

SEJ Journal

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Up the planet

Time to trade in despondency for environmental optimism?

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

Imminent environmental collapse has become an ingrained presumption of American politics and thought. Vice President Al Gore, for example, calls the ecological situation "extremely grave, the worst crisis our country has ever faced." Few ideas in public discourse are more deeply entrenched than that of impending ecological doomsday.

This entire line of thought is about to be overturned. We are not living in a time of environmental collapse, but of profound natural recovery. Public perceptions of environmental issues are about to undergo a striking reversal. We are all about to become environmental optimists.

That despondency will soon be replaced by optimism regarding the ecology represents the most glorious news that could be imagined for the 25th anniversary of Earth Day this April 22. The

coming environmental optimism will represent both a celebration for those who have struggled to preserve the Earth, and a forceful rejoinder to that portion of the political right now striving to undo 25 years of remarkable progress.

Since contemporary green consciousness began with the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's masterpiece *Silent Spring*, the main current in environmental thinking has been descending pessimism. Yet results from the "laboratory of nature" show the reverse—that the environment is on the way up. In the United States and the European Union, almost all indicators of environmental quality are positive and have been positive for some time.

In Western countries—the first to attempt systematic ecological protection—the air and water have for two decades grown steadily more clean, even

(Continued on page 7)

Staking out the statehouse

By SCOTT POWERS

In Columbus this winter, an armed guard was posted at the door of the Ohio Senate's Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee hearings on low-level radioactive waste.

In Austin this winter, Ralph Haurwitz, of the *Statesman-American*, says he expects bruising fights in the Texas legislature on several property rights proposals addressing development, green space and water resources issues.

In Trenton and Indianapolis last year, Peter Page of the *Trenton Times* and Kyle Niederpruem of the *Indianapolis Star* watched as the New Jersey and Indiana legislatures overwhelmingly passed stringency bills to limit those states' powers in environmental matters.

State governments have voiced frustration and impatience with federal environmental regulations. However, in

(Continued on page 11)

Getting to break even at SEJ

If you've been to an SEJ annual conference in the last couple of years, chances are you remember Whitman Bassow. A distinguished former *Newsweek* correspondent in Moscow and other foreign places, Bassow now writes for *Tomorrow Magazine*. He asks good questions. Lots of them.

In fact, Bassow often is first to raise his hand when seminar moderators call for audience participation.

He probably doesn't know it, but Bassow delighted SEJ's staff and directors with one of his questions at the last annual meeting. It was, in essence:

Do SEJ's dues and conferences fees cover the cost of our program? Are we breaking even?

The answer: No. Not even close.

Does that mean that SEJ is on the brink of financial collapse?

No again.

It means that SEJ couldn't exist in its present form without generous grants from a variety of foundations. It also means that SEJ members are getting a bargain for their dues. The foundations are paying for programs that we journalist cannot afford to buy. Slightly more than half of SEJ's \$296,000 budget for 1995 will come from foundations.

This financial arrangement has worked well for the last few years, but it is not stable. SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke spends lots of time and energy writing grant proposals. Some are accepted. Others are not.

This month, the news was good. SEJ learned that the George Gund Foundation is increasing its long-time support of the organization with a \$25,000 grant for

regional and national programs that help members cover environmental politics. Turner Broadcast Co. sent \$1,000.

Next month, who knows?

SEJ has submitted solid grant proposals to several foundations and media companies. We don't accept funds from non-media companies, environmental groups or individual high donors.

If the fates should turn against our grant proposals, SEJ could be forced to

to raise fees for non-members who attend our conference and rent our mailing list for an increased amount. Student dues will remain at \$30 annually.

This spring SEJ's board begins the process of developing a multi-year strategic plan. One of our goals will be to think up new, enhanced services and ways to fund them. Another will be to plan for a possible rainy day when grants don't materialize. Ideally, SEJ should find a regular source of income that could one day replace many of the foundation grants.

Suggestions are welcome. Please contact me, Parke or any board member.

My number is (800) 678-6400, ext. 4536. Parke's is (215) 247-9710. The numbers of other board members are: Rae Tyson of *USA Today*, (703) 276-3424; Steve Curwood of *Living on Earth*, (617) 868-8810; Kevin Carmody of the *Chicago Daily Southtown*, (312) 229-2814; Marla Cone of the *Los Angeles Times*, (800) 528-4637, ext. 67833; Julie Edelson of *Inside Washington Publishers*, (313) 769-7780; Amy Gahrn of E Source, (303) 440-8500; Erin Hayes of ABC-TV, (312) 899-4000; Randy Lee Loftis of the *Dallas Morning News*, (214) 977-8433; Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star*, (816) 234-4433; Wevonneda Minis of the *Post & Courier*, (803) 937-5705; and David Ropeik of WCVB-TV, (617) 253-6709.

SEJ's founding president, Jim Detjen, remains an ex officio member of the board. His number at Michigan State University is (517) 353-9479.

The real assets of this organization are the insights and energies of its members. That doesn't show up on any balance sheet.

(Continued on page 6)

Report from the society's president

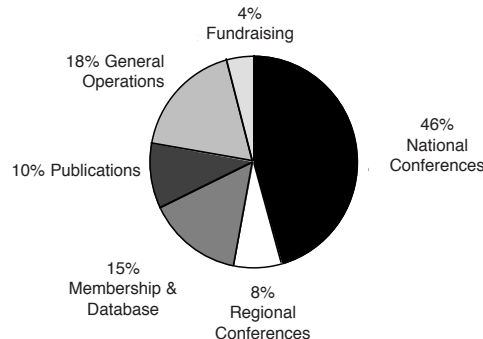
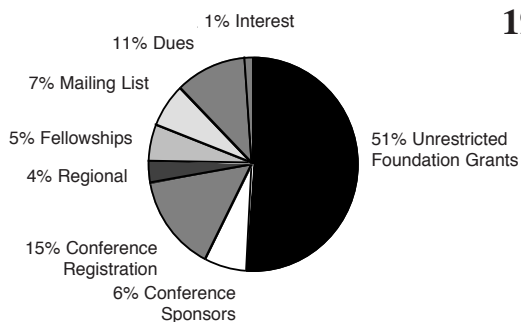
By
Emilia
Askari



shrink dramatically. Our employees could lose their jobs and our members could lose many of services we enjoy.

That's why SEJ's leaders appreciated Bassow's question. It gave us another chance to inform our members about the group's budget.

In January, SEJ's board voted to raise our dues for the first time since the organization was founded five years ago. At \$35 a year—an increase of \$5—SEJ membership is still a great buy. We voted



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

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Knight Ridder bureau chief praises SEJ

As one editor, I'm very impressed with the work that is being done by the Society of Environmental Journalists. I was privileged to be able to attend your recent board meeting in Washington, and to discuss SEJ's work with directors.

Newspapers need badly to improve the quality of content. One key way is to develop the knowledge and skills of the specialized writers on our staffs.

A newspaper's key asset is not the building or the press line in the basement. The most valuable asset is that body of talent, knowledge and skills held by a newspaper's employees—including circulators, advertising salespeople, printers...and most especially by the reporters. We can be beaten by radio, television and online services in timeliness, but newspapers have no peers in their capacity to explain and explore issues and events.

There are many organizations that exist to further the skills of journalists. While SEJ is young and comparatively small, it strikes me—because of what I hear from reporters, what I see first-hand in its work—that SEJ ranks near the top, up with Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), in effectiveness.

Environmental journalism is resurgent. Some of our colleagues may think that the discipline peaked in the 1970s when the focus was on industrial and transportation pollution and the growing scarcity of resources. But today's environmental news has no rival in importance to our readers.

The new Congress is but one example. It is examining virtually every assumption of environmental regulation: the existence of the EPA, the continuation of the Endangered Species Act, the use of cost-benefit analysis in creating regulations, the possible sell-off of public lands.

Reader surveys frequently show that reader interest in the environment is very high, rivaling and sometimes surpassing interest in coverage of religion.

So, we need to improve the breed of environmental journalists. We need training, education, resources for computer-assisted reporting, collaboration among colleagues. We need news hole, and we need the commitment of editors and publishers.

These are tough times with newsprint price increases, and we need to acknowledge that. But I think you as environmental journalists will get that support, because it clearly translates into readership. And, indeed, SEJ plays a critical part in providing support, especially in training, education, computer-assisted reporting and professional collaboration.

Good luck. I predict you'll find increasing support among editors for SEJ's good work.

—Rich Oppel

Rich Oppel is Washington bureau chief of Knight-Ridder and a member of the board of directors of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He was editor of The Charlotte Observer for fifteen years and, before that, executive editor of The Tallahassee Democrat.

ABC's Hayes appointed to fill Detjen slot on Board

ABC correspondent Erin Hayes has been appointed to the SEJ board of directors. She fills the active member seat vacated by the Society's founding president Jim Detjen, who has taken a position with Michigan State University.

The Chicago-based Hayes was selected at the January board meeting held in Washington, DC. She must run for re-election at the next SEJ annual meeting in October.

Hayes was the first person asked to fill the vacant seat, according SEJ

President Emilia Askari. "Erin has been a strong supporter of SEJ over the years." Askari said the appointee had expressed a willingness to work on a variety of projects and has already been tapped for some fundraising duties.

According to SEJ, Hayes has been a broadcast journalist for 14 years and received three Dupont Columbia awards as well as an Investigative Reporters and Editors award. Askari called her "one of the most prominent people covering environmental issues

on network television."

Hayes fills the seat vacated by Jim Detjen, who remains an ex-officio member of the SEJ board and chairman of the Society's national advisory board. In January, Detjen left his post as science writer for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to become the Knight Chair of Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Detjen's transition to academia made him ineligible to hold a voting seat on the SEJ board.

They're trying to "do news a bit differently" in San Antonio, Texas, according to **Jennifer Zeppelin**, who just joined the city's brand new Fox affiliate, KABB-TV. Zeppelin says the station's reporting will be less "blood and guts, more education." That suits the environmental reporter/meteorologist just fine. She took a similar approach to her last job at KTBS-TV in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Ironically, **Scott Bronstein's** switch to television will give him the opportunity to do more in-depth reporting. Bronstein has joined the CNN Special Reports unit. The former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter is now an off-air correspondent, investigative reporter and writer for the hour-long documentary series. The focus of the Sunday night news program is broader than just the environment, but with Bronstein's background and the show's inclination towards green stories, he expects to do a fair bit of enviro reporting. He'll be based in Atlanta, but Bronstein's beat is now the world. Before they even told him his first assignment, his new bosses asked for his passport.

Scott Thurm will keep his thumb in environmental reporting, but now with a business twist. He's the new economics reporter at the *San Jose Mercury News*. Thurm is "hoping to write about economics in real life" and that includes its relationship with the environment. After eight years of enviro reporting (the first four at the *Louisville Courier Journal*) Thurm says, he wasn't burnt out on the green beat, but he saw a need that his paper wasn't filling. He says the *Mercury News* is committed to finding another full time environmental reporter.

Anita Kugler is helping to bridge the trash gap between academia and industry. She's the new technical editor for the Florida Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management in Gainesville. The state-funded program is an effort to disseminate the work of Florida's top trash researchers. Kugler got into the garbage beat as a freelance writer for *Florida Environments*, a statewide monthly magazine.

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Moving out from behind the editor's desk is **Will Nixon**. The former associate editor at *E Magazine* is now a New York City-based freelancer. His mixed feelings about the transition stem from the fact that he's been "getting assignments, but finding they pay very little." Although he's broadening his client base, you will still find his byline in *E*, where he remains editor-at-large.

SEJ board member **Amy Gahrn** always wanted to live out west. Now she's got her wish. Starting in April she'll be in Boulder, Colorado, working as the editor for *E Source*. Gahrn calls the operation the "Consumer Reports of energy efficiency." Her audience, mostly utility engineers and facility engineers, look to *E Source* publications for information on the effectiveness of various buildings-related energy efficiency strategies and technologies. Gahrn's goal is to move parts of *E Source* beyond print and onto the Internet. She has some bits and bytes of experience.

As the first records manager of SEJ, Gahrn brought the society into the 20th century by organizing its complex database. She also organized and ran SEJ's online workshop at the 1993 national conference at Duke University.

Also developing info superhighway journalism is *SEJournal* Co-Editor **A. Adam Glenn**, who last February helped to pull together an on-line Election '96 forum where users discuss the presidential race in online town meetings. The project was conducted at the Edward R. Murrow Center, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where he began a mid-career masters degree in international environmental policy this January.

Meeman awards in environmental reporting have gone to **Marla Cone**, *Los Angeles Times* reporter (and SEJ board member), and **Ken Ward Jr.**, of the *Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette*. Cone won in the over 100,000 circulation category for what judges said was "comprehensive and immensely readable [work]...She displayed an uncanny instinct for developing stories that many journalists would have missed." Ward took the prize for under 100,000 circulations, for reporting on a proposal to build a paper and pulp mill in Apple Grove, W.Va. The Meeman carries a \$2,000 cash prize.

WHERE ARE YOU? Change jobs? Win an award? Start a fellowship? Let us know. Send any professional news about you or your colleagues to: George Homsy at *Living On Earth*, PO Box 380639, Cambridge, MA., 02238-0639; tel: 617-868-8810; fax: 617-868-8659. Email: loe@npr.org.

'95 Conference: tours, speakers, panels planned

By DAVID ROPEIK

Will there be enough chairs at lunch? Enough vegetarian meals? Will all the speakers show up? Do we have enough buses? And will the whole thing cost SEJ more than we can afford?

Ah, the pleasures of planning the 1995 conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From deep inside the bunker of working out the details, it's hard to keep sight of the bigger picture...the exciting, rich, varied menu of activities we're planning that will hopefully make the October 26-29 conference rewarding for SEJ members.

Here's a look at what's in the works. First of all, we will be joined this fall by our international colleagues, members of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ), a nascent group that will hold its annual meeting at MIT during our conference so IFEJ members can also attend the SEJ get-together. Journalists from Europe, Asia, South America and Africa will be on hand. And they won't just be attending SEJ sessions. Some of our panels will *feature* these international folks so they can talk about what environmentalism, and journalism, are like in other countries. We're also planning a system for helping U.S. and international journalists who may want to get together to socialize in small groups to share work stories and enjoy some cross-cultural enrichment.

As to the activities on the schedule: We have a full day of several tours lined up for Thursday, Oct. 26. One is an all-day trip down to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Topics include oil spills, a look at WHOI's manned and unmanned deep ocean research vehicles, non-point source coastal pollution, and the ocean's role in climate change.

There will be a tour of Boston Harbor and the sewage treatment project already dramatically cleaning things up. There will be a tour of urban environmental issues at a variety of sites in Boston. And we hope to take a tour to an experimental forest just west of Boston to talk about forestry issues.

Conscious of the fact that the political landscape is changing, and that we

will be in the primary campaign season and just south of the first primary state, New Hampshire, we have invited President Clinton to a speech/town meeting with our members. We have also invited all the declared presidential candidates to talk about their environmental positions and field questions.

And on Sunday, we plan two great options. One is a ride out to Walden Pond and some time for walking around the pond, either with an actor who portrays Thoreau, or on your own. Then we'll go to a mansion, converted into the Thoreau Institute, for panels on environmental history, a session with authors, one with a writing coach, and one featuring musician Don Henley (if he's not touring) to review the recent issue of "saving" Walden Pond. The other option is a boat ride with marine scientists from the New England Aquarium around Boston's inner and outer harbor, site of a proposed new national park, and if conditions permit, a trip offshore for a whale watch!

Major speakers invited, besides the President and the presidential candidates, include Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Bruntland, former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, and head of the United Nation's Environment Programme, Elizabeth Dowdeswell.

Those are the "special" activities. But we hope the line-up of plenaries and panels will be special too. Topics include:

- The Mood of America—featuring a national poll being done for SEJ to see what Americans think about the environment issue *and* how they think we're doing covering it, as well as a discussion including key members of Congress and news industry leaders, moderated by Michael Dukakis.
- Fisheries
- The basics of covering the enviro beat
- Making a living as a freelancer
- Journalists and scientists—understanding each other better
- Greenwash? The use of environmental issues by advertisers and PR people
- Several hands-on sessions on working online
- Enviro-journalism ethics—Are we telling the public the world is worse off

than it actually is?

- The environment and spirituality
- What's new on climate change and ozone depletion?
- Biodiversity
- Visits to interesting MIT labs working on environment technologies
- A series of hands-on computer-assisted reporting workshops

And that's just one third of them! Thanks to all those of you whose input shaped this list of topics, by the way. And input is still welcomed.

