

# SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

Vol. 7 No. 2

## Dodging Numbers Reporters avoid the population crunch

By MICHAEL MAHER

Many environmental stories chronicle the inevitable collisions between finite nature and growing human population. Journalists, however, are reluctant to use the "P" word in covering environmental issues.

In a study published in the March 1997 issue of the journal *Population and Environment*, I analyzed how newspaper journalists depicted causality in urban sprawl, water shortage, and endangered species stories. Using Lexis-Nexis, the world's largest database of full-text news stories, I dredged up thousands of stories and sampled them randomly. I found that just slightly more than one story in 10 mentions population growth as a source of the problem. And less than one story in 100 mentions population stability as a possible solution.

Typically a story describing urban sprawl or disruption of wildlife habitat mentions only the land developer as the cause of the problem, and ignores the role of population growth in providing the market demand that makes land development possible. A typical water shortage story mentions only the drought or the inadequate water conveyance infrastructure as a cause, and ignores the fact that many more people now want access to a limited supply of water.

The 10.7 percent of stories that do acknowledge population growth as a cause typically fail to mention that population stability might be a solution. This happens because journalists do not advocate policy change in news stories. But the reader is left with the impression that, although population growth might

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### Interview

## Newspaper has seven reporters on environment

By CHRIS BOWMAN

*Peter Bhatia, managing editor of the Portland Oregonian, explains why the state's largest newspaper fosters a commitment to environmental journalism unmatched by any other general circulation newspaper in the country.*



**Q.** The decision to devote seven reporters to writing about the environment must be unprecedented, certainly for a newspaper of your size. Why so many reporters on the beat?

**A.** When you ask readers what issues *(Continued on page 9)*

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### Cyber scribe tells all

## Writing for the web

By DAVID TENENBAUM

In 1995, After 10 years of full-time freelancing, I heard about an intriguing, challenging job opening and fired off a résumé. The challenge would be writing on the World Wide Web, a brand-spanking-new medium that neither I, nor anybody else, understood.

In case you've been snoozing, the Web is a system of Internet-linked computers that all babble a common language. For relatively little money, individuals and organizations can make text, graphics, even some audio and video accessible to anybody with the right hardware and Internet connection.

The employer was the National Institute for Science Education, which had a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to fund, among other things, a Web site to cover the science behind the daily news for a general audience. The staff would be three part-time specialists in science writing, computers, and graphics.

From that meager starting point, with help from others in the Office of News and Public Affairs at University of Wisconsin-Madison, we concocted a bi-weekly feature magazine covering science, health and environment. We aimed

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# “Resignation is the only avenue”

## New job poses membership conflicts for SEJ president

*SEJournal* Editor Noel Grove has been on my back for weeks because my column was late. For once, I had a valid reason for procrastinating.

Saying goodbye is never easy. By the time you read this I will have resigned from the board, and the presidency of an organization I helped create.

It has not been an easy decision. And this, in essence my farewell to the presidency, is certainly not easy to write.

Let me explain how all this came about. Most of you know that I left *USA Today* in February after nearly two decades as an environmental reporter and editor for the Gannett chain. I said then that I hoped to stay in the environmental reporting business. And I will.

I have accepted a job as editor/reporter for *Environmental Science & Technology*, an excellent magazine produced by the American Chemical Society. It is a job that will allow me to continue writing about the environment while giving me an opportunity to work in close harmony with scientists and chemical engineers. For those of you unfamiliar with ACS, it is the world's largest scientific society, a non-profit organization based in the heart of Washington, D.C.

But the SEJ bylaws as written, and interpreted, disqualify me from active membership. Once I accepted the job at ACS. I automatically became an associate member, a status that does not allow me to hold office in SEJ. I will, of course, remain a loyal member and do what I can to further the mission of SEJ. There are many ways to serve other than on the board.

Ironically, as one of the founders I helped write those bylaws. As vice president of the board, I was until this year the chief enforcer and interpreter of SEJ's membership criteria. To avoid even the vaguest appearance of impropriety, I decided that resignation is the only avenue available to me. I also recused myself from any discussion involving possible changes to the current membership structure. I felt that I had no choice in either instance.

To the membership of SEJ—especial-

ly the other board members and staff—I owe an apology for abandoning the organization at mid-course. I am confident, however, that the remaining board will carry on until board elections are held at the annual meeting in Tucson. I am, of course, going to do all I can to make the transition as seamless as possible.

The unsaid part of all this is that I also have supreme confidence in SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke and her staff as the organization works through this difficult period. And it isn't just my resignation that makes this a challenging time for SEJ.

### Report from the society's president

By  
Rae  
Tyson



We are wrestling with perplexing issues related to membership. We are facing some financial challenges because several of our major foundation grants are nearing an end. And we are trying to initiate and maintain some of the most ambitious outreach and education programs in the organization's history.

On the other hand, my departure from the board means that new leadership must step forward to fill the void. I am confident that new leaders will take this organization to new heights. In a sense, it is time for a change, though I would have preferred not to force the issue this way.

For those of you who have given your time and energy to SEJ, I want to thank you. SEJ has a vitality that we never imagined when the organization was founded. It has, without a doubt, been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life.

Thank you for the wonderful opportunity. Let's keep up the good work.

### From the Executive Committee:

During the eight years since a group of veteran journalists including Rae Tyson decided to create SEJ, Tyson has been vital to its evolution as one of the nation's most vibrant journalism organizations.

Tyson brought a statesman-like presence to every role he accepted, from membership chairman to president. His quiet wisdom, focused leadership and institutional memory will be missed when the board meets to debate difficult issues.

As Tyson has often said, an associate membership entitles him to participate fully in SEJ's activities and program committees; the only exception is that he can't be president or vote for SEJ's next one. We hope he will continue to volunteer his talents.

Upon Tyson's formal resignation on Tuesday, July 1, Marla Cone assumed the duties of acting president pending the election of a new SEJ president at the board's previously scheduled meeting on July 18-19 in Los Angeles. According to the society's bylaws, in the event of the president's resignation, the society's "first vice president (Cone) and second vice president (Kevin Carmody), in that order, shall perform the duties of president."

The bylaws also require that the board, at its subsequent meeting, fill a vacancy in any officer position for the remainder of the unexpired term. Thus, by the time most of you read this, SEJ will have a new president who will serve at least until October.

Following the board election at the annual meeting in Tucson in October, the board will, as it does each year, fill all five officer positions for the next year.

Although the society faces some challenges, as Tyson outlines above, it also has an experienced professional staff in place to assure that member services are not interrupted during times of transition. SEJ has evolved far beyond the point where Tyson and the other co-founders literally ran the organization out of desk drawers with a mailing address borrowed from Scripps Howard's Washington, D.C., news bureau. Not to diminish Tyson contributions, but SEJ is now far bigger than any individual officer or member of the board—because the society draws its strength collectively, from its members.

Any eligible individual who has the time and energy to devote to a term on the board is encouraged to run for a seat. Eligible members will be receiving a letter this month outlining the process and requirements.

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*SEJournal* will accept unsolicited manuscripts. Send story ideas, articles, news briefs, tips, and letters-to-the-editor to Noel Grove, [ngrove1253@aol.com](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), P.O. Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 22118. Send calendar items to Janet Raloff, [jar@scisvc.org](mailto:jar@scisvc.org), 1719 N Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For Green beat, contact Kevin Carmody, [kpcarmody@aol.com](mailto:kpcarmody@aol.com), 1447 1/2 W. Fletcher Street, Chicago, IL 60657; (708) 633-5970. For book reviews, contact Nancy Shute, [nshute@igc.apc.org](mailto:nshute@igc.apc.org), (202) 378-9110, 2730 Wisconsin N.W., Washington, DC, 20007.

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

*SEJournal* on the World Wide Web: <http://www.sej.org>

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## On trashing the Meeman Archives

**To The Editor:**

An article in the Spring *SEJournal* "Portions of Meeman Archive trashed" misrepresents the efforts that I and Professor Paul Nowak of the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment made to preserve that collection of articles.

We did not casually trash the archive, as the article implies. Rather, we tried for more than five years to interest SEJ in making the collection a more effective tool for reporters. We suggested ways to link its content to the SEJ Web site. We asked the board to suggest steps to make more SEJ members aware of the resource. When the board showed no interest, we tried to find a new home for the collection at either Michigan State University or the University of Colorado.

I personally told Jim Detjen at MSU and Len Ackland at Colorado nearly two years ago that the collection would be lost if they could not act to save it. And on one of Detjen's visits to Ann Arbor last year, I showed him the filing cabinets that held the collection--the cabinets that the article says he "found" in February. Having exhausted University of Michigan funds allocated for the project, we asked the Scripps Howard Foundation for supplemental money so that we could pay the monthly storage costs, but were turned down. Despite that, we kept the articles another six months, but then had no choice but to throw them away.

The article quotes me as saying many of the articles in the collection were "in tatters". I suspect the reporter simply misunderstood. The materials in storage were in fine shape, with the first ten years of the collection properly catalogued and organized and the next five years stored in the boxes they came in. The articles of the last two years were in less complete shape, largely because SEJ did not promptly return those articles which we put on display at the SEJ convention at M.I.T. I agree with the anonymous source the article quotes as saying that the loss of the original articles was "tragic." What makes it particularly sad is that is that the loss could have been avoided had SEJ, MSU, the University of Colorado or the Scripps Howard Foundation cared enough to save the stories.

—Jonathan Friendly  
*University of Michigan*

**Jim Detjen responds:**

Contrary to Jonathan Friendly's assertions, the SEJ board and Michigan State University have made repeated efforts over several years to preserve the Meeman Archives.

