goodman, a freelance business writer from New York City, and Jacques Rivard of the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*.



James Bruggers

Members also re-elected to another term Gary Polakovic of the *Riverside (Calif.) Press-Enterprise* and Kevin Carmody of the *Daily Southtown* in Chicago. The board had appointed Dykstra in July to fill Rae Tyson's vacancy on the board.



Peter Dykstra

As for its officers, the board re-elected Carmody as president. Carmody assumed the job when Tyson stepped down as SEJ president (*see Report from the Society's President*). The board also re-elected Marla Cone of the *Los Angeles Times* and Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star* as vice presidents and Sara Thurin Rollin of the Bureau of National Affairs Inc., as treasurer. The board elected Polakovic as its new secretary.



Ann Goodman

Members in Tuscon also voted to change SEJ's bylaws related to membership, approving the changes with only two dissenting votes. The approval adds to a section of the bylaws that pertains to Active Members, these words: "Neither members nor their employers shall engage in lobbying or public relations work relating to environmental issues." SEJ members are already prohibited from public relations or lobbying on the environment.



Gary Polakovic

The bylaws approval included a slight change to the Academic section of the bylaws, adding "An individual is eligible to be an Academic Member if he or she is on the full-time faculty or is a student at an accredited college, university or other school and has an interest in environmental issues. Part-time faculty may qualify if they meet other membership criteria."



Jacques Rivard

The members also approved adding to the bylaws a sentence that says the board may issue guidelines on how the bylaws should be implemented regarding membership. The board has already approved new guidelines that are intended to clarify the qualifications for each membership category.

"This should be a good road map for the future...and it also should ensure SEJ's credibility as a journalism organization," vice president Mike Mansur told members.

Mansur is SEJ's membership chair. He may be contacted ([mmansur@kstar.com](mailto:mmansur@kstar.com) or 816-234-4433) about these changes, or a copy of the new guidelines may be ordered from the SEJ office.

—Mike Mansur





# Less is more at Tucson gathering

By **RUSSELL CLEMINGS** and **RANDY LOFTIS**

Having the two of us assess SEJ's just-completed Tucson national conference is kind of like having a new mother evaluate her baby. We can't possibly be objective, and besides, after organizing the organization's biggest annual event what we really want to do is get some sleep.

Feedback forms from conference attendees will give us a more complete report of the gathering's success. At this writing those forms with your comments are still trickling in and conference coordinator Jay Letto will summarize them in the next issue of SEJournal. Jay says in preview that the comments are generally upbeat. And we're pleased to report that a late surge in registration—about 100 signups in the final three weeks—made this one of SEJ's most well-attended conferences ever.

At 254, member registration was higher than for any previous conference except Boston in 1995, where we were joined by several dozen members of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists. Total attendance in Tucson (477) lagged slightly behind the 1996 conference in St. Louis (524), but only because our speaker list was much shorter (92 non-member speakers in Tucson, as opposed to 199 in St. Louis).

That was intentional. In response to feedback from past conferences, we cut back on the number of talking heads this year—we had 23 concurrent sessions, compared to 31 in St. Louis—and built in more opportunities for networking and excursions. We wanted people to see the environment, not just sit in a room and talk about it.

That strategy seems to have worked well. By word of mouth, we heard enthusiastic reviews of Tucson's border environment tour, Friday's afternoon and evening under the stars at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and Sunday morning at Biosphere II.

That's not to say there weren't a few sour notes. Some who went on Thursday's grazing issues tour complained that the no-compromise environmental point of view was not represented.

Friday's plenary on the North America Free Trade Agreement also fell short of our vision. The juncture of trade and the environment may be the most under-reported issue facing us today. That's why we choose it for the plenary. But it is also among the most sensitive politically, which may explain why many of our big-name speakers cancelled, some at the absolute last minute.

On the brighter side, Saturday's concurrent panels went well, and unlike years past, we never faced the embarrassment of having a session where speakers outnumbered their audience. Some sessions were standing room only: "The Environmental Movement in the 21st Century," "Organized Religion and the Environment," "New Ways to Cover the Old Debate About Endangered Species," and "From Clearcut to Zero Cut: The Debate Over Logging on National Forests," each drew 70 to



**SEJers brave the heat for lunch at Biosphere 2**

80 attendees.

And we even had a few stars in residence: Michael Dombeck, the new chief of the Forest Service; Robert Stanton, the new director of the National Park Service; California State Sen. Tom Hayden, who first achieved fame as one of the Chicago Seven anti-war protest defendants; and Stewart Udall, Interior secretary for most of the 1960s and an icon of the modern environmental movement, who appeared via satellite hookup from a studio near his home in Santa Fe.

Also, for the first time non-attendees had a chance to watch the conference, thanks to a class of UA journalism students that covered our every move. You can read their work on SEJ's Environmental Journalism Home Page (<http://www.sej.org>). Soon we will be adding transcripts of some of the more popular sessions. (As always, audio tapes of the sessions are available from Goodkind of Sound at 800-476-4785.)

Finally, more than two dozen attendees joined us after the conference for a two-day study trip to the Grand Canyon. We spoke with National Park Service administrators and scientists, hiked the Bright Angel Trail, and stood on the rim at sunrise in a thunderstorm as lightning bathed the canyon in an eerie glow.

"Getting a taste of the canyon's problems and seeing it during the hike was the highlight of my three-week trip to the West, and made re-reading 'Beyond the 100th Meridian' all the more real on the plane ride home," canyon trekker Eric Niiler of the *Patriot-Ledger* in Quincy, MA commented later.

"I sometimes feel SEJ focuses too much on issues and policy, and not enough getting to the big outdoors, which is why many of us got into environmental writing in the first place."

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*Russell Clemings is environment reporter for the Fresno Bee. Randy Loftis covers the beat at the Dallas Morning News.*



# SEJ and *Wall Street Journal* collide

They say you can gauge your importance by the size and power of your critics. By that yardstick, SEJ took a sizable leap onto the public stage recently when the *Wall Street Journal* took it to task in an article published in August 20, 1997.

A sidebar to the article by Dr. Stephen Safe entitled "Another Enviro-Scare Debunked," suggested that a \$50,000 grant from the W. Alton Jones Foundation had compromised SEJ's handling of a controversial subject.

Dr. Safe is a well-known critic of the theory that certain common pollutants mimic hormones, producing a variety of health effects in wildlife and humans through endocrine disruption. The theory was expounded in a 1995 book, *Our Stolen Future*, co-authored by J.P. Myers, executive director of the Jones Foundation. Panels debating the theory of endocrine disruptors have appeared at SEJ conferences.

In the sidebar to Dr. Safe's article, writer Diane Katz implied that after receiving the grant, SEJ may have promoted an uncritical treatment of the issue in the panels. In a letter to the editor published September 18 in the *WSJ*, SEJ president Kevin Carmody and SEJ executive director Beth Parke answered the charge.

Dr. Safe, the outspoken critic of the theory or his peers, they pointed out, have been included "on every training program on the topic we have conducted at our annual conferences.

"Therefore it strikes us as intellectually dishonest for the *Wall Street Journal* to publish a sidebar to Dr. Safe's piece that implies that SEJ...may have promoted uncritical reporting of the issue.

"SEJ's programs are designed by veteran science and environment reporters without regard to the agendas of any funders," they wrote. In fact, they continued, "SEJ has declined funding when a

foundation has suggested we promote discussion of an issue that is of marginal public interest.

"In the case of hormone mimics, the W. Alton Jones Foundation has never sought to control the content of our programs. And because of the expanding scientific, journalistic and public interest, it is an issue we would have explored regardless of the funding."

Ms. Katz's piece, they concluded, "...was fatally flawed by the faulty premise conveyed in her lead paragraph: 'The endocrine apocalypse has been canceled, but word in the press is harder to find than a humbled green activist.' Perhaps Ms. Katz should avail herself of SEJ's training programs, so she can avoid making such fundamental errors in the future."

Whether or not the latter suggestion took root, Ms. Katz did attend the SEJ conference at Tucson.

—Noel Grove

## Mexican journalists attend SEJ conference as fellows

Thanks to support for fellowships from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, SEJ was able to bring a group of eight Mexican journalists to its annual conference in Tucson. The fellows included:

Pedro Enrique Armendares, Assistant Director, *Periodistas de Investigacion*, of Mexico City; Martha Patricia Giovine and Martin Eduardo Orquiz, both environmental writers, *Diario de Juarez* from Juarez; Luis Manuel Guerra, environmental writer, founder, Mexican Association of Environmental Journalists in Jardin; Alejandro Ramos Magaa, editor, urban design and environment desk, *Reforma*, of Mexico City; Tatiana Adalid Mayorga, environmental writer, *La Cronica*, Mexico City; Suzana Guzman Ortega, reporter, *Televisa*, Mexico City; Sylvia Aguilar Zeleny, student, Sonora University, editor of the publication of

the Red Fronteriza de Salud Ambiental (Environment and Health Border Network), of Sonora.

In cooperation with the Latin America Center of the University of Arizona, SEJ managed to get all but one of the fellows into Tucson two days before the conference. Diana Liverman, director of the Center, arranged for a series of meetings, discussions, and a reception for the fellows involving faculty and students, local journalists, and representatives of area environmental groups. Among the resulting media coverage was an interview of Liverman by Manuel Guerra for a radio audience in Mexico of eight million.

Three of the fellows (Armendares, Giovine, and Ortega) participated in a conference panel on covering environmental issues along the border and inside Mexico. Ignacio Ibarra of the *Arizona Daily Star* served as moderator.

## CASW funds two members

Two SEJ members are among four U.S. graduate students who have been awarded \$1,500 fellowships for 1997 by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW). They are Karlyn Duncan and Ike Iyioke, master's degree students studying environmental journalism at Michigan State University.

Duncan, a native of Massachusetts, focuses her studies on environmental science and policy. Iyioke is studying the decline of forests in his native Nigeria. He is a co-founder of Uwamaka, a non-governmental agency examining environmental health in his nation.

Other winners were two masters degree students, Jeffrey Brainard, of Boston University, and Samuel Kearn Moore of New York University.

CASW, based in Greenlawn, NY, is a non-profit, grants-supported organization established to increase the quality and quantity of accurate science reporting and writing in the nation's media.



# Educators lectured on the ills of journalism

By JOHN PALEN

SEJ board members provided a somber look at the current state of environmental journalism at a recent national conference for journalism educators, and asked educators to do more research directly useful to reporters and editors.

The atmosphere in which journalists work has turned nasty, they reported in a panel discussion in Chicago on "New Developments in Environmental Journalism." Local TV coverage of the environment is sinking, and too little research exists that would help all working journalists navigate, educators were told.

The August panel was part of the national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Panel members were SEJ President Kevin Carmody, academic representative JoAnn Myer Valenti, and Erin Hayes, who did not run for re-election to the board at SEJ's Tucson convention in October. SEJ's founding president Jim Detjen moderated.

Television coverage of the environment is getting better and worse at the same time, Hayes said. On the bright side, the environment gets increasing play on cable channels like "Discovery" and "The Learning Channel," she said. But local coverage has gone downhill, with some stations dropping the environmental beat altogether and others increasing emphasis on

live coverage. "The environment can't be reported live," Hayes said. "You can't do complicated stuff off the top of your head."

Hayes, a national correspondent for *ABC-TV*, said some TV newsrooms now want reporters to be on air three or four times a day. These reporters spend a fourth of their time "preparing, doing and cleaning up after live shots, she said.

Another factor hurting environmental coverage, according to Hayes, is an increasingly combative climate, with sources on all sides growing more shrewd about manipulating the media. "You know as soon as a story hits that you will be answering for everything in there," she said. "We're in a food fight."

Carmody, environment reporter for the *Chicago Daily Southtown*, urged the audience of academics to do more research that would be of direct use to environmental journalists. He fired off a list of research topics. "What's happened to the beat, and why? Is it budget? What are the consequences of quality environmental reporting? What are the consequences of not doing it."

Audience member Robert J. Griffin, associate professor at Marquette University, said one characteristic of a profession is that practitioners have available to them a body of knowledge based on systematic research which they can use in everyday work. Journalism would move

toward professionalism if scholars were more responsive to questions like Carmody's, he suggested.

Panel moderator Detjen, professor of environmental journalism at Michigan State University, said a hopeful sign for environmental coverage on TV is a recent commitment by *BBC* to increase environmental coverage and expand its U.S. presence. Valenti, a professor at Brigham Young University, pointed to another trend in environmental communication—the conservative attack on perceived pro-environmental biases in K-12 environmental education. Most K-12 teachers trying to enhance environmental education are women, Valenti said, so the attack from the right, perhaps unintentionally, "winds up being an attack on women trying to teach science."

At the same time, Valenti said, some environmental courses and research studies in colleges and universities do have an advocacy edge. In addition, some students come to environmental journalism with a passion for journalism, but others come as ardent environmentalists. "We all need to be talking to each other" about advocacy issues, she added.

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*John Palen, a member of SEJ and AEJMC, is an associate professor of journalism at Central Michigan University.*

## Mid-Atlantic region explores point source water pollution

Efforts to prevent point source pollution have dominated the first 25 years of the Clean Water Act. The result is that 60 percent of U.S. waters now meet the designated use goals set forth in the statute, compared with 36 percent in 1972, according to the EPA. More progress is needed, say water quality experts, in pre-



**Dick Thompson, Peter Fairley, Karen Urish, Meg Walker, and Mike Richman study cow pollution**

venting nonpoint source pollution and in controlling point and nonpoint discharges with a regional, or holistic, approach.

To learn more about these issues, five SEJ members from the Washington, D.C. area undertook a field trip recently into the Chesapeake Bay drainage. At EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program office in Annapolis, Md., they saw a slide show about threats from toxic pollutants and nutrients entering the largest estuary in the U.S., and EPA's efforts to reduce nutrient levels in the Bay by 40 percent by the year 2000. EPA Internet manager Karen Klima described the Surf Your Watershed Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/surf>) to be unveiled this summer, offering an integrated snapshot of watersheds in all 50 states.