A few other enticements. We've increased the time for socializing. Breaks between sessions are longer. And we have two receptions, one on Thursday night, one on Saturday. The Saturday night reception promises to be fun. It's at the Museum of Science, which we have to ourselves all night. It's got some great hands-on exhibits and other fun things. And we're planning an auction of fun/interesting/valuable items to be held in an auditorium at the museum during the reception. If you have any ideas for what you or anyone might donate that could get some bidding competition going, contact board member Wevonneda Minis.

A couple of cautions. The price we pay for coming to Boston is higher hotel rates. MIT is helping coordinate a room-sharing list to cut hotel costs in half, and we're preparing a list of less-expensive places to stay. If you have friends in the area you can stay with, start buttering them up now! Also, we'll have to limit attendance on the tours (you have no idea how much bus companies charge). So whenever you get material from us asking your preferences, don't take too long signing up.

Ge. Writing it all up that way DOES make it sound like it could be pretty good. But I've got to get back to talking to the caterers, and the audio-visual people, and the campus police, and the hotels, and the bus companies...

David Ropeik has been the environment reporter at WCVB-TV in Boston since 1989. He's been on SEJ's board since 1991.

Regional events planned for Calif., D.C., Southeast

By **TOM MEERSMAN**

Coming soon to a city near you...an SEJ regional conference!

Well, maybe not for all of our far-flung membership, but many SEJers who haven't had the opportunity before will be able to meet with their regional counterparts this spring and summer.

- In **Southern California**, regional coordinator Gary Polakovic of *The Press-Enterprise*, SEJ Board member Marla Cone and Lee Peterson of the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin* have organized a conference at the UCLA faculty center in Los Angeles on May 20. The one-day session will focus on "Covering the Endangered Species Act in Your Backyard," and will include a luncheon address by Mollie Beattie, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is the lead federal agency for ESA listing and enforcement.

The California conference also will include Republican Rep. Richard Pombo, chairman of the House Resources Committee ESA task force, former BLM director Jim Baca, as well as a panel discussion about the property rights and takings legislation—a major issue in many parts of the country, especially in the West. Conference fee, which includes lunch and snacks, is \$25 per person.

Invitations are being mailed to SEJ members and others in the California

region, and will be available to others upon request. For more information contact Gary at (909) 782-7564 or SEJ's national office at (215) 247-9710.

- In the **Washington, D.C.** area, regional organizers will have another Congressional briefing similar to the successful half-day session on Feb. 27. That morning event focused on environmental issues before the new Congress and featured Sen. John Chafee, R-RI, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and other speakers.

SEJ vice-president Rae Tyson and Sara Thurin Rollin are planning another Congressional briefing for late spring, and they're also organizing another in their group's series of Newsmaker dinners at the National Press Club. Final dates will be available soon.

(Heather Dewar prepared a Congressional source guide for the first briefing, which is available from SEJ's national office. The event was also tape recorded for members outside the region, and a two-tape set is available from Goodkind of Sound, a commercial tape service, at (800) 476-4785.)

- In the **Southeast**, Peter Dykstra of CNN's environment unit, Stuart Leavenworth of the *News and Observer* and others are planning a one-and-a-half day conference in Atlanta for mid to late July. Dykstra said half a dozen SEJ mem-

bers are working on the program's topics, which will focus on unique aspects of the environment in the Southeast U.S. as well as the status of environmental reporting in both large and small communities.

- SEJ members have also been active in a number of "supporting roles" in other recent conferences and workshops. In late February, Polakovic, Cone, and Steve LaRue of the *San Diego Union Tribune* spoke about environmental reporting at the national College Newspaper Convention in **San Diego**. On March 18, with the help of Adam Glenn and Bud Ward, SEJ co-sponsored a climate change workshop with the Environmental Health Center and other groups at Tufts University in **Boston**. And on March 27, SEJ co-hosted a half-day coastal issues seminar with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in **Washington, DC**.

In addition to regional mailings and notices in *SEJ Journal*, announcements about regional events are also posted on the "SEJ Alert" portion of SEJ's bulletin board on America Online.

Tom Meersman is the energy and environment reporter at the Star Tribune newspaper in Minneapolis, and formerly worked at Minnesota Public Radio.

President's column...(from page 2)

Here's some other SEJ news:

- Planning for SEJ's next annual conference Oct. 26-29 in Boston is revving into high gear. (See related article, page 5) Former presidential candidate Michael Dukakis will moderate the opening plenary, which will explore the mood of America on the environment. Results of a poll co-sponsored by SEJ and Times-Mirror, Inc. will be released during the plenary. United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell will give a keynote address. President Clinton and all the U.S. presidential candidates have been invited to explain their positions on the environment.

- Former SEJ President Jim Detjen will represent SEJ and the International

Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) this spring at a meeting of environmental journalists in Kiev.

- SEJ's board will meet again on August 4-6 in Missoula, Montana, at the invitation of SEJ member Frank Edward Allen, dean of University of Montana's journalism school. Allen is planning a seminar about how to cover forestry issues. Board members will conduct a panel for seminar participants. In exchange, the University of Montana Foundation will pay much of our travel costs.

SEJ board meetings are open to members. For detail on meetings, please call the SEJ office. For information on the University of Montana forestry seminar, please call Allen at (406) 243-4001.

Associates and Academics gain representation

Academic and associate members will soon have non-voting representatives on the board of the Society of Environmental Journalists. An election is planned for next fall, to coincide with that of active SEJ board members. Academic members will vote for their representatives only; associate members will elect theirs only.

Anyone inter-ested in serving as an academic or associate representative is welcome to call any current SEJ board member for more information. Keep an eye on your mail for election details.

Enviro optimism... (from page 1)

as population and economic output expand. In these countries forested acres have expanded throughout the postwar era. In the Western countries several important categories of pollution have already ended or are close to ending. In them most attempts at habitat and species protection have been successful.

And though political discourse continues to embrace the idea that environmental regulations are costly, burdensome and unwieldy, experience shows the reverse here, too. Most environmental programs have been highly effective; have cost less, not more, than expected; are delivering cost-effective returns; have made Western economies stronger, not weaker.

Of course in the Third World and the nations of the former Soviet bloc many environmental circumstances are frightful and

In the United States and the European Union, almost all indicators of environmental quality are positive and have been positive for some time.

continue a downward spiral. One reason it is important for politicians, journalists and intellectuals to shake off what I call the "instant doomsday" viewpoint about environmental conditions in the West is so that resources can be shifted toward more pressing needs outside the affluent world. If your concern is ecological protection, today a dollar will accomplish 10 times more in Africa, Asia, South America or Poland than it will in the United States.

The fantastic—and fantastically unrecognized—record of Western ecological progress has been made possible because warnings sounded by Carson and others triggered the reforms necessary to stave off the doomsdays foreseen. Here conversion to environmental optimism ought to be seen as particularly appealing, since it shows that government, business and activists can through cooperation achieve social progress each would be incapable of alone. Nevertheless the notion of impending environmental collapse continues to exert a strange allure on public discourse: as if bad news about the environment were reassuring, conforming to preconceived notions, while good news must be some sneaky trick.

Such thinking is particularly ill-considered because environmental protection,

properly construed, ought to be seen as the greatest postwar triumph of liberalism. Many impacts of liberalism—on the public schools, on welfare policy—are debatable at best. As regards the environment, liberalism has recorded an astonishing succession of unalloyed triumphs: protecting the Earth, strengthening the economy, saving capitalism from itself. When Democrats and liberal intellectuals in general, and Vice President Gore in the specific, endlessly speak in the vocabulary of fashionable gloom regarding the environment, they sell themselves and their philosophy short. Why shouldn't voters turn away from liberalism when liberals will not acknowledge their own success in safeguarding the Earth?

Replacing trendy defeatism with optimism about the environment may make political liberalism more attractive at the ballot box.

Four eventful and far-reaching notions are now missing from public understanding of environmental affairs:

- In Western nations, pollution is declining and conservation expanding much more rapidly than generally understood. In the West, the Age of Pollution will come to a close during our lifetimes.
- The protection of the ecology is not a costly burden involving wrenching sacrifice but a practical, affordable endeavor that strengthens the economy and renders daily life more pleasant.
- Human ecological malfeasance, far from representing some "unprecedented" assault overpowering to nature, is of lesser severity than environmental assaults that nature has overcome countless times in the past. This does not rationalize any artificial environmental abuse, but does suggest that once abuses are controlled nature will rebound rapidly and heartily—exactly the sequences being observed in the Western world today.
- The evolving ability of genus Homo to live a materially comfortable life yet minimize damage to the Earth holds the hope that people, machines and nature can learn to work together for each other's mutual benefit.

Book's message to journalists: keep perspective

By CHRIS BOWMAN

Timothy Ford, a Harvard professor of microbiology, recently argued in class that pesticide use had gotten much worse in the 33 years since publication of "Silent Spring." Application in the U.S. has doubled and production has quadrupled, he lamented.

Having just read Gregg Easterbrook's optimistic take on pesticides, I couldn't resist challenging the professor's dismal outlook.

Though pesticide poundage use in the Western world is up since 1962, Easterbrook says, application relative to farm production has declined. What's more, he says, use has grown more judicious, not indiscriminate as Rachel Carson anticipated.

"What about these positive trends?" I asked at the end of the lecture. Ford declined to address them, saying, "The danger of ending with an optimistic note is that it decreases the sense of urgency."

The response—hush up the good news—reflected precisely the doctrine of doom that Easterbrook wants to smother under the weight of his new encyclopedic book, "A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism."

By sustaining a "sense of urgency" for its own sake, he argues, environmentalists discredit their righteous cause and may ultimately do in what has been one of the most successful movements of the century. Easterbrook calls for a shift from alarmism to "ecorealism," an approach that recognizes not only the seriousness of human abuses of the environment, but also the enduring power of nature. "The straightforward case for Earth's preservation is sufficient," he says.

The book conveys a more powerful message that deserves the attention of environmental journalists: KEEP PERSPECTIVE. Like environmentalists, we, too, feed on and

(Continued on page 8)

Constraints of space prohibit me here from fully developing these ideas; details can be found in my forthcoming book, "A Moment on the Earth." (Which is sure to inspire quips about requiring more than a moment to peruse. All I can say is the book may be 800 pages, but it's so fast-paced it only seems like 700.) I'll just offer brief substantiation regarding the notion of an outbreak of environmental optimism.

In air pollution, smog has gone down 27 percent nationally since 1970, though the United States now contains more than twice as many automobiles, each driving more miles. Smog is down 40 percent since 1970 in Los Angeles, where the auto population has trebled. Lead has been eliminated as an air pollutant; carbon monoxide and particulates are down sharply; sulfur emissions have fallen by a third since 1970, though the nation now burns roughly twice as much coal; CFC releases are just shy of eliminated; emissions of airborne toxics have fallen a third in the past five years alone. Though the common belief is that the air grows more dirty, in truth it has become dramatically cleaner in the past 25 years, and continues to grow more clean.

Trends in water quality are as good or better. In 1970 only a quarter of U.S. river miles met the federal standard of safety for fishing and swimming. Today 56 percent do, with the proportion rising. Boston Harbor, Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, and other major water bodies depicted as facing biological death in 1970 show steady improvement, including resummptions of fishing and swimming.

Numerous other environmental indicators are positive. Though final cleanup of Superfund sites continues to bedevil everyone, creation of new toxic dumps has essentially come to a halt, and is unlikely ever to resume. Ocean dumping of untreated sewage sludge by major American cities ended in 1992 and is

unlikely ever to resume. The portion of house wastes going to landfills peaked in the 1980s as recycling took hold, and is unlikely ever again to rise. Only a few creatures protected under the first Endangered Species list have fallen extinct; the rest remain viable in the wild, a spectacular achievement considering that the first endangered species inventory included dozens of species widely thought beyond hope of salvation. Many creatures described around the time of the first Earth Day as doomed—including the bald eagle, gray whale and peregrine falcon—have rebounded so rapidly they are being delisted from priority protection.

The amazing record of environmental success in the Western world moves us to hope that if men and women can learn to coexist with nature, they can learn to coexist with each other as well.

So why do journalists say and write so little about environmental optimism? I believe it is because public debate on the ecology remains frozen into preconceived ideological positions, imagining the only two possible points of view are instant-doomsday on the left and reactionary apologetics on the right. The next phase of environmental progress will not begin until those stale distinctions fade. The coming environmental optimism will not only reflect verities of the indomitable natural world: by breaking down the old, polar left-right extremes, optimism will help speed the next phase of ecological progress into being.

SEJ member Gregg Easterbrook is a contributing editor for The Atlantic Monthly and Newsweek. His book, A Moment on the Earth, will be published April 22nd by Viking, following an excerpt in the New Yorker. SEJ members wishing a copy of the book for a story or review should call Paul Slovak, Viking's publicity director, at (212) 366-2219.

Note to Fellow Reporters:

The first run of my book contains a two-word, but nevertheless consequential, error. The sentence says the Environmental Defense Fund "accepted payment" for its advice to big corporations such as McDonald's. In fact it did not. The context of the reference is actually favorable to the Environmental Defense Fund, but that does not alter the commission of a factual error. If you get one of the copies that contains this error (most will not) please don't replicate my mistake. —Gregg Easterbrook

Review...(from page 7)

amplify crises. The enviros have successfully exploited this common denominator more than we care to acknowledge. Our challenge is to exact the legitimate dangers from the clutter of those that are overstated or nonexistent.

To this end, I would put "A Moment on the Earth" on the required reading list for students, scholars and practitioners of environmental journalism. I would lean this 699-page opus on environmental optimism against Carson's "Silent Spring" (1962: "The robin seems to be on the verge of extinction.") and Paul Ehrlich's "Population Bomb," (1968: "We will not be able to prevent large-scale famines in the next decade.") as a formidable counterweight to environmental alarmism.

The release of Easterbrook's book on the 25th anniversary of Earth Day comes as environmental journalism undergoes a major transformation. Fewer of us are observing the world solely through the convenient environmentalist prism that splits debates to polar extremes. More of us are viewing environmental problems from a variety of perspectives, and reaching our own conclusions.

Take myself. In 1970, when I was 15, I joined environmental activists in the first Earth Day, helped clean up litter along highways and pulled automobile tires out of the mudflats rimming the San Francisco Bay in my hometown of San Mateo, California. Then, as a young newspaper freelancer at Lake Tahoe, virtually all my sources were preservationists battling casino and housing developments at the Sierra Nevada resort. The stories were pretty much white-hat vs. black-hat.

Today, as an environmental writer for *The Sacramento Bee*, I have at any moment environmental advocates criticizing me for not covering the stories as dramatic or polarized as they saw them. I believe I'm providing readers a more realistic, albeit skeptical, look at environmental progress than I have in the past. "A Moment on the Earth" helps advance our move beyond the hysteria school of environmental reporting.

Though Easterbrook is out to reform environmentalism, not journalism, his

book gives us new insights to avoid being suckered by activists bearing bad science.

He does this by examining environmental problems from the point of view of nature: "Human assaults on the environment, though mischievous, are pinpricks compared to forces of the magnitude nature is accustomed to resisting." Easterbrook also supplies us with a lot of evidence for optimism on most environmental issues—from deforestation, smog, toxic waste and population growth to radiation, energy and biotechnology—so we can challenge doomsayers like the professor who claimed pesticide use had gone bonkers. Here are some of the specific Easterbrook tips on keeping a rational perspective on the environment:

- "Irreversible, a favorite adjective of doomsayers, almost never conforms to the observed realities of the natural world." One exception: extinction.

- "The notion of a fragile environment is profoundly wrong. Individual animals, plants and people are distressingly fragile. The environment that contains them is close to indestructible."

- Think and write holistically. "If everything is part of everything else—an environmentalist's motto well spoken—then the whole of pollution

effects, not their individual parts is what matters.

- Predictions of calamity are "inherently implausible." (Taking current rates and projecting them—but failing to take change into account—leads to the conclusion that "things can only get worse.")

- "Torture statistics and they will confess to anything."

- Give readers a sense of scale. "Something that exists in very small

SEJournal Book Review Editor Kathy Sagan will review Easterbrook's "A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism," in the next issue.

amounts may grow dramatically relative to itself yet remain tiny compared to the larger system."

For example, environmentalists have expressed dismay that the carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere has increased 25 percent—from 290 parts per million about 100 years ago versus some 350 parts per million today. This leads people to assume that the 20th century human greenhouse activity has had an overwhelming impact on nature. But the human contribution of carbon dioxide emissions have brought the gas only to

the point at which it constitutes 0.0006 percent of the atmosphere.

- Don't focus on the outrage of people living near hazardous waste without exploring whether their fears are rationally based.