Since SEJ was launched in 1990 the board of directors has worked to make the archives more accessible. We have written articles about it in the *SEJournal*, arranged tours of the collection at the University of Michigan during our second national conference and spoken to numerous officials at U of M and the Scripps Howard Foundation (which has generously supported the collection over many years) about ways to preserve the collection.

Since I arrived at Michigan State University in January 1995 I have told Jonathan on at least three occasions that MSU was interested in the collection and that I would personally drive to the University of Michigan to "rescue" it, if necessary. In each

*(Continued on page 27)*

# SEJ offers newsroom help

By MARLA CONE

The Society of Environmental Journalists might be in your newsroom soon. In an effort to make environmental journalism more accessible to reporters and editors—and ultimately readers, viewers, and listeners—SEJ plans to mount a pilot program this year that will provide training sessions in newsrooms across the country. Through SEJ, experienced environmental journalists will visit newsrooms that currently do not cover environmental issues or are seeking more expertise. The idea is to provide practical tips for covering environmental issues with a limited staff.

Provided free of charge, this service will be tailored to suit the needs of the specific editors and reporters in each newsroom. One editor might prefer that the “teachers” meet with only one or two reporters, while others may want most of the staff to participate. Training may last a half-day or stretch out to two or three days in others. Visits to TV news rooms will offer testimonials from news directors who actively cover the environment beat, along with videotaped examples of work being done elsewhere.

Some sessions may culminate in published stories, while others will be purely informational, describing how other news

organizations in similar media cover the environment beat. In each case, the visiting journalists will research local issues—from Superfund sites to endangered species—before they venture into the newsrooms so they can provide specific story ideas and tips.

The National Association of Science Writers and Investigative Reporters and Editors already have established successful outreach programs. SEJ plans to fill in the gap by providing training on environmental reporting, which in many areas goes unreported.

SEJ board members and staff are in the process of choosing candidates for this pilot program, and it is likely the first newsroom visit will occur in August.

The program is designed to meet one of the goals the SEJ board has dubbed a priority—outreach into newsrooms across the country. The idea is to bring high-quality environmental journalism into more newsrooms, even when staff cannot afford a full-time environment reporter.

*SEJ board member Marla Cone reports on the environment for the Los Angeles Times.*



The Pulitzer Prize for Public Service went to **John McQuaid** and **Mark Schleifstein** of *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans. Their series, “Oceans of Trouble: Are the world’s fisheries doomed?” resulted from 15 months of reporting (see Bits and Bytes, page 12). McQuaid and Schleifstein also captured the Phillip D. Reed Memorial Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment, sponsored by the Southern Environmental Law Center, which also honored **Bill Finch** and **Sam Hodges** for their “Alabama Forest Cut Short” which appeared in the *Mobile Register*.

By mixing green and green, reporter **Mike Ivey** has come up with the gold. Ivey covers the environment for the business desk of *The Capital Times* of Madison. The Wisconsin Newspaper Association singled him out for ongoing environmental coverage including a feature on a utility company’s effort to restore native prairie.

The *New York Times* has a new science editor. **Cornelia Ryan** moved to the Big Apple from the nation’s capitol where she had been Deputy Washington Editor.

Former *Times* environmental reporter **Philip Shabecoff** has moved his base of operations to Newton, a suburb of Boston. Shabecoff is no longer working

with *Greenwire*, the electronic news service he founded. Now he freelances from home as he writes his next book, this one about international environmentalism.

**Michael Nitz**, University of Idaho School of Communication, has received a one-year Fullbright Fellowship to study German media coverage of environmental news. He will also teach communication classes at the Institute for Political Science, University of Hamburg.

**Craig Trumbo** is now assistant professor in Cornell University’s Dept. of

## Media on the Move

Compiled by **George Homsy**

Communication where he will teach and study reactions to public health risks, an extension of his doctoral thesis. Trumbo says, “if my results hold up, I can go back and ask for a bigger grant.” More importantly, he hopes the research will help communities facing public health problems better communicate with government aid agencies

This year’s class of Knight Fellows at Stanford University includes **Gary Polakovic**, environment writer with the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* in California. He’ll study market-based environmental

solutions. Also Knighted is *Boston Globe* environment reporter **Scott Allen**. He will join seven other science journalists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Bruce Ritchie** is trading flatlands for flatirons with a Ted Scripps Enviro Journalism Fellowship at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He’ll be leaving *The Gainesville Sun* this month. Ritchie also won first place from the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors for in-depth reporting for *The Sun’s* “Struggling with Sprawl” series in March, 1996.

Finally, **Jim Schwab** is brushing up on his fiction writing skills, having been selected for the prestigious Breadloaf Writers Conference in Middlebury, Vermont. Started in 1927, the conference has hosted such greats as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and Toni Morrison. Schwab, a researcher for the American Planning Association and author of the book *Deeper Shades of Green*, hopes to use the conference to get his novel about life after a homeless shelter on track.

*Write a book? Start a fellowship? Switch jobs? Contact George Homsy. Fax: (617) 868-8659; Ph: (617) 520-6857; <ghomsy@world.std.com>. Living On Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.*



Tucson conference set

# Wild west rendezvous for SEJ

By JAY LETTO

It's time to dust off those cowboy boots and dig out that old bolo tie that some uncle gave you 100 years ago. That's right, pardner, 'cause SEJ's headin' out West.

The real West. Tucson. Flanked on two sides by Saguaro National Park and surrounded by the stunning Sonoran Desert and picturesque mountain ranges, Tucson is the site of SEJ's Seventh National Conference, October 2-5, 1997. Early sign-ups indicate an attendance figure of about 400, similar to last year's showing at St. Louis. Hosts this year are the University of Arizona, the Morris K. Udall Foundation, and the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy.

And, we promise to get you "out there" to see a piece of the West. Thursday tours include trips to: Nogales, Mexico, to examine border environment issues; a working ranch and rangeland, to address conflict and resolution between ranchers and environmentalists; the University of Arizona Desert Lab, to learn about desert ecology and cultures; and Hughes Missile Systems and other sites where trichloroethylene (TCE) has caused groundwater problems and charges of environmental racism.

Friday afternoon and evening at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum features special presentations throughout this

unique open-air zoo/botanical garden/museum, followed by a traditional dinner of Southwestern cuisine. Saturday afternoon mini-tours include trips to the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research and an attempted sustainable community, Civano, the original "Solar Village."

Be sure to make travel plans so you can stick around for our Sunday sessions. We head out to Biosphere 2 for exclusive guided tours inside the \$200 million, three-acre facility, built to be its own separate biosphere, now run by Columbia University. Held there will be the popular "Writers on Writing" and "Environmental History" panels, the latter focusing on the legacy of Ed Abbey.

If that's not enough, sign up for the post-conference Grand Canyon trip where you can enjoy its grandeur and talk to experts about threats to its future. Space is limited and attendance restricted to SEJ members only.

Amid the usual plethora of topic panels, computer workshops, small-group sessions with newsmakers, debates, and reporting tips sessions, will be plenty of time for socializing. The opening reception Thursday evening will take place at the Arizona Historical Society Museum. Dinner and reception Friday will be at the Desert Museum. Network lunch on Saturday and brunch Sunday morning are at Biosphere 2.

## Share your work

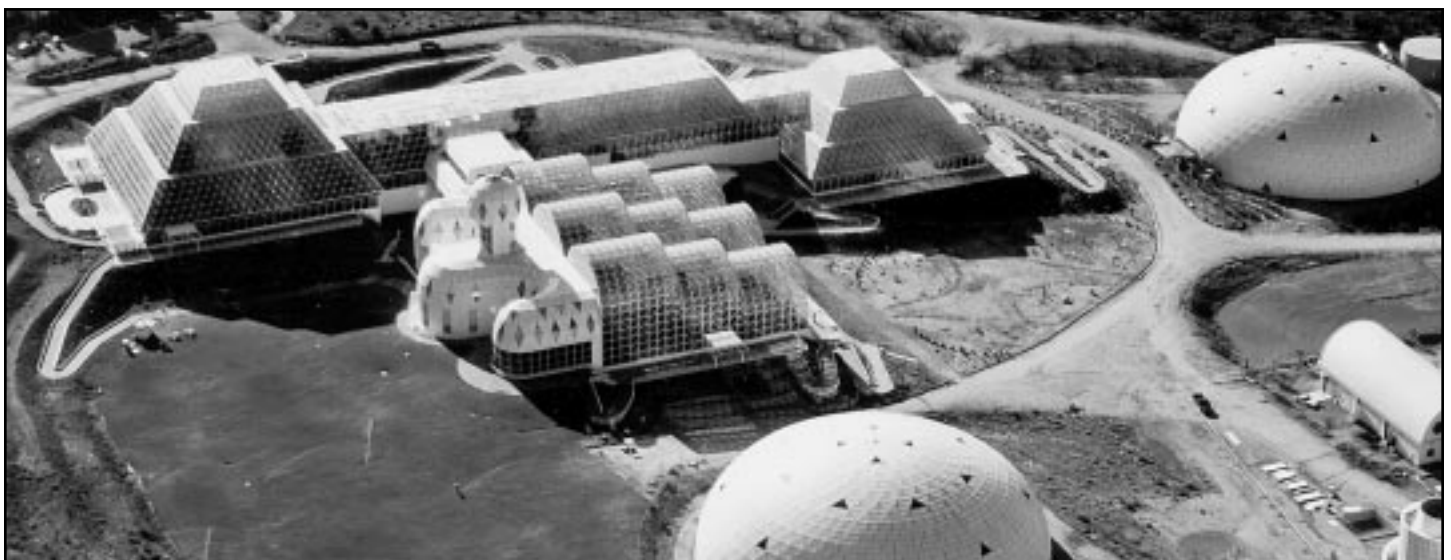
SEJ members are encouraged to bring copies of recent books and articles or radio or television news clips for display in the Reading Room. Equipment will be available for listening and viewing.