At a farm in the Bay watershed they observed best management practices for preventing runoff into streams. Techniques included alternate grazing to keep vegetation healthy, and buffers and channels around a nutrient-rich manure pile to protect waterways.

—Michael Richman





## Challenges... (from page 3)

Picard: "If we're going to be damned, let's be damned for what we really are." That is, an organization whose leadership and the vast majority of members are dedicated to perpetuating best traditions of independent journalism, not advancing anyone else's agenda.

Unfortunately, the question of funder influence over programs was again raised at the recent national conference in Tucson, where two members publicly questioned the "balance" of a panel on conflict resolution regarding livestock grazing disputes. We sometimes rely on our university partners in national conferences, like the Udall Center at the University of Arizona, to help organize a few tours or special interest panels. But in all cases there is oversight by SEJ staff and working journalists, plus the option to pull the plug on any event that doesn't meet our standards.

The tour in question was not about whether ranching is bad or good—it wasn't designed as one of the "he-said, she-said" debates we sometimes present—but was intended to examine how conflict resolution might work. The majority of tour participants seemed to appreciate that. In fact, there were two journalist tour leaders, and after recognizing a curious slant in the panel, SEJ Conference Coordinator Jay Letto insisted that the Udall Center staff add a prominent environmental critic of conflict resolution.

That critic couldn't make the tour, while his last-minute fill-in was not provided an equal platform, prompting the minority critique. While this circumstance might be defensible, I think we learned a lesson that we need to tighten our already stringent controls to keep program decisions exclusively in the hands of SEJ members and other experienced journalists.

Just imagine, however, where SEJ would be if such criticisms were justified—if SEJ did sacrifice its integrity and independence in the pursuit of funding.

Again, as journalists, we should not try to micro-manage or dictate the message of our programs so that they take one side or the other in these complex issues. While we strive for balance throughout the broader conference program, assuring

that industry, activist, political, and scientific perspectives are represented, I don't think we want to be in the business of controlling what our speakers say. What we do try to do is intelligently set up the platform for views that may better inform journalists hoping to delve more deeply into environmental issues.

The board and I are also committed to the full disclosure of relevant organizational business (while keeping in mind there are fiduciary decisions that only the board can make and legal/personnel matters that might be inappropriate to air publicly). Further, we will whenever possible seek comment from members, through the SEJ listserv, before considering policies or programs that may be controversial.

You might have guessed by now that I like to get the serious issues out of the way first. It might not follow standard communication theory. But, then, neither can I be accused of burying the lede.

Most of you have come to expect a lot of good news regarding SEJ, so, not to disappoint, we have in the past year:

- Painlessly resolved, mostly thanks to Mike Mansur, some long-standing, nagging questions about membership criteria.
- Implemented an elections procedure that assures the integrity of that process and promises that all members are adequately informed of all ballot items.
- Received funding from three foundations for the first time, six renewing ones, and five news organizations.
- Increased of travel fellowships for journalists to attend the national conference.
- Brought in an \$11,500 endowment, creating the \$1,000 annual Rita Ritzke Fellowship for Broadcast Journalists, underwriting training or story research.
- Installed cost controls for the national conference that helped produce a profit for the first time ever.

Finally, executive director Beth Parke and her staff judiciously managed the society's budget so there were no costly surprises this year.

I will wind down this first column by thanking a number of retiring board members for their dedicated service. Rae Tyson's contributions to the creation and growth of SEJ, particularly the even-tem-

pered wisdom he brought to difficult issues, are well known. Emilia Askari had the unenviable task of assuming the presidency from SEJ founder Jim Detjen and, despite the Detroit newspaper strike that claimed her job at the *Detroit Free Press*, propelled SEJ to the heights it currently enjoys. Ever-thoughtful Tom Meersman, another founding board member and former vice president, was instrumental in launching SEJ's regional conferences and maintaining a network of regional coordinators; And Erin Hayes lent us the credibility of her position as a network correspondent for *ABC* and *CBS News*, while often dazzling her peers with her eloquent and probing moderation of conference plenary sessions.

Unlike some journalism organizations, SEJ's members have generally trusted the board to take care of the business end of the society while volunteers have worked diligently to help deliver programs such as regional and national conferences.

It's time for the board to get down to some serious work on financial restructuring, while it's vital for you, as members, to recommit yourselves to the volunteer spirit that has distinguished SEJ thus far. Feel free to e-mail me or call (708) 633-5970 if you want to take a more active role in SEJ.

### '98 Conference site named

The SEJ board has accepted UCLA's proposal to hold the 1999 SEJ National Conference in Los Angeles on Sept. 16–19, and tentatively agreed to hold the 2001 event in Portland, Ore.

The board made the decision during a conference call on Oct. 31, after soliciting member comments about the selection criteria though SEJ's sejanounce listserv. The board also agreed to solicit proposals from major East Coast universities for the 2000 conference.

The proposals from UCLA and Portland State University represented two of the best SEJ has received in terms of opportunity to explore relevant issues and affordability for both the organization and its members. In some important ways the financial edge went to Portland, but UCLA's proposal offset the high expenses associated with holding a conference in a major metropolis and was valid only for 1999.



# Are Aliens feeding the greenhouse effect?

## A tongue-in-cheek view of events at the Tucson Conference

By DAVID HELVARG

A recent movie suggested Aliens were accelerating climate change in an effort to terraform earth to their needs. Of course if such a plan were actually underway they would first have to neutralize any organization that might threaten to alert the public, a society of environmental journalists for example.

"It looks like it'll be cooler today, somewhere in the mid-90s," the weatherman reported on my first morning in Tucson, Arizona, a desert town growing without reason in a dry zone where "illegal aliens" have long been a topic of concern. But of course we were there to discuss pressing environmental issues such as free trade, deregulation of utilities, organized religion, and computer surfing. No mention of global warming.

"Cows versus Condos," was the motto of the alleged ranchers we met on the first SEJ tour I took. Of course these "folks" who invited us to sit on hay bales under a spreading cottonwood tree, looked a little too "authentic" with their cowboy hats and howdies, their smiles and jeans, their denim dresses and talk of loving the land, and every time I thought about the heat a grasshopper the size of a sparrow would land on my shoulder with a little motor sound. "We're trying to disarm the earthlin...I mean find consensus," a woman from something called the Udall Center told us when we asked whatever became of the conflict we'd heard about over public lands grazing. And indeed at a county fairground "luncheon" that consisted mainly of flies and Styrofoam—something the average human doesn't consume—we discovered that a local eco-developer had come up with a win/win consensus solution that includes both cows and condos on his property.

We returned to the Marriott which had a realistic-looking stream bed running through its lobby, except for the presence of water and absence of cows in the middle of it. There we also encountered folks returning from a tour of Mexican *maquilladora* fences. They said they weren't allowed inside the factories by corporate managers who didn't want to let them see their exploited workers, which of course would be what ETs would say if they didn't want you to see their alien heat pumps.

That night I began to have serious suspicions about the SEJ conference organizers themselves. Nobody familiar with earth-based reporters would have a ticketed cash bar at a journalism conference.

The second day seemed designed to lull us into a trance-like state, beginning with a panel that droned on about the impacts of free trade. This was followed by a luncheon presentation by one of the famous Udalls on a satellite-feed from "Santa Fe" and two government bureaucrats. The famous Udall was obviously an Alien stand-in, because every time he'd answer a question he'd turn his head to resemble an Indian-head penny, perhaps not realizing such pennies haven't been in circulation on earth for over 50 years.

The real purpose of the day became clear late that afternoon

when we were bussed to a "desert museum" and left to wander zombie-like in the 100 degree heat among pigs, mountain lions and other interesting earth fauna. Luckily, by chewing ice I was able to maintain enough awareness to wonder, Why a "desert museum" in Tucson? Do they have a "Freeway museum" in LA, or an "Aryan museum" in Idaho? I couldn't help but notice the

### Grin & Bare It

glazed look that was overcoming many of my colleagues, one of whom began muttering, "Sure they're an oil industry front, but the

Global Climate Coalition still has some valid points to make."

By Saturday's panels it was clear that the heat had unhinged any chance at human solidarity, with people arguing over nuclear deregulation, sprawl, waste, and endangered species. "You fools," I wanted to yell out, "We're the endangered species." Luncheon roundtable discussions included talk on pesticides, toxic waste, festering fish sores, and other topics designed to limit our caloric intake. There was a brief moment of human resistance around happy hour when CNN held an open bar discussion of global warming at the Marriott, but any chance to build momentum was quashed by the absence of the traditional Saturday night SEJ party.

Sunday we were bussed to Biosphere Two, a kind of pet zoo for humans. Architecturally it resembles an exhibition from the 1939 world's fair, one of the first sites to broadcast TV signals into space. Who would spend over \$100 million to place a group of people inside an artificial glass environment completely sealed off from the outside world, I wondered, when you can find the same conditions in any high-rise office in America?

The Biosphere is supposedly run by Columbia University, the previous management having departed on Hale-Bopp. After showing us Biosphere's CO2 enhanced rainforest, square ocean and squatter sparrows ("We're getting rid of them"), we were led down a long tubeway to one of the building's "lungs." With complete arrogance our "guides" now revealed the underside of one of their Motherships. "It's a 26-ton plate," they smiled, challenging us to say otherwise. "It rises on heated air." Of course it does. Heated air is what they're all about.

After Tucson I began reading up on how environmental coverage is declining in newspapers and on TV (while PBS has announced a new series on "hot and spicy cooking"). It doesn't take an investigative reporter or a Star Trek fan to see the emerging pattern. I don't really expect this article to appear in the *SEJournal*, but even if it does, what will that tell you about the growing confidence of our overlords? The ETs have already relegated us to obscurity at our next conference after rejecting bids from Ely, Rosswell, and Everglades City. Fool that I am, I'll still probably go to Chattanooga, Tennessee, if only to attend the last human hootenanny.

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*David Helvarg is an author, TV producer and long-time resident of earth. Or so he says.*





## New England regional conference SEJers talk inner city restoration

Is there a new way of thinking about economic development and environmental protection? William Shutkin, director of an inner-city group called Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) believes so and shared his ideas with 10 SEJ members from the Boston area Oct. 22 at Boston University.

Shutkin, who also teaches environmental law at Boston College, has been working with residents of Roxbury for the past five years to develop a cleaner, more economically attractive inner-city environment. Doing that, he said, means forming ties with existing community health and social welfare groups.

Among its activities, the expanding staff of ACE works in Roxbury schools to teach students about causes of asthma. The low-income, mostly African-American and Hispanic neighborhood has five times the state average for asthma hospitalizations. It suffers from heavy bus and truck traffic as well as emissions from many manufacturing plants and auto body repair shops. One week, ACE organized a protest by local schoolchildren against drivers who allow their cars and trucks to idle in busy neighborhoods.

Shutkin believes that environmental issues facing suburban and rural areas—sprawl, transportation congestion, overstressed water and land resources—are directly tied to the health of cities.

“We have to make cities more livable,” he said.

Another part of ACE’s mission is to push for “brownfields” development in the

inner city. Brownfields are abandoned industrial and commercial sites that have been contaminated with toxic waste. Federal and state incentives are given to companies that will clean up these sites—many of which are in the urban centers—and establish businesses.

The idea is to steer new development into “brownfields” that are close to existing transportation links and utilities, instead of plowing up “greenfields” and open space in suburban or rural areas.

ACE has received grants from the U.S. EPA to develop Roxbury’s brownfields. Shutkin wants to make sure that companies who take advantage of these incentives don’t replicate the environmental mistakes of the past, or leave for greener economic pastures after squeezing money out of the neighborhood.

ACE and local activists successfully battled the installation of a new asphalt plant slated to be built in the Roxbury area in 1995. Shutkin says it’s much more difficult to be “pro-active” in attracting new manufacturers than it is in organizing to defeat manufacturers that are polluting the environment.

The event was part of an irregular series of meetings held by SEJ members in the New England region. The group hopes to have another pizza and discussion get-together in January. For more information, contact Eric Niiler at [eniiler@ledger.com](mailto:eniiler@ledger.com), or (617) 786-7322, or George Homsy at [ghomsy@world.std.com](mailto:ghomsy@world.std.com) or (617) 520-6857.

—Eric Niiler

## In Budapest, IFEJ elects council, passes resolution

Environmental journalists from around the world met in Budapest, Hungary October 15–18 at the fifth annual conference of the Paris-based International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ). The group seeks to link together and assist environmental writers in more than 100 countries.

The journalists elected for three-year terms a new 19-member administrative council and officers. They also passed resolutions in support of environmental journalists facing hardships in Russia and Algeria and selected Colombo, Sri Lanka as the site of IFEJ’s next conference, to be held September 1998.

Elected as officers were Jim Detjen, of the United States, president; Sonia Edith Parra, from Columbia, vice president; Darryl D’Monte, of India, vice president; Manuel Satorre, Jr., from the Philippines, secretary; Dharman Wickremaratne, of Sri Lanka, vice secretary; Valentin Thurn, of Germany, vice secretary; and Wolfgang Fruehauf, of Luxemburg, treasurer.

IFEJ, a nonprofit, educational organization that became incorporated at its first conference in 1993, has held conferences in Dresden, Germany; Paris; Boston; Cebu City, Philippines, and Budapest.

The 1999 conference is targeted for Latin America and the 2000 conference will be held in Cairo, Egypt.

—Jim Detjen

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from June 29, 1997 through Sept. 3, 1997. Memberships recorded after June 29 will appear in *SEJournal* volume 7, Number 4.