- Be wary of computer-model predictions. "When news reports say there is a scientific consensus that the Earth will warm, what they mean is that computer models concur in predicting a warming. The atmosphere of an entire planet contains so many variables acting in such dimly understood ways that no computer can take everything into account."

- Focus on confirmed environmental emergencies. "There is something faintly indecent about the world's heads of state gathering, as they did at Rio, to bestow many tens of billions of dollars on the greenhouse effect, a speculative concern, while lifting not a finger to assist 7.8 million children dead each year from drinking infected water and breathing dense smoke."

Chris Bowman, an environmental reporter at the Sacramento Bee, is an environmental Nieman Fellow at Harvard University this year.

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from December 5 through March 17. Memberships recorded after March 17 will appear in *SEJournal* Vol. 5, No. 2.

Alabama

- Michael Hardy, *Mobile Press Register* Mobile
- Desmond G. Keller, *Progressive Farmer*, Birmingham

Arizona

- Susan Zakin, Tucson

California

- Anne Heller Anderson (associate) Atherton
- Yvonne Baskin, Encinitas
- Katherine Fong, *Mother Jones Magazine*, San Francisco
- Mark A. Grossi, *The Fresno Bee*, Fresno
- Jack Howell, *Morning Sun Press* Lafayette
- Keith Howell (associate) *Pacific Discovery* California Academy of Sciences San Francisco
- Wanda Ochoa, Bay City News Service, Oakland

Colorado

- Kim Vacariu, Steamboat Springs Review Green Highlands, Inc. Steamboat Springs

District of Columbia

- Robert A. Benenson, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*,
- John Nielsen, Science Department, National Public Radio

Florida

- Kristine Fluker, *The News Journal*, DeLand
- Kimberly Harper (academic) University of South Florida, Tampa
- Steve Newborn, *Tampa Tribune*, Tampa

Georgia

- Patricia A. Curtin (academic) Grady College of Journalism, University of Georgia, Athens
- Kelly Rickenbaker, CNN, Atlanta

Illinois

- Mick Hans (associate), Chicago
- Katie Schallert, *The Moline Dispatch*, Rock Island

Kansas

- Carol Estes (academic), University of Kansas, Lawrence

Massachusetts

- Robert Emro (academic) School of Communication, Boston University, Boston
- Judith Tegger Kildow (academic) Department of Ocean Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Chestnut Hill
- Willard Rappleye, News Department WLVI-TV, Boston
- George Stubbs, *Hazardous Materials Intelligence Report*, World Information Systems, Melrose

Maryland

- Martin Heavner (associate) Education Department, Government Institutes, Inc. Rockville

Michigan

- Elizabeth Burch (academic) Journalism

(Continued on page 17)

Congress Plunges Headlong into the Risk Debate

By **RICH STONE**

Risk assessment. Few words have more power to inflict pain on a journalist. (Except, of course, the word: “nee” from Monty Python’s “Holy Grail.”) Admit it: Wouldn’t you rather write about global warming, the health effects of smog, or the reintroduction of the wolf to Yellowstone?

Risk assessment.

Hah! You cringed again.

I utter those vulgar words not to torture you. Only to get you used to them. The age of risk assessment is upon us. If you haven’t written about it yet, you will.

On March 1, the House of Representatives passed a major bill (part of the Contract with America) that would force federal agencies to conduct an elaborate series of analyses—called risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis—before issuing regulations aimed to reduce a risk to health or the environment. Be it airbags or atrazine, duck hunting or DDT, any hazard or measure to mitigate a hazard costing the economy

more than \$25 million would fall under the bill’s purview. No manufacturer, environmental activist, or taxpayer would be spared from the bill’s consequences. The Senate is expected to scrutinize the bill this spring before casting its lot.

Science Survey

Rich Stone offers a review of selected environmental science and policy issues in the news.

Called the “Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Act of 1995,” debate about the bill (H.R. 1022) is exposing a young, controversial science to the glare of public scrutiny. Some members of Congress pushing the Act see risk assessment as a perfect sedative for rabid regulators. Opposing voices view it as a yoke that will delay implementation of regulations to protect the public. The bottom line is that the bill, if it were to become law, would delay and weaken scores of regu-

lations—and that’s why, to make a crass generalization, Republicans love it and Democrats hate it.

The bill’s opening monologue makes some observations that few could argue with. For instance, it says, “too often, regulatory priorities have not been based upon a realistic consideration of risk.” Right on. Resources to address environmental concerns “are not unlimited.” Check. “The priority setting process must include scientifically sound, objective, and unbiased risk assessments.” Sounds good. But wait—what does “scientifically sound, objective, and unbiased” actually mean? Such value-laden terms are throwing environmental scientists into a tizzy. Understanding scientists’ concerns is paramount to understanding how this bill might weaken regulations.

Some of the bill’s more contentious language would force federal agencies, when conducting a risk assessment (see sidebar), to provide “the best estimate or estimates” of a risk. Those familiar with the risk assessment process warn that this

A guide to the nuts and bolts of risk assessment

Risk assessment is a set of experiments, tests, computer models, and statistical analyses aimed at characterizing a threat to health or to the environment. There are three main types of risk assessors: a government agency confronted with a potential hazard; a manufacturer considering whether to market a product; and a consulting firm hired to assess, for instance, a Superfund site.

Risk assessments, particularly those done to gauge health threats, generally follow a four-step recipe. First, the assessor—a team of scientists and technicians—must figure out what kind of hazard it’s dealing with. Take an easy example: tobacco smoke. Epidemiological studies link smoking and lung cancer. Other hazards are defined by how they harm animals. For instance, dioxin causes a decreased sperm count in rats. No one knows how dioxin affects human sperm counts, but based on the animal data, dioxin is considered a reproductive toxicant.

The next step for a risk assessor is to establish how a test subject—animal or human—responds after being exposed to various doses of the hazard. Much of this sort of data is collected in two-year-long studies on rats. For each dose, toxicologists count the number of rats that develop tumors (other possible responses include crippled immune systems, or nerve damage). Next they plot a dose-response curve to determine if there is a safe level of exposure to the substance, and if not at what dose there is a minute risk of cancer. After throwing in safety factors (because, in part, it’s pretty shaky science to extrapolate from cancer seen in rats to cancer predicted in humans) scientists come up with a “safe” dose—the dose below which the average person, over the course of a lifetime, has less than one in a million chance of developing cancer.

But such data are only meaningful if people are exposed to the hazard. The third step in a risk assessment is to determine the amount of a toxic substance

present in the environment, who comes into contact with it, and how the substance is metabolized. Few hazards are “new.” Rather, many concerns about environmental threats now arise because technological advances have enabled scientists to detect traces of substances at infinitesimal concentrations.

Finally, a risk assessor must tie all this data together in a risk characterization. This report gives a regulator the raw data—what is the hazard, how bad is it, and who’s at risk—needed to make a decision. From here on out, deciding whether to regulate becomes a political decision. In this process, called “risk management,” a regulator weighs the cost of implementing a proposed regulation versus the benefits to health or the environment, and compares and prioritizes the risk at issue versus other risks.

Until this year, Congress had poked its nose only in risk management decisions, leaving risk assessment to the scientists. H.R. 1022 changes all that.

provision may result in regulations that fail to protect segments of the population vulnerable to particular risks: for instance, children exposed to lead in house paint, or subsistence fishermen eating PCB-laden fish.

So far, federal scientists have had free reign to skew risk assessments toward protecting vulnerable subpopulations, explains Adam Finkel of the University of Texas at Dallas. For instance, take lead in house paint, which poses little risk to the average adult. However, in small doses lead appears to be a potent neurotoxicant in young children, reducing IQ and leading to learning deficits. EPA has crafted its regulations—and set limits on lead exposure—based on risk assessments that point out this threat to children.

The risk bill, however, mandates a “best estimate” of a hazard. To many scientists, such terminology implies that assessments must produce an estimate of risk to the entire population. If this were the case, the risk of lead exposure would be averaged out across children and adults. The threshold of lead exposure deemed to be safe would rise, and regula-

tions would be set accordingly. It would cost less for industry to comply with lead abatement standards. Meanwhile, the cost to public health would be harder to gauge. What is certain is that many sources of lead exposure occur in poor, urban neighborhoods, so these areas would face a disproportionately high risk.

In criticizing the fuzzy science in the bill, White House Science Adviser John Gibbons said in a statement on February 3, the Clinton Administration opposes “risk methodologies that would minimize or diminish concerns related to our children, pregnant women, the elderly and others who are often disproportionately affected by environmental, health, and safety threats.”

To avoid this scenario, federal agencies may wish to interpret a “best estimate” to mean one geared toward protecting people most susceptible to a particular risk.

But lawyers may not see it that way. According to the bill, lawyers would have the final word on what constitutes a valid risk assessment. The bill allows for judicial review of any risk assessment if a party deems it incomplete or improper.

It’s this threat of frequent and prolonged legal challenges—based on the bill’s fuzzy wording—that may force agencies to be less protective of vulnerable subpopulations, says Lynn Goldman, EPA’s top risk assessment official.

Other parts of the bill are equally contentious. For one thing, the bill mandates federal agencies to place a risk in context by comparing it to other risks. Such an exercise would help agencies—and Congress—to better prioritize federal spending on environmental problems. This is a laudable goal, but easier said than done. How, for instance, does one compare the hypothetical cancer risks of a lifetime’s exposure to radon to the known risk of illness after a brief exposure to cryptosporidium in drinking water? How does one compare these involuntary risks to the voluntary risk of air travel? The bill demands quick answers to these thorny questions.

The debate over H.R. 1022 is a primer on the primary uncertainties facing environmental policymakers. This debate will force a better understanding of how to reduce these uncertainties—whether or not the bill gets signed into law.

States...(from page 1)

places like those mentioned above or in Des Moines, Lincoln, Phoenix and no doubt elsewhere, state houses may not be looking so eager to tackle environmental protection laws themselves.

Indeed, as the 104th Congress ponders delegating unprecedented environmental protection authority back to states bristling against “federal mandates,” here is the word from many statehouse bureaus:

States may not be so ready.

States may not be so willing.

And states may not be expecting much to trickle down.

Still, should the 104th be resolved to dump programs on the states, here are some things to consider when looking in on statehouses to see what might happen:

- State capitals can be just like Washington D.C.: legislators posture, bureaucrats shrug, lobbyists slink, activists yell, PR agents sell, and scientists act indignant. And many of them may appear to know less about the issue than was outlined in your last report.

Then, six months of speeches, press conferences, hearings, floor actions, amendments and substitute bills later, the state has a new five-pound law, the full impact of which won’t be known for sure until some agency lawyers and some violator’s lawyers get together in a closed room to decide just how many of the verified complainant’s concerns and field inspector’s observations they’re willing to acknowledge in a consent order.

- Gridlock, posturing, horse trading, bickering, compromising and litigating can turn good or bad intentions into mush as quickly in a state as in Washington D.C.

In 1980, for example, when the federal government was failing miserably at developing a disposal strategy for low-level radioactive waste, the states begged for a chance to take on the task themselves. In the 15 years hence, states have proven themselves as inept as the feds were.

- The two most frequently heard issues driving states to demand more clout are an assumption that feds can’t

know what a state’s priorities ought to be, and a frustration that the feds aren’t sending enough money. But no state can know for certain if it can develop programs based on local priorities, because none has ever done it—at least not dealing with big ticket issues like clean air and clean water. A half-dozen states have completed comparative risk studies and another 15 or 20 are putting them together. But they may think differently if they actually have to make funding and regulatory decisions based on those studies—especially if it means deflecting Chamber of Commerce agendas, Greenpeace stunts, budget short falls, and bureaucracy’s proclivity to micro-manage.

- Still, it’s not as if states haven’t tried to develop environmental initiatives. And it’s not as if business or environmental interests don’t already know they can come to Columbus or Boston if they get spurned in Washington.

In the past four years, at least 44 states have taken up property rights bills,

and at least 13 states have approved them. Likewise, in the absence of any meaningful federal laws, dozens of states have enacted strong recycling and pollution prevention programs.

- States are more used to dealing with specific problems, like tire dumping or pig farms. But there is no issue too narrow to bring out state government bungling. Ohio began developing rules restricting yard waste disposal, for example, in 1988. A task force was convened. Hearings were held. Waste Management, BFI, Citizen Action and the Ohio Environmental Council weighed in. A whole new bureaucratic structure was created. Specialists were hired. Yet a December, 1992, deadline for the regulations was missed. So was a one-year extension. So was the next extension.

Finally last fall, the agency came out with its rules—with a catch. The catch: there would be no enforcement. The agency explained it couldn't police yard waste generated and disposed by 10 million people, any of whom might treacherously rake a few leaves into a Hefty bag, undermining a whole community's law-abiding standing.

- A lot of the responsibility already is in the state's hands—in a way that gives states some power without the blame. Under most environmental laws, states have permitting and enforcement powers and some latitude in writing regulations, but the feds set the parameters and retain veto power on actions.

That lets states play "good cop/bad

cop" when they have to push a program that is costing jobs, driving up the cost of drinking water, or closing a county's only landfill. State officials say, "Sorry, our hands are tied. Those darn feds are making us do this." Without federal oversight, state officials will have to take more blame—from one side or another.

- The side with the most votes wins. This is often underappreciated. At an Ohio legislative hearing in March, one Cleveland Democrat offered 49 amendments to a single piece of environmental legislation, one at a time. Five to three.

States are more used to dealing with specific problems, like tire dumping or pig farms. But there is no issue too narrow to bring out state government bungling

Five to three. Five to three. Each amendment got shot down by the Republican-controlled committee, but the determined Democrat pressed on. Later, he proclaimed moral victory because he got his points into the debate. Ohio's environment is unmoved by his boast.

- Political sides—and the level of trust people may have in each level of government—can ebb and flow with the political tides. And sometimes it's irrelevant what side is in charge. For the past four or five years, activists in Ohio's environmental cause célèbre, the WTI

hazardous waste incinerator fight, saved their harshest condemnations for Ohio's Republican governor, alleging he blocked any impartial review. The governor's staff routinely replied, almost with an attitude of boredom, that WTI's siting plans and permits to install all were approved by his Democratic predecessor, but that he, the Republican, had signed a moratorium on new incinerators.

- Whenever an issue divides business and environmental groups against each other it can get ugly, even at the state level where fewer environmental groups are organized or represented.

In 1992 Ohio's governor declared brownfields—those properties too contaminated to develop but too clean for Superfund—to be his administration's top environmental priority. He campaigned hard for a brownfields development law. But two years later the legislative, staff and public wrangling over brownfields had led to two corruption investigations and the resignation of a deputy Ohio EPA director, and it may have helped propel a new state attorney general into office. Ohio Gov. George V. Voinovich has been taking a much lower profile on environmental issues lately.

Scott Powers is the environment reporter at The Columbus Dispatch and works across the street from the Ohio statehouse.

SEJ Membership still growing in its fifth year

By CHRIS RIGEL

Membership in SEJ has shown an increase since it's first year in 1991, during which 622 people joined the fledgling organization. The most dramatic increase occurred during 1994, when over 300 people became members.

On January 7, 1993, then records manager Amy Gahrn recorded the total membership at 781; January 21, 1994: 830, a slow year for growth at 49 increase. January 5 of this year, SEJ membership stood at 1011, up 181 for the year.

We've only recently begun tracking the number of people dropping out of SEJ, an important figure in showing the

true increase. While totals show an increase, they don't accurately reflect the number of people who are joining SEJ. During 1994, records show that 121 people dropped out of the organization while the increase equalled 181, meaning that 302 people joined SEJ during 1994.

The percentage of active members has dropped slightly, from 72% in the first year to the current 64%, while academic membership has shown a steady increase from 8% in the first year to 18% currently. Associate membership has remained at a solid 18% throughout.

Newspaper reporters still make up the greatest portion of the group, though

the percentage slipped from 36 to 33. Freelancers hold the second position at 13.7%, followed by magazine (9.6%), newsletter (8.1), educators (7.8%), TV (7.3%), students (6.5%), non-profit or university (4.8%), radio (3%), news service (3%), photography (.8%), government (.8%), publishing (.6%), with miscellaneous categories making up the rest at .8%. Miscellaneous categories include association, attorney, author, cartoonist, film and informational materials.

Chris Rigel is systems manager at SEJ's office in Philadelphia

APRIL

18-19. **More than Aware: Women Making a Difference for the Environment** (with at least 17 women speaking on environmental research and the "Rachel Carson legacy"). Chatham College, Pittsburgh. Contact: Conference Coordinator, Chatham College, Woodland Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15232. Fax: (412) 365-1610.