Academic members are invited to bring copies of recently published research articles and books for similar display in the Reading Room. Contact Academic Board Representative JoAnn Valenti if you have questions.

You'll get an opportunity to test your skills, because this year's conference features SEJ's first Environmental Reporting Trivia Contest. The written quiz will be handed out in registration packets, and answers, with winners and prizes announced at SEJ's membership meeting Saturday afternoon.

For more information, call the SEJ office or check SEJ's Environmental Journalism Home Page at <http://www.sej.org>. The deadline for early registration is August 1. See you in Tucson.

*Jay Letto is SEJ's national conference coordinator and a freelance journalist in White Salmon, WA.*



**Biosphere 2, an experiment in enclosed ecosystems, will be a site for several of SEJ's national conference sessions.**



# TipSheet use quadruples, spurs memberships

By JIM QUIGLEY

The circulation of SEJ's biweekly *TipSheet*, one year old July 1, has grown substantially since a news item about it ran in the winter 1996-97 issue of the *SEJournal*. At that time it was reported that the *TipSheet* had about 400 subscribers, split fairly equally between those receiving it by fax and those receiving it by e-mail. Currently, there are 1,622 subscribers, 910 via e-mail and 712 by fax. The SEJ office continues to get regular requests for new subscriptions.

"We're delighted with the results," said Beth Parke, SEJ Executive Director. "The *TipSheet* is not only a service for improving the visibility of environmental news, it also spreads the word about SEJ."

Distributed every other Wednesday, the *TipSheet* provides story ideas for journalists in the areas of environmental, science and health. It is a joint production of SEJ, the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), and the National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center (EHC). Joe Davis of the EHC serves as *TipSheet* editor.

A footer on the *TipSheet* solicits readers for story ideas and other feedback. Since late March, the SEJ office has heard from several dozen readers and with one exception, responses have been entirely positive. The exception was a plea for

giving more attention to international issues. Readers have cited specific story ideas they have used, and have offered additional information to be passed on to the listserv, or used as future tips.

Since half of the *TipSheet* readers are non-member journalists, the SEJ office also gets occasional requests for information and membership applications from *TipSheet* readers. Since the expansion of the *TipSheet* distribution list to include more broadcasters, the SEJ office has noticed a pick-up in membership applications from broadcast journalists.

The *TipSheet* also carries the SEJ Website address in its footer. While it is impossible to determine how visits to the Website are elicited, the SEJ office surmises that some must be due to the *TipSheet*. The office reports that since early spring more than half of all new membership applications have been generated from the SEJ Website <<http://www.sej.org>>, administered by SEJ board member Russ Clemings. All past issues of the *TipSheet* can be found there.

The *TipSheet* is in constant need of fresh ideas. Tips, leads and favorite rolodex numbers may be sent to Jim Quigley at the SEJ office (215) 836-9970 <[QuigSEJ@aol.com](mailto:QuigSEJ@aol.com)>, or Joe Davis at the Environmental Health Center, (202) 974-2464 <[jdavis@cpcug.org](mailto:jdavis@cpcug.org)>.

## Favorite *TipSheet* Fishing Holes:

- Amazing Environmental Organization WebDirectory!  
<http://www.webdirectory.com>
- American Lung Association:  
<http://www.lungusa.org>
- ENN Daily News:  
<http://www.enn.com/newstoday/news.htm>
- Envirobiz Press Releases:  
<http://www.envirobiz.com/pr.htm>
- EPA Press Releases:  
<http://earth1.epa.gov/PressReleases/>
- EurekaAlert! News Releases (AAAS):  
[http://www.eurekaalert.org/Elert/current/public\\_releases/releases\\_long.shtml](http://www.eurekaalert.org/Elert/current/public_releases/releases_long.shtml)
- GreenWire: <http://www.apn.com>
- National Biological Service (USGS, Dept. of Interior):  
[http://www.nbs.gov/nbs/nbshp2\\_2.htm](http://www.nbs.gov/nbs/nbshp2_2.htm)
- SciNews-MedNews (client-driven press release service):  
<http://www.ari.net/newswise/menu-sm.htm>

The *TipSheet* team was pleased when *Time Magazine* ran a recent cover story on asthma and children's health following a *TipSheet* edition devoted entirely to the subject. Even if *Time* was not influenced by the *TipSheet*, it was an affirmation to *TipSheet* producers that their news sense was on target.

*TipSheet* readers who want to fish in some of the same waters fished by *TipSheet* production staff should browse the daily editions of *Greenwire* and *ENN* (Environmental News Network) and visit a few of the Websites listed here (see sidebar). *TipSheet* production staff have also gotten on various fax distributions and e-mail listservs which generate press releases from both the private and public sectors. If you have any favorite Websites, fax lists, or e-mail listservs to recommend, contact the SEJ office about it.

## Ohio regional conference

### Browner, others address air quality

U.S. EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner defended the government's proposed changes to the Clean Air Act standards May 17 at an SEJ regional conference near Akron, Ohio.

Browner, keynote luncheon speaker at the one-day conference, said industry opponents to the smog and soot standards have attempted to discredit the science behind the standards while raising unsubstantiated fears about "banning backyard barbecues and Fourth of July fireworks."

Some 35 people from Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania attended sessions at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Nine speakers on three

panels discussed and debated a variety of air quality issues, including the proposed standards and efforts to control ozone drift.

Speakers included environmental regulators from Ohio and New Jersey as well as representatives of the American Lung Association, American Electric Power, Ozone Transport Commission, the Ohio Public Interest Research Group, the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, and journalists.

The conference was sponsored by the SEJ with support from the George Gund Foundation, Scripps Howard Foundation and *The Columbus Dispatch*.

*Jim Quigley is programs manager of SEJ and co-producer of Tipsheet. To receive TipSheet by e-mail, contact Quigley at <[QuigSEJ@aol.com](mailto:QuigSEJ@aol.com)>. To receive TipSheet by fax, call Michelle Thibideau at RTNDF at (202) 659-6510.*



# Bear with us in the great outdoors

Experts say you are more likely to be struck by lightning than attacked by a bear, but tell that to your imagination. Following are a few bear tales by SEJ members:

► **Bear? What bear?** Freelancer Margie Kriz of Bethesda, MD, was following House candidate Georgiana Lincoln on the campaign trail in Alaska last summer when their small plane was fogged in overnight at the small village of Tanana.

"The wonderful folks there found a nice vacant apartment for Georgiana, her campaign manager, the pilot, and me to stay in," said Margie. "Early next morning as we prepared for the two-mile walk to the airport, the phone rang. A townswoman said she just wanted us to know that it was okay for us to leave now, they had killed the bear. No one had told us there had been a wild bear wandering around the little town for several weeks!

"As we walked to the airport Georgiana, a Native American, and other Native Americans who had joined us, assured me that if a woman meets up with a bear she need only moon it and the bear would run away. I accused them of pulling my leg but they said no, it was one of those weird tales passed along."

Bear suit, anyone?

► **Not recommended!** Freelancer Greg Breining of St. Paul, MN, tells of rounding a corner on a trail while backpacking and meeting a big bear and two cubs.

"I thought the sound of my beating heart would scare them into Canada but miraculously, they didn't see me," he said. "They merely continued to forage through bushes next to the trail.

"I tiptoed back around the bend and thought a moment. Should I wait for them to go? No, that might take too long. What if I just walk through? No, that might startle them. Maybe I should make noise and hope they move off.

"So I marched around the bend again, opened my mouth and, in one of the most stupid decisions I've ever made, uttered a noise I had made often in playing with my young daughter: I growled, loud and mean.

"Who would have believed that a full-grown bear could jump three feet in the air, spin completely around and achieve 30 miles an hour before touching the ground? When she did she was aimed at me, and closing fast. I sprinted for a tree and as I prepared to hoist myself up, expecting at any second to feel bear teeth on my skull, I couldn't resist one last look over my shoulder. All three bears were gone."

► **Cool Dad.** Board member David Ropeik has inside information on a family of four in a "bear jam" at Glacier National Park, watching a grizzly on a hillside at safe distance, along with hundreds of other tourists. Suddenly a second grizzly stepped out of the bushes 100 feet away.

"A park ranger ordered everyone into their vehicles as quickly and quietly as possible. The bear ambled toward the crowd where many continued to make noise and sudden move-

ments, exciting it further. As the huge animal rose on its hind legs, obviously agitated, the nine-year-old in the family climbed into a car—not even his—and cowered, not watching. The Mom smilingly snapped pictures with a still camera, thinking the ranger's 9 mm pistol ensured her safety. The 12-year-old stood by her mother and nicknamed the cute carnivore 'Mr. Fuzzy.'

"Dad, brave Dad, grabbed the family video camera and shot footage of what would surely make network news that night as a bear attack on a crowd of tourists. But the animal opted for berries instead and ambled away.

"Good thing, for the video was later found to be unusable. Too shaky from being held by the supposedly calm newsman. Like they say, the camera never lies."

► **A priest, a rabbi, and a minister...** From Sarah Gilbert, of Boulder's *Daily Camera*: "About four years ago I took a helicopter flight into Kluane National Park in the Yukon with a geologist, a botanist, and a mammalogist. We landed in this incredible alpine meadow well above timberline and about a 10-day hike from civilization.

"While I was soaking in all the beauty on that crisp summer day the geologist exclaimed, 'Wow, look at these rocks!'

"The botanist replied, 'That's nothing, look at these plants!'

"The mammalogist offered, 'That's nothing, look at this bear (scat)!'"

► **Playing bear.** Camping in a California state park, Paul Rogers of the San Jose *Mercury News* and his girlfriend were awakened one night by a rustling under the tent's rain fly. They unzipped the tent fly in time to see a fleeing raccoon. "He's got one of our hiking boots!" the girlfriend shrieked.