### ARKANSAS

- Clark Evans (Associate), *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, Judsonia

### ARIZONA

- Cate Gilles (Active), *Navajo Times*, Window Rock
- William P. Hess (Active), *Sierra Vista Herald*

- John F. Moeur (Active), *Sierra Vista Herald*

### CALIFORNIA

- Anne H. Ehrlich, Stanford University, Department of Biological Sciences
- Stephen Levine (Active), Center for Investigative Reporting, *Muckraker*, San Francisco
- Stewart Long (Academic), California State University, Fullerton, Environmental Studies Program
- Erica Stuart (Active), ETS R & D, Inc., *The MONITOR*, Palos Verdes Penins

### COLORADO

- Paul Larmer (Active), *High Country News*, Paonia
- David Reed (Associate), Rocky Mountain Institute, *Rocky Mountain Institute Newsletter*, Snowmass
- Tom Yulsman (Academic), University of Colorado at Boulder, Center for Environmental Journalism

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Stephen Blakely (Active), *Nation’s Business*
- Deborah Block (Associate), Worldnet



New memberships, continued

Television/U.S. Information Agency,  
Television Production

- Barrie McKenna (Active), *Toronto Globe and Mail*
- Kieran Mulvaney (Active), *SeaWeb*
- Nicholas A. Sundt (Active), *Global Change*
- Chris Tollefson (Active), *Casper Star-Tribune*

#### FLORIDA

- Sally Deneen (Active), Ft. Lauderdale
- Robert McClure (Active), *Sun-Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale
- Neil J. Santaniello (Active), Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*, Delray Beach

#### GEORGIA

- Jennie Garlington (Active), CNN, Earth Matters, Atlanta
- Julie Sirotti (Active), CNN, Earth Matters, Atlanta

#### ILLINOIS

- Jonathan Ahl (Active), WCBU 89.9, Peoria
- Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni (Academic), Northwestern University, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Evanston

#### INDIANA

- Jay R. Boyer (Active), Dakota Consulting Group, *Daily Regulatory Reporter*, Carmel

#### KANSAS

- Mike Corn (Active), *The Hays Daily News*, Hays

#### LOUISIANA

- Wendy Hessler (Associate), Raceland

#### MARYLAND

- Elaine Bloom (Associate), Tetra Tech, Inc., *Nonpoint Source News-Notes*, Washington Grove
- Jeff Ghannam (Associate), Society of American Foresters, The Forestry Source, Bethesda

#### MASSACHUSETTS

- Lisa Capone (Associate), Melrose
- David A. Liscio (Active), *Daily Evening Item*, Lynn

#### MINNESOTA

- Dennis Lien (Active), *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, St. Paul

#### MISSOURI

- Margaret Stafford (Active) *Associated Press*, Kansas City Bureau
- Kevin T. Wiatrowski (Academic), University of Missouri-Columbia, *Columbia Missourian*

#### NEW JERSEY

- Mary L. Nucci (Associate), Califon
- John Sailer (Active), Business News Publishing, *Environmental Design & Construction*, Saddle Brook
- William C. Schillaci (Active), Business & Legal Reports, *Environmental Managers Compliance Advisor*, Ridgewood

#### NORTH CAROLINA

- Steve Anderson (Academic), Duke University, Forest History Society, Durham
- James Eli Shiffer (Active), *The News and Observer*, Raleigh
- Diane Toomey (Active), WUNC Public Radio, Chapel Hill

#### NEW MEXICO

- Mary K. Bowannie (Associate), National Tribal Environmental Council, *Tribal Vision Newsletter*, Albuquerque
- Roger Featherstone (Associate), GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network, *Greenlines*, Albuquerque
- Drew Magratten (Academic), University of Texas at El Paso, Civil Engineering Dept., Sunland Park
- Charles R. Stocks (Active), *New Mexico Stockman*, Albuquerque

#### NEW YORK

- Dina Cappiello (Academic), Columbia University, Teachers College/Graduate School Of Journalism, New York
- Claire B. Dunn (Associate), SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry, Syracuse
- Kim Kastens (Academic), Columbia University, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Palisades
- Lynndee Kemmet (Associate), Levy Economics Institute, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson
- Jean Parvin (Active), Emis Tech Publishing, *Emis Tech*, Barrytown
- Amy Sirot (Active), WNYC Radio, NPR's Science Friday, New York
- Monica Michael Willis (Active), Hearst Magazine, *Country Living Magazine*, New York

#### OKLAHOMA

- Anita M. Caldwell (Academic), Oklahoma State University, Journalism Department, Stillwater

#### OREGON

- LaRee Brosseau (associate), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological

Services, Division of Endangered Species, Portland

#### SOUTH CAROLINA

- James Mason (Academic), University of Charleston/Medical University of South Carolina, Department of Environmental Studies, Charleston

#### TENNESSEE

- Mark E. Littmann (Academic), University of Tennessee, School of Journalism, Knoxville

#### TEXAS

- Jennifer C. Magee (Associate), Texas A & M Sea Grant Program, Bryan

#### VERMONT

- Tatiana Schreiber (Associate), Putney

#### VIRGINIA

- Gideon Berger (Active), National Journal, *Greenwire*, Alexandria
- David Franke (Active), New Media News Corporation, *GreenWatch*, Fairfax
- Steven Gibb (Active), Inside Washington Publishers, *Inside EPA's Risk Policy Report*, Arlington
- Rachael Kelly (Associate), Virginia Sea Grant, Charlottesville
- Ronald P. Sepic (Associate), U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division, *BRD Highlights*, Reston
- Traci Watson (Active), *USA Today*, Arlington

#### WASHINGTON

- Keith Seinfeld (Active), KPLU-FM, News Dept., Seattle
- Duff Wilson (Active), *Seattle Times*, Seattle

#### WISCONSIN

- R. Tod Highsmith (Associate), Manomet Observatory for Conservation Sciences, Conservation Sciences, Madison

#### AUSTRALIA

- Tim Winkler (Active), *The Age*, Melbourne

#### BRAZIL

- Sylvia Fonseca (Associate), Ministry of Science and Technology, PPG-7 Notícias, Brasília

#### REPUBLIC KAZAKSTAN

- Lydia A. Astanina (Active), Ecological News Agency, Almaty

#### RUSSIA

- Anatoly Lebedev (Associate), Vladivostok
- Yuri Shmakov (active), *Molodoy Daenevostchnik*, Khabarovsk

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# Data-crunching exposes windmill cover-up

## Electronic gumshoes track down bird losses in San Francisco Bay area

By JAMES BRUGGERS

The companies that operate the windmills of Altamont Pass on the outer edge of the San Francisco Bay Area have long worn white hats, especially among environmentalists who promote wind power as one solution to burning fossil fuels. That's why I was so intrigued when I heard there might be trouble in this green energy paradise.

Rumors had come from both environmentalists and the companies that operated the turbines that the windmills were killing birds, but it had seemed like a small problem. Then I learned from a source who is very fond of raptors such as eagles and hawks about an ongoing study that was attempting to document the bird deaths and injuries and how they were being killed.

I called the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which I learned was collecting dead carcasses and storing them in a freezer. I asked for mortality statistics and requested a visit to the freezer, with a photographer. The agency said no to both requests, claiming that the birds and the records were evidence in an ongoing criminal investigation. One door had been slammed in my face.

Instead of asking my editors at the *Contra Costa Times* to file a lawsuit, I decided to follow another tip. Companies operating in at least one of the three counties in my area were required by the Alameda County Planning Commission to file mortality reports with the county planning department. It turned out these were the very same mortality reports that the wind farms had been sending to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The largest company, Kenetech, which has since gone into bankruptcy, also reported mortality data for its wind farms in the other two counties: Contra Costa and Solano. This meant that I had access to what I believed were nearly all of the same records that were being collected at Fish and Wildlife Services offices.

The records came in two formats. One was a list that itemized monthly totals for each death or injury and included the date of the collision, species of bird, type of injury and location. The other was a sheet of paper that included the same information for each incident.

At the time, the *Contra Costa Times* had a computer-assisted reporting guru who volunteered to help me crunch the numbers. Morgan Cartwright, who now runs our World Wide Web publication, used Visual Basic to design a front-end program that allowed easy data entry. To make sure we entered the data in a consistent fashion, he designed a series of scrolling list boxes. One list, for example, contained all the different kinds of birds. Another was for the location of the turbine. One more provided for different kinds of injuries: broken wing, decapitation, etc.

Cartwright chose the database program Microsoft Access to use in our IBM-clone 486 computer to manage and manipulate the data. It took a temp worker and myself three days to enter the data by hand. Once it was in, I was amazed at how easy it was to figure out what was going on in those fields.

After we crunched the numbers, we ran them by several sources such as consulting biologists, Kenetech, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Were we on target? No one objected.

It seemed clear to me, however, that our numbers were probably low because of the two counties that didn't have a mortality reporting requirement. Their response: They weren't in the wildlife regulatory business.

So after six months, I was able to give the first comprehensive and public accounting of bird mortality associated with the Altamont wind farms. The *Times* published in late 1995 my report that 8,900 turbines had killed or injured 679 birds over a period of three years and one month. Most were birds of prey. The death toll included 266 red-tailed hawks, 64 golden eagles, 48 barn owls and 34 American kestrels. The government can fine companies and individuals thousands of dollars if they kill golden eagles or other migrating birds under the Bald Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Our computer analysis also revealed that the deaths were on the increase.

The numbers were only a small part of the three-story package that began on the cover and filled two inside pages. The main story explained a deep rift in California's sizable environmental community. After all, wind energy produces no greenhouse gases. The project also detailed industry and government efforts to reduce the mortality and revealed that, despite the fact that laws were apparently broken, no prosecutions had been made. Persuading a jury that the deaths were intentional would be difficult, a former federal prosecutor told me.

A second story documented how wind energy faces an uncertain future in California due to land use conflicts, the loss of subsidies, and changing economics. Starting this January in California, electricity will be deregulated, meaning consumers will be able to shop around for the lowest rates. I also reported that outside of the United States, wind power is expanding rapidly. The third story was a short sidebar on a proposed new wind farm in the Bay area.

Some tips on digging out information on similar stories:

1) If one government source won't give you the information you want, keep looking. Another agency might have just what you need.

2) Balance and juggle your editorial responsibilities. Around my newsroom, that's how special projects get done. Although I worked on this for more than six months, I was still required to produce daily stories. I tried to devote one day a week to the birds. Once I was ready to write, my editors cleared me for two weeks to complete the job.

3) See what others have written about the subject. A Nexis search turned up wind farm articles from around the globe. Use the Internet, too.

4) If you don't have all the computer skills you need, chances are someone in your newsroom will. Just ask for help.

5) Check your results with outside experts. You don't want to be embarrassed.



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*James Bruggers covers environment for the Contra Costa Times and Contra Costa newspapers in San Francisco's Bay Area.*



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# Post-NAFTA: Digging out the borderland news

By **RON MADER**

When they cover the U.S.-Mexico border, both the U.S. and Mexican press portray the border as a sharp dividing line, with one set of issues in the United States and another in Mexico. The reality is that the borderlands fuse cultures, politics, and the environment.

Biodiversity, air pollution, and ground water issues freely cross the border. Journalists who identify the results of cross-border policies offer readers insights in developing and fostering successful conservation or development strategies.

The sad truth is that borderland reporting is not a priority for most newspapers and environmental reporting less so. The sensationalist stories tend to grab the space. How did this happen? During the heated debates over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1992 and 1993, coalitions of U.S., Mexican, and Canadian groups fought bitterly in Washington, D.C. and Mexico City over the perceived consequences of the treaty on the U.S.-Mexico border environment. However, now that the treaty is in effect, many of the bi- and tri-national coalitions have seemingly withdrawn their interest (and financial resources).

For example, in the United States, during the NAFTA debates, the Sierra Club offered criticism of how trade negatively impacts already taxed environmental infrastructure. Consequently, their studies fueled a demand to create an environmental fund, which later evolved into the North American Development (NAD)Bank.

However, once NAFTA was approved by the U.S. Congress, the Sierra Club did not stick around to check out environmental management. In fact, in its review of North American bioregions, it ignores most of Mexico! In 1994, the club chose to move on and lobby against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Likewise, pro-NAFTA groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and the National Wildlife Federation have maintained little interest in the border since 1994. Only the Environmental Defense Fund maintained its border office in Texas. Why did top NAFTA issues drop off the radar screen

three years later?

Long ignored, the border had become a major news story in 1992 during the NAFTA debates as the U.S. media and public discovered Mexico and the borderlands. Congressional visits touring border shantytowns and toxic dumps became a staple of the U.S. media diet. Mexican newspapers also paid greater attention to the border.



As politicians focused their energies on the borderlands, the media beefed up its coverage, foundations offered new funds for research and projects, environmental groups jumped onto the bandwagon and the media covered their efforts. The border was given priority coverage in 1992-1993, but this circle was broken, ironically, when NAFTA took place on January 1, 1994.

Mainstream reporting returned to immigration and drug stories that perhaps correctly but stereotypically dominate the public perception of the border. Perhaps infrastructure problems or green conservation issues simply aren't "sexy" enough.

There are several problems with today's border environmental coverage. First, the market is small and seems to be drying up. The market that does exist pigeon-holes stories in one of two fashions—(1) Great strides are being made or (2) All hell is breaking loose. The "progressive" magazines run toxic ravine and health risk stories, but rarely any positive stories. On the other hand, business magazines love happy *maquiladora* stories.

Mainstream reporting fares no better. The border seems so far away from the state capitals in Austin and Phoenix—let alone Mexico City and Washington, D.C.—that the daily papers rarely cover the region, except in times of crisis.

Following are some of the stories being missed:

- Failure of Institutions: (1) The

NAFTA-related organizations, NADBank and BECC, have been criticized for extremely slow development. Why have these institutions performed so poorly in funding environmental projects? (2) While demanding transparency and inclusivity from governmental groups, academic centers and environmental groups often exclude public participation or reporters from their own meetings. Is this hypocritical or do they play by different rules?

- Finance: Environmentalists and developers have long pointed out the lack of funds for border clean-up projects or environment-friendly technologies. What funds have been available or used in the past year? What are the stumbling blocks to further investments?

- More attention is spent on "gray" environmental stories than "green" ones. The border encompasses a number of bioregions, with individual conflicts. What are the native species and are they under any risk?

- Cooperation: States and local governments have the most direct contact with counterparts across the border. Do bi-national treaties and agreements promote or hinder these efforts?