23-26. **Water in the 21st Century: Conservation, Demand, and Supply** (sponsored by American Water Resources Assn). Salt Lake City. Contact: M.C. Fink, AWWRA, 5410 Grosvenor La., Ste. 220, Bethesda, MD 20814-2192. Ph: (301) 493-5844.

27-28. **Symposium on Air Toxics: Biomarkers in Environmental Applications** (sponsored by Centers for Disease Control and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, it will focus on how to establish and monitor human exposure to air pollutants). Houston. Contact: National Urban Air Toxics Res. Ctr., PO Box 20286, Houston, TX 77225-0286. Ph: (713) 792-7459; Fax: (713) 792-4407.

27-28. **Risk Issues and the Chemical Industry** (sponsored by *Chemical and Engineering News*, it will explore how scientists and the public view risk, offer case studies, and evaluate prospects for legislation to impact risk analysis). Park Hyatt, Washington, DC. Contact: Marv Coyner, American Chemical Soc., 1155 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Ph: (202) 872-4450; Fax: (202) 872-4370.

MAY

1-3. **Indoor Environment Conference** (focusing on monitoring and improving indoor air quality). Hyatt Regency on the Inner Harbor, Baltimore. Contact: IAQ Publications Inc., 2 Wisconsin Circle, Suite 430, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Ph: (800) 394-0115; Fax: (301) 913-0119.

2-4. **National Outdoor Action Conference on Aquifer Remediation, Ground Water Monitoring, and Soil Treatment** (sponsored by National Ground Water Assn., conference will include both scientific papers and outdoor demonstrations). Las Vegas. Contact: NGWA, 6375 Riverside Dr., PO Box 9050, Dublin, OH 43017-0950. Ph: (800) 551-7379; Fax: (614) 761-3446.

8-12. **International Incineration Conference** (with papers on novel air pollution controls; new monitoring technologies for emissions of dioxins, mercury, and volatile organics; and cleanup of toxic wastes). Seattle. Contact: Lori Barnow, Univ. of Calif.-Irvine. Ph: (714) 824-5859; Fax: (714) 824-8539.

22-23. **International Conference on Climate Change** Washington, DC. Contact: Jan McCusker, International Climate Change Partnership, PO Box 236, Frederick, MD 21701. Ph: 301/695-3762.

23-25. **Measuring and Monitoring Forest Biological Diversity** (sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and United Nations, it will focus on assessments in sessions organized by continent and ecosystem type). Contact: Francisco Dallmeier, The Smithsonian, 1100 Jefferson Dr. SW, Ste. 3123, Washington, DC 20560. Ph: 202/357-4793.

26-28. **Risk Assessment of PAHs in the Environment** (sponsored by EPA, it will examine both cancer and noncancer health consequences of human exposures to mixtures of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs] produced by combustion). Hyatt Regency Airport, San Francisco. Contact: Alex Taylor, JACA Corp., 550 Pinetown Rd., Ft. Washington, PA 19034. Ph: 215/643-5466; Fax: 214/643-2772.

JUNE

1-3. **First open meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Community** (with sessions on property rights and environmental change, industrial restructuring and sustainable development, and human migrations). Durham, NC. Contact: Global Environmental Change Program, Social Science Res. Council, 605 Third Ave., New York, NY 10158. Ph: 212/661-0280; Fax: 212/370-7896.

5-7. **International Congress on Toxic Combustion Byproducts** (sponsored by NIEHS, EPA, Sandia National Laboratory, Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley, and Advanced Combustion Engineering Res. Ctr., with sessions on soot and particulates, organics and metals, fate in the environment, and health effects). Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley. Contact: Conferences and Institute, Univ. of Utah, 2174 Annex Bldg., Salt Lake City, Utah, 84112. Ph: 801/581-5809; Fax: 801/581-3165.

5-8. **International Congress on Hazardous Waste: Impact on Health and Ecological Health** (sponsored by the Dept. of Health and Human Services, with sessions on noncancer effects of hazardous wastes, biomarkers of exposures to these wastes, new technologies to limit these wastes, and case studies in environmental justice). Marriott Marquis Hotel, Atlanta. Contact: Howard Frumkin, Emory Univ. School of Public Health, Div. of Environmental and Occupational Health, 1599 Clifton Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30329. Ph: 404/727-3697; Fax: 404/727-8744.

5-9. **Sustainable Forests** (with sessions "designed to take you from academic philosophies to development of an actual ecosystem management plan"). Sault Ste.

Marie, Michigan and Ontario. Contact: Joan Jaffit, BRIDGE-Sault College, PO Box 60, 443 Northern Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5L3, Canada. Ph: 705/759-2554; Fax: 705/256-6156.

7-10. **Environmental Lung Disease** (sponsored by the Univ. of Colo., it promises to explore research behind mechanisms of lung disease and human impacts of environmental and occupational exposures to toxic agents). Aspen, Colo. Contact: Lee S. Newman, Box C272, Univ. of Colo. Health Sciences Ctr., 4200 E. 9th Ave., Denver, CO 80262. Ph: 303/270-7767; Fax: 303/270-5632.

21-25. **First Interdisciplinary Conference on the Environment** (to explore interactions between the natural environment and human institutions). Worcester, MA. Contact: Demetri Kantarelis, Institute for Energy Analysis, Economics/Foreign Affairs, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury St., Worcester, MA 01615-0005. Ph: 508/752-5615 ext.557; Fax: 508/799-4502.

JULY

2-6. **International Congress of Toxicology** (with sessions on asthma and the environment, estrogenic chemicals in the environment, ozone exposures, health risks of oxygenated auto fuels, and pesticide effects). Seattle. Contact: ICT-VII Management Staff, the Wellington Group, 4707 College Blvd., Ste. 212, Leawood, KS 66211. Ph: 913/345-1990; Fax: 913/345-0893.

9-12. **Mid-Atlantic Industrial and Hazardous Waste Conference** (with sessions on waste minimization, treatment technologies, air pollution, control of volatile organic chemicals, legal and regulatory issues, in situ remediation, and case studies). Bethlehem, PA. Contact: Arup K. Sengupta, Media Relations, Lehigh Univ., 436 Brodhead Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18015. Ph: 610/758-3171; Fax: 610/758-4522.

WORKSHOPS

April 21-23. **The Future of the Endangered Species Act**, a course for mid-career journalists, sponsored by the Foundation for American Communications (FACS) at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV. Scheduled speakers include Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, author Gregg Easterbrook, Harvard biologist Otto Solbrig, economists Robert Stavins and John Loomis, and legal expert Brian Gray. It's open to the first 40 qualified applicants, and "demand is expected to be heavy." Subsidized meals and lodging still run only \$75, with travel costs the responsibility of attendees. Interested candidates should contact: FACS, 3800 Barham Blvd, Ste. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90068. Ph: 213/851-7372; Fax: 213/851-9186.

Look before you leap on environmental stories

By **SEN. FRANK H. MURKOWSKI**

Back in 1988 the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) led the attack on the chemical Daminozide, better known as Alar. A growth regulator commonly used on certain varieties of apples to prolong their ripening, Alar became the urgent environmental battle cry of the year.

In 1989, CBS' *60 Minutes* did a segment suggesting that Alar posed a dire cancer threat to the nation's young. The NRDC prompted a bumper crop of Alar stories, a display of pack journalism that would cause an informed reporter today to stampede from the room in embarrassment. There were so many of these stories that apple sales plummeted. Foreign nations refused to permit U.S. apples onto their shores (including apples not treated with Alar). Growers everywhere lost hundreds of millions of dollars.

Later, Alar was determined to be non-carcinogenic. Only a byproduct of Alar, UDMH, was found to produce tumors in blood vessels in mice, but only at the equivalent dose of a human consuming 19,000 quarts of apple juice daily for 70 years. This was a classic example of reporters following the siren call of common wisdom.

Reporters did not base their Alar stories on sound science. Rather, they selected which stories to write based on whatever trend was then in vogue and whatever "source" said it had the best interests of the environment at heart.

The new story line making the rounds of environmental reporters today is that because the Republicans won the election in November, the nation's environment is somehow under siege. I have seen stories, based largely on the ramblings of major environmental groups or former Democratic activists, that because Alaska Republicans chair the two natural resource panels in Congress, the environmental protections and ethics in public land policy are likely to follow the passenger pigeon into extinction.

The truth is that while Republican stewardship hopefully will mean a swing in the pendulum back toward rational environmental regulation, it will not

mean an end to the nation's battle to clean up its waters, protect its air quality, preserve its parks and, in general, promote a healthful environment for us and our grandchildren.

As a Senate chairman, I am fully aware that 70 percent of Americans support a healthy environment. Alaska spends more per capita on environmental protection than any other state. That is not to say, however, that Americans blindly support the definition of a healthy environment as preached by major environmental organizations for the past decade. A case in point is risk assessment.

I have sponsored legislation to require that federal regulations be based

Policy makers need reporters to look beyond the scare of the day.

on sound science, and that regulations will go into effect only if the risk to be mitigated is real. Some environmental groups have already decried risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis as code words to weaken environmental laws. Such fears are groundless, assuming that current environmental law has been based on real hazards. By recent polls, 80 percent of Americans support risk assessment-based regulations. I would hope that reporters would objectively look at those risks and costs in reporting on this issue.

During the coming year, I can envision a number of issues that will come to the forefront. They include:

- **Mining reform:** Republicans will be reintroducing legislation to reform current federal mining law. The major environmental groups have been spreading the word that any Republican-proposed federal royalty payment—whatever is proposed—won't be high enough to prompt mining reform.

To be balanced, a reporter needs to look at the total costs borne by industry to mine in America and remember that to protect the environment—not counting the jobs of American miners—the royalty should be at a level companies can afford to pay. If it isn't, firms will simply abandon building new mines in America and

head for the Third World, where costs are lower and environmental laws less burdensome. We will have lost jobs, harmed our security, and worsened the global environment for naught.

- **Endangered Species Act:** There will be debate over how to prevent frivolous challenges to development of any kind, in the name of protecting this or that species.

A recent example came in Alaska, where environmentalists argued that logging should be curtailed on the excuse that future logging might someday threaten wolf habitat, even though Alaska has the nation's healthiest wolf stocks. Recently that claim was dismissed, but only after 40 percent of the land open to logging—less than 10 percent of the forest in the first place—had been closed, putting hundreds of loggers and mill workers out of work.

- **Energy development:** There will be efforts to expand U.S. energy production that might well be good for the environment because they might cut the number of foreign oil tankers streaming toward U.S. coastlines.

The debate should be whether more energy can be produced domestically while protecting the environment. Reporters owe it to the public to examine the tradeoffs—environmental, economic, and strategic—if we continue to import more and more of our energy resources from overseas.

In short, policy makers need reporters to start communicating to the American public the real impacts of environmental policy, to look beyond the scare of the day. This country won't be able to afford policies that will be best for the planet over the long term if we destroy our national economy in the short-term by excessive regulation, or by the continued imposition of costly regulations that may not address our real environmental needs.

Republican Frank H. Murkowski is U.S. Senator from Alaska and chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Don't Forget Administration's Role in Reform

By **JIM BACA**

Journalists who cover the environment are right to focus on the new Congress, where the House has moved to cripple environmental regulation and enforcement with byzantine new cost-benefit rules. But they should not forget about the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, where meaningful reform first lost its way.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's supposedly tactical call to forsake grazing fee reform, for example, was disappointing, particularly in light of other recent administration actions to increase cruise ship visits to Alaska's fragile Glacier Bay National Park and its proposal to sell off millions of acres of public land. It makes me wonder if the administration is on the verge of making a significant political blunder—abandoning its pledge to pursue reform of natural resource policies.

The president's first budget laid out a new approach to natural resource use, following through on promises made in the 1992 election campaign. To paraphrase Secretary Babbitt, the administration's policies towards resource exploitation would be based on three principles: the use of market principles, fairness, and environmental protection. As the secretary remarked, this approach was "at once simple and profound." The 1872 Mining Law, grazing fees, below-cost timber sales, and federal water projects were at the top of the administration's reform agenda.

So what happened to justify a retreat on these policies?

Consider Secretary Babbitt's retreat on grazing fees. Was it a crushing defeat in Congress? Only a revisionist historian could blame it on the Congress. Bi-partisan majorities in both the House and Senate supported the proposed new poli-

cy for grazing on taxpayer-owned rangelands. The House voted in support of it by an overwhelming 3-1 margin, and 53 senators supported ending the filibuster against Nevada Senator Harry Reid's compromise grazing reform proposal.

Such broad support should come as no surprise. Big-money ranching operations such as Metropolitan Life are grazing cattle on public lands for as little as

ing subsidized grazing fees. Now the administration has retreated in the midst of battle, leaving only a watered-down set of administrative reforms—and even these reforms will be "on hold" for the next six months while Congress debates their future.

If this is a tactical move, it is in the wrong direction. If this marks full-scale retreat on the administration's promised reform of federal natural resource policies, it is a political blunder. The voters did not elect President Clinton, or the members of the 104th Congress, with a mandate to protect special interest subsidies that distort the marketplace, cheat middle-class taxpayers, and discourage protection of the fragile and arid western lands.

If the administration retreats now, it will seriously undercut reform efforts in Congress. Certainly as the president and Congress work to cut the federal deficit, shared sacrifice must be a guiding principle. To once more paraphrase Secretary Babbitt, it would be unreasonable to say to the American people, "Everyone should pay their fair share—except subsidized miners, timber companies, ranchers, and water users."

The lessons of the mid-term election should not be lost yet again in a scramble to appease a few special interests and their congressional defenders. Secretary Babbitt and President Clinton should recognize that only by following through with their original agenda of fundamental reform—including natural resource policy reform—can they be accountable to the American public.

Jim Baca is a former director of the Bureau of Land Management under Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, and former New Mexico state land commissioner.

Viewpoints

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

\$1.86 per animal unit month (AUM). Private rates range from around \$6 to nearly \$12 per AUM.

Despite the broad support for legislative reform, the filibuster succeeded, and the ball was back in the administration's court. It was time for the administration to show courage and fight to keep its promises to the American taxpayer—and it did not.

Why? Did the voters reject the principles embodied in the administration's policy in 1994? No. I am not aware of exit polls indicating that the electorate spoke in favor of abandoning market principles, fairness or environmental protection.

Indeed, I would argue that the mid-term election should have sent the administration a very different message: If elected officials expect the public's support then they must follow through on their promises and give the public something positive to vote for.

For the first two years of the administration, Secretary Babbitt repeatedly affirmed the administration's commitment to grazing reform, including end-

Tip of the Hat

The editors of this journal offer a much-belated gesture of gratitude to SEJ members Tim Wheeler and Amy Gahrn for their important contribution to the editing and production of our coverage of the 1994 Utah conference.

Thanks, Tim and Amy. We could not have done it without you!

SEJ has found a new “home” on the web

By **RUSS CLEMINGS**

Easily the fastest-growing part of the multi-faceted Internet is the World Wide Web. But describing the web brings to mind the old joke about the blind men examining the elephant—what it looks like depends on how you look at it.

Whatever else it may be, the web is now an online home of the Society of Environmental Journalists. In February, SEJ went “on the web” with a central jumping-off point—a “home page” in Internet parlance—for environmental information housed on computers around the world.

The Environmental Journalism Home Page is designed to be the next best thing to one-stop shopping for online environmental information. Already, in its infancy, you can use it as a gateway to toxicological information briefs at the University of Oregon, current weather forecasts and satellite photos from the University of Illinois, or the card catalog at the Environmental Protection Agency’s headquarters library.

More of these links will be added in coming months. What is a link, you ask? It’s what makes the World Wide Web special—a highlighted entry in a screen full of text that you can “click” on with your computer’s mouse, enabling you to “jump” to another screen, maybe on the same computer or maybe on another computer on the other side of the world.

So, for example, on the opening screen of the Environmental Journalism Home Page, you can click on the highlighted words “Society of Environmental Journalists” and watch your screen switch to another page describing our group and explaining how to join. Or you can click on the words “U.S. Environmental Protection Agency” and be connected in seconds to a similarly formatted “home page” for the EPA, housed on one of the agency’s computers.

The magic of the web is that these connections are practically seamless and nearly invisible to the user. Unless you pay close attention to the messages that scroll across the bottom of your

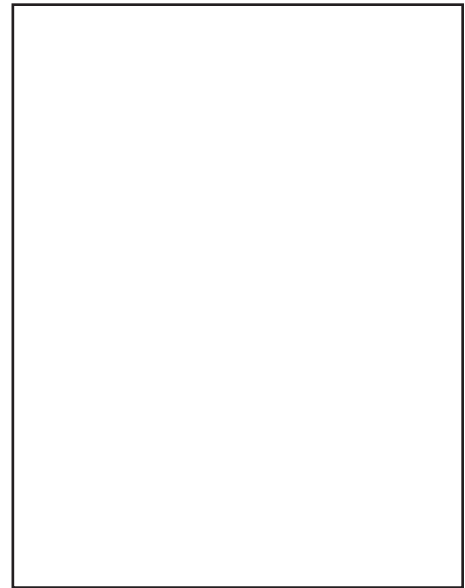
screen, you may never know that you’ve jumped from one computer to another one thousands of miles away. And, with few exceptions, it’s all free once you’ve established a basic Internet connection.