"I noted with relief that it was one of hers, not mine," said Paul, "but in the name of chivalry I ran naked after the marauding animal and chased it to a standstill at the edge of a precipice. I yelled. I waved my arms, but it wouldn't drop the boot. As a last resort I did my best impersonation of a grizzly bear. I put the flashlight in my teeth, raised my arms high, roared, and lunged forward. The raccoon dumped the boot and I was a hero for the rest of the trip."

► **Avoidance behavior.** Mike Taugher's girlfriend tried to nudge him awake while camping in Yosemite, to point out that a bear was brushing back and forth along the side of the tent.

"I groggily told her not to worry, that it was just the people across the lake zipping and unzipping the fly on their tent, which is how the sound was being interpreted in my dream. She didn't rest well that night but since she's a nice person, she let me sleep."

Which may help explain why she's now his wife.

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*Anything humorously connected to the environment ever happen to you, be it bears, boats, or boomerangs? E-mail your tales to Noel Grove at [ngrove1253@aol.com](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), or send to same at Box 1016, Middleburg, VA. 20118.*

## Dodging Numbers...(from page 1)

cause environmental problems, population stability is too loony-fringe an idea even to be mentioned in the news.

Why would journalists want to avoid mentioning population growth in stories about environmental problems? In Part II of the study I interviewed a sample of 25 journalists to find out.

My sampling drew from many parts of the country to ensure a good geographic distribution of interviewees. I also sought reporters from different-size newspapers: nine were from papers with less than 250,000 circulation, 10 were from papers with circulation of 250,000-500,000, and six were from papers with greater than 500,000 circulation.

In interviewing journalists, I explained I had retrieved their story via Lexis-Nexis, and I recounted some details of their story. Then I asked each reporter, "what would you say was the cause of the problem you wrote about?" If that open-ended question produced no mention of population, I asked, "Can you think of any other causes? Perhaps at a deeper level of causation?" If two open-ended questions pro-

duced no mention of population growth, I brought up the subject by saying that many environmental writers considered population growth one of the ultimate causes of environmental problems. Then I asked the journalist if population growth had affected the problem the journalist had described.

Eight interviewees mentioned population in response to an open-ended question. Six discounted population as an influence on the environmental problems they had written about. Eleven reporters did not volunteer a perspective on population growth, but agreed that it was a significant cause after I brought up the subject. Of these 11, only two seemed unfamiliar with the environmental effects of population growth. The other nine were quite conversant with the role of population growth, and several mentioned that they write about it as an issue occasionally. One reporter who did not mention population in response to my open-ended questions told me she had chosen not to have children in part from environmental concerns.

These responses imply that journalists

aren't putting all that they know about environmental causality into their stories. Why not? Many admitted that population is a controversial issue and said they prefer to avoid it if possible. One reporter said, "It's such an incendiary issue. If you say, 'It all comes down to too many people,' you'll have everybody from Operation Rescue to the Catholic Church calling you."

Another said, "We as journalists are nervous to discuss population." Another told me, "Most of us (reporters) wait until somebody says it." Another recalled the furor over the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* advocacy of Norplant for local teen pregnancy, which produced charges of racism by area black people.

But in addition to averting controversy, the most common reason journalists gave for avoiding population growth in their stories was that population growth did not fit within the event frame that served as their news peg. "I've got 20 inches to explain why a garter snake is endangered. There's no room for population growth in the story," one reporter said. Another said, "I don't think globally when I write a story; I think, 'what do the people in this town want to know about?'"

## Does population matter?

As the doomsayers/naysayers debate at the St. Louis SEJ annual conference demonstrated, the debate about population can be confusing and rancorous.

A generation ago the books that scared everyone about population growth—Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* and the *Club of Rome's The Limits to Growth*—focused on how population would soon grow beyond the supply of food and mineral resources. But what the neoMalthusians predicted would be The Age of Famines is today better remembered as the Age of Polyester Leisure Suits, and the price of gasoline in constant dollars has never been lower.

The past generation has shown that population growth has much more impact on those commodities that do not respond to market incentives, that human ingenuity cannot cause to multiply. Nature, for instance. Although agronomists have tripled or quadrupled the yield per acre of grain, the maximum sustainable yield of the world's natural fisheries is fixed by Darwinian, not market, forces. Hence the world's fisheries have failed to keep up with the demand from growing human numbers, and have been declining since 1988. The amount of fresh water is also finite and is not keeping up with population growth in many countries. And the supply of land is actually shrinking, so population growth inevitably has great impact on land use. Indeed, land developers are very forthcoming about the importance of population growth to their mission of converting farmland and

wildlife habitat into subdivisions and outlet malls:

The two primary determinants of the need for home and commercial construction are population growth and the demolition and retirement of existing facilities, according to *When Real Estate and Home Building Become Big Business*, by L. Goodkin. Growth in population creates a need not only for housing but also for supporting real estate facilities such as shopping centers, service stations, medical clinics, schools, office buildings, and so on.

From *All About Investing in Real Estate Securities* by I. Cobleigh, "The main idea to keep in mind as you search for rewarding corporate reality investments is that in general, land prices are the resultants of population. As more people come on a given section of land, whether to build homes, to work in stores, office buildings, factories, financial institutions, or supermarkets, they create a demand for living space, land and structures. This demand, except during a recession, seems likely to expand indefinitely."

And from *Property Development: Effective Decision-Making in Uncertain Times* by J. McMahan: "Demand for real estate at the national level is influenced by national population growth and demographic change, coupled with expanding employment opportunities and rising per capita incomes."

So yes, human population growth is an important influence on the environment. Journalists are on solid ground when they connect local environmental problems like urban sprawl, water shortages, and wildlife habitat loss to population growth.



Many interviewees were aware of the constraints of being a local reporter. They felt that population growth was simply too broad and distant to figure in their stories. As one reporter told me: "I don't know that you can get (population) into the story. There are space limitations and the conventions of journalism are such that you have to keep your paragraphs germane to one another. If you're talking about wildlife habitat and then all of a sudden you're talking about world population growth, you've got to explain to an editor how you got there and use a lot of paragraphs to do that."

*The number of Americans who feel population growth within the United States is a major problem diminished from 41 percent in 1971 to 29 percent in 1992.*

*Less than half of Americans polled by Gallup in 1992 felt that population would be a problem by the year 2000.*

Another said in a similar vein: "It is the role of journalists to include population growth as a source of problems. But on a daily story, you can practically never do that. On a daily story, it's almost impossible. If I were to try, my editor would probably want me to spend more time defining terms, and we don't have space for that."

Yet another said, "Often daily journalism doesn't include the broad context; you find that in the op-ed pages. Journalists are self-conscious about appearing intellectual; they don't want to appear self-indulgent."

From these and other similar comments, I concluded that the working principles of journalism create a vast causal dissociation with regard to population and environment: local reporters have plenty

of news pegs about population-driven environmental problems, but don't have the space or the scope to connect these problems to a national issue like population growth. The national media can discuss national issues, but they cannot peg their stories around local problems that, from a national perspective, seem trivial.

What does this pattern of causal myopia in the news mean to public opinion? A May 1992 Gallup poll showed that the number of Americans who feel population growth within the United States is a major problem had diminished from 41 percent in 1971 to 29 percent in 1992. Less than half of Americans polled by Gallup in 1992 felt that population would be a problem by the year 2000.

A second poll, done in 1993 for the Pew Global Stewardship Initiative, showed similar results: less than half of a sample of Americans agreed that lowering the U.S. birthrate was important for the environment.

Most tellingly, a nationwide series of focus groups on population and environment concluded that most Americans cannot make the connection between population growth and environmental problems. The focus groups were sponsored by the Pew Global Stewardship Initiative in 1993.

In their 1995 book, *Attitudes Toward the Environment: Twenty-Five Years After Earth Day*, Ladd and Bowman concluded that the domestic population issue in the United States is essentially dead.

Despite its low salience in the news and growing public indifference, U.S. population continues to grow 10 times as fast as the growth rate of an average developed country and at the highest growth rate in the developed world. Our population has doubled in the past 50 years and at current rates could double again in 60 years. Given Americans' per-capita consumption rates, this will have stunning environmental effects.

A group is forming to try to resurrect domestic population growth as an issue. The U.S. Population Policy Project (US3P, for short) is co-chaired by Doug LaFollette, Wisconsin Secretary of State, and David Pimentel of Cornell University. It will sponsor a series of workshops, focus groups, and eventually a national population policy conference, tentatively set for Autumn 1997. The aim of this group is not a one-shot set of meetings, but a continuing dialogue on the role of population growth in American life. This effort is just coalescing, but it has a Web site: <http://www.iti.com/iti/US3P/>.

In the meantime, as U.S. population continues to grow blithely, environmental reporters are guaranteed to have plenty of problems to write about.

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*Dr. Michael Maher is assistant professor of communication at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and an academic member of SEJ. He can be reached at [tmm8088@usl.edu](mailto:tmm8088@usl.edu).*

## Interview...(from page 1)

matter to our readers, people in Portland respond quite similarly to the way they do in most metropolitan areas. Quality of life issues like education, transportation and commuting and entertainment show up loud and clear. What distinguishes this area I think from other places is that the environment is on that short list, too. That's because people in the Northwest are invested in the environment. They spend time in the forests, on the streams, at the beach. A lot of people live here because they enjoy the outdoor life. A lot of couch potato people care about the environment here, too, because of the natural beauty of the area and because the quality of life, relatively speaking, is so good here.

To some people it's as fundamental as driving down the freeway going to work in the morning and being able see Mount Hood. It's that simple for people, as well as for the serious outdoors people, hunters and fisherman and people who protest timber cuts.