In 1994 I created an online archive of border materials I'd written for *Mexican Environmental Business*, *Texas Environmental News*, and *El Financiero International*. As a freelance writer, it was in my interest to let people know of my specialized interest. Posting my own materials on the web led to inquiries and volunteered information that I was able to use to begin the research for future stories.

This archive was beefed up a year later with bibliographies, contact lists, and links to government, academic, environmental group and personal pages. Together, these pages make up the Borderland Environmental Archives, which can be freely accessed at <http://www.greenbuilder.com/mader/ecotravel/border/borderlands.html>.

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*Ron Mader is a freelance writer and author of the upcoming guidebook, Mexico: Adventures in Nature (John Muir Publications, 1998).*

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# Fishing for facts on *Pfiesteria*

## East coast's mysterious microbe augers ill for tidewaters

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

The recent outbreaks of a microscopic creature known formally as *Pfiesteria piscicida* up and down the eastern seaboard and its characteristic fish kills presents journalists with a common challenge: to catch one of the most spectacular environmental science stories of recent years.

If you have not yet written about the “cell from hell,” there is still time because this story is complex and not yet completely told. It is significant because it has collected and drawn the spotlight of attention from the public, politicians, and scientists to the oceans and tidewaters, their water quality, complex aquatic botany, and nonpoint-source pollution. *Pfiesteria* may become a symbol, a wake-up call to ocean and tidal areas and coastal economies' dependence on water quality in much the same way the infamous snail darter or loon did for fresh waters.

*Pfiesteria* is a single-celled microorganism. It is related to the toxic dinoflagellates that cause red tides. But *pfiesteria* is unique because scientists believe it can change from a non-toxic amoeba, cyst, or plant-like creature into a “killer” dinoflagellate that intentionally releases its toxins on its prey—all within a few hours.

Perhaps the most significant scientific aspect of this story is the suggested link between exposure to the mysterious microbe and ill health.

Although millions of fish—mostly menhaden (a bony, oily fish harvested

exclusively for non-food uses)—have been killed by *pfiesteria*, the conclusion by a team of Maryland physicians that people have gotten sick from exposure to *pfiesteria*-contaminated water or air has changed the nature of this story.

In August, a team of Maryland medical doctors said the microbe caused neurological problems, including memory loss, and other health problems among



some people exposed to waterways either before or during a *pfiesteria*-linked fish kill. That announcement, along with continued fish kills in Maryland, led to the closing of three waterways in that state by mid-September.

There is no identified food-borne contamination threat from *pfiesteria* because people do not eat menhaden—*pfiesteria*'s fish of choice. Aquatic toxicity studies have shown *pfiesteria* can make dozens of types of fish sick.

However, the sick people may have only touched *pfiesteria* laden waters or breathed tainted air. One person reportedly was waterskiing, another fishing, and yet others were taking water samples.

From a scientific view, there is much to learn about this mighty microbe. For example, scientists and physicians do not know what level of exposure to the toxins produced by *pfiesteria* are hazardous, or what remedies may be available for people, the fish, or the contaminated water.

A local physician has offered a not-yet-proven hypothesis to explain the conditions necessary to trigger the microbe in its toxic form and a possibly contain it. Dr. Ritchie Shoemaker says *pfiesteria*-rich waters have excessive nutrients, likely from farm runoff. But, he notes, in particular, the presence of copper in these rivers. The physician proposes using a dilute solution of potassium permanganate to disrupt the copper-based ecosystem chaos and possibly return it to a healthier state.

What is striking about *Pfiesteria piscicida*, (pronounced fis-TEER-ee-ya pisi-SEED-uh), is its alleged ability to:

- change physical form quickly
- exist with benign and toxic lifestyles
- emit more than one toxic fume
- injure and kill fish though open, festering sores and
- injure humans, possibly at similar dose levels to fish.

It is worth noting that SEJ members and some SEJ conference goers attending the 1994 meeting hosted by Duke University had an early crack at this fascinating story. After the close of the 1994 conference, a small group participated in the first of SEJ's now famous conference field trips. The destination was North Carolina tidewaters.

Among the speakers was North Carolina State University aquatic botanist, JoAnn Burkholder, who is credited with discovering *pfiesteria*. SEJ member Harvey Black in Wisconsin sent me his “phantom killer” clip stemming from that field trip that describes *pfiesteria* as an “ambush predator” of fish.

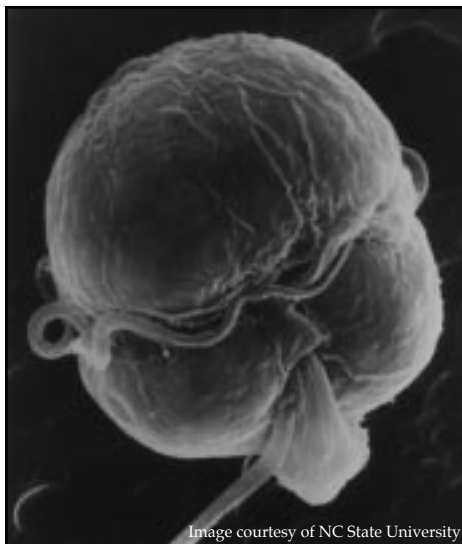
Burkholder is widely credited with studying *pfiesteria* in such detail that the microbe was given a new and unique name among living creatures. Moreover, at least one of her colleagues experienced serious health effects while handling *pfiesteria*-laden water.

There is plenty of room for a few good journalists to cover the *pfiesteria* phenomena, specifically, for journalists on the environment, health, outdoors, and business beats, and food critics, and/or one very talented general assignment reporter. A review of *pfiesteria* articles in the *Washington Post* revealed 31 different bylines during a recent 10-week period.

Journalists throughout the United States, North America, and other regions with similar environment, regardless of their beat, may discover a way this mighty microbe or another seaborne saboteur have affected the environment near them.

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*Sara Thurin Rollin is a reporter for BNA's Bureau of Environmental News, based in Washington, D.C.*



*Pfiesteria piscicida*

# The real wolf story

## *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone*

by Thomas McNamee  
Henry Holt & Co., 1997  
354 pp.; \$27.50

When wolves were reintroduced into the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in 1995, their release culminated one of the most bitterly fought conservation battles of this century. Media coverage of the experiment's launch was extensive, but typically short-sighted. The public was left with the impression that all you have to do is capture some wolves in Alberta, set them free in Yellowstone, and the much-misunderstood carnivores will live happily ever after.



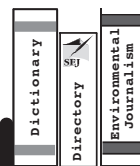
There's a lot more to the story, of course, and fortunately, Thomas McNamee was there to chronicle it for us. McNamee is a former president of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and author of such ecology-themed books as *The Grizzly Bear* and *Nature First*. But he also raises cattle in Montana, so he can view the wolf-reintroduction controversy from both sides of the fence.

McNamee spent a year shadowing the researchers and rangers involved in the wolf project, and in many cases he was given access where no other reporters were permitted. He attended the tedious hearings and meetings leading up to the wolves' release, and then he was out in the field with the team, observing, gathering background, constructing intimate portraits of each member so that we come to know them as individuals. Their dedication to the project is total; their spirits soar and plummet in response to each small victory and setback. When the wolves seem to be heading north—apparently back to Alberta—the team hovers on the edge of despair.

Adopting a device used by John

McPhee, McNamee humanizes environmental issues by finding people who embody divergent values (cattle ranchers vs. conservationists, for example) and watching them interact with each other. He also reveals the dark side of humanity when he describes, in nightmarish detail, the senseless murder of a wolf and the ensuing manhunt.

Without slowing the pace of the story too much, McNamee weaves in musings about the implications—political, social, ecological—of wolf reintroduction, and he ponders why we care so



## Book Shelf

deeply about saving the wolf while so many other species are allowed to slip into extinction. The wolf is a metaphor, a symbol of the wild, and McNamee examines the nature of wilderness and our relationship with it. One passage, about the death of an old bull elk, is almost symphonic in its emotional power. At other times he can be playful, as when he describes James Watt as “Ronald Reagan’s shiny-pated, widely hated, and finally incarcerated secretary of the interior.”

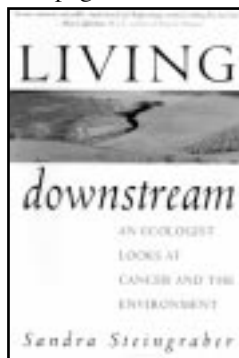
In the end, you're left with a clear understanding of how species conservation actually works, and you'll appreciate the enormous effort it takes to bring an ecosystem back to equilibrium. Beautifully written, balanced, and factually impeccable, *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone* is one of the best wilderness-conservation books of the decade.

—Debbie Gilbert

## Sourcing a disease

### *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment*

By Sandra Steingraber  
Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc.  
357 pages



In the introduction of *Living Downstream*, Sandra Steingraber offers a parable of a village along a river. The residents who lived there began noticing increasing numbers

of drowning people caught in the river's current and so went to work inventing ever more elaborate technologies to resuscitate them. So preoccupied were the heroic villagers with rescue and treatment that they never thought to look upstream and see who was pushing victims in.

Steingraber, a biologist, poet, and cancer survivor, uses *Living Downstream* to argue that, like the drowning victims in the village, cancer victims in modern society can trace their ailment to a source upstream: highly toxic chemicals first manufactured during World War II. Like Rachel Carson 25 years ago, she synthesizes published but often impenetrable scientific journal articles and toxic release inventories to prove her point, lucidly demystifying the science behind cancer registries, biomagnification, ground water contamination and airborne transport of toxic chemicals.

But the the most compelling part of *Living Downstream* is Steingraber's use of her own and others' experiences with cancer to help illustrate how society views causation and how it goes about “fixing” the problem. She presents her own and close friend's experience of becoming “medicalized”—being questioned about lifestyle choices like smoking and exercise and being put through operations and batteries of chemotherapy and radiation in an attempt to solve the problem.

She then explores cancer incidence in animals, such as the beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River that have suffered from bladder cancer, to show what she considers to be the absurdity of looking only at lifestyle choices. She quotes a scientist at a 1990 International Forum of the Future of the Beluga who demanded “Tell me, does the St. Lawrence beluga drink too much alcohol and does the St. Lawrence beluga have a bad diet... is that why the beluga whales are ill?”

No, Steingraber argues, the beluga did not develop cancer due to poor lifestyle choices, and neither have most Americans. She places the blame on exposure to toxic chemicals through compounds that are necessities for our very existence: air, water and food.

—Suzanne Spencer



# Environmentalism or ideology?

## Inner city activists talk pollution, push social agenda

By CHRISTOPHER FOREMAN

Since Love Canal, grassroots activists and their allies in academia have argued that “environmental racism” too often characterizes the way society allocates pollution, hazardous chemical exposures, and environmental law enforcement. A multi-ethnic (black, Latino, Native American, and Asian American) movement for “environmental justice” (EJ) has thus spurred creation of an Office of Environmental Justice at EPA. It has also inspired EPA Administrator Carol Browner to create a National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) through which activists, industry representatives, and the agency could “brainstorm” for ways to reach out to minority and low-income communities and regularly hear their pleas for environmental redress.

In the name of environmental reform, however, inner city activists have been pushing their own agenda. Indeed, the best way to think of EJ partisans is as social justice activists who choose to pursue their goals within an institutional and rhetorical framework of environmentalism.

The EJ movement’s biggest coup was the February 1994 presidential executive order instructing federal programs across the board to address “disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects. . . on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.” Health is surely a concern of EJ activism. The specter of poisoned communities is obviously compelling for constituencies that have generally paid scant attention to (and sometimes even disdained) the “hiking, biking, and spotted owls” brand of white middle-class environmentalism.

But “health” is really only the tip of the EJ iceberg. Below the water line lurks a far broader social justice agenda. Consider the very names of some of the major activist organizations.

NEJAC chairman Richard Moore heads the Albuquerque-based Southwest

Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. There is also the Environmental Justice Project of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, located in Atlanta and run by the indefatigable Connie Tucker, a self-declared “Pan-Africanist.”

When the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit convened in Washington, D.C. in October 1991, the 17 “principles of environmental justice” it adopted demanded an end to “the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials” and to the “testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.” The principles also affirmed the right of everyone to safe and healthy work environments, to quality health care, and to freedom from the need to choose between unsafe jobs and unemployment. The preamble, modeled on the U.S. Constitution, pronounced the aims of the meeting as including nothing less than

*The specter of poisoned communities is obviously compelling for constituencies that have generally paid scant attention to (and sometimes even disdained) the “hiking, biking, and spotted owls” brand of white middle-class environmentalism.*

“our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our people. . .” Clearly, more than mere environmentalism is operating here.

In March 1993 testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, Pat Bryant, head of the Gulf Coast Tenants Association, another EJ group, offered a similarly lengthy list of grievances. And this past August, during a segment of MSNBC’s “Internight” television program, the Reverend Jesse Jackson couched his support for a lawsuit by residents of a black Houston neighborhood against the

Chevron Corporation in stark social justice terms. The residents of Kennedy Heights allege that Chevron’s predecessor, the Gulf Oil Corporation, targeted contaminated land for a black housing development, and they are seeking up to \$500 million in damages.

During the program Jackson argued that Chevron needs to “come to the table” to discuss jobs and the company’s broader obligations to the neighborhood. Jackson made this point in response to my argument that modern epidemiology generally offers little support for citizen allegations of environmentally-induced clusters of non-infectious chronic disease. I was trying to talk science but Jackson had his eyes on a different prize altogether.

A primary appeal of the EJ rubric clearly lies in the leverage it might offer over redistributive and political objectives that have little, if anything, directly to do with industrial pollution. In the final analysis, the EJ movement is not primarily a “public health” movement but a loose aggregation of advocates for grassroots democracy, institutional accountability, and social justice. As with grassroots environmentalism generally, its fringes include a fair number of folks whose underlying thrust is a frank dislike of industrial capitalism.