How can you do that? Let us count the ways, starting with the big commercial online services that most consumers use. If you’re on Prodigy, you can fire up the needed software—called a “web browser”—by selecting “jump,” then typing “world wide web.” If you’re on America Online or CompuServe, you won’t be able to use a web browser until later this spring. Both have lagged behind Prodigy in providing this service, but promise to have browsers in place before summer.

If you have a “Unix shell” Internet connection, what you can do will depend on what kind of software your service provider has loaded on its computer. You could call and ask. Or just try typing “lynx” and see if anything happens. Lynx is a popular web browser that is installed on many Unix systems (although it can’t display photos or other graphics). If it’s on your system, you can jump to the Environmental Journalism Home Page by typing “g” (for “go”), followed by the page’s web address (see accompanying box). If you don’t have lynx but do have the access to the “telnet” program, try using telnet to connect to the site “fatty.law.cornell.edu,” where there is a public-access lynx browser. You’ll need to log in as “www.”

If you have a more sophisticated Internet connection known as “SLIP” or “PPP,” then you’re really in luck. You can view the Environmental Journalism Home Page the way it was meant to be seen, using a graphical web browser like Netscape or Mosaic, which will give you all the text plus some nice typography and spectacular pictures. (You’ll love the ants we picked up from the Smithsonian.) Again, check with your Internet provider for details. SLIP or PPP accounts are available in most U.S. and Canadian cities for \$30 per month or less. A computer store may be able to help you find a provider in your area

Or, if you’re on a commercial service such as AOL or Prodigy, you can



The SEJ Environmental Journalism Home Page, as viewed with the Netscape browser.

post a query for providers in your area code on Internet access-related message boards. Another member of that service may have the information you need. The Environmental Journalism Home Page is a major part of SEJ’s online presence, which the board has made one of the organization’s top priorities for 1995. We’re grateful to a Washington newspaper, the *Tacoma News Tribune*, for donating space on one of its computers for our web page. And if you visit the page, we’d appreciate hearing from you. Just click on the word “Comments” at the bottom of any page to send your thoughts via e-mail. Finally, if you’re planning to attend the SEJ annual conference in Boston from Oct. 26 to 29, be sure to stop by our computer lab. We’re planning live demonstrations of our web page, and we’ll have Internet experts on hand to show you how to use it.

Russell Clemings, environmental reporter at the Fresno (Ca.) Bee, is the principal author of the Environmental Journalism Home Page. But he could always use more help.

SEJ on CompuServe journalism forum: alternative to AOL

SEJ's longstanding online meeting place on America Online has now been supplemented by an new cyberhome in the Journalism Forum on CompuServe.

The CompuServe forum isn't designed to replace the AOL forum, which will remain our principal residence in cyberspace. But it will allow those who prefer CompuServe to AOL (it's one of those Coke-vs.-Pepsi things, you know) to connect with us anyway.

So stop by section 15, "Journalism Organizations," for a cup of virtual coffee and a chat. We share the section with many other organizations, from the Asian American Journalists Association to the National Association of Physician Broadcasters.

We have an accompanying file library with selected *SEJournal* articles, the Environmental Health Center's *Environment Writer* newsletter, and other useful stuff. Thanks, by the way, to *SEJournal* authors, whose articles (unless they request otherwise) will make up much of the offering.

Elsewhere in the Journalism Forum, you'll also find the National Association of Science Writers (in section 14) and Investigative Reporters and Editors (in section 19). The latter's file library, like SEJ's, is open to members and non-members alike. NASW's file library is for members only.

If you want to learn more about the Journalism Forum and CompuServe in general, drop into the computer lab at the SEJ annual conference in Boston from Oct. 26 to 29. Jim Cameron, the forum's chief sysop, will be there to conduct demonstrations and give away CompuServe starter kits. (If you can't wait until then for a starter kit, call CompuServe at (800) 848-8199 and you'll be sent one upon request.)

You can reach the Environmental Journalism Home Page by using any World Wide Web browser and typing SEJ's home page address (no carriage returns):

http://www.tribnet.com/enviro/env_home.htm

New Members

New Members...(from page 9)

Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing

- Janina de Guzman (academic), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Teresa Ann Kim (academic), Michigan State University, East Lansing
- John A. Kinch (academic) American Thought & Language Department, Michigan State University, Lansing
- Richard Kleiman (academic), University of Michigan Ann Arbor
- Edward Martel (academic), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Richard Mertens (academic), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Melissa Ramsdell (associate), East Lansing
- Jenny Weil (academic), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Minnesota

- Mary Losure, News Department Minnesota Public Radio St. Paul

Missouri

- Repps B. Hudson, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*,
- Andy Kravetz, St. Louis
- Susan Parker, *Soils Magazine* Group III Communications, Independence

Montana

- David N.B. Lee, East Glacier

North Carolina

- Kathleen M. Coe, News & Record, Greensboro
- Karen Schmidt, Chapel Hill

New Hampshire

- Carol C. Cushing (associate) *Concord Monitor*, Bow

New Jersey

- George C. Andreassi, *The Wave*, Cresskill
- Nichole Tillman (academic), Norfolk State University, New Brunswick

New York

- Paul J. Bartishevich, *Nature Watch; Environminute*, Finger Lakes Productions, Inc., Trumansburg
- Karen de SEVE (academic), New York University, Brooklyn
- Daniel Drollette, Jr. (academic), Cancer Research Institute, Brooklyn
- Pranay Gupte, *The Earth Times*, Brooklyn
- Eric Koli, *Primetime Live* ABC News Rockaway
- Al Lewis, *EBJ's Enviro Consulting Manager*, Environmental Mktg. & Communications, Inc. New York
- Beth Parento, *Sports Afield Magazine* Hearst Corporation, New York

Ohio

- Joe Feiertag, *Journal-News*, Hamilton

Pennsylvania

- Jeff Kralowetz, *York Dispatch/Sunday News*, York

Texas

- Paula Dittrock, UPI Houston
- Jerry Needham, *San Antonio Express-News*, San Antonio

Utah

- Janet Meiners (academic), Brigham Young University, Provo

Virginia

- Larry Evans, *The Free Lance-Star*, Fredericksburg
- Anna Hebner, *Greenwire*, American Political Network, Arlington
- Caroline G. Hemenway, *International Environmental Systems Update*, CEEM Information Services, Fairfax
- Kimberly A. Roy (associate) *Industrial Wastewater*, Water Environment Federation, Alexandria

Washington

- Lloyd D. Brown, *Port Orchard Independent*, Kitsap Newspaper Group, Port Orchard
- Jack Hamann, *Earth Matters; Network Earth*, CNN Environment Unit, Seattle

Wisconsin

- Bill Keenan (academic), University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Craig Trumbo (academic) Agricultural Journalism Department, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Australia

- Bill Birnbauer, *The Age*, David Syme & Company, Blackburn, South Victoria

Brazil

- Roberto Villar Belmonte, *Gaúcha Ecologia*

Canada

- Brian McAndrew, *The Toronto Star*, Toronto

Chile

- Paola Andrea Gerszenwich, *El Mercurio S.A.P.*, Santiago

Indonesia

- Warief Djajanto (academic) Dr. Soetomo Press Institute, Jakarta

Hungary

- Marta Sarvari, *Magyar Nemzet*, Budapest

Environment Meets Agriculture in 1995 Farm Bill

By JOEL GROSSMAN

With the 1995 Farm Bill winding its way through Congress, it's a good time to examine the environmental impacts of 945 million acres of farmland and six billion U.S. farm animals.

Money, power, politics and the environment are all wrapped up together in the measure. The vested interests are many, and include vendors of fertilizers and other agrochemical. Conventional farmers often find themselves basing their planting decisions and agrochemical use on bottom-line economics related to government program requirements and subsidy payments. And every agricultural rule,

regulation, program, price support, quota, credit, subsidy and farming practice has environmental impacts that can be explored at local, regional, national and even international levels.

WHERE TO BEGIN YOUR SEARCH

- For any agricultural project, get the background government statistics. For national statistics, as well as state and some county statistics, don't overlook the Census of Agriculture conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce every fifth year ending in two and seven. The 1992 Census of Agriculture (AC92-A-51; available from U.S. Government Printing Office), pub-

lished in October 1994, is over 500 pages. Separate state reports and electronic data products such as computer tapes and CD-ROMs are also available (Call 1-800-523-3215 for info).

- Data from the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is available on the Internet through Cornell University's Mann Library (gopher to usda.mannlib.cornell.edu), or can be purchased ready for spreadsheet use on floppy diskettes.

- A good Internet starting place for agriculture is the "Extension Service, USDA" gopher, which is listed among "U.S. Government Gopher Servers" on

Selected 1995 Farm Bill Environmental Resources

- **American Farm Bureau Federation**, 600 Maryland Ave SW, Suite 800, Wash DC 20024, Ph: (202)484-3620.

- **American Farmland Trust**, Center for Agriculture in the Environment, P.O. Box 987, DeKalb, Illinois 60115, Ph: (815) 753-9347; fax: (815) 753-2305. (Published *Agricultural Conservation Alternatives: The Greening of the Farm Bill*, A. Ann Sorensen, Editor, October, 1994. 130 p.)

- **Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture** encompasses over 500 grassroots and national organizations from all regions of the country representing everything from family farmers, farmworkers and people of color to fish and wildlife interests and animal protection supporters. The Campaign's goals include "reform and redirection initiatives through the 1995 Farm Bill reauthorization, the Fiscal Year 1996 Budget Act and Fiscal Year 1996 Agriculture Appropriations bill, and through improved administrative implementation of existing measures.

Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture Contacts:

National Office:
12 N. Church St., Somerville, MA 02144
Ph: (617) 666-1005; fax: (617) 666-1005
e-mail: hn3149@handsnet.org

Northeast Contact:
368 Highland Ave., Goshen, NY 10924
Ph: (914) 294-0633; fax: (914) 294-0632

Midwest Contact
P.O. Box 648, Rochester, IL 62563
Ph: (217) 498-9707; fax: (217) 498-9235

Southern Contact:
4 Lindsey Rd., Asheville, NC 28805;
Ph: (704) 299-1922; fax: (704) 299-1575

Western Contact:
P.O. Box 8596, Moscow ID 83843;
Ph: (208) 882-1444; fax (208) 882-8029

Calif. Contact:
P.O. Box 1599, Santa Cruz, CA 95061;
Ph: (408) 458-5304; fax: (408) 454-0433

- **Community Food Security Coalition**: "a diverse network of anti-hunger, sustainable agriculture, environmental, community development, and other food and agriculture related organizations."

Contact: Hartford Food System, 509 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06114;
Ph: (203)-296-9325; fax: (203)-296-8326

OR: Sustainable Food Center, 1715 East Sixth St. Suite 200, Austin, TX, 78702
Ph: (512)-472-2073; fax: (512)-472-2075

- **Council for Agricultural Science and Technology [CAST]**, 4420 West Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014-3447 Ph: (515) 292-2125; fax: (515) 292-4512, Internet: b1cast@exnet.iastate.edu

Numerous publications sponsored a conference on sustainable agriculture and the Farm Bill.

- **National Farmer's Organization**, 2505 Elwood Drive, Ames, IA 50010-200, Ph: (515)-292-2000

- **National Pork Producer's Council**, P.O.Box 10383, Des Moines, IA, 50306 Ph: (515) 223-2600; fax: (515) 223-2646

Publishes a *Pork Issues Handbook*, which includes environmental positions.

- **National Public Policy Education Committee's "Farm Bill Policy Papers"** cover everything from green payments, animal welfare and credit regulations to targeted commodity assistance for mid-sized to small farmers, CRP, WRP, food assistance and food safety. Available for \$10 from publisher, Agricultural and Food Policy Center, Dept of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2124, Ph: (409) 845-5913; fax: (409) 845-3140.

"Farm Bill Policy Papers" also can be downloaded free from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Internet GOPHER site, though graphs and tables are in *.GIF format, which can be hard to use.

- **The Wildlife Society**, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-2197 Ph: (301)-897-9770.

- Background papers on farm bill topics on the World Wide Web:
URL <http://unlvm.unl.edu/farmbill.htm>

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) position paper on effects of CRP on wildlife, with background on past Farm Bills. The CRP pays farmers \$2 billion per year to keep 36.5 million acres of land out of production.

Source: Compiled for Sanet-mg by David Hougen-Eitzman, DEITZMAN@carleton.edu [Feb 28, 1995].

Internet gopher menus. The USDA gopher also offers access to a laundry list of other agricultural gophers around the country. Environmental gophers are also plentiful on the Internet. But searching the Internet for information can be time-consuming, and at times a bit like searching for a needle in a haystack.

The National Agricultural Library (NAL) is often the best place to start a cold search. NAL has a good "quick bibliography" series on hundreds of topics. Quick bibliographies are packaged searches of USDA's Agricola database, and can be obtained from NAL via the Internet (mostly FTP of *.zip files) or in print form by sending a self-addressed label. (See box on other sustainable agriculture sources)

The NAL's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center is an especially good source of information on sustainable agriculture; look there for environmental solutions to agricultural problems. Though among the major topics at the United Nations' Earth Summit Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, sustainable agriculture is still a Rorschach ink blot term whose definition is hotly debated.

If nothing else, the environmental ideas of sustainable agriculture thinking offer another perspective against which to measure the impacts of the bill. It's a perspective in which the bottom-line maximum production and profit concerns of conventional farming are not the only set

of values to use in divvying up the Farm Bill pork barrel.

If agriculture is part of your beat, particularly in the American heartland, check out "Sustainable Agriculture in the American Midwest: Lessons from the Past, Prospects for the Future," a new book from the University of Illinois Press (1325 Oak St., Champaign, IL; \$32.95; 291 pp.). The book focuses on the American breadbasket, and is a well-executed combination of overviews and detailed discussions ranging from ecology, entomology and ethnicity to wildlife, soils and sociology. Among the dozen chapters is one by co-editor Gregory McIsaac exploring definitions of sustainable agriculture that include socioeconomic justice, stewardship of the earth and preserving ecosystems.

Another good place to seek information on agricultural issues and environmental concerns is the Sustainable Agricultural Network mailing group, Sanet-mg (for info send e-mail to almanac-help@ces.ncsu.edu). Sanet-mg also provides notices of conferences and electronic newsletters, some from grassroots groups that might provide sources for local stories. (See box on electronic newsletters free on Sanet-mg).

Joel Grossman is a Santa Monica-based freelance writer and an associate member of the SEJ.

Sustainable agricultural directory on sale

The second edition of the *Sustainable Agriculture Directory of Expertise* is now on sale. This electronic version of the popular directory contains 932 individuals and organizations with sustainable agriculture know-how and skills.

The directory is available on a 3.5-inch computer diskette (compatible with MS-DOS systems) as a Folio "Infobase." The infobase, a completely indexed, full-text database, allows users to browse through the directory, jump from section to section via hypertext links, or search for keywords anywhere within a document. Information can be printed or saved to a file. The diskette includes an intro, instructions and a list of key terms.

While supplies last, SAN is offering, for the price of \$14.95, a diskette copy of the 1994 Directory and a print edition of the 1993 Directory. (Price includes shipping and handling.) To order, send \$14.95 to Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Building, Room 12, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405. Make check or money order payable to "Sustainable Agriculture Publications." Purchase orders can be mailed to the above address or faxed to (802) 656-4656. Special bulk order discounts are available. Questions about directory orders should be directed to Meredith Simpson at the above address or by phone at (802) 656-0471.

Other sustainable agriculture sources

• Alternative Farming Systems

Information Center, National Agricultural Library (NAL), 4th fl., 10301 Baltimore Blvd., Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

Ph: (301) 504-6559

e-mail: nalasfic@nalusda.gov.

• Environmental Working Group, 1718 Connecticut Ave. N.W., suite 600, Washington D.C. 20009
Ph: (202) 667-6982

Publishes an annual review of the EPA, a report on herbicides in the water supply and has the most complete information available by county on recipients of agricultural subsidies.

• Knowledge Index on Compuserve (Go: KI) has USDA's Agricola and Commonwealth Agriculture Bureau's

CABI databases searchable back to early 1970s, as well as Pollution Abstracts, food science and medical databases. Costs \$24/hr.