**Q.** Does The Oregonian have a strong tradition of environmental reporting?

**A.** A few years ago we had two or three full-time environmental reporters and other people who worked around the periphery. We've not only added reporters to the beat, we've also tried to make the coverage much more utilitarian, more accessible so people understand what the impacts of certain actions might be upon the environment they use and live in.

**Q.** Utilitarian?

**A.** Yeah, a gross oversimplification might be that instead of writing just about the science of salmon runs declining--how and why that happens--you write about how to reverse that, or what the financial impact would be if the Columbia River salmon became extinct. You would bring that cost home to the customer. If more river water bypasses the dams to save the fishery, then that could increase utility rates.

**Q.** That's asking for a much harder level of reporting--getting to the consequences.

**A.** Yes, it is harder, but the potential payback is tremendous in terms of helping people understand what's going on their world and how it has an impact.

**Q.** Do you actually have a "salmon reporter"?

**A.** If the car is the symbol for Detroit, if the oil business defines Houston, then the icon for the Northwest--at least west of the Cascades--is the salmon. Certainly fishing has been a huge industry here. The salmon is a fine symbol, not just economically, but also defining the independence that has always been a part of the Northwest.

The salmon's struggle has been used to define qualities that have been valued in the region--intuitiveness, straightforwardness. It's not the kind of thing people talk about at a dinner party or think about at their desk during the day. But there is sort of a spiritual connection here with the salmon. The story is really never ending, with issues over salmon recovery, endangered species designations, fishing season limitations, the scientific debate over how you save the salmon and the more fundamental debate over whether you want to pay the cost of saving the fish.

**Q.** What is this "natural heritage" beat?

**A.** We want to tell stories about the particular character of the Northwest. A couple of our writers do this especially well. When they wade into a stream, they see things based on their experience, the time they have spent talking to scientists and farmers and environmentalists. They see things other reporters might not see if they had the opportunity. They see the spiritual connection to the environment, the undercurrent.

**Q.** Is your beefed-up environmental coverage in response to news competition in the region?

**A.** Tacoma is 150 miles from here. Seattle is 180 miles from here. There's some competition, but it's really more in response to issues that are right in front of us, and to people wanting to know more about them. The list is endless. It's not just salmon recovery in the Columbia or trees dying in the Cascades. It's also grazing in eastern Oregon. It's the wise-use movement and "property takings." It's the Endangered Species Act. Environmental stories are a fundamental part of what we do.

You could make an argument that environmental coverage in Portland is the equivalent of Capitol Hill coverage at the Washington Post or state capitol coverage in Sacramento. At Northwest newspapers, being an environmental writer is seen as an elite job, in the way that perhaps a national writer at a national

paper might be seen. Or the big-time investigative reporter. It has that kind of status.

**Q.** Are your environmental writers criticized as advocates more than other reporters on your staff?

**A.** The fundamental obligation for environmental reporters is no different than for any other reporter. And that's to tell the truth. We have worked real hard to make sure that our coverage is in the middle. It's an easy area to attack journalists because few

people understand environmental issues deeply. You are dealing with things like parts-per-million and science. It's harder for readers to sort that out. That makes environmental reporting easy to attack because the risk of attacking is lower. The beat is relatively new.

In sports journalism, it's okay to say almost anything because ultimately it doesn't matter. It's not going to change the course of civilization. And in political journalism the boundaries have long been established and that allows some room for interpretation. In environmental journalism, which is really the phenomenon of the last 20 years, the boundaries are not as clear-

ly defined. It really has been up to the reporters to figure out where those are. So the opportunity for criticism is greater because no one is quite sure exactly how and where to draw lines, if you should draw lines.

But many of the traditional standards apply. Make sure the stories are fair and complete. Make sure the responses are full and the explanations are clear. And if there are other plausible sides to the story, just bend over backward to make sure they are there.

**Q.** Aren't there times, when the debate on an environmental issue is highly polarized or muddled, that reporters need to immerse themselves in the subject and draw their own conclusions on the validity of competing claims?

**A.** That's exactly right. One of the things that is so important to journalism now is the development of expertise. That's especially true in environmental reporting. We have all believed for a long time that in health science and medical journalism that reporters have to have expertise, that they have to be able to converse with doctors and specialists. They at least have to have enough of a working knowledge to be able to sort through the BS and to be able to explain for readers what's going on, and not in scientific jargon.

**Q.** So you believe environmental reporters should address relative risk, scientific uncertainty and other issues that are hard to explain?

**A.** I really do believe that. But it's very hard work, and it takes great patience on the editors' part. Because great and experienced and talented environmental writers didn't get that way just from doing stories. They got that way from studying and reading and doing hours of interviews that yielded nothing in terms of product for the paper. Traditionally we are very tolerant of that in some of the established specialties like medical or science writ-

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ing. We say that medical writers have got to spend a lot of time talking to doctors to really understand things. Well, if you are going to report with depth about the environment, you have to spend hours and hours listening to scientists, to environmentalists, to bureaucrats. Just understanding the Clinton Forest Plan is almost a Ph.D. experience.

If there is an incremental decline in environmental reporting nationwide it may be because of the time that the beat requires. Staffs are smaller, but the pressure to produce stories is no less. But environmental coverage is only going to become more important to readers. Our children are being raised in an era where environmental awareness is fundamental. They see mom and dad putting the newspapers out on the curb every week. They talk about recycling and preservation in school. Now that doesn't mean they are going to grow up and chain themselves to trees to prevent salvage logging. But it does mean the generation that is coming to age now is connected to the environment.

The connection is so important. And it's not about advocacy,

which is where some of our critics get off the point. It's about connecting the dots, and about explaining the world that they live in. The children who grew up with Earth Day and recycling are going to be caring adults, wanting to know the world in which they live. It's not like when we grew up and took for granted that the air was clean, the water was safe. They are growing up in a time when those assumptions aren't quite the same. The environmental ethic is going to produce an appetite for reporting that explains things for them. It's fundamental to newspaper survival anyway. That's what we do uniquely well. We can explain well.

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*Chris Bowman, a senior reporter at the Sacramento Bee, has covered environmental and natural resource issues in California and the West for several years. He is the first U.S. journalist to be appointed Environmental Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.*

### Cyber scribe...(from page 1)

at becoming a top-flight, electronic-only magazine and a test bed for research on how people might use the Web. Since going online in Feb., 1996, *The Why Files* has been drawing 9,000 to 15,000 readers per week.

In writing about topics from astronomy to technology, from social science to environment, from sports to eye disease, we decided to tell stories with this point of view: science is cool. You can understand it once the fancy lingo is stripped away.

Our "science behind the news" led us, on the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, to cover the changing view of radiation's health effects. Last Valentine's Day I wrote about male-female attractions, citing evidence that humans may communicate, without realizing it, with pheromones. In one test, women sniffing T-shirts worn by different men were attracted to those from men with different immune characteristics. This seems to comprise a natural and subtle method for preserving immune function in offspring.

Every two weeks, I write a 4,000 to 5,000-word story. I also write headlines, subheads, and captions, and prepare the glossary and bibliography. When I cruise cyberspace looking for links for our stories, I sometimes feel like an alien. I'm a writer, a believer in the journalistic tradition epitomized by Upton Sinclair and Rachel Carson. But in Web-roaming I find myself in a virtual valley where the goals are often flashiness, techno-whizzery, and complexity for its own sake. I'm not the first one to wonder what happened to accuracy, readability, and balance in a medium where "writing" is known as "generating content." In the culture clash between computerdom and journalism, between whiz-bang and "content," between West Coast and Rest-Of-Us Coast, I stand with the scribes.

But that doesn't mean I believe in dumping onto the Web material that was written for paper. Although that may work on a Web site created for a specialized audience, it seldom works for a general audience. To place an entire article from a print magazine onto the Web and expect the average surfer to read it is about as sensible as throwing the text of *War and Peace* on the screen of prime-time television and hoping for good ratings.

I break up my 4,000-word articles with sidebars, photos, hot-links to other sources, or humor. Humor is a hallmark of Web-writing, probably because it grew out of the hacker culture, not out of J-schools. The negative side of that history is a loss of accuracy. The positive side is a looser, more enjoyable use of language. In a recent article on health and emotion, for example, I referred to those most prone to stress as being on the "best-stressed list." How many print editors would let that stand?

Our audience is a big unknown. E-mail responses and records of those who log-on include computer geeks and first-time Webbers. They come from 100 countries and range from 5th graders to teachers to bench scientists. Judging from our e-mail, we can't talk down to our readers. The science has to be rigorous (and accurate, given that NSF sponsorship). But at what level do we write? That's a riddle we'll never solve definitively.

To write on the Web you must keep up with the market—study what else is being done out there. Do that, and you'll probably notice the differences between Web-writing and print-writing. Here's my advice for handling some of those differences:

First of all, the reader has control over the order in which an article appears, and even where to start. A reader searching, for example, for information on "radiation hormesis" would come directly to our page on that topic without reading the dozen pages on Hiroshima and Chernobyl that had set up the topic. So that page on radiation hormesis must stand on its own for the specialist, but it must fit into the flow of the entire article for those who are reading from the top. At the same time, we allow that specialist who landed at "hormesis" to return to the beginning of the article and read it all.

I suggest avoiding unneeded electronic complexity in creating an article. Golly-gee, whiz-bang gimmicks on a Web site favor the rich, high-tech publishers and sabotage the democratic "anybody-can-publish" ethos of a year or two ago. A lot has improved in terms of sophisticated presentation, but it's not all for the better. There may be fewer sophomoric, home-built pages, but there's also more of a need to download this plug-in, rejigger that setting, and most significantly, buy a higher-horsepower computer. There are giant commercial battles over browsers and comput-



The National Institute for Science Education's Web site, Web page above, is maintained by three part-time specialists.

er languages, with gigabucks riding in the balance.