EJ aspires to unify residents, to increase their collective profiles in policy debates and decision-making, and to get “the system” (i.e. firms and government) to yield as many environment-related social benefits as possible. This egalitarian motivation means that EJ can ill afford an agenda driven mainly by health impacts. Mortality and morbidity associated with causes that don’t easily prompt the necessary citizen outrage—tobacco-use or poor dietary habits are obvious examples—make for difficult mobilizing.

The movement’s aims also explain its insistent emphasis (as with grassroots environmentalism generally) on relatively minor or weakly-documented (but nonetheless fear-inducing) hazards like

dioxin, toxic waste sites, and environmental "endocrine disrupters." The debunked folk myth of a "cancer alley" in Louisiana lives on in the minds of EJ activists and fearful citizens because it is both intuitively appealing and politically useful.

This is not to argue that environmental poisons are innocuous. They are not. But we cannot rely on EJ activists to give communities balanced guidance on the relative significance of various environmental risks.

For the activists, a claim about risk is a political tool in the service of broader purposes.

Nevertheless, there are signs that EJ

*For the activist, risk is a political tool in the service of broader purposes.*

activists and the political establishment might be able to cooperate on a social justice agenda that avoids distorting public health priorities in minority communities. The administration's "brownfields" urban revitalization initiative is the vehicle. By reducing disincentive barriers to local development unwittingly erected by Superfund's liability scheme, the Clinton EPA hopes to spur jobs, training, and life chances among communities of all colors throughout the country.

Activists were at first suspicious when the administration began talking-up brownfields redevelopment in 1994, fear-

ing it might be just an excuse to introduce polluting development. But with aggressive outreach by EPA, activists are coming around, and brownfields is now a major item on NEJAC's agenda.

By shedding its misleading health rhetoric, and by moving overtly toward the economic agenda that has actually propelled it all along, EJ may yet play a productive role in national public policy debate.

*Christopher Foreman is a senior fellow with The Brookings Institution. His latest book "The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice" will be published early next year by Brookings Institution Press.*

"Free as a bird" is the lifestyle calling out to **Amy Gahran**. Free maybe, but working hard nonetheless. First, the former managing editor of E Source wants to do a lot more writing as a freelancer. She also hopes to continue training reporters to use the Internet. In the meantime she will continue to manage SEJ's Listserv. Finally, Gahran is developing her own web site devoted to grooming good consumers of news. She is in the money-raising phase of the project to help people look beyond the headlines.

**Meg Walker** is getting out of the beltway. The former land management and health care reporter for the *Federal Times* is going to the *Statesman Journal* of Salem, Oregon. Her beat there combines health care and gambling. Still, given her location in the Pacific Northwest, Walker expects to include a lot of environmental reporting in her stories.

Heading from Oregon is **Orna Izakson**. Her new job is covering woods and water at the *Bangor (ME) Daily News*. She moved to the daily from the twice weekly *News-Times* in Newport, Oregon where her beat included all manner of enviro-news.

Izakson fills a gap left by **Andrew Kekacs**. Kekacs is striking out on his own as publisher and editor of the Maine Woodsman, a new forestry magazine for the northern woods.

Also looking into magazine publishing is former *Gainesville (FL) Sun* reporter **Bruce Ritchie**. Under consideration is a

new environmental journal in Florida. But first he must finish his work as a Ted Scripps Fellow in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Others in this inaugural group of Boulder fellows are **Michael Milstein** of the *Billings (MT) Gazette*, **Christine Shenot** of the *Orlando (FL) Sentinel*, **Jenni Vincent** of the *Fairmont (WV) Times-West*

## Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

*Virginian* and **Dan Whipple**, a freelance writer from Broomfield, Colorado.

After writing the history of the world in eight months for *National Geographic's Atlas of World History*, freelancer and SEJ editor **Noel Grove** will be writing two books at once in the coming year. One will be on the Sierra Nevada for the *Geographic* and the other will discuss endangered biomes, featuring the work of photographers **Franz Lanting**, **Galen Rowell**, and **David Doubilet**, publisher not yet known.

**Frank Allen** plans to devote more time to High Country Institute programs since his association with the University of Montana ended. The former J-School dean and environmental editor for the *Wall Street Journal* will expand the Institute's offerings. In addition, Allen has accepted a position as a visiting professor at the

University of Maryland where he will offer one or two-week intensive courses in interviewing skills, environmental reporting and the like.

In his new role, **Rod Jackson** will encourage more environmental reporting on *ABC News*. Jackson is now a producer and assistant bureau chief for *ABC News/NewsOne* based in Los Angeles. That makes him a gatekeeper for stories up and down the west coast. He moved to LA after thirteen years, including seven on the green beat, at *KTVX* in Salt Lake City.

It looks like **John Daley** is doing a pretty good job filling Jackson's shoes at *KTVX*. Daley has brought home some gold for the ABC affiliate. His story about Boy Scouts learning to 'tread lightly' captured the Nike 'Earthwrite' award.

**Cheryl Hogue**, senior reporter for the daily environment report of the Bureau of National Affairs, received her Master of Science degree in environmental sciences and policy from Johns Hopkins in May. "I feel it gives me training that will help in talking to both scientists and policy wonks," she said.

*What about you? Win an award, change jobs, start a fellowship or write a book? Let your colleagues know. Send all professional news to: George Homsy, Living on Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Email: ghomsy@world.std.com. Telephone: 617-520-6857. Fax: 617-868-8810.*



# Society of Environmental Journalists Application for Membership

### Instructions:

1. Fill out application carefully and completely. Attach additional pages if necessary.  
*Incomplete applications will be returned.*
2. Attach a current resume or brief biography.
3. **Mail to:** **Society of Environmental Journalists**  
**Membership Department**  
**P. O. Box 27280**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19118**

Please include \$35 with your application. (Students: \$30) Payment options are noted below.

*(Please print legibly. Include a business card if possible.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Employer or University \_\_\_\_\_

Publication or Department \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \* \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Area of Employment (*Check one only*):

- Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  Author  Educator  Freelancer  Government  Magazine
- Fax \_\_\_\_\_  News service  Newsletter  Newspaper  Nonprofit  Photographer
- E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  Publisher  Radio  Student  Television  University

\* Home phone number will not be listed in the directory.

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. Applicants must be substantially engaged in journalistic pursuits.

**Please Note: SEJ bylaws preclude membership eligibility of public relations professionals.**  
SEJ's quarterly, the *SEJournal*, is available by subscription to non-members.

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

## Payment Information:

Please make your check or money order out to the *Society of Environmental Journalists*

Check Enclosed



*For credit payment, please circle one and fill in the information below*

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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## To Be Completed by All Applicants:

Briefly describe duties \_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you presently involved in any lobbying or public relations work?       Yes    No

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

If yes, for whom? \_\_\_\_\_

## To Be Completed by Applicants for Active or Associate Membership.

Is your employer or organization, or the organizations to which you submit works, 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 or the organizations to which you submit works supported by:

advertising    paid subscriptions    membership dues    other

If "other", please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## To Be Completed By Applicants Signifying Freelancer as Primary Area of Employment

*Please complete the following with as much detail as possible:*

Full Time Freelancer: How long? (Starting date) \_\_\_\_\_

Part Time Freelancer: How long? (Starting date) \_\_\_\_\_ Percent of working time in journalism: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list publications and/or organizations who have published your work: (Attach a separate sheet, if necessary.)

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## To Be Completed by All Applicants:

I hereby apply for membership in the Society of Environmental Journalists and do attest that the information I have provided on this form is true and complete. I understand the Board of Directors retains sole authority in determining eligibility for membership in any category. I understand that my continuing eligibility depends upon my employment being acceptable for membership by the terms of the SEJ bylaws, and upon my returning a completed survey each year to the membership committee. I further understand that if I engage in professional activity which renders me ineligible for membership in SEJ, I will notify the membership committee and have my name withdrawn from the membership rolls.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Office Use Only

Status Assigantion: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes

## Green firms...(from page 1)

“Does the power come from a company owned by the developers and owners of Seabrook nuclear power plant?” reads one flyer sent to prospective customers and provided to journalists. “If you don’t ask, they won’t tell you.”

WAGP was betting that no one would ask. Safe bet apparently. “About 5 percent of (Working Assets’) power comes from so-called “renewable” sources such as wind and solar,” states an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “I know what (the power mix) won’t include,” Scher is quoted as boasting, without challenge, in another piece, “and that is nuclear and coal.”

As it turns out, Working Assets offers zero wind and solar power in New England. It acts as a middleman, making wholesale purchases of already-generated energy and selling it at retail. Neither WAGP nor any green marketer in New England contracted for cleaner energy. And the energy brew going to its trusting, idealistic customers is among the highest-priced of the power marketers.

Most deceptive of all, Working Assets buys all of its power from New England Energy Systems (NEES), part owner of Seabrook and the “dirtiest utility in New England,” according to Rob Sargent of Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG). NEES and the region’s largest nuclear generator, Northeast Utilities, also offer paper green-energy contracts.

The never-stated reality is that every “green” slice of electricity offered by green marketers results in an identically “brown” slice going to the rest of the region’s customers. According to MIT economist Paul Joskow, an expert on energy deregulation who sits on the board of Working Assets’ partner NEES, “(Green marketers in New England) are basically reselling contracts that have been designated for hydroelectric facilities, for example, that have no short-run effect whatsoever on the dispatch of generation

in the area, and have no positive effect on the environment in the short run.”

Although some journalists effusively praised the “good guy” green marketers, government officials and energy activists were horrified. “We’re trying to ensure that misleading claims never happen again,” says Jonathan Raab, facilitator for the New England Disclosure Project, which was formed by regional utility commissioners. “People know that Working Assets is getting flamed (being heavily criticized by energy professionals). Everyone now knows that if they screw up they’ll get caught. Power marketers will not be able to get away with questionable and undocumented claims.”

Why did most environmental groups hold their tongues in criticizing the green hype? Why did normally dogged reporters miss the story for more than a year?

The green power story suggests that ideology can sometimes blind or even corrupt one’s judgment. Apparently journalists failed to press for documentation of the extravagant green promises. No one

interviewed economist Joskow. Or state attorneys general who expressed outrage at the irresponsible green hype at a spring meeting held in Washington, D.C. The Federal Trade Commission did finally take note and

is now weighing rules to limit excessive marketing hyperbole.

Some of the reason rests with the adage that the press empowers those without a voice and acts as a gadfly to the privileged and powerful. That’s what inspired some of us to go into the field in the first place and it’s one of the reasons that some journalists have cut slack for campaigning organizations like Greenpeace or People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals which sometimes cross over the line of truth to make their case.

“We do want to be more careful about attacking people or institutions who are supposed to be our “friends” than those

who we assume are our enemies,” wrote Marc Breslow, editor of the left economics publication *Dollars and Sense*, as he debated whether to authorize a story on Working Assets. By “friends,” he meant Working Assets, which uses money it skims from its idealistic customers paying sky high prices for its services to run full-page ads in *Mother Jones*, *Utne Reader*, *Nation* and *E Magazine*.

“So, when our writers go after General Electric, or Exxon, or whoever among the Fortune 500, we don’t necessarily demand that they prove all their assertions definitively, nor that they get Exxon’s side of the story.”

To their credit, Breslow and the cooperative team that manages the magazine did some hard fact-checking and concluded that Working Assets should be treated as it is—a business, and an extraordinarily profitable one, not a social campaign. *Dollars and Sense* eventually ran my piece, “Deregulation and Green Marketing: The Threat to Safe Energy” in its current issue.

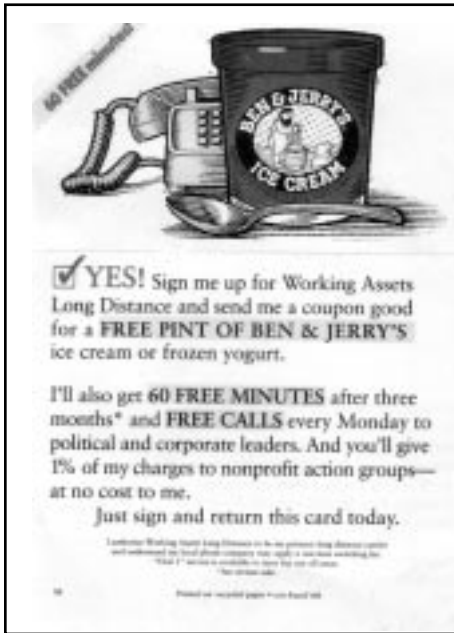
Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for *E Magazine*. The environmental monthly is strapped for cash—witness its July two-page spread purchased by Philip Morris—and is a beneficiary of considerable Working Assets ad dollars. In March, the magazine ran the story, “Dialing for Dolphins: Activist Phone Companies Give to Cause and Reduce Rates” a thinly-disguised promotional piece starring Working Assets.

“I have been a WALD customer for several years,” later confessed editor Jim Motavalli, who acknowledges that he had never scrutinized its claims. “I genuinely thought they were the best and cheapest phone service out there.”

Perhaps some journalists fail to recognize how much the environmental playing field has changed in the Nineties. Some reform is underway in corporate America which is learning, perhaps with excruciating slowness, that self-policing on environmental issues can keep a hostile press and regulators at bay.

On the other hand, social activism is now being driven by entrepreneurial high-fliers like Working Assets, Ben & Jerry’s, and The Body Shop International (BSI). These companies have come to realize that they can get away with charging eye-popping prices on commodity products—

***The never-stated reality is that every “green” slice of electricity offered by green marketers results in an identically “brown” slice going to the rest of the region’s customers.***



## Teaming up to make green

telephone service, ice cream, and cosmetics—simply by slapping on a green label while posturing on distant and complex issues. It can be a low-risk, high-return strategy as long as sympathetic journalists provide the marketing fuel.

In the early 1990s, Body Shop and Ben & Jerry's reaped a public relations windfall after they launched the celebrated "rainforest harvest." The harvest soon became a Hollywood charity project—Sting and the Grateful Dead held regular fund raisers—and the marketing centerfold for the New Age 'socially responsible' business movement. Natives wearing ceremonial dress and rubbing exotic Body Shop ingredients on their breasts and hair promoted the charming story of capitalism-on-the-Amazon. Rainforest Crunch ice cream was an instant best seller. Working Assets, tasting a marketing bonanza, began giving out pints of free Ben & Jerry's ice cream, which sent its sales into hyperspace.