• USDA SERA State Extension Sustainable Agriculture Leaders:

Irv Skelton, Alaska: (907) 474-6367

Salei'A Afele-Fa'Amuli, American Samoa: (684) 699-1575

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Dennis Lamm, Colorado: (303) 491-6281

Bob Barber, Guam: (671) 734-2575 or 2518

Po-Yung Lai, Hawaii: (808) 956-8392

James R. Nelson, Idaho: (208) 885-7635

Nelson M. Esguerra, Micronesia: (691) 320-2462

Greg Johnson, Montana: (406) 994-3861

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Overcoming science anxiety: reading journals

By Janet Raloff

There are environmental journalists who think of themselves as science writers—and then there are those who don't. This column is for the latter: writers who break into a cold sweat at the prospect of interviewing the white lab coat crowd; or whose brains automatically enter "screen-saver mode" during long presentations of technical data.

This, the first in a series of occasional toolboxes aimed at making science and its practitioners more accessible, tackles that bastion of mumbo jumbo—the scientific journals. If you have never cracked the pages of *Nature*, *Cancer Research*, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, or *Environmental Science & Technology*, you don't know what you're missing. Such showcases for research are chock full of original data, insights, and analyses.

Findings presented in journal articles can become the focus of a news story, strengthen a feature, or suggest contacts for comment on focal issues of your articles in the works. Studies presented in these journals can lend authority to what might otherwise constitute only anecdotal trends and your own local observations. Scientific studies also can illustrate national or even international dimensions of a topic that your audience ordinarily confronts only in its own backyard.

The rub, of course, is that for your purposes, most of the material in any given journal will constitute chaff. And even when you find the good stuff, will you recognize it?

Following are tips not only on how to separate the wheat from the chaff, but also on how to mill that wheat into a product you can use.

First, don't confuse a journal with jargon magazines. Journals are like a hard-copy form of scientific conferences. Typically, their featured articles constitute the first peer-reviewed presentation of original research.

Scientists volunteer articles, usually based on one or more sets of related experiments. Those that the journal deems original and interesting enough go out to a group of reviewers. These experts in the field develop questions and criti-

cisms that the journal anonymously relays back to the authors. An article may go through numerous and extensive rewrites over the period of a year or more as its authors attempt to satisfy these reviewers—and the journal's editors.

Some journals also contain a news section and other departments. But it's important to note that these entries constitute magazine journalism—not peer-reviewed science. Treat them, therefore,

Findings presented in journal articles can become the focus of a news story, strengthen a feature, or suggest contacts for comment on focal issues of your articles in the works.

as you would any secondary source, such as an AP wire story.

Back to the original, peer-reviewed articles. All journals tend to present these using the same format, beginning with the title and abstract (summary). The actual text starts with an introduction, followed by a methods section, presentation of results, discussion, and numbered references.

First tip: Don't try to read a whole journal any more than you would a newspaper. Skimming is the rule.

While scouting for something interesting, be aware that researchers sometimes resort to subterfuge: that is, they can intentionally mask fascinating stuff behind a really dry or supercilious title. For instance, "Hepatobiliary adducts in shipyard workers," might constitute the first solid evidence correlating asbestos with quantifiable precancerous changes in the liver—the body's primary organ for detoxifying noxious materials. If your audience is solidly landlocked, and you don't haven't a clue what the first two terms refer to, you might miss this.

So when in doubt, scope it out by jumping to the last paragraph of the abstract. It will say something like, "these findings suggest Supremo Pesticido may be more toxic than originally anticipated." If that whets your interest, read on. But realize the conclusion might just as easily say, "these data indicate the appar-

ent toxicity of this compound remains unexplained." With that warning of no new answers, you can fairly confidently move on to the next candidate.

If the abstract's conclusion looks promising, read the introduction to the article. This provides a background, such as how many tons of Supremo Pesticido were sprayed on U.S. fields last year, and which edible crops carry residues of the chemical into the nation's kitchens. This section also should summarize most related research in the area within a few paragraphs.

Still interested? Then move on to step four: the last graph of the entire article.

Here the authors usually provide as cogent an extrapolation of their findings to the real world as the article will contain. This is the make-or-break graph. If you're still tantalized after reading this, you may need to read little more.

With an investment of only a minute or two, you have breezed through a jargon-laden technical paper and made the subjective determination of whether—for you and your audience—it represents wheat or chaff.

For the record, this is also what scientists do. Few will more than scan those papers that don't directly relate to their work. Instead, they breeze through this four-step process—title, end of abstract, introduction, and end of discussion—to decide whether a paper is worth photocopying for their files.

If you've decided this isn't chaff, you now have several options. Because some authors are remarkably lucid, you might find reading the entire paper fairly easy and interesting. More often you won't find it's either. But that's okay. Scientists too can find these papers tough wading—which is why they often stop at the end of the four-step skimming process.

If the mumbo-jumbo is really daunting, stop now and call one of the authors. You're allowed. But if you can, try stumbling through prose portions of the results and discussion sections. Here the authors explain what is in their tables of data, what these findings mean to them, and any caveats about their methods or interpretations.

I usually underline the more interesting segments in pen or with a yellow marker, and annotate the margins with questions—all of which I'll use when interviewing one of the authors.

But with some papers sporting six to 10 authors, how do you know which to call? If your phone budget is limited, try calling the closest one. Better yet, focus on the one identified (usually in small print somewhere at the bottom of the first page) as the author to whom reprint requests should be addressed. More often than not, this is the project's Big Cheese.

Theoretically, the first author is the one who did the most work. But if this is a grad student (not uncommon in research, where grunt work frequently falls to the slaves) he or she may not have the years of experience of self confidence to offer much perspective on the new findings. Big Cheese can. When Big Cheese isn't identified, assume it's the last author.

Additional tips. Don't assume that what you read in any given paper is all there is to tell. Scientists often face the same space limitations as most print journalists, so often they divide the data from broad experimental-research programs into a series of papers. A team of scientists may publish three back-to-back papers in a single journal issue. Or, as one Cal Tech team showed, you can space out over a couple of years the publication of about 10 related papers—all of which stem from a single project. Therefore, when you call an author be sure to ask about his or her related work in the area.

And don't overlook that vast list of references at the back of a paper—often printed in six-point type. Researchers usually attempt to cite all important, related work in every paper. This means, they've handed you a veritable Who's Who on the topic in question.

Ferretting out the area of expertise for each individual cited in the references can take a little work, but the rewards are usually worth it. Go back over the paper and look for those small numerical citations—especially in the introduction and discussion sections. Find citations appearing at the mention of related work in the field, even work that reported contradictory results. Then match those numbers (or names and dates) to the list at the back of the paper.

Unless they're all you have to work with, I'd ignore cites 15 or more years old—tracking authors back that far can be difficult. But anyone who has published on the topic within the last three to five years should be up to speed and able to offer some perspective on the newly reported data.

Now how do you track down the author of a cite? The easiest way is to ask the author of the current journal article. Especially if you're talking to Big Cheese, phone and fax numbers to these colleagues may be just a Rolodex away.

If that doesn't work and you have access to the journal in which the other scientists published, go to the library shelf or your computer data base searching system and look up the article. The author's affiliation and address will be there.

If neither you nor the database have the journal on file, call the cited journal's editorial offices. Ask them to look up the article and read you the authors' affiliations. (The journal may balk at providing this service, so be persistent and pleasant; they usually cooperate in the end.)

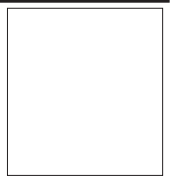
But how do you find where a journal's editorial office is? If it's a common publication, any local public or university library should subscribe—and therefore be able to read you their address or phone number. But what about the *Canadian Journal of Forestry*? For this, you may need Ulrich's *International Periodicals Directory* (published by R.R. Bowker, New York, N.Y.; the same people who publish *Books In Print*). Again, many libraries may have this at their reference desk and librarians could look up what you need.

When all else fails, be creative. For instance, in tracking down the *Canadian Journal of Forestry*, you could try calling the main office of Society of American Foresters (as with most national societies, it's headquartered in the Washington, D.C. area). Associations and societies usually subscribe to journals by sister societies—or know who does.

[NEXT ISSUE: How to identify and gain access to journals that best meet your needs.]

Janet Raloff is environment and policy editor for Science News in Washington, DC

The Book Shelf



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

Whose Backyard, Whose Risk: Fear and Fairness in Toxic and Nuclear Waste Siting

Michael B. Gerrard
The MIT Press \$39.95

This comprehensive look at the hazardous and radioactive waste problem in the United States begins by describing the various kinds of waste, from high- and low-level radioactive to medical and municipal solid waste, as well as how waste originates. Gerrard then details the history and controversy surrounding various disposal methods, highlighting some of the more famous incidents along the way—from Jacksonville Arkansas to Tooele Counter, Utah. Finally, he puts forth a blueprint for siting and disposal of waste that advocates a combination of local, state, and federal responsibility.

Thought somewhat dry in the writing, *Whose Backyard, Whose Risk* is a valuable sourcebook for anyone reporting specifically on waste disposal. Gerrard attempts to cut through the controversy and distinguish between real and perceived risks, as well as to analyze the way previous sitings have been handled, and to expose mistaken assumptions and policy blunders. Gerrard also posits some viable solutions.

Environmental lawyer Michael B. Gerrard is a partner with the firm Arnold & Porter, and is part of the firm's Environmental Practice Group. He is coauthor of an environmental law column in the New York Law Journal, founder and editor of the newsletter Environmental Law in New York, and general editor of the six-volume Environmental Law Practice Guide

Reflections of Eden: My Years with the Orangutans of Borneo

Birute M.F. Galdikas
Little Brown \$24.95

In a similar fashion to Dian Fossey with her mountain gorillas and Jane Goodall with her chimpanzees, anthropologist Birute Galdikas has dedicated her life to studying the orangutans of Borneo for "the insights they give into human nature and human origins."

Reflections of Eden, her autobiography, catalogues her more than 20 years of research, chronicling both wild and ex-captive animals in the remote jungles of Indonesian Borneo. She describes the threats to their preservation, from illegal trade in infant orangutans to encroachment by loggers and poachers.

The focus of the book is personal, interweaving the author's own story with extended anecdotes about the various animals she helped rehabilitate—Cara, Akmad, and Sugito, to name a few. While the adventure of living and studying in the wild has its definite appeal, one wishes at times for more focus on the animals themselves, and more revelations about their behavior. Nonetheless, the book, while far from comprehensive, is an interesting first-hand account of working with primates and delineates yet another species whose habitat has become endangered.

A protégé of Louis Leakey (like Fossey and Goodall), Galdikas is currently professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and the Universitas Nasional in Jakarta, Indonesia. She also is president of the Orangutan Foundation International, a conservation organization.



Censored—The News that Didn't Make the News—and Why: The 1995 Project Censored Yearbook,

by Carl Jensen and Project Censored
Four Walls Eight Windows, \$14.95
Reviewed by Amy Gahrn

Project Censored has once again provided a wealth of material for journalists on the environment beat in its

new book, "Censored--The News that Didn't Make the News--and Why: The 1995 Project Censored Yearbook," published in March.

Project Censored is a national media research effort launched in 1976 by Carl Jensen, and it is conducted by participants in the annual censorship seminar taught at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, Calif. The project explores whether there is a systematic omission of certain issues in the national news media, thus defining censorship not as the failure of information to be made public, but as the failure of important information to reach the general public.

Each year for the last 19 years, Project Censored has published an overview and anthology of the previous year's most underreported (or misreported) stories. Environmental stories regularly make this list.

According to the 1995 Yearbook, six of the top 25 censored stories from 1994 were environmental stories, including three in the top 10. Health was the only other general topic to have as many stories on the list. An additional five stories in other categories have environmental implications, including all three stories related to military issues, and two stories related to nuclear issues. (See sidebar)

The environment is a common theme in Project Censored's annual reports. For instance, in last year's Yearbook (which addressed 1993 media coverage), 11 of the top 25 censored stories were on environmental issues or had environmental implications, including four in the top 10. At least 11 of the top 25 censored stories for 1992 had ties to environmental issues; as did four of the top 25 censored stories from 1991.

While the Project Censored yearbooks are useful reference books for environmental journalists, journalists should remain aware of the sometimes casual use of inflammatory language in reference to environmental (and other) topics in these books. For example, the section which describes the fifth-ranked censored story of 1994, the Clinton Administration's policy on ozone issues, is entitled "Clinton Administration Retreats on Ozone Crisis" (emphasis added). Likewise, the section on the fourth-ranked censored story on incinera-

(Continued on page 25)

1994 Environmental Stories on the Project Censored Top 25 List

#4: **Toxic incinerators**—based on the report "Poisoning Ourselves: The Impact of Incineration on Food and Human Health," by Mick Harrison director of environmental advocacy group GreenLaw.

#5: **Clinton Administration retreats on ozone issues**—based on "Full of Holes: Clinton's Retreat on the Ozone Crisis," In These Times, January 24, 1994, by David Moberg.

#6: **1947 AEC memo reveals why human radiation experiments were censored**—based on "Protecting the Government Against the Public," Secrecy & Government Bulletin, March 1994, by Steven Aftergood; and on "the Radiation Story No One Would Touch," Columbia Journalism Review, March/April 1994, by Geoffrey Sea.

#7: **60 billion pounds offish wasted annually**—based on "Special Report: A Farewell to Fish?," *Mother Jones*, July/August 1994, by Peter Steinhart, Hal Bernton, Brad Matsen, Ray Troll, and Deborah Cramer.

#9: **The secret HAARP project--Pentagon builds 1.7-gigawatt transmitter in Alaska to distort the ionosphere**—based on "Project HAARP: The military's plan to alter the ionosphere," *Earth Island Journal*, Fall 1994, by Claire Zickuhr and Gar Smith.

#12: **California oil spill covered up by Unocal**—based on "Environment: Why Not a Three-Strikes Law for Corporations?," *Santa Barbara News-Press*, September 25, 1994, by Gary Hart.

#13: **NRC fails to act on documented nuclear plant operations and equipment problems**—based on "What the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Won't Tell You: Aging reactors, poorly trained workers," *Public Citizen*, January/February 1994, by Matthew Freedman, Jim Riccio.

#14: **Potential disasters from faulty nuclear fuel rods**—based on "Faulty Rods," *Mother Jones*, May/June 1994, by Ashley Craddock.

#20: **Legalizing carcinogens in food**—based on "Risky Business: A proposed EPA reform may leave Americans even more exposed to the dangers of pesticides," In



Society of Environmental Journalists Application for Membership

Instructions:

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

Please include \$35 with your application. 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 Magazine

Fax _____

News service Newsletter Newspaper Photographer

E-mail address _____

Public Relations Radio Student Television

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.

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 _____

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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: _____

Briefly describe duties _____

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.)

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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

Signature _____

Date _____

Office Use Only Status Assignment: _____ Date of Acceptance: _____	Notes
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Dedicated to Enhancing the Quality and Accuracy of Environmental Reporting

Censored...(from page 22)

tors is entitled "Poisoning Ourselves with Toxic Incinerators" (emphasis added).

Semantics aside, the Yearbook contains detailed discussions of each "censored" story, including the opinions of the Project Censored researchers and the author. These discussions invariably contain enough information for reporters to judge the merits of a story based on facts. It should also be noted that in some cases, stories on the censored list are based not on journalistic articles, but on government or advocacy group reports, as is the fourth-ranked story on incinerators. The full text of the top 10 censored stories is reprinted in the back of the book.

Each yearbook contains information on the year's "Junk Food News" stories - sensationalistic stories which eat up inordinate amounts of air time and column inches. Although this year's junk food news picks are not on environmental topics, this section is a real eye-opener. If you're having trouble convincing your editor to run a breaking story on water contamination instead of yet another O.J. story, you might stick the chapter in front of your editor's face at an opportune moment. See if it helps.

In my opinion, these yearbooks should be essential reading for any journalist, but especially environmental or

investigative journalists.

The book is published by Four Walls Eight Windows, 39 W. 14th St., #503, New York, NY 10011 and is available for \$14.95; ISSN: 1074-5998. For more information on Project Censored, contact: Project Censored, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, Phone: (704) 664-2500. Internet (WWW): URL address: <http://censored.sonoma.edu:70/1/ProjectCensored>

Amy Gahrn is an SEJ board member and editor for E Source, in Boulder, CO.

Top 25...(from page 22)

These Times, March 21, 1994, by William K. Burke.