Since relatively few readers have high-class connections, I'd suggest using some bells and whistles but remembering that most people can't take advantage of them yet. So complicated whiz-bang should remain secondary to the task of telling the story. The Web is entertainment, and unfortunately most readers are slouched at a desk, not sitting in an easy chair.

In light of these technology-for-its-own-sake precautions, how does *The Why Files* use video, sound, interactivity, and links to other Web sites? We rely heavily on other Web resources to fill out our stories. As a non-commercial site, we're happy to direct readers to great, free sites where readers can find a boundless supply of extra information. In our "Radiation Revisited" story, for example, we linked to Web sites run by the Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Hiroshima, The U.S. Department of Energy, and a medical physics organization, where readers could meet experts, read abstracts of science studies, and goggle

at hundreds of photos of the atomic bombings. These hotlinks may appear in the story (using explicit language that tells readers where the hotlink will take them) or in the bibliography that accompanies each article. (Heeding the primacy of print, the bib lists books and magazine articles before Web resources.)

We try to keep the reader "found" rather than lost in cyberspace. To that end, we rely heavily on subheads, captions and graphics to keep readers oriented. We use simple drawings, or even cartoons, to de-jargonate stories. We offer definitions for readers who need them in a glossary that's just a click away.

We help the reader keep up-to-date on the future by linking to sites that present current information. In our forest fire story, we linked to a U.S. Forest Service map that shows yesterday's forest-fire danger around the country. (Thus, tomorrow, the site will show today's conditions. Try that with print!) We print e-mail from scientists (but only with permission and only if they can actually write). In our volcano story, we ran—on a lined-paper background—a great letter from an expert on recolonization of an island destroyed by a volcano.

We use a provocative tone—to keep the reader awake if nothing else. Links to the next page commonly ask pugnacious questions: "So-and-so's theory sounds crazy, but could there be something to it?" or "I bet you were starting to believe this bunkum..."

Finally, we occasionally tickle the ears. We ran heartbeat noises, barely audible, on the intro page to our story about heart surgery.

*The Why Files* is entirely written by our staff of three part-timers, but as the Web matures, some publications are starting to buy freelance material. Still, I expect that more work will come from the increasing number of organizations that are initiating Web sites, or replacing a boringly institutional site with something more lively, entertaining, and digestible.

I often run across biases against the Web, such as "anything so trendy must be equal parts fraud and hype." There's considerable truth to that. But it's also true that this kid we call the Web is the only candidate for global bookstore and world library. As a medium barely out of toddlerhood, it has phenomenal potential. And it can be a cool place to write.

*David Tenenbaum is the feature writer at The Why Files, a biweekly electronic science magazine housed at University of Wisconsin-Madison (<http://whyfiles.news.wisc.edu>). He is also a freelancer and science correspondent for ABCNEWS.com.*

## SEJ online services not difficult to access

- **The SEJ web page** <<http://www.sej.org>> holds past issues of the *SEJournal*, *TipSheet* archives, information about the board, SEJ events (including our 7th national conference planned for Tucson, AZ in October), a magazine rack featuring articles by members and other environmental journalists, links to other Web sites, and more. Russ Clemings, SEJ board member and reporter for the *Fresno Bee*, is our Web site manager.
- **SEJannounce** is a non-interactive list for messages from the SEJ office, such as announcements about SEJ elections, meetings, other important official business. All members are auto-

matically subscribed.

- **TipSheet** provides biweekly news tips on potential enviro stories and sources. To subscribe, e-mail <[majordomo@sej.org](mailto:majordomo@sej.org)>. In the message body, type: subscribe sej-member firstname lastname <your Email address>.
- **SEJ listserv** <[sej@indra.com](mailto:sej@indra.com)> is an interactive, member forum. To subscribe, e-mail <[majordomo@indra.com](mailto:majordomo@indra.com)>. In the message body, type: subscribe sej-member firstname lastname <your Email address>. Any questions? Contact Jim Quigley [QuigSEJ@aol.com](mailto:QuigSEJ@aol.com) or (215) 836-9970.

# New Members

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from April 1, 1997 through June 29, 1997. Memberships recorded after June 29 will appear in *SEJournal* volume 7, Number 3.

## Alaska

- Doug Schneider (associate), University of Alaska NOAA-Sea Grant College Program, Fairbanks

## California

- Steven Church (active), *The San Bernardino Sun*, San Bernardino
- Jennie Fitzhugh (academic), San Jose State University Journalism Department, Porterville
- John Ince (associate), Earth Aid Foundation, *New Paradigm Series* Sausalito
- John J. Tipton (active), *Porterville Recorder*, Porterville

## Colorado

- Anna Perea (academic), Colorado State University, Journalism & Technical Communication, Fort Collins

## Connecticut

- Clare Condon (active), Business & Legal Reports, Inc., *Environmental Compliance*, Madison
- Ira Flatow (active), ScienCentral, Inc., Stamford

## District of Columbia

- Eliene Augenbraun (active), ScienCentral, Inc.
- Patricia B. Kelly (associate),
- Kevin McManus (active), *Washington Post*

## Florida

- Jan Hollingsworth (active), *The Tampa Tribune*, Tampa

## Idaho

- Stephen Schowengerdt (active),

Environmental News Network, *ENN Online*, Sun Valley

## Illinois

- Max Bazerman (academic), Northwestern University, Organization Behavior, Evanston
- Sheryl A. Reda (associate), *Conscious Choice Journal of Ecology*, Chicago
- Mark D. Uehling (active), Chicago
- Robert Vosper (associate), The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

## Indiana

- Benjamin Cox (academic), Indiana Univ. Purdue Univ., *The IUPUI Sagamore*, Indianapolis
- George Howard (academic), University of Notre Dame Dept. of Psychology

## Louisiana

- Marilyn Barrett-O'leary (associate), Louisiana State University Sea Grant, Baton Rouge
- Mike Maher (academic), University of Southwestern Louisiana, Communication Department, Lafayette

## Massachusetts

- Ross Gelbspan (active), Brookline
- Anne Harding (active), Stow
- Deborah Knight (associate), Lexington
- Marie D. Natoli (associate), Suffolk University Law School, *Dicta*, Wellesley

## Michigan

- Jon Hoban (active), Great Lakes Radio Consortium, Ann Arbor
- David Reich (associate), Wayne State University, *Exemplar*, Detroit

## Minnesota

- Mark Neuzil (academic), University of St. Thomas, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, St. Paul

## New York

- Conn Nugent (active), Liberty Tree

Website, NYC

## North Dakota

- Heather Larson (academic), University of North Dakota, School of Communication, Grand Forks

## Ohio

- Michelle Tedford (active), *The Dayton Voice*, Dayton

## Oregon

- Christy George (active), Oregon Public broadcasting, *Marketplace*, Portland

## Pennsylvania

- Joseph Robert Lankard (academic), Penn State University, Indiana

## Texas

- Ames Presley (active), Texarkana

## Utah

- Brent Israelsen (active), *Salt Lake Tribune*, Salt Lake City

## Virginia

- Lynn M. Davis (associate), Virginia Tech College of Forestry and Wildlife Resources, Roanoke
- Tracey Grau (active), WSET-TV, Lynchburg
- Joan Hustace Walker (active), Ashburn

## Washington

- Laura T. Coffey (active), *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, Seattle

## Wisconsin

- Jennifer Fessler (academic), UW-Stevens Point Communication, Biology Department, Stevens Point

## Canada

- Arlene Bouwman (active), Templegate Information Services Inc., *Canadian Environmental Regulation and Compliance News*, Georgetown, Ontario

## Czech Republic

- Xavier A. Cronin (associate), 15500 Prague 5

## SEJournal submission deadlines

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

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

Want to contribute to the best-read section of the *SEJournal* and brag about your region at the same time?

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

said they get ideas for print or broadcast coverage from the pages. The comment was once made that many members read the *Journal* from the back to the front.

This is not heavy lifting. Most members are aware of events in their state (or sometimes more than one state) anyway, so a quick wrap on the top stories, how they are being covered, and contact information about those who did the work suffices.

Positions for Green Beat correspondent are open to any SEJ members, though preference will be given to journalists or educators. Anyone interested may call Kevin Carmody at (773) 229-2814, or Chris Rigel, [rigel@voicenet.com](mailto:rigel@voicenet.com) or at SEJ headquarters at (215) 836-9970

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

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# Listservs, web sites help win Pulitzer

## Member of Times-Picayune team describes electronic research

By MARK SCHLEIFSTEIN

*Editor's note: Earlier this year a team from the New Orleans Times-Picayune newspaper won the Pulitzer Prize for public service, for an eight-day special report entitled "Oceans of Trouble: Are the World's Fisheries Doomed?" SEJ member Mark Schleifstein reports here on the long process of gathering information for the series.*

In December 1994, I wrote a simple paragraph that set in motion the biggest reporting project I've ever undertaken. My editors had asked for ideas about projects for the coming year. I glanced through a list of story ideas in my computer and wrote the following:

"Seafood: We need to do a major take-out on how the rapidly declining stocks of a variety of seafood species, ranging from redfish to shrimp to sea trout, are affecting the state. This is a huge story that we've covered poorly on a daily basis, inasmuch as seafood is the third or fourth largest industry in the state. I see this as a bells-and-whistles project."

The editors went for the idea and decided to team me with three people: John McQuaid, our Washington correspondent, who has covered environmental issues both in Congress and during two years as our Central American correspondent; Bob Marshall, our nationally respected outdoors writer; and photographer Ted Jackson, whose expertise is in filming both complicated people stories and wildlife stories. Keeping track of what we were doing would be political editor Tim Morris.