Unfortunately, it turns out that Ben & Jerry's did not source nuts from indigenous Amazon groups as it pledged, but off the commercial marketers, supplied by some of the most rapacious agribusinesses in Latin America, primarily the notorious Mutran family accused of killing labor organizers. Community Products Inc., the nut-sourcing company which Ben Cohen founded in 1989 "with the exclusive mission of being a force for progressive social change," and which was chartered to give

60% of its profits to charity, generated mostly red ink, eventually filing for bankruptcy before being sold in October at auction. While native groups were stiffed for almost \$100,000, Ben Cohen reportedly made \$287,000 on the sale and Working Assets, which had invested \$300,000 in the venture when it started up, escaped with a profit of more than \$500,000.

Dr. Terrence Turner, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago and one of the world's leading experts on Amazon cultures, has spent many months in the eastern Amazon where The Body Shop's equally ill-managed project is focused. He dubs the rainforest fiasco "Aid Not Trade," a play on the British company's well-abused Trade Not Aid slogan.

"These projects are tiny and provide little extra income," says Dr. Turner. "But the Brazilian and Bolivian governments have used the cover of the publicity they've generated to justify cutting back financial support of native communities. The result is that these projects in effect supply free aid to companies like Ben & Jerry's and The Body Shop while the communities get almost no trade in return."

It's also a fraud on consumers. According to cosmetic experts, the amount of oil used in BSI's best-selling hair rinse is far below levels that could affect the product. It's a "marketing gimmick," they say.

Perhaps most disturbing, some journalists and environmental organizations have shown themselves beholden to green shell companies that dangle money.

"We made some inquiries about sponsorships to a bunch of companies like Working Assets, Body Shop, etc.," writes Don Hazen, director of the Institute for Alternative Journalism, as he was putting together the second Media and Democracy Congress in October. "(Body Shop CEO Anita) Roddick got interested and wanted to speak." In effect, she bought herself onto a panel. The primary beneficiary is of course, her hugely profitable image machine, which continues to offer pricey, petrochemical confections washed in green rhetoric.

There is a lesson here, although it's not the mantra that green business and environmentalists are transforming society. In the case of energy deregulation, the reckless foray into green energy by Working Assets and friends, if boosted by an uncritical press and the support of some environmental groups, risks the future of the fragile renewable energy market, which seeks to develop long-term alternatives to dirty fossil fuels and nuclear energy.

It also costs a pound of flesh: In their desperate competition for funding, environmental groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council are starting to look much like empty-shell green marketers. EDF jumped into the green marketing game in May when it announced a deal to resell already-generated hydropower produced by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to environmentally concerned customers, at a price far above what BPA has been charging for the identical energy. Most troubling, a number of environmental groups like the Natural Resources Defense Council have tacitly agreed not to oppose write-offs of billions of dollars in money-

losing investments in nuclear plants in exchange for support for their high-risk gamble on green marketing. Beneath the green veneer, "clean" energy looks both browner and a lot more expensive.

Dilbert, middle-management's comic

strip revenge on the corporatizing of America, sums up the green business myth best: "Remember, what we do here might seem like criminal fraud," he says about his company's promotions, "but it's not. It's marketing."

Journalists who jump on large corporations for playing loose with the truth—as they should—must remember to cast the same skeptical eye toward high-decibel green marketing claims. Otherwise, Dilbert is right. In our image-dominated society, maybe perceptions are enough.

*In the case of energy deregulation, the reckless foray into green energy risks the future of the fragile renewable energy market.*

*Jon Entine is a freelance journalist specializing in business ethics and sports.*

## Face to face...(from page 1)

at arm's length. Former *Wall Street Journal* environmental editor, Frank Allen directs the nine-day program that takes journalists from Bangor to Baxter State Park to Belfast and finally Bar Harbor.

It is an extension of the three-year-old High Country Institute run by Allen and his wife in Montana. (Funding comes from a basketful of sources, none of which, Allen says, has any input to the program.) By meeting with local residents, scientists, environmentalists, and business representatives on their own territory, Allen hopes Institute attendees come away with a better understanding of the science, economics, and politics of natural resources. But the institute's real value lies in the personal contact.

The agenda is broad. Development, for example, is discussed over dinner, with residents worrying about the future of their small town as a financial giant moves in with more jobs than the town has people. A hike up Cadillac Mountain serves as a laboratory for investigating effects of air pollution on plants. The superintendent of Acadia National Park spends hours discussing the pressures put on his park by the millions of visitors.

No issue in Maine is as divisive as logging. It is one of the state's biggest industries, and its most controversial. Logging companies large and small wage a global battle to produce the cheapest paper and lumber. At the same time, political and popular pressures increasingly limit cuts and demand protection for rivers and scenic vistas.

With a tip of his hard hat, the president of Robbins Lumber Company greets us in a perfect Maine drawl. Jenness Robbins, and his brother Jim, are the fifth generation to run this family-owned company. Their milling, logging, and other operations employ 130 people in Searsmont, a town of almost 1800.

Piled high in the lumber yard are trees that look more like telephone poles than a fallen forest. Inside the mill, monstrous debarking machines strip the logs before sending them to computer-controlled saws.

Sitting in a darkened booth, each hand on a joystick, the saw operator talks without turning his attention from the logs that zoom by him. He makes sure that

each is cut into the most valuable number of boards possible. Part of the Robbins' credo of sustainability is not wasting any wood. "Highest and best use" of everything, they claim. This differs significantly from many megacorporations that feed any size tree into the chippers of their pulp and paper mills in order to keep them running 24 hours a day.

The brothers are proud of their company and the way they manage their people and their land. Painting them as the good guys in the timber wars is easy.

Still, a trip to the woods to see their logging operation is eye-opening. A tree-eating Fellerbuncher looks like a small steam shovel. However, instead of a large dirt bucket at the end of its arm there is a huge metal claw that grips and holds a 'handful' of trees as a saw slices through the trunks. It chews through a stand in a matter of minutes.

Climbing down from the machine to talk to journalists, the operator proudly describes the mechanical attributes of the Fellerbuncher. Despite the irreversible changes he wreaks on the forest, it is obvious that this easygoing young man

believes, along with his bosses, that he is doing the best thing for the forest: a different perspective on the timber-cutting story.

Not everything about the week is as illuminating. A discussion on dioxin drags on, despite the sparks provided by an industry scientist. A small plane trip over the northern forest has to be scrubbed because of weather. Director Frank Allen plans to address some of these shortfalls in organizing future Acadian trips.

Nothing detracts from the overall impact of the nine days of fieldwork. For us it breaks the day-to-day grind of the newsroom and injects a little reality into our understanding of the issues.

It also makes people reflect on their craft. One seasoned reporter remarks to me that the Institute makes you to question your own competence as a journalist. It is not that anyone in attendance really doubts their ability to tell a story and to tell it fairly. But the Acadian Institute makes reporters realize there is always more to a story, even if there is no time or space to tell it all.

*George Homsy is coordinating producer for National Public Radio's Living on Earth in Cambridge, MA*

## Educator, author Paulo Freire dies



**Paulo Freire**

During the rainy season of 1974, I sat mesmerized in a turtle taggers' hut in Tortugero, Costa Rica, reading Paulo Freire's renowned *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I'm convinced that many of us are better researchers and teachers today because of that one book.

Freire warned us not to become "prisoners of a circle of certainty," and not to "suffer from an absence of doubt." He would have been a fine journalist.

Lately, as an SEJ Board member, I have thought about other Freire words of wisdom. He suggested that so-called leadership training courses are based on the naive assumption that one can promote the community by training its leaders, "...as if it were the parts that promote the whole and not the whole which, in being promoted, promotes the parts."

Brazilian educator and author Paulo Freire died at age 75 earlier this year. His advocacy of dialogue continues to serve us well.

—JoAnn Valenti



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# Calendar

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## DECEMBER

**2-4. Superfund XVIII** (sponsored by E.J. Krause & Associates, with sessions on site remediation, brownfields, policy issues, cleanup strategies, and wastes recycling). Washington, DC. Contact: Susan Cantor, E.J. Krause & Assoc., 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 450 N, Bethesda, MD 20814. Ph: (301) 986-7800; Fax: (301) 986-4538; E-mail: [susancantor@ejkrause.com](mailto:susancantor@ejkrause.com); Web: [www.ejkrause.com/enviroshows/superfund](http://www.ejkrause.com/enviroshows/superfund).

**3-5. Third Annual Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program Conference** (focusing on defense issues, with sessions on limits for cleanup, unexploded ordnance detection, in situ bioremediation, and volatile organic chemical emissions). Washington, DC. Contact: Labat-Anderson Inc., SERDP Support Office, 8000 Westpark Dr., Ste. 400, McLean, VA 22101. Ph: (800) 522-2861.

**7-10. Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference: Integrating Ecology and Society** (with sessions on such topics as alternative agriculture's effects on wildlife, and landscape-scale management of resources). Milwaukee. Contact: Robert Dumke, Bureau of Integrated Science Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Ph: (608) 266-8170; E-mail: [dumker@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:dumker@dnr.state.wi.us).

**8-9. Natural Attenuation '97** (a conference on cleaning up areas contaminated with PCBs, gasoline, and hazardous organics at sites ranging from the Hudson River to military bases). Scottsdale, AZ. Contact: IBC Conferences, 225 Turnpike Rd., Southborough, MA 01772-1749. Ph: (508) 481-6400; Fax: (508) 481-7911; E-mail: [reg@ibcusa.com](mailto:reg@ibcusa.com); Web: [www.ibcusa.com/conf/attenuation](http://www.ibcusa.com/conf/attenuation).

**11-12. Bioavailability, a conference focusing on common soil contaminants** (with sessions on uptake of pesticides and dioxins through skin, a study of how ingested pollutants move through the body, and a pollutant's susceptibility to phytoremediation). Scottsdale, AZ. Contact: IBC Conferences, 225 Turnpike Rd., Southborough, MA 01772-1749. Ph: (508) 481-6400; Fax: (508) 481-7911; E-mail: [reg@ibcusa.com](mailto:reg@ibcusa.com); Web: [www.ibcusa.com/conf/bioavailability](http://www.ibcusa.com/conf/bioavailability).

**11-13. Computer-assisted reporting workshop** (sponsored by National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting and the Medill School of Journalism, with sessions on practical use of the internet, spreadsheets, searching and organizing with a database manager). Washington, DC. Contact Sarah Cohen, Ph: (301) 942-2199; E-mail: [sarah@nicar.org](mailto:sarah@nicar.org); Web: [www.nicar.org](http://www.nicar.org).

## JANUARY

**27-28. Working with Wetlands & Wildlife workshop** (sponsored by the Wildlife Habitat Council, with sessions on wetlands restoration). Sacramento. Contact: Jana Goldman, WHC, 1010 Wayne Ave., Ste. 920, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Ph: (301) 588-8994; Fax: (301) 588-4629; E-mail: [whc@wildlifehc.org](mailto:whc@wildlifehc.org); Web: [www.wildlifehc.org](http://www.wildlifehc.org).

## FEBRUARY

**12-17. American Association for the Advancement of Science** annual meeting (with sessions on hormone-mimicking pollutants, climate change in the Susquehanna River Basin, how embryos cope with environmental stress, and the economic consequences of climate change on forests). Philadelphia. Contact: Ellen Cooper, AAAS, 1200 New York Ave., NW, Washington DC 20005. Ph: (202) 326-6440; Fax: (202) 789-0455; E-mail: [ecooper@aaas.org](mailto:ecooper@aaas.org); Web: [www.aaas.org/meetings/scope/info/index.htm](http://www.aaas.org/meetings/scope/info/index.htm).

## MARCH

**5-7. First Annual Meeting on the Border Environment** (an ecology meeting hosted by a number of U.S. and Mexican institutions). Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Contact: Emily Frank, Latin American Area Center, University of Arizona, P.O. Box 210028, Douglass Bldg., Tucson, AZ 85721. Ph: 520-626-8197; E-mail: [Bordenv@u.arizona.edu](mailto:Bordenv@u.arizona.edu).

**5-8. National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting (NICAR) National Conference** (with panels and hands-on classes for beginners through advanced users and a set of special half-day sessions that will take in-depth looks at how to use electronic information for particular beats). Indianapolis, IN. Contact Lisa Barnes, Ph: (573) 882-8969; Web: [www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org).

**29-Apr. 1. North American Conference on Pesticide Spray Drift Management** (with sessions on the social, legal and environmental repercussions of pesticides landing in nontargeted areas such as school yards or organic farms). Portland, ME. Contact: Paul Gregory, Maine Board of Pesticides Control, 28 State House Station, August, ME 04333-0028. Ph: (207) 287-2731; Fax: (207) 287-7548; E-mail: [afpgreg@state.me.us](mailto:afpgreg@state.me.us); Web: [www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/](http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/).

## APRIL

**20-23. Symposium on Environmental Toxicology and Risk Assessment** (with sessions on topics including biomarkers of exposure to hormone mimicking pollutants, assessing reproductive hazards and brain alterations from such pollutants, monitoring PCBs in pine needles, and minimizing impacts from seafood processing). Atlanta. Contact: Diane Henshel. Ph: (812) 855-4556; E-mail: [dhenshel@indiana.edu](mailto:dhenshel@indiana.edu).

## JUNE

**4-7. Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) National Conference** (with sessions on practical use of the internet, spreadsheets, and searching and organizing with a database manager). New Orleans, LA. Contact: Lisa Barnes, Ph: (573) 882-8969; Web: [www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org).