#21: **Illegal toxic burning at secret Air Force base in Nevada**—based on "Target of Suit Doesn't (Officially) Exist," *Legal Times*, September 5, 1994, by Benjamin Wittes; and on

"Government Hides Illegal Disposal of Toxic Waste," and "High Levels of Dioxins Found in Former Worker at Secret Air Force Base," both by Scott H. Amey in the bulletin of the *Project on Government Oversight*, August 2, 1994, and August 16,

1994, respectively.

#23: **Buying and selling permits to pollute**—based on "Selling Dirty Air is Big Business: One firm's smog is another's gold," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 21, 1994, by Jonathan Marshall.

Desert Legends

Gary Paul Nabhan

Henry Holt \$45

Reviewed by Nancy Riggs

Reading *Desert Legends* is like taking a sojourn, an ecotourism package in 193 pages through the stark beauty of the Sonoran desert that forms the border between the United States and Mexico. We first view the desert through Gary Paul Nabhan's eyes when he writes:

There is a window—or rather a mirror—in the middle of this desert. It is called the U.S.–Mexico border...The image that the border mirror reveals can seldom be gained in any other land.

As Nabhan leads us along the barbed wire fence that divides the two countries, we hardly realize we're learning environmental history. Using no scientific jargon to impress us with his knowledge, he simply invites us to accompany him in the land he now calls home. Through Mark Klett's accompanying photographs, exhibiting a Farm Services Administration

influence, we meet the people and the plants inhabiting the borderlands.

Opening each chapter with epigrams, one English, one Spanish, Nabhan "talks" to us through a guided tour of the border country. Speaking for those who can't, like the wild gourd vine that twines over razor blades atop the barbed wire, Nabhan shows that concerns are significant on both sides of the border.

We can visualize the scarred legume trees, where woodcutters have worked. Nabhan first thought the wood went to fuel grills and hearths of low-income Mexican households along the border. We soon learn that it has gone to expensive restaurants frequented by American tourists looking for mesquite-grilled-steaks. And we learn that the ironwood trees for "Seri Indian" wood carvings isn't being hauled four or five hours south to villages, where Seri normally gather long-deadtrees to carve. Instead, it's gone to Mexican beach towns where non-Indians chainsaw and machine-carve the scarce wood to sell to tourists.

In a chapter entitled "Hanging Out the Dirty Laundry," Nabhan introduces us to "reading trash." After a night of camping, he opened his eyes to what at first seemed like bright flowers or Christmas decorations. Closer inspection revealed the hackberry bushes and cholla cactus to be holding fire-engine red panties and pink fishnet stockings. While still enjoying this incongruity, we learn that trash in the desert is more visible than trash in other parts of the country. Because there is little cover; junk lies exposed: "...the dirt is so poor, that a good quick rot cannot be taken for granted."

In *Desert Legends*, Nabhan introduces us to ecological restoration, a concept new to many readers. Perhaps more significantly, he reminds us, "to restore any place, we must also begin to re-story it...The stories will outlast us."

Nancy Riggs is editor for The Helm, an Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant publication in Mt. Zion, IL.

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 — Sean Reilly, *Anniston Star* Montgomery Bureau, 1621 Deatsville Hwy., Millbrook, AL 36054, (205) 264-8711

Alaska — Vacant.

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

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

California:

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

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

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

Colorado — Ronald Baird, *Colorado Daily*, 839 Pearl St., Boulder, CO, 80302, (303) 443-6272.

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

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

Florida:

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

South Florida — Kirk Brown at the *Palm Beach Post*, 2751 S. Dixie Highway., West Palm Beach FL, 33416, (407) 820-4400.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kentucky — Vacant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New York — Vacant.

Nevada — Mary Manning at the *Las Vegas Sun*, 800 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, (702) 259-4065 or Jon Christiansen of High Country News, 6185 Franktown Road, Carson City, NV 89704, (702) 885-2023.

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

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

Pennsylvania — 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.

Tennessee and Mississippi — Debbie Gilbert at *The Memphis Flyer*, 460 Tennessee St., Memphis, TN38103, (901) 521-9000.

Texas and Oklahoma:

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

Central and West Texas — Robert Bryce at *The Austin Chronicle*, 3812 Brookview, Austin, TX 78722, (512) 454-5766.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please note openings for correspondents for several states. If you are interested, please contact Kevin Carmody at (312) 229-2814

ALABAMA

► Changes of political interference and a lawsuit by the Sierra Club followed the appointment of John Smith as director of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, (ADEM) last November. Smith is a long-time friend of former Alabama Governor Jim Folsom, who, despite official denials, apparently helped engineer Smith's appointment before leaving office in January. In its lawsuit, The Sierra Club charged that Smith did not meet the statutory qualifications for the job. The matter was still unresolved at press time. Call Greg Jaffe at the *Montgomery Advertiser* at (334) 261-1520 or Sean Reilly with the *Anniston Star* at (334) 264-8711.

CALIFORNIA

► Scott Wilson, political reporter for the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, detailed how the California Coastal Commission, once known as a strict environmental watchdog, reversed its vote on Atlantic Richfield's plans for two beachfront public golf courses. Critics say the project was approved after intense lobbying by ARCO and campaign contributions by the oil company to Democratic Assembly Speaker Willie Brown and Republican Governor Pete Wilson, who each appoint four voting representatives to the 12-member commission. For copies, call Wilson at (805) 564-5212.

► In San Francisco, the threat of a third power plant in low-income Bayview Hunters Point "has galvanized the neighborhood into a multiracial union of people with little in common aside from the air they breathe," wrote Clarence Johnson in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His story told of residents questioning disturbing health effects and wondering why they can't get nice, safe development instead of plants that discharge wastes. For more information, call (415) 777-7159.

CONNECTICUT

► Connecticut has hundreds of commercial and industrial sites polluted by hazardous waste that have not been cleaned up because the state Department of Environmental Protection lacks the staff to supervise the cleanup program. That is the major finding in a

three-part series the *Hartford Courant* published Dec. 26 – 28. The series is particularly critical of a state law, the Property Transfer Act, which intended to encourage disclosure of a properties' environmental condition prior to a sale. The series says the law is vague and confusing and can tie up potential sales transactions in court for years. It cites several examples. The series was written by W. Joseph Campbell, who can be reached at the *Courant*, (203) 241-6200.

► *The Hartford Courant* also published a three-part series beginning Jan. 8 on potential dangers from tap water in Connecticut and throughout the country. It notes that cryptosporidium, which two years ago created problems in Milwaukee, has been found in three of Connecticut's largest water systems. It gives an extensive listing of the state's water suppliers who failed federal safety standards, and invites readers to check specific records through a computer online service the newspaper makes available. Day two is particularly alarming, it details numerous problems at several small water utilities in Connecticut and the failure of the state to force corrections. Some customers endured water systems for years that had high bacteria levels or contained mud; and one owner described a water tank where dead rodents floated at the top. For further details, contact the writers, Alan Levin and Daniel P. Jones, (203) 241-6200.

COLORADO

► While cleaning up the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, one of the most polluted sites in the United States, Shell Oil Co. billed the U.S. taxpayers for tens of thousands of dollars in projects that cleaned up no pollution, according to a copyrighted Jan. 15 *Denver Post* article by environment reporter Mark Obmascik. Some of that money was spent on trips to Aspen, Colo., and Europe, a new fence at the company's corporate building in Houston and thousands of glossy wildlife calendars.

The company also billed taxpayers for a half-million dollars for public relations at the Superfund site northeast of Denver.

Obmascik wrote the story after scouring nearly 15,000 pages of documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. The documents were originally sought in early 1993 and finally

supplied nearly two years later an official protest was filed.

Hundreds of pages of documents are still being withheld, the *Post* said.

Obmascik also learned that a public relations firm had charged \$8,214 to review his earlier articles dealing with the arsenal clean up, of which there were few. The same firm billed Shell Oil just \$574 to prepare for an interview with Obmascik's counterpart at the *Rocky Mountain News*.

In any case, Obmascik said in a column a few days later that if the company had called him and asked to see his articles, he would have supplied them for free. Call Obmascik at (303) 820-1415 for more information.

► A Jan. 27 story in the *Colorado Daily* about landowners of the Summitville Mine site suing the EPA, claiming that the cleanup of the mine is a "taking" of the owners' private-property rights was used in testimony in the U.S. House of Representatives in early March.

Rep. David Skaggs, D-CO., testified against legislation that would expand the definition of "takings" to include even partial diminution of the land's value by environmental laws and regulations and would establish even more bureaucracy to determine, in advance, whether those regulations would constitute a "takings."

Skaggs said in his testimony that new "takings" legislation would legitimize the "bizarre" scenario laid out in the Summitville suits.

Three owners of the land have sued the State of Colorado for issuing a permit for the mine, saying state agencies should have known the mine's pollution prevention plan was inadequate and sued the EPA, saying the clean up has prevented them from further mining activities.

Pollution from the mine killed aquatic life in about a 17-mile stretch of the Alamosa River and is expected to cost as much as \$100 million. For more information, call Ron Baird at (303) 443-6272.

FLORIDA

► In May 1993, the first skirmish in what would become a major legal battle broke out between Department of Environmental Protection scientists and managers of the *Orlando Sentinel*. The scientists were out to uncover the trichloroethane (TCE), a common indus-

trial solvent, in a 128-acre area adjacent to the newspaper. Following a year of difficult investigation, they fingered the paper as the major polluter. The *Sentinel* vigorously disagreed. But after a scientific panel concurred with the state's findings and public concern continued to grow, cleanup negotiations began. Today, the two parties are near agreement. The state, the paper and the city are each going to cover part of the tab. The pollution is still there, however, and continues to move toward a nearby lake, where it could threaten the city's drinking-water source, the Florida Aquifer. For more information, contact Kathleen Laufenberg at *Florida Environments*, (904) 421-2449.

► The *Tallahassee Democrat* published two separate packages last November and December on the effects of stormwater runoff on lakes and groundwater. The stories explained how recent flooding had degraded local lakes and how high concentrations of carcinogenic polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were found in some lakes around Tallahassee. Flooding last year also caused widespread well contamination. State environmental officials pointed to stormwater as the culprit but disagreed with a local scientist and residents as to whether the contamination came from underground or the surface. For more information, telephone Savannah Blackwell at The *Tallahassee Democrat*, (904) 599-2100

► The Department of Environmental Protection announced in January it will seek permits to restore the Ocklawaha River in North Central Florida unless the Legislature intervenes. Nine thousand acres of floodplain forest were destroyed in the 1960s as the river was dammed for construction of Rodman Reservoir as part of the Cross Florida Barge Canal. Canal construction was halted in 1971 by a federal judge and by President Richard Nixon. Supporters, using data from recent DEP studies, estimate the cost of restoration at \$5.1 million. Opponents are led by local business leaders and bass fishermen who enjoy using the reservoir. For more information, telephone Bruce Ritchie at the *Gainesville Sun*, (904) 374-5087.

► With the signing of the Everglades Forever Act a year ago, the long legal fight between the state and federal government ended in bittersweet compromise. Since then, the South Florida Water Management

District has been forging ahead with plans to acquire land to help restore some of the most egregious of environmental problems created by the man-made system of canals that drain South Florida. Probably the greatest milestone since then came in February when farmers and the water district agreed to a deal in which the district will buy 5,200 acres known as Frog Pond near the entrance to Everglades National Park. The land, which has been used for tomato farming, will be flooded to help restore a more natural flow of water through Taylor Slough into northeast Florida Bay, which experts say is in desperate need of more fresh water. For more information, contact Willie Howard at The *Palm Beach Post*, (407) 820-4417.

IDAHO

► It's more than 500 miles between the potato farms of eastern Idaho and the barge docks and canyon country of North Idaho, areas linked by the Snake River. The staffs of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* and the *Idaho Falls Post Register* have joined together in a year-long series to give their readers a comprehensive look at the river that runs between them. This unique partnership of two independent newspapers is aimed at showing the differences and similarities between the people and interests of the two areas and to aid the search for shared solutions. The first section ran Feb. 26-27 in both newspapers.

► Hundred of reporters followed the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone and central Idaho in January from around the world. Reporters had to contend with below zero temperatures in Hinton, Alberta, where the wolves were captured and logistical problems, due in part to changing schedules forced by a lawsuit. The story was perhaps the biggest in Yellowstone since the fires of 1988.

ILLINOIS

► Northeastern Illinois conservationists are attempting to reclaim and preserve valuable areas in unusual locations. A consortium of groups led by the Nature Conservancy want to preserve prairie in an old US Army arsenal and ammunition plant near Joliet; a pocket of undisturbed prairie near a landfill in Burnham; and a wetlands areas that harbors several species of endangered birds near Lake Calumet.

Coverage of the conservation efforts has been noticeably stepped up by *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Chicago Reader* in recent months. What's unusual about the areas in question is that rare flora and fauna appear to be flourishing on land ringed by abandoned factories, railroads and toxic waste dumps.

Coverage of grassroots environmental groups in the Chicago area has been sparse in the past. But metro editors at both the *Tribune* and *Sun-Times* have been assigning more reporters to cover everything from wetlands developments to controversial highway extensions, in turn highlighting environmental aspects. A watershed piece in the *Tribune* was headlined "Green's new battlefield in back yard: Grassroots holding up environmentalism" (February 9). The summary piece highlighted victories by local groups on environmental issues.

KANSAS

► The nation's dioxin wastes are flowing to the southeast Kansas community of Coffeyville, where Aptus Inc. operates the only commercial incinerator with federal approval to burn dioxin. While other communities such as Jacksonville, AR., and Midland, MI, fight against burning dioxin in their backyards, Coffeyville has embraced the incinerator. Upwind though, some residents are becoming concerned about rare cancer cases among teenagers. Contact Mike Mansur at the *Kansas City Star*, (816) 234-4433.

► Large pockets of the Tri-State mining area, a 500-square-mile area in Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri topped the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's original Superfund list. More than a decade later, EPA points to the once scarred land, much of it restored by the \$20 million cleanup, as a Superfund success story. It's also a story of how a community have used the cleanup as an opportunity to improve in other ways. Contact Jean Hays at the *Wichita Eagle* (316) 268-6557.

LOUISIANA

► The *Baton Rouge Advocate* has done extensive stories in recent weeks on the local impacts of proposed Congressional changes to wetlands and endangered species laws and budget cuts for environmental and science programs.

Contact environment editor Bob Anderson, (504) 383-1111.

MASSACHUSETTS

► *Garbage*, the Massachusetts-based environmental journal that Bud Ward once called “always unpredictable and frequently irreverent,” closed shop with its Fall, 1994 issue. The journal had distinguished itself from other eco-magazines by taking on environmentalists as well as industry and government, running pieces like “Ozone: Scam or Crisis?” among others. But it went through a fatal makeover last spring, shifting to a quarterly, raising its newsstand price to \$9.95, and dropping paid advertising, hoping to position itself as the magazine of choice for an emerging, enlightened readership. “I have some sense that *Garbage* and our writers are a step ahead, that open-minded debate on environmental issues is coming,” wrote editor and Publisher Patricia Poore in the Summer, 1994 issue. It did not come soon enough, and the journal’s fall is being felt. “We’ve lost a voice that made its case well, that added a view that was valuable, and so now the whole field is weaker,” said *New York Times* environmental correspondent Keith Schneider. “One of our most important species has gone extinct, and that hurts rather than helps.” Contact Bill Breen, former managing editor, (508) 283-3200.

► Debate over how clean automobiles should be in the future has recently centered in Massachusetts. The nation’s auto makers want to build a low emission vehicle that they would sell in every state except California, which has its own special requirements. But negotiations between the auto industry and 13 Northeastern states and the District of Columbia on the 49-state car have stalled because of the stance taken by New York and Massachusetts. Both states have adopted the same schedule as California for requiring cleaner cars on the road, including a small number of electric vehicles by 1998. The auto industry has insisted that Massachusetts and New York must drop its requirements for electric vehicles. As of this writing negotiations are underway Massachusetts has been the most insistent in keeping its electric vehicle mandate. For further information on what is happening in Massachusetts,

contact Scott Allen, *Boston Globe*, (617) 929-3000.

► Environmental reporters might want to check out recently published, *Always Rachael*, a collection of about 500 letters between Rachael Carson and a longtime friend, Dorothy Freeman. Edited by Martha Freeman, Dorothy Freeman’s granddaughter, the book chronicles a friendship that began in 1954 and continued through publication in 1962 of Carson’s landmark environmental book, *Silent Spring*, until Carson’s death from breast cancer in 1964. The personal tragedies that haunted Carson’s life, and almost prevented the writing of *Silent Spring*, are discussed. *The Boston Globe*’s Scott Allen, who wrote a story published March 6 about the book, says the writing is both informative and very readable.