We had to learn everything we could about fish as fast as we could, a process that took more than a month and required a search for general books on fisheries and specific books on issues we discovered. We used listservs from the very beginning, lurking at first on a variety of fisheries and environmental lists, and then asking questions as we moved deeper into our research and reporting.

We also made extensive use of Lexis to research specific issues, as well as the World Wide Web. After we concluded we had at least a cursory knowledge of fisheries issues, we tried to divide up the work.

Bob would tackle recreational fisheries and the pressures and changes being caused by overfishing and habitat change. John would take on the deciphering of overfishing and the regulatory structure being used to deal with it, and how both were affecting the commercial fishing industry. He also would explore how the markets for fish moved the industry.

My focus would be on the environmental elements--wetlands loss and pollution problems. I would also tackle the basics of the aquaculture industry.

We did not work full-time on the project the entire 13 months. Bob was still producing weekly outdoor pages and a weekly fishing column. I kept getting pulled off my research to help out on stories involving the gambling industry in Louisiana. John often had to tackle daily stories involving the state's congressional delegation.

We quickly realized that our story was much bigger than the

Gulf of Mexico. The only way to explain the Gulf's problems and potential hazards was to compare it to fisheries worldwide. John also discovered that fisheries management was not the safe, steady system that the managers wanted the public to envision. It was a politically-operated bureaucracy that itself was threatening fisheries.

Once the worldwide scope was decided upon, the question was, where to go. We felt we needed to understand the Japan fish market. Without understanding how Japanese buyers made decisions on where to buy fish, we'd never really answer the question of what drove fishing in the Gulf and elsewhere around the world.

Since we were going that far, a stop in Thailand to study their shrimp aquaculture made sense, since foreign competition was a sore point for Gulf shrimpers. The shrimpers were being

forced to the verge of bankruptcy by the combination of cheap imports and new, expensive shrimp-fishing rules, such as requirements for devices that exclude turtles and a bycatch of juvenile fish.

We also needed to compare other fishing areas to the Gulf, and other habitat problems with Louisiana's wetlands. John went to Japan, Thailand, and New England. Bob went to Alaska. I traveled the Everglades system through Florida.

We found our best source of leads for both scientists and fishers was the listserv. A listserv is an e-mail mailing list that connects people with like interests. You subscribe to it, and all of a sudden, you receive copies of all mail sent to that list.

When we began our project, America Online had its own searchable list of listservs, so I started there. Today, there are several internet sites that serve the same purpose. For instance, an index of fish-related listservs can be found at <<http://www.actwin.com/fish/lists.html>>. Two search engines directed at listservs are <<http://www.netSPACE.org/cgi-bin/lwgate>> and <<http://catalog.com/vivian/interest-groupsearch.html>>.

I typed in the word "Fisheries" in the AOL search engine and checked what turned up, and then used other words, like "ocean" and "habitat" and "wetland," to expand my choices. Several listservs seemed to cover subjects dealing with fisheries. Here are some examples:

- Aqua-L, is a list for aquaculture businessmen and scientists. I met Bob Roseberry, the publisher of *Shrimp News International*, on this list. His publication, aimed at shrimp farmers worldwide, provided me with quite a few leads to track down the spread of Taura, a virus that kills farmed shrimp in the U.S. and around the world.

- Benthos, devoted to organisms that live on the bottom of the sea. This list proved useful in my research on the effects of the "dead zone" on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. The dead zone, an area of water that some years is 7,000 square miles in size and stretches from the Mississippi River's mouth to the Texas border, is very low in oxygen content. Fish and shrimp avoid the area, much to the chagrin of fishers, and the benthos—everything from starfish to clams to worms—are killed.



- Coastnet, scientists and others discussing coastal issues.
- FISH-ECOLOGY, discussion of scientific fisheries issues;
- FISHERIES, a similar sort of list;
- FISHFOLK, a discussion of social science and fisheries, used by sociologists, anthropologists and economists. John used this list to gather quite a bit of information about the effects of a system called individual transferrable quotas that was being considered as a tool for limiting the number of fishers on both the east and west coasts. John also met his fiancée, an anthropologist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, through the list.
- INFOTERRA, an environmentalist-oriented worldwide list.

This list proved quite useful over the past year in our coverage of issues involving gold mining in Indonesia by Freeport-McMoran, a fortune 500 company based in New Orleans. We were able to track rumors involving the Bre-X

gold mine scam on this list, because it is used by quite a few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dealing with indigenous peoples.

- SHELLFISH, a discussion of shellfish culturing issues for oyster, mussel and clam growers.

John and I started signing up for a number of the lists. I already was a member of SEJ-L, the Society of Environmental Journalists listserv, as well as CARR-L and NICAR-L, all of which proved useful during the project. Signing up consists of sending a message to a special address, normally the home computer of the list. You generally send an e-mail that includes the word "subscribe," the name of the list and your name.

Web pages also proved invaluable. Numerous scientific papers have been posted on the Web; we could even pull up pictures of a small piece of the coast of Norway to better describe the area affected by a dead zone similar to the one in the Gulf.

Writing our series turned out to be the most difficult and frustrating job. We had done so much reporting, gathered so much information, talked to so many people. I had accumulated

three file boxes full of notes, two bookshelves full of books and reports and a desk full of odds and ends. And those were just my paper files. I had eight 3-inch computer disks full of notes and John had 20 of his own, in addition to his own huge file boxes that he kept shipping by UPS between Washington and New Orleans. And we had stored a staggering 600 files of notes in the paper's mainframe computer. We kept getting blamed by other reporters every time the computer system crashed.

While we were reporting, Tim and other editors were reminding us to keep graphic artists informed of potential graphics. Ted was doing his own research on the internet, quizzing

other photographers on the best way to take underwater pictures and the potential for good photographs at locations to which he would accompany us.

I used my tried-and-true method of going back through all my notes and extracting

quotes, and then categorizing them. That helped me come up with story themes that I could flesh out with information from reports, or with more reporting to fill in holes. At the same time, Tim would hammer out draft outlines that we would kick around and see if they fit our notes, or vice versa.

As we wrote, we would run drafts by our artists, who would pull out information for their graphics. We also would do additional reporting for the artists, finding photos and drawings of specific fish, and a variety of maps.

In the end, we still had too much information for the amount of space available over eight days, and left whole stories, many photos and several graphics on the cutting-room floor. What we ended up with, however, outlined the breadth of fisheries problems facing Louisiana, the United States and the world, and won a Pulitzer Prize.

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*Mark Schleifstein has been a reporter with the Times Picayune since 1984.*

*In the end, we had too much information for the space available over eight days, and left whole stories, many photos, and several*

## First environmental cybermeeting planned

A British chemical engineering society is planning what may be a first this fall: An environmental conference held entirely online, over the Internet.

Environment97 will have more than 150 technical and general papers on subjects that range from climate change and urban air quality to pollution prevention and the future of wind power. Each keynote paper will also have a corresponding online discussion group, and there will be audio interviews with 10 environmental experts on future developments in environmental protection, along with transcripts for those whose computers can't play sounds.

All of the conference proceeding will be free, and all will be online at the Environment97 Web site, <http://www.environment97.org>, where registration is already available.

The conference will be held over two weeks, from Monday Nov. 3 to Sunday Nov. 16. Sponsor is the Institution of Chemical Engineers, an international body of chemical and process engineers based in Rugby, UK.

"It is ironic that conferences, particularly international ones, have such a large environmental impact," said the organization's safety, health, and environment manager, Dr. Mark Smith. "By running

a so-called flesh conference to discuss the problem, we can actually make things worse."

Whether a virtual conference will prove as valuable to its participants as an actual one won't be known until it happens. To prove their point, Environment97's organizers plan to do a life-cycle analysis of their conference's environmental impacts and compare it with conventional conferences.

"At the end of Environment97," Smith said, "we will know how many kilograms of carbon dioxide we've saved by running Environment97 over the Internet."

# Bridging the gap to science

## Teamwork necessary in reporting environmental issues

By KRIS M. WILSON

*Excerpts from a speech by Kris M. Wilson, Ph.D., to scientists attending the Science and Its Critics Conference, March 1997.*

For most people, the reality of science is what they see in the media. For those of you in the audience who are scientists, this may be a disturbing notion. But study after study indicates that television is the primary source of news and information in our society. My research has found this is true with scientific topics as well.

As a crude example, with a show of hands, how many of you learned about the successful sheep cloning by reading the original article in the journal *Nature*? (One hand goes up, that of the editor for *Nature*!). How many of you read about it in a newspaper or saw it on TV? (Nearly all hands go up). Even among this esteemed group of scientists, the important role of the media is evident. It makes sense then that we discuss ways to strengthen this important, necessary relationship between scientists and journalists. My research has focused on the scientific topic of climate change reporting, so I will refer to it often as one example of science journalism.

According to Dorothy Nelkin in her groundbreaking book *Selling Science*, many scientists are quick to condemn the media, to criticize the quality of science reporting, and to attribute negative or naive public attitudes toward science and technology to the images conveyed in the press. William Burrows in his 1980 article, "Science meets the press," describes the uneasy relationship between scientists and journalists this way: "Scientists think that whatever they tell a reporter is bound to come out wrong. Most ordinary reporters would practically cross the street to avoid running into an expert since they consider scientists to be unemotional, uncommunicative, unintelligible creatures who are apt to use differential equations and logarithms against them the way Yankee pitchers use inside fast balls and breaking curves."

With the topic of climate change, at

least one scientist agrees with many reporter assessments of his colleagues. Atmospheric scientist John Firor told a gathering of environmental journalists, "The scientific community is the main culprit in miscommunicating information about global warming to the press—we speak in jargon, and have focused too much on just temperature change."