## SELECT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

**Feb. 23-27. International Conference on Pesticide Use in**

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# Calendar

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**Developing Countries: Impact on Health and Environment** (sponsored by Costa Rican Department for Research Cooperation and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, with sessions in English on organic agriculture, pesticide research's influence on public policy, and economics issue). San Jose, Costa Rica. Contact: Luisa Castillo, Pesticide Program, Universidad Nacional, Apdo. 86-3000, Heredia, Costa Rica. Ph: (506) 277-3694; Fax: (506) 277-3583; E-mail: ppuna@una.ac.cr; Web: www.una.ac.cr/ambi/ppuna.

## APPLICATION DEADLINES

As soon as possible for **National Media Fellowships** offered by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Among the dozens planned for this academic year are several of potential interest to environmental reporters.

- **Biodiversity's New Age: Preservation and Planning at Florida Institute of Technology**, taking place for five days in March. Three fellows will study researchers who focus on environmental issues, especially those facing Florida and the Caribbean, and travel on field trips to coral reefs, mangrove forests and salt marshes. Contact: Lydia Hausman. Ph: (407) 984-2974; E-mail: lhausman@fit.edu.

- **Marine Environmental Engineering at the Stevens Institute of Technology** (dates flexible). Six to 15 fellows can come for a day or two to study environmental issues affecting ports, wetlands, and oceanic regions including dredging, disposal of contaminated sediments, eroding beaches, oil spills, and ocean dumping of wastes. Contact: John La Place. Ph: (201) 216-5238; E-mail: jlaplace@stevens-tech.edu.

- **From Cloning Sheep to Creating Alternative Fuel Sources to Saving Lives, Biotechnology is the Answer** at the University of Florida in the spring (dates flexible). One fellow will receive a week-long program to discuss the scientific, ethical, and political ramifications of genetic manipulation. Program includes study at beach-side lab studying targets for mosquito control. Contact: John Lester. Ph: (352) 392-0186; E-mail: jlester@nervm.nerdc.ufl.edu.

Jan. 27 for the **Edward J. Meeman Awards for Environmental Reporting**. Applicants for the \$2,000 award must submit work that ran in a newspaper in the United States or its territories during this calendar year (wire service and college newspaper stories ineligible). Contact: Debbie Cooper. Ph: (513) 977-3036; E-mail: cooper@scripps.com.

Jan. 31 for **U.S. applicants to the Nieman Fellowships for Environmental Journalists**. A \$30,000 stipend will cover expenses for an academic year at Harvard University for study and research. Qualifications include three years of professional experience, full time employment as an environmental journalist for conventional media outlet of broad public interest, and an ability to take a nine-month leave of absence from this work. Foreign journalists may apply for a related fellowship, though the stipend there varies according to a host of other factors. The deadline for this sister program is March 1. Contact: Nieman

Foundation, 1 Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Ph: (617) 495-2237; Fax: (617) 495-8976; E-mail: nieman@harvard.edu.

March 1 for the **Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at MIT**. Open to English-speaking U.S. and Canadian print and broadcast journalists, including freelance writers, applicants must have at least three years experience in communicating science or technological issues, such as environmental research, to a broad audience. The \$26,000 stipend covers an academic year of residence at MIT beginning Sept. 1. Contact: Knight Fellowships, MIT E32-300, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph: (617) 253-3442; Fax: (617) 258-8100; E-mail: ksjf-www@mit.edu; Web: web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/k/ksjf/www/how\_to\_apply.html.

March 1 for the **Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Journalism** at the University of Colorado. Applicants must be U.S. citizens with at least five years of full-time professional experience in print or broadcast journalism, though not necessarily in covering the environment. A \$26,000 stipend will cover the fellow's nine-month period of research and seminars in Boulder, beginning in August. Contact: Center for Environmental Journalism, University of Colorado at Boulder, Campus Box 287, Boulder, CO 80309-0287. Ph: (303) 492-4114; Web: campuspress.colorado.edu/cej.html.

March 15 for the **Marine Biological Laboratory Science Writing Fellowships** of up to eight weeks—usually during the summer, and usually on Cape Cod. Applicants must have two years of full time professional experience in print or broadcast journalism, and preference will be given to journalists with staff positions, including those at the editorial or news director level. Contact: Pamela Clapp, Science Writing Fellowships Program, 7 MBL St., Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods, Hole, MA 02543-1015. Ph: (508) 289-7423; E-mail: pclapp@mbi.edu.

## SEJournal submission deadlines

Fall '97 .....	October 15, 1997
Winter '98.....	January 15, 1998
Spring '98 .....	April 15, 1998
Summer '98 .....	July 15, 1998

Submissions should be sent to Noel Grove, editor, [ngrove1253@aol.com](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), P.O. Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 20118

The *Journal* has several vacancies for correspondents in the Green Beat section, where environmental writers in states and regions around the country report on coverage being done in their area. The section is very popular with readers. Many have said they get ideas for print or broadcast coverage from the pages.

Positions for Green Beat correspondent are open to any SEJ members, though preference will be given to journalists or educators. Anyone interested may call Kevin Carmody at (708) 633-5970, or Chris Rigel, [rigel@voicenet.com](mailto:rigel@voicenet.com) or at SEJ headquarters at (215) 836-9970

You'll be making an important contribution to SEJ and will have your name listed among the Green Beat correspondents, no small honor.

# 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** — Patti Epler, *Phoenix New Times*, PO Box 2510, Phoenix, AZ 85254, patti\_eplar@newtimes.com, (602) 229-8451

### Arkansas — Vacant

### California:

#### Northern California — Vacant

**San Francisco Bay Area** — Jane Kay at the *San Francisco Examiner*, Box 7260, San Francisco, CA 94120, janekay@batnet.com, (415) 777-8704

**Southern California** — Marni McEntee, *Los Angeles Daily News*, 20132 Observation Drive, Topanga, CA 90290, (805) 641-0542

**Colorado** — Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 30 S. Prospect St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903, toddh@gazette.com, (719) 636-0285

**Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts** — Peter Lord, *Providence Journal*, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902, plord@projo.com, (401) 277-8036

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

### Florida:

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

#### South Florida — Vacant

### Georgia and South Carolina — Vacant

### Hawaii — Vacant

**Idaho** — Rocky Barker of the Post-Register, 1020 11th St., Idaho Falls, ID, 83404, (208) 529-8508, rbarker@

micron.net, (509) 459-5431

### Illinois — Vacant

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

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

**Kentucky** — Andrew Melnykovych, *Louisville Courier-Journal/Metro Desk*, 525 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40201, (502) 582-4645

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

**Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont** — Robert Braile, *Boston Globe* correspondent, P.O. Box 1907, Exeter, N.H., 03833, braile@nws.globe.com, (603) 772-6380

**Maryland and Delaware** — Tim Wheeler, *The Sun*, 501 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21278, tbwheeler@aol.com, (301) 332-6564

### Michigan — Vacant

**Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota** — Tom Meersman at the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 425 Portland Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55488, meersman@startribune.com, (612) 673-4414

**Missouri** — Bill Allen, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 900 N. Tucker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63101, 72263.3236@compuserve.com, (314) 340-8127

### Montana — Vacant

### Nebraska — Vacant

### New Jersey — Vacant

### 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 *Great Basin News*, 6185 Franktown Road, Carson City, NV 89704 manning@lasvegassun.com, (702) 882-3990

**Ohio, Indiana** — Charlie Prince at *Ohio Environmental Reporter*, 516 Ludlow Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45220, chasprince@aol.com, (513) 221-0954

### Oregon — Vacant

**Pennsylvania** — John Bartlett, *Erie Daily Times*, 513 13th St., Franklin, PA 16323, (814) 437-6397

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

**Rocky Mountain Region** — Elizabeth Manning, *High Country News*, P.O. Box 1274, Paonia, CO 81428, elimanning@earthlink.net, (303) 527-4898

**Tennessee and Mississippi** — Debbie Gilbert at *The Memphis Flyer*, 460 Tennessee St., Memphis, TN 38103, memflyer@aol.com, (901) 521-9000

### Texas and Oklahoma:

#### North Texas and Oklahoma —

Randy Loftis at *The Dallas Morning News*, 508 Young St., Dallas, TX 75202, loftis@ix.netcom.com, (800) 431-0010

#### Central and West Texas —

Robert Bryce at *The Austin Chronicle*, 3812 Brookview, Austin, TX 78722, (512) 454-5766

#### East and Coastal Texas — Bill

Dawson at *The Houston Chronicle*, Box 4260, Houston, TX 77210, bill.dawson@chron.com, (713) 220-7171

### Utah and Wyoming — Vacant

### Virginia and North Carolina — Vacant

### Washington State — Vacant

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

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

**Canada** — Doug Draper, *The Standard*, 17 Queen Street, St. Catharines, ON L2R 5G5, (905) 684-7251 x229

## SEJ is urgently looking for Green Beat correspondents

Please note new openings in several states. If you are interested in being a Green Beat correspondent, contact Kevin Carmody at (708) 633-5970 or Chris Rigel at rigel@voice.net.com, or (215) 836-9970.

Positions are open to SEJ members, though preference is given to journalists or educators.

To submit copies of stories for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state. If no correspondent is listed for that state, e-mail your submission to rigel@voicenet.com or fax to (215) 836-9972.

## ARIZONA

➤ Ranchers and grazing rights are getting renewed attention from environmentalists and reporters. Both the *Arizona Republic* and *Phoenix New Times* published substantial articles examining environmentalist efforts to reclaim public ranch lands for the public. Environmental groups are asking the Arizona land department to grant them leases for “unranching,” fencing off land and allowing it to recuperate. “Cow Punchers,” a September 25 piece by *New Times* environment reporter Michael Kiefer, looked at recent legal setbacks Arizona ranchers have suffered. Kiefer also compared environmentalist tactics on ranch lands to strategies used to stop logging in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere. So far, state and federal officials have been reluctant to grant conservation groups the non-development leases they’re seeking. The *Arizona Republic*’s Kathleen Ingley spent time with ranchers and environmentalists for an October 5 story that detailed similar “unranching” attempts on public lands in Arizona. Her piece also examined the economic fallout ranchers fear if environmentalist tactics succeed. Contact Kiefer: [mkiefer@newtimes.com](mailto:mkiefer@newtimes.com) or (602) 229-8434; Ingley: [kathleen.ingley@pni.com](mailto:kathleen.ingley@pni.com) or (602) 444-8171.

## CALIFORNIA

➤ Through genetic engineering, scientists are revolutionizing the world of agriculture forever. Since the first experimental crop of a genetically modified organism—a bacteria used to frost-proof strawberries—got underway in eastern Contra Costa County 10 years ago, genetically engineered crops have grown to more than 30 million acres worldwide. They are here to stay. But many serious environmental and health questions remain unanswered. As an alternative, the fast-growing organic food market represents less than 2 percent. At this moment, the US Department of Agriculture is deciding on recommendations for national standards on organic food. One question is whether certified organic food should be free from genetic engineering. Published Oct. 12 and 13 in the *Contra Costa Times*. Call James Bruggers at (510) 943-8246.

➤ Hidden in the southeastern foothills of the Klamath Mountains, abandoned piles of crushed ore and rock higher than a 70-story building leak rivulets of orange-and-green water into a tributary of the Sacramento River. Iron Mountain Mine, California’s largest, has been poisoning salmon and other downstream fish for more than a century. The mine dumps an average of 180 pounds of copper daily to the river. By comparison, all the factories and sewage treatment plants around the Bay together are allowed to discharge 55 pounds a day. Yet, some call the mine a Superfund success story—thanks to the way the EPA has forced the owners to reduce pollution. Now a giant corporation, Rhone Poulenc, is asking the state and federal governments to bear the cost of perpetual cleanup. It’s part of a legal strategy from companies that have spent tens of millions of dollars fighting Superfund orders, seeking to turn the nation’s hazardous-waste cleanup program on its head. In the last five years, some federal judges have ruled in their favor. Published Nov. 2 in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Call Jane Kay at (415) 777-8704.

➤ Check the *San Francisco Examiner* and *San Francisco Chronicle* at [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com) to find dozens of stories written in the last six months by different writers about the continuing fight for the Headwaters Forest, demonstrators doused with pepper spray, non-native pike poisoned in Lake Davis and the weather phenomenon, El Niño. Also check *Contra Costa Times*, *Oakland Tribune*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* for Northern California stories on these subjects.

## COLORADO

➤ A grand jury that intensely probed wrongdoings at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Boulder for two and a half years is pushing to make the secret findings of its hearings public. In a scenario that takes the the grand jury system into “uncharted” legal waters, the jurors outlined their case before a federal magistrate this summer. A judge has yet to rule on the jurors request to make their grand jury report public. Members of the Rocky Flats grand jury have been angered ever

since 1992, when federal prosecutors declined to file charges for environmental crimes against top managers of the plant, which once manufactured triggers for nuclear bombs. Contact Howard Pankratz, *Denver Post*, (303) 820-1201.

➤ In a natural catastrophe never before recorded in the Rocky Mountains, 20,000 acres of old-growth forest was flattened by a monstrous wind that raced over the Continental Divide and through the Routt National Forest at more than 100 miles per hour on the night of Oct. 24. The 20,000 acre “blowdown” is the largest of its kind recorded in the Rockies and may be the biggest in a spruce forest ever documented in the United States, said Bob Averill, a forest health specialist with the Forest Service. Most of the trees were between 200 and 350 years old and up to 100 feet tall. Contact Mark Eddy, *Denver Post*, (303) 820-1201.

➤ Efforts to save endangered fish in the Upper Colorado River are hitting rough water as dozens of water interests—including large cities like Denver and Colorado Springs, ski resorts and irrigators—want promises from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that current and future water projects won’t be cut back to preserve the four species of fish. The increasingly heated dispute threatens a 1988 agreement between wildlife officials and water interests to work together—politically and financially—to find other methods, like control of non-native fish and habitat restoration, to save the fish. But concerns are growing that Fish and Wildlife may ultimately demand less water be taken from the tributaries to the Colorado River, a move that could threaten growth, particularly along Colorado’s booming Front Range. Contact Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, (719) 636-0285 or [toddh@usa.net](mailto:toddh@usa.net).