MICHIGAN

► The Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron, designated as the most contaminated bodies of water in the state, are cleaner than they used to be, but there is still much to do, concluded an eight-day series in the *Bay City Times*, “Cleaning Our Troubled Water.” Editorially, the paper called for the formation of a foundation to lead continued efforts. Nearly half of the *Times*’ editorial staff worked on the project over 10 months. The series is available in a 28-page reprint edition. Calling Dave Vizard at (517) 895-8551 for copies.

► A 20-year-old state program to relocate Canada geese from cities and suburbs to rural areas may be ending soon. Rural northern Michigan now has a suitable population of the birds, and other states aren’t interested in getting them. Often a nuisance because of droppings and overpopulation, the birds could be rounded up in pens on designated days for relocation by the Department of Natural Resources. Federal funding that supported the relocation may be in jeopardy, reports Jeff Green at the *Oakland Press*. Green also reports that shooting ranges in Michigan are under scrutiny. Hunters have been required to switch to steel shot, but skeet shooters at ranges still load with lead, which may contaminate ground and surface water. The DNR is conducting a statewide review. Call Green for details at (810) 332-8181 ext. 325.

MINNESOTA

► Scientists are just beginning to understand the ecological damage and benefits from the 1993 flood along the upper Mississippi River and many of its tributaries. Although the results are preliminary, the National Biological Service estimates that damage to trees in the floodplain gets progressively worse between southern Minnesota and St. Louis, where 80 percent of the saplings and 40 percent of the mature trees have died. But the flood also created more spawning areas for fish and improved conditions for some native plants, such as wild celery, a favorite food of water fowl. Contact Dean Rebuffoni, *Star Tribune* newspaper, (612) 673-4432.

► The Mescalero Apache nation has voted to let its tribal council move forward on a proposal to store spent nuclear fuel on its reservation in south-central New Mexico. Northern States Power Co. in Minnesota brought together 31 utilities and two other firms in a consortium to negotiate with the Mescaleros.

The tribe voted against the idea on Jan. 31, but reversed themselves in a second referendum on March 9. The tribal council will discuss terms of a contract with the nuclear utilities, who need more room to store their radioactive wastes. If a storage site is licensed, it would be available after 2002, but officials in New Mexico said they will challenge the project because transportation of the highly radioactive wastes is too risky. Contact: Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune*, (612) 673-7388.

MISSISSIPPI

► When an oil spill at Chevron’s Pascagoula Refinery drenched about 150 brown pelicans—at least 32 of which died—volunteers flew to the Gulf Coast to help clean and rehabilitate the surviving birds. Local fishermen donated up to 1,000 pounds of fish to feed the recuperating pelicans. For more information, contact Patrick Peterson at the *Gulfport/Biloxi Sun Herald*, (601) 896-2343.

MISSOURI

► Monsanto Co. scientist unveiled in February another genetic weapon to protect crops from insects. The researchers told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* they have geneti-

The Green Beat

cally engineered corn, cotton and potatoes to produce an insecticide called cholesterol oxidase. The discovery is Monsanto's second major anti-bug biotechnology. In the late 1980's, the company transferred into crops an insect-killing gene from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The company expects federal approval soon to begin selling crops with the B.t. gene in 1996. Robert Fraley, president of Monsanto's New Agricultural Products unit, said the second finding will give farmers a better chance to counter insect resistance and cut pesticide use. Contact reporter Bill Allen at (314) 340-8127 or Monsanto's Gary Barton at (314) 694-7233.

► Scientists may have found another smoking gun in the case of the worldwide disappearance of frogs and other amphibians. For the first time, they have shown how a pesticide can disrupt reproduction in frogs. The finding, by Brent Palmer, a reproductive biologist with Ohio University, Athens, was reported in January in St. Louis at the annual meeting of the American Society of Zoology. "It looks like pesticides are one more nail in the coffin for amphibians," Palmer told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. In his lab, Palmer injected red-eared turtles and African clawed frogs with DDT. To compare the effect, he injected other frogs and turtles with estrogen, the female sex hormone, and DES, well-studied drug used in humans until the 1970s to prevent miscarriages. The male turtles and frogs injected with DDT produced significant amounts of vitellogenin. This chemical is a key building block of egg yolks. Normally, it is produced by estrogen—not by male hormones. "Essentially, males are being feminized," Palmer said. "Their bodies are trying to produce egg yolk." Contact reporter Allen at (314) 340-8127 or Palmer at (614) 593-0425.

► The zebra mussel invasion of rivers may be choking off the oxygen supply for fish. That's one conclusion of a January report by scientists with the Illinois Natural History Survey. The researchers also discovered that a major boom-bust cycle in zebra mussel populations may be at work on the Illinois River. They found several areas along the river north of Grafton where the oxygen content of the water was so low that it posed a serious threat to fisheries, said Scott Whitney, a biologist with the survey's field station in Havana, Ill. The threat is

just the latest documented in the steady push of the zebra mussel into the Midwest's lakes and rivers. Contact reporter Allen at (314) 340-8127 or Whitney at (309) 543-6000.

► Ten small Missouri towns violated the federal limit for atrazine in drinking water, a state study shows. Now, the towns face treating their water in new ways, costing them thousands of dollars. Atrazine is the most commonly used weed killer in the country. Contact Terry Timmons at the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, (314) 751-5331.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

► The *Northern Forest Forum*, an advocacy newspaper based in New Hampshire and Published by the Northern Appalachian Restoration Project of Earth Island Institute, reported in its Winter issue that "alarming ecological trends" were occurring in northern New England's forests. The piece, by Middlebury College professor Stephen C. Trombulak, said 33 percent of Maine's ferns and allies are rare, threatened or endangered, as are 25 percent of native flowering plants and mammals, and 23 percent of reptiles and amphibians. In New Hampshire, 28 percent of native flowering plants, 25 percent of ferns and allies, and 19 percent of native conifers are similarly at risk. In Vermont, 46 percent of reptiles and amphibians, 30 percent of flowering plants, 31 percent of ferns and allies, and 26 percent of native fish are also similarly at risk. The piece blamed exotic species and polluted water, and called for ecological reserves to save the forests. Contact Jamie Sayen, editor, the *Northern Forest Forum*, (603) 636-2952.

► The *Boston Globe* reported February 26 on a National Wildlife Federation report, said to be the first of its kind in the nation, that assessed how much communities and states would pay to compensate landowners whose property values were diminished by land use laws and regulations, or "takings." Three case study New Hampshire communities would be devastated, paying 21 percent, 34 percent and 118 percent of their yearly budgets. The state would spend \$2.7 million annually to assess whether new laws or regulations caused takings. Property rights activists blasted the report, arguing that whatever the cost, landowners must be compensated. It came as takings bills

have swept the nation—86 introduced in 33 states last year alone, passing in six. The U.S. House has also enacted a taking law as part of the Republicans' "Contract with America." Contact Robert Braile, *The Boston Globe*, (603) 772-6380.

NEVADA

► The U.S. Justice Department filed suit against Nye County March 8 to keep the public lands open and to teach those in the Sagebrush Rebellion II that federal sovereignty is intact. The *Las Vegas Sun* and the *Las Vegas Review Journal* were joined by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post* and major television networks covering this story

► During February and March, the Lincoln County Commission attracted major media attention by defying Gov. Bob Miller and the Nevada congressional delegation who are opposed to storing or disposing of nuclear waste in the state by inviting a temporary storage site at an old railroad siding once used for mining at the eastern edge of the state. The 2:1 vote saw petroleum geologist Alan Chamberlain voting against the proposal because of earthquake and flooding dangers, while Commissioner Eve Culverwell and Ed Wright were in favor of the storage for a \$100 million federal fund.

► "The Great Basin: America's Wasteland Seeks a New Identity" is the theme of a special issue of *High Country News* published April 3. Written by Jon Christensen, the collection of 17 stories explores environmental changes coming from surprising places in the region that was the setting for last year's SEJ conference. The stories look at the cities of the region—Las Vegas, Reno, Elko and Salt Lake City—as well as ranchers, farmers, miners, and Indian tribes. More than 80 percent federal land, the Great Basin has long been dominated by the federal government, extractive industries, and Sagebrush Rebellion. Now environmental values are being internalized, from the mining industry to Las Vegas, and change is coming from within the region. For a copy of the special issue, contact Jon Christensen, *High Country News*, Great Basin regional editor, 6185 Franktown Road, Carson, NV 89704, (702) 885-2023. For a subscription, call (800) 905-1155.

RHODE ISLAND

► Rhode Island has hundreds of urban sites that have sat abandoned for years because hazardous waste has been dumped on the property and either the owners refuse to finance a cleanup or the cleanup plan is mired in regulatory red tape. Now, the state is taking a new approach. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management says it will work with prospective developers who want to take over a site, clean it up, and reuse it. In addition, new legislation has been introduced allowing the state to grant waivers on the degree of the cleanup that will be necessary. A site does not have to be cleaned up to the standard's of a child's playground, if it is going to be used for industrial purposes. The *Providence Journal-Bulletin* ran a story about the new approach Feb. 17. For further details, contact Bob Wyss, *Journal-Bulletin*, (401) 277-7364.

TENNESSEE

► Exotic Asian bighead carp, which apparently escaped from Arkansas aquaculture ponds during heavy flooding, are now rapidly proliferating in the Mississippi Delta, including West Tennessee. The carp feed on plankton, putting them in competition with many native fish species. For information, call Tom Charlier at the *Commercial Appeal*, (901) 529-2572.

► After a timber company bought 4,000 acres of pristine wetlands on the upper Wolf River in West Tennessee, intending to clearcut and subdivide the property, environmentalists, the Conservation Fund, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency tried desperately to raise \$4 million to keep the land as wilderness. The tract was saved from the auction block at the eleventh hour, when an eccentric millionaire bought the property and donated it to the state. The *Memphis Flyer* reported extensively on this story. Contact Paul Gerald or Debbie Gilbert at (901) 521-9000.

UTAH

► A interagency squabble has developed over who should have overseen waste emissions from a water pumping project in central Utah. The project was part of a co-generating plant that was pumping water supplies out of an abandoned coal mine. The state and federal government are point-

ing fingers at each other over who allowed improper discharges into a nearby stream which now threaten several species of endangered fish. The whole incident came to light when a Bureau of Land Management employee got fed up with the finger pointing and called local television stations. Further information: John Hollenhorst, KSL-TV (801) 575-5500.

► The U.S. Army has unveiled a state of the art "Bang Box," designed to measure the chemical reactions by the destruction of obsolete munitions and propellants. The quarter-million dollar facility looks like an enclosed tennis court, and contains sophisticated computer monitoring equipment that can measure compounds like CO₂, SO₂, NO and NO_x to parts per trillion. The military hopes to use data collected by the device to convince environmental critics that open-air detonation of obsolete munitions is safe. Further information: Rod Jackson, KTVX-TV, (801) 975-4418.

► The state of Utah is in the midst of trying to resolve a 15-year battle over wilderness designation of BLM administered lands within the state. Utah Governor Mike Leavitt wants a compromise package ready for presentation to Congress by June 15, 1995. Environmental groups say the process is designed to shut them out of the debate. At stake is the question of which figure for wilderness is more appropriate: the 5.3 million acres suggested by environmentalists or the 1.1 million suggested by rural Utah politicians. Further information: Jim Woolf, *Salt Lake Tribune* (801) 237-2045.

VIRGINIA

► The *Roanoke Times & World-News* in January published a two-part series that is critical of the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for rushing to issue environmental permits to businesses and for lagging when it comes to enforcing environmental regulations. "The agency's emphasis on economic development has overshadowed its mission to protect Virginia's natural resources and people's health," wrote reporter Cathryn McCue, who quoted unnamed DEQ employees and environmentalists. For more information, call McCue at (703) 981-3256.

► Mark Di Vincenzo has vacated the

environment beat at the 120,000-circulation *Newport News Daily Press*. Di Vincenzo, who wrote about the environment since September 1990, now covers education. Richard Stradling, whose beat includes higher education, mental health, two rural localities and general community news, also will cover the environment.

WASHINGTON

► The Environmental Protection Agency was deciding whether to declare much of the water below eastern Washington a "sole-source aquifer." The proposed designation—which would let EPA oversee federally funded projects above the aquifer to make sure they wouldn't pollute it—was meeting a surprising amount of opposition.

Karen Dorn Steele, a reporter with *The Spokesman-Review* of Spokane, wondered what role garbage giant Waste Management had in the debate. The company has proposed an enormous landfill in the center of the aquifer region. An aquifer designation would give state ecology officials more say in the landfill's construction.

Dorn Steele and reporter Eric Sorensen approached the story as the study of a political/public relations blitz. Using EPA and county documents, press clippings and several key company memos, they produced a timeline that became the story's template. Their records search included Freedom of Information Act requests and a database search for Federal Election Commission reports.

The Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, sponsor of the proposal, had also turned up some key information in a public records request of its own. A pattern emerged. Waste Management had produced slanted anti-aquifer propaganda, lobbied politicians and essentially pushed one of the region's hottest emotional buttons: fear that the federal government will tell farmers how to farm. Government officials above other sole source aquifers said the fear was groundless. EPA records showed the same.

The key to coverage was questioning the sources of the aquifer opponents—it turned out that most of their claims were based on Waste Management information and looking at past experiences. Simply relying on he-said, she-said, pro-vs.-con reporting would have been inadequate, the reporters said.

Reporters interested in researching

similar stories can reach Dorn Steele at (800) 789-0029, ext. 5462, or Sorensen at (509) 332-3674.

► Eric Pryne wrote a series in the *Seattle Times* Nov. 13-15 on the checkerboard legacy of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which disrupts wildlife in the Cascade Mountain Range east of Seattle. Clearcutting by Plum Creek Timber and others on private sections there bisects the Cascades. Interfering with wildlife migration north and south, biologist say. The Forest Service is working on a land swap to consolidate its holdings. Timber companies say that would help them comply with spotted owl protection rules while continuing to harvest trees. Environmental activist John Osborn argues for simply repealing the land grant and reclaiming the land. Pryne's number is (206) 464-2231.

► In the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* Feb. 2, Rob Taylor explored evidence that salmon are shrinking in size from waters of Russia to Alaska to California. Expanding on a story by Hal Bernton in the *Anchorage Daily News*, he documented the decline with several studies and concerns that the trend could produce fewer, feebler fish. Leading suspected causes are overgrazing the ocean by hatchery fish and fishing targeted on the biggest. Some biologists warn it could lead to an international battle over "grazing right" to the Pacific. Taylor's number is (206) 448-8337.

WISCONSIN

► The *Milwaukee Journal* and *Milwaukee Sentinel* newspapers were due to merge newsrooms April 1st, and begin publishing as the *Journal/Sentinel*. Despite losing one daily paper, *Journal/Sentinel* environment writer Don Behm is optimistic readers will find expanded environmental coverage. *Sentinel* coverage of environmental issues was not extensive and Behm says he will keep many of the duties he performed at the *Journal*. He also says many of the new paper's suburban writers have been specifically told to follow green issues in the communities they cover. A former *Milwaukee Sentinel* writer has been named chief of the *Journal/Sentinel's* Capitol Bureau in Madison. But Behm says he's working to develop a good relationship with that bureau on coverage of environmental issues in the Wisconsin state legislature.

Longtime *Journal Science* Writer Paul G. Hayes did accept a company buyout offer. But another *Journal* veteran with experience on the science and medical beats will now cover science issues.

The merger of the two papers was less kind to other employees. But total job loss was not available at press time.

► The flap over reformulated gasoline in southeastern Wisconsin tested reporters' ability to separate fact from fiction. Hundreds of Wisconsin residents, some encouraged by conservative radio talk show hosts, besieged the EPA with

complaints the gas is causing ill health and poor engine performance. As the EPA was putting off requests to halt sales of the gas, groups like the American Petroleum Institute, Oxygenated Fuels Association and Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association cranked out fax releases and set up news conferences to downplay complaints about the fuel. A local natural gas company contacted reporters to claim one of the gasoline additives, MTBE, is not derived from natural gas. The Petroleum Institute said just the opposite the next day.

WYOMING

► The US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Idaho Game and Fish continue to monitor the activities of Canadian gray wolves released into Yellowstone National Park in January. Two of the animals have already been killed that had been part of a similar release program in central Idaho. For further information: Michael Milstein, *Cody Bureau-Billings Gazette*, (307) 527-7250.

► Construction of a Natrona county natural gas pipeline has run into problems with the discover of the golden eagle nesting areas in the path of the proposed pipeline. A Denver-based company wants to build two new gas wells in a promising gas field, but the fate of the project is uncertain with discovery of the eagles. For further information: Chris Tollefson, *Casper Star Tribune*, (307) 266-0591.

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