"The current global warming debate: is it science or just media hype?" asks Steve Schneider, one of the most outspoken proponents of a global warming. Even Schneider cannot find an easy answer to the question, since he is part of both the hype and the science.

"Scientists need to get some broad-based support, to capture the public imagination," Schneider continues. "That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest."

This particular quote has embroiled Schneider in an on-going debate with several other climate-change scientists who say that Schneider has created his own ethical bind. Certainly this fractious atmosphere among scientists is accountable for some of the miscommunication to and in the media about climate change, but there are other factors as well. I'd like to mention some of the realities of journalism in hopes that you may better understand the environment in which science is reported.

Science stories are not only affected by the often turbulent and tenuous relationship between scientists and journalists, but also with a number of journalistic constraints—factors such as space, competition, economics, deadlines, one-source stories, and complexity. A finite amount of space is available in a newspaper, and an even smaller amount of time is open in a daily news broadcast in which to report the day's events. Science stories must compete to get on the news agenda.

These decisions are made daily by

news gatekeepers (e.g., news directors, reporters, editors, photographers, producers) who come in contact with the news and then filter it through their own perceptions and experiences. Many of these people who frame our world have limited science backgrounds. Getting on the news agenda means clearly demonstrating the relevance of scientific research to the average consumer's life.

Competition among news outlets can also constrain good science reporting by encouraging a premium on "breaking news," and discouraging the coverage of long-term issues. Climate change is just one example of a long-term scientific issue that is difficult to cover for a daily news budget. A short-term drought episode is much easier to visualize and portray. Ninety seconds of testimony is boring stuff for television, but images of scorched land, sweaty brows on farmers, and shots of the blazing sun all add spice to the climate change story.

Mother Nature cooperated in the summer of 1988, providing the visuals of drought as scientists warned about possible future droughts in an enhanced greenhouse world. Whether the two are actually linked is impossible for current science to evaluate, but regardless, the images are now part of the televised portrayal of a greenhouse world, and a part of the reality of climate change for those viewers relying on television news. The need to visualize the greenhouse story has exacerbated the "dueling scientist" scenario postulated and promoted by Steve Schneider.

Another limitation to solid science reporting is the overwhelming pressure of deadlines which tends to make stories overly-simplified and one-sided. Under pressure of a deadline, a reporter is tempted to rely on one source. My research indicates that most reporters rely on each other as primary sources of climate change information. A similar situation likely exists with other scientific topics.

I refer to this as food chain journalism, and it has its roots in the biological concept. Once a science story gets on the news agenda at a national newspaper, such



as the *New York Times*, it trickles its way down the news food chain until it is picked up at the local level. Results from my climate change study indicate this is highly problematic. Any errors in reporting, which are common with single source stories, are often compounded lower on the food chain.

Most reporters tend to rely on previously published newspaper stories as their primary information sources, but those reporters who go directly to scientists are significantly better informed. As a scientist, you can help improve science reporting first-hand by being available and accessible to reporters, and making sure they are getting their information from credible sources. This will help reduce the problems associated with food chain journalism.

Like other commercial enterprises, news organizations are in business to make money. The need to turn a profit can also act as a constraint to effective science reporting. In the 1990's many news organizations have cut back on science and environmental reporting because of the extra time and investigation necessary to cover these issues. Many specialized reporters have been reassigned off the environmental beat, leaving complicated scientific stories in the hands of general assignment reporters.

A final constraint to good science reporting is the complexity of science, and the lack of education and/or training for

many of these general assignment reporters. Complexity acts as a constraint because some journalists may not know

be accomplished.

Modern journalists and scientists can find a refreshing reminder of the optimal goal of science reporting in the words of one of the earliest science writers, William Laurence of the *New York Times*, who wrote: "True descendants of Prometheus, science writers take the fire from the scientific Olympus, the laboratories and the universities, and bring it down to the people."

***"True descendants of Prometheus, science writers take the fire from the scientific Olympus, the laboratories and the universities, and bring it down to the people."***

how to recognize what is important and may, therefore, miss a newsworthy story. Simplification is an important process for the press to help the audience understand complex concepts, but oversimplification can lead to a host of crucial errors for journalists. As Schneider's quote demonstrates, scientists themselves are also implicated in the oversimplification of complex scientific concepts.

Scientists often feel the need to talk down to reporters and the public, and this can lead to strained relationships. Most scientists are much more comfortable talking with each other through scientific journals than to the mass media. About 50,000 journals and one million scientific papers are published every year. Unfortunately, few ordinary citizens read these scholarly publications. Today, when most scientific research is publicly funded, I would argue that scientists have an obligation to inform taxpayers on what their dollars are discovering. Only through the mass media can such communication

down to the people."

When Laurence began his career in the 1930s he was one of only a handful of journalists concerned with science. Today the media are paying increased attention to science, technology, and the environment, creating more opportunity for scientists and journalists to interact. Science and journalism have been forced into an uneasy marriage that is necessary, but strained. With some concerted effort this marriage can be saved, for the betterment of the democracy which science and journalism both serve.

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*Kris Wilson, assistant professor in the William Allen White School of Journalism, University of Kansas, earned his Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Colorado-Boulder specializing in climatology and climate change. He spent more than a decade in the television news business as a news director, anchor, executive producer, reporter and weathercaster.*

## Institute for reporting marine and enviro issues funded

An institute that would enable journalists in reporting on developments in marine and environmental sciences came closer to reality in June with a \$725,000 gift from the A.H. Belo Corporation of Dallas.

The gift bolsters a \$250,000 challenge grant pledged by the Providence Journal Charitable Foundation in 1995, to endow such an institute as part of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO). *The Washington Post's* Philip L. Graham Fund has also contributed to building the endowment.

The A. H. Belo Corporation is the Dallas-based television and newspaper company that recently acquired the Providence Journal Co. The university's GSO is the largest marine science education program in the United States, and one of the world's foremost marine research institutions. It serves a community of scientists who are researching the causes of and solutions to such problems as acid rain, global warming, air and water pollution, oil spills, overfishing, and coastal erosion.

The new institute is envisioned as a tribute to the late

Michael P. Metcalf, former publisher of the *Providence*, (RI) *Journal-Bulletin*, who had a special interest in marine and environmental matters. It will consist of biennial seminars which bring GSO scientists and others into a working relationship with professional journalists and students from the URI Journalism Department. This unique pairing of the scientific and journalistic communities will allow each to learn how the other conducts research and addresses issues that impact on the public, and enable the two communities to collaborate on reporting about scientific research. The biennial sessions will be based at the GSO and managed in conjunction with the URI Journalism Department. The grants will provide funds to design the institute and cover tuition for up to eight participants to attend the first session.

"This institute will allow us to provide journalists from across the country with the specialized information they need to communicate about the often complex findings in the marine and environmental research areas," said Barbara Luebke, chair of URI's Journalism Department. "We feel this should make for better-informed reporters and better reporting to the public."

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# Disclosure: Electronic emission reports are helping corporate spies

By MARK GREENWOOD

*Does Web site disclosure of chemical emissions do more harm than good? Opposing views are presented on these two pages.*

With the arrival of the Information Age, governmental agencies concerned with environmental protection have recognized the power of information disclosure as a means of influencing private behavior. Agencies like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are adopting an "information provider" role, disseminating a large array of data bases, software tools and other information "products" to the public for their use. EPA's Worldwide Web site ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)) now houses 400,000 pages of material and receives 7 million "hits" per month. This new forum for public discourse on environmental issues will generate much debate in the next several years.

Two issues promise to be particularly controversial. First, the government will have to find the proper balance between serving public needs for information and protecting the privacy of legitimate trade secrets. Second, the government will need to take on new responsibilities to assure that the information it provides the public is accurate, understandable and fair.

Many advocates for public disclosure dismiss the trade secret concerns as a perennial business complaint aimed at discouraging any and all public disclosure. Several factors, however, suggest that there has been a quantum leap in the threats that environmental disclosures can present to proprietary interests.

For example, one data base tool on EPA's Website known as ENVIROFACTS allows anyone in the world to call up the agency's public files on emissions, wastes and product inventory at a particular facility. While these data have always technically been in the public domain, they have often been hard to find. By empowering citizens in communities, EPA has also allowed these data to be easily transferred to the desktops of our economic competitors all over the world, greatly reducing the cost of economic espionage.

Second, EPA is seeking data integration through ENVIROFACTS and other projects. Data integration serves several useful purposes, but it also increases the clarity with which competitors can view the operations of particular facilities.

Third, EPA is seeking to boost the currency of its information by supplying "real time" data about environmental conditions. EPA's Website now includes real time (i.e., 30 minute) updates of air emission data collected at air monitoring stations in several states. This can only improve the value of these data for espionage purposes.

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## Viewpoints

**is a regular feature offering a forum to those who deal with environmental issues in the media. Opposing viewpoints are welcome.**

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EPA should recognize that trade secrets go beyond the formula of a particular product. For example, understanding a competitor's inventory situation can allow a firm to gain pricing advantages in the marketplace. A sound system for protecting trade secrets must also face up to the "jigsaw puzzle" problem. Incremental disclosures of otherwise unremarkable data can be assembled, particularly through computer networks and tools, in a manner that can reveal the outline of a trade secret.

Finally, EPA must begin to consider the institutional dilemma created by its adoption of the public "right to know" ethic as a core principle for the Agency. This new policy direction creates a tension with EPA's traditional role as a neutral arbiter of disputes concerned with public disclosure and protection of proprietary information.

A second and larger class of challenges raised by EPA's embrace of information technology involves "environmental information stewardship." The essence of this is twofold. First, information providers—whether they be private firms or government agencies—must tell the truth. There must be an absolute commitment to communicating the most accurate

description of environmental conditions