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

➤ Right-to-know reporting is touted by government policymakers as a powerful incentive to improve environmental performance and is preferable to traditional command-and-control regulation. But U.S. chemical makers are concerned that an expanded Toxics Release Inventory will compromise trade secrets such as



plant output and product formulations, hurting their competitiveness in the world market. Peter Fairley, Washington bureau chief for *Chemical Week*, examined the concerns of the chemicals sector over expansion of the TRI and found them wanting. The cover story, "Right-to-Know Knocks: Will the Industry Open Up?" appeared in the Aug. 20 edition. For more information, contact Fairley at (202) 628-3728 or at pfairley@chemweek.com by e-mail.

## IDAHO

► The *Idaho Statesman* devoted six pages and three days to an editorial series calling for the breaching of four dams on the lower Snake River to aid endangered salmon. The series prompted editorials from at least five other Pacific Northwest newspapers—mostly opposing the proposal—and a story in the *Washington Post*. For more information contact Rocky Barker, 208-377-6484 or rbarker@micron.net.

► Hearings on reintroducing grizzly bears into central Idaho in October drew wide coverage from newspapers and television stations in Idaho and Montana as well as national stories in the *Washington Post* and *CNN*. For more information contact Rocky Barker, *Idaho Statesman*, (208) 377-6484 or e-mail at rbarker@micron.net.

## ILLINOIS

► Both the *Chicago Tribune* (Sept. 11) and the *Daily Southtown* (Oct. 19) reported on the prediction of some scientists that, while most of the globe is expected to warm several degrees during the next 50 years, the Midwest could see an average cooling of a few degrees. The cooling trend would result from the region's high emissions of sulfate aerosol pollutants, offsetting the warming expected from the global buildup of greenhouse gasses, the scientists said. Several of those scientists warned, however, that the consequences of mild cooling might not be benign. For more information, contact Peter Kendall at the *Tribune*, (312) 222-3232 or Kevin Carmody at the *Southtown* (708) 633-5970. Text of the *Southtown* story is available at [town.com.](http://www.dailysouth-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

► The *Tribune's* Kendall was the first reporter in Illinois to break the story about plans by Michigan officials to approve additional permits for exploratory oil wells underneath Lake Michigan. Kendall's piece on Oct. 14 examined whether the well heads, located on shore, could endanger the lake in the event of a blowout. For more information, contact Kendall or search the *Tribune* archives site available on AOL.

► The *Chicago Sun Times* led its tabloid-style front page on Sept. 29 with a story, by Basil Talbot of the paper's Washington bureau, headlined "Region's top 10 polluters." The report, based on the 1995 Toxic Release Inventory, included comments from residents expressing little surprise that factories in their suburban Chicago neighborhoods are among the largest emitters of toxic pollutants in the state. Maybe residents there are readers of the city's other dailies. Those papers had reported the 1995 TRI data upon its release more than six months earlier, and in prior years, when the pollution emission rankings were similar. Text of the story is available on the *Sun-Times* webpage: [www.suntimes.com](http://www.suntimes.com).

► The *Sun-Times* also bemused Chicago-area environmental activists by its coverage of an Aug. 4 sulfur trioxide spill at the long-troubled PMC Inc. chemical plant on Chicago's South Side. The spill which, on contact with air, created a dense cloud of sulfuric acid that drifted for several miles, sent more than 50 people to hospitals for emergency treatment. The *Tribune* and *Daily Southtown* gave the story similar section-front treatment, including stories and aerial photos about what Chicago officials called the city's worst hazardous material emergency this decade. The *Sun-Times*, meanwhile, relegated coverage to a 4 by 4 1/2 inch photo and cutline showing five evacuated school children.

## KENTUCKY

► New federal regulations aimed at reducing nitrogen oxide emissions from coal-fired power plants are stirring opposition from Ohio Valley utility

companies. They are predicting that the regulations will lead to huge increases in electric rates. The companies claim that utility companies in the Northeast pushed for the NOx rules because they want to eliminate the threat of competition from lower-cost coal-fired plants in the Midwest. For more information, contact Andrew Melnykovich at *The Courier-Journal* in Louisville, (502) 582-4645, or email [amelnyko@louisvil.ganett.com](mailto:amelnyko@louisvil.ganett.com).

► Timber harvests in Kentucky are at the highest level in nearly a century, prompting fears of environmental damage. Nearly all of the logging is occurring on private lands, on which it is virtually unregulated. Gov. Paul Patton plans to introduce forestry reform legislation when the General Assembly meets in January. For info, contact Melnykovich.

► Faced with an influx of large-scale swine confined-feeding operations, Kentucky adopted emergency regulations to govern manure disposal, setbacks from homes, schools and other facilities, and other aspects on industrial-scale hog farming. Pork producers charged the rules would harm small farmers, but the rules prompted the largest operation planned for Kentucky to pull up stakes and head elsewhere. For more information, contact Jim Malone in *The Courier-Journal* Western Kentucky bureau in Paducah, (502) 443-1802.

► Under pressure from environmentalists and its own biologists, the Daniel Boone National Forest is proposing to severely curtail the use of off-highway vehicles for backcountry recreation. More than 80 percent of the forest—both on and off roads—is now open to dirt bikes, ATVs and four-wheel drives. The proposal is to close about 95 percent of the forest, leaving only 122 miles of trails open. The Forest Service says the closures are needed to prevent erosion, silting in of streams, damage to archeological sites and threats to endangered species, including freshwater mussels and two endangered bats. Contact Melnykovich.

## MISSISSIPPI

► Bruce Reid, staff writer for

Jackson, Mississippi's *Clarion-Ledger* has written dozens of stories about the methyl parathion scandal, including a detailed three-part series, "Cotton Poison: A Pesticide Gone Astray," published in March. Methyl parathion is a potent pesticide that's supposed to be sprayed on cotton, but it has been used indoors illegally by unscrupulous exterminators all along the Mississippi River corridor. In the state of Mississippi alone, at least 2,400 homes and businesses were found to be contaminated, and many residents have been relocated. Cleanup could cost the government \$100 million—and that doesn't include the expense of investigating and prosecuting the offenders. Reid recently reported that methyl parathion is being smuggled north and used inside homes in Chicago. Contact Reid at (601) 961-7063.

## NEVADA

► Cory Farley of *The Reno Gazette-Journal* spent 18 months and 105 miles trekking along the Truckee River in Northern Nevada to find out the state of its health. In a special section run Sunday, Oct. 19, the newspaper discovered how much people care about the river's future. The address is P.O. Box 22000, Reno, NV 89520 or contact by e-mail at newsroom@nevadanet.com

► The *Las Vegas SUN* reported on Friday, Oct. 10, that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 9 in San Francisco has called on headquarters to make the health effects of perchlorate in drinking water a national priority. Mary Manning reported that perchlorate contaminating drinking water in California, Nevada, and Utah prompted the request. She can be reached at 800 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, Phone: (702) 259-4065 and e-mail: manning@lasvegassun.com

► The *Las Vegas Review Journal's* Keith Rogers reported about the perchlorate issue on Saturday, Oct. 11, noting that the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection is working with the two companies believed to be the source of the perchlorate in the water. Contact Rogers at 1111 E. Bonanza Road, Las Vegas, NV 89101, e-mail: Keith\_Rogers@lvvj.com.

## RHODE ISLAND

► Saltwater returned to a badly impacted salt marsh in Galilee, RI last month, as the state of Rhode Island and the Army Corps of Engineers opened new tide gates built as part of a \$1.8 million restoration project. The 80-acre marsh had been choked off for years by a new road and the dumping of dredge spoils from the nearby harbor. Only two 30-inch culverts delivered saltwater to the marsh. In the restoration project, four 10-foot-wide culverts were built under the road, and two miles of channels were dug into the marsh. Already biologists are seeing fish and crabs and snails pouring into the marsh with each high tide. For more information contact Peter B. Lord at the *Providence Journal*, e-mail plord.ljpb.projo.com or (401) 277-8036.

► There has been significant interest in a series of underground fuel tanks that have leaked and affected nearby residents in Bristol and Warwick, RI. A criminal investigation into the leak at the Warwick station also occurred. The problems should have been eased by a state board created to help service station owners pay for repairs to such tanks. But the board, headed by a powerful state legislator, as of November had not yet dispersed any payments on the claims it has received. The board was created in July, 1994. A legislative committee looked into the problem in October. For information, call Bob Wyss, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, bwyss@projo.com or (401) 277-7364.

## TENNESSEE

► Anne Paine of Nashville's *The Tennessean* reported in May that the Department of the Interior and the state of Tennessee had reached a new agreement to protect air quality in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A similar agreement had been in effect in 1995, when Gov. Don Sundquist cancelled it under pressure from industry lobbyists. Public outcry forced state and federal agencies to work with the Tennessee Association of Business and hammer out a compromise. Officials hope that other Southern Appalachian states will join the initiative. The GSMNP, America's most-visited national park, is plagued by smog

from nearby cities and industries. Paine can be reached at (615) 259-8071.

► The Sunday, May 18th edition of Memphis' *Commercial Appeal* contained a comprehensive package on problems facing national wildlife refuges which began on the cover and jumped to a two-page spread full of color photos and graphs. The problem, according to reporter Tom Charlier, is that the federal government keeps adding new properties to the refuge system even though there's not enough money to staff and maintain the existing refuges. In a sidebar, he focused on Arkansas' Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge, where a lone, untrained maintenance worker is responsible for managing 5,484 acres. Charlier's phone number is (901) 529-2572.

## UTAH

► The red rock canyons surrounding the rugged town of Escalante were the last places in the continental United States to be mapped. Dotted with juniper and sage under sweeping blue skies, southern Utah's most remote landscape has remained largely undiscovered since the Mormon pioneers of the 1870s first rolled up in their wagons. But now, people are paying attention. In the months after President Clinton created the United States' latest national monument here, invoking an obscure 1906 law, the newly protected Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is dividing Utah residents and illustrating the growing battle between tourism and tradition on public lands across the West. In creating the largest national monument in the lower 48 states, the president also killed a proposed coal mine on the region's Kaiparowits Plateau that could have brought millions of dollars and up to 900 jobs to economically struggling Kane and Garfield counties. Similar debates are playing out in dozens of Western areas, from logging towns in Northern California to the prairies of Montana. Published July 13 in the *San Jose Mercury News*. Call Paul Rogers at (408) 920-5045.

## WEST VIRGINIA

► A lengthy exposure of strip mining in West Virginia's coal industry was

published in *U.S. News and World Report*. The article, by investigative reporter Penny Loeb, focused on the devastating environmental impacts of mountaintop removal mining. The article drew harsh criticism from industry groups, but has some state environmental groups rallying to focus more attention on strip mining. The article is available online at <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/coahigh.htm>.

► The *Charleston Gazette* published a four-part series on the growing poultry industry in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. The series, published Oct. 12–15, comes just as officials in other states are looking at poultry pollution as a possible cause of pfeisteria killing fish in Maryland and Virginia streams (see page 13). The series concluded that a tripling in size of the poultry industry over the last 5–10 years has contaminated the Potomac River with bacteria. It also concluded that state regulatory and agricultural officials are not doing enough about the problem. The series is available online at <http://wvgazette.com/poultry>. Or call Ken Ward Jr. at (304) 348-1702.

### WASHINGTON

► The *Seattle Times* disclosed July 3-4 how some U.S. industries are quietly disposing of tens of thousands of tons of hazardous wastes by turning them into ingredients for fertilizer to spread around farms. Environmental agencies encourage the practice in the name of recycling. The practice has increased nationwide due to

the costs and liability of putting toxic wastes in landfills since RCRA. Internal company documents show that heavy industries, including smelters, wood mills, and cement kilns, save millions of dollars in waste disposal costs by applying this unique form of "dilution is the solution to pollution." Some byproducts are even federally classified as "hazardous wastes" unless they are used as fertilizer, in which case they are classified as "products." The little known practice has been barely regulated, studied, or even disclosed to farmers and consumers. Fertilizer companies only have to list the beneficial ingredients on their labels, so nobody knows what else is inside the bag. Unlike sewage sludge, which has been broadly researched and tightly regulated, there are no numeric standards for heavy metals in fertilizer. The *Times* found examples of crops killed by toxic wastes mixed with fertilizer in Georgia and Oregon, but so far, no proven human health effects. Canada and Europe are more concerned with cadmium in fertilizer and foods than the U.S. has been. The *Seattle Times* series, "Fear in the Fields—How hazardous wastes become fertilizer," and extensive follow-up reporting, is available on the web at <http://www.seattletimes.com/todaynews/special.html>. The newspaper is also providing reprints for \$1 at PO Box 70, Seattle WA 98111. Contact reporter Duff Wilson, [dwilnew@seattletimes.com](mailto:dwilnew@seattletimes.com) or (206) 464-2288. Wilson is preparing a tip sheet for how reporters can find out about waste-to-fertilizer schemes in their home states. The tip sheet will be published on the web at <http://www.seanet.com/~duff/fertip.htm>.

### WISCONSIN

► The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* ran a three-part series on Wisconsin's Stewardship Initiative, under which state money is used to preserve undeveloped land. The front-page series which ran in mid-August also previewed the upcoming debate over re-authorizing the Fund. Contact *JS* environmental reporter Don Behm at (414) 224-2000.

► Dueling news conferences prior to an October legislative hearing on a proposed mining moratorium offered reporters some contrasting styles. Environmentalists in favor of the bill held their event on a windy outdoor platform, and broadcast media had to compete for microphone space on a small podium. A business group opposing the measure held its event inside a heated tent. The electronic media could plug into a rented audio mult box, but all reporters had to show identification and sign in, before they could gain access to the tent. For more information, contact Chuck Quirmbach at Wisconsin Public Radio, (414) 227-2040.

► A statewide poll conducted by Saint Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin, shows the environment remains on the top ten list of issues important to state residents. However, taxes, education, and crime top the list. Some of the funding for the October poll came from Wisconsin Public Radio. For more information, contact WPR's Joy Cardin at (608) 263-2662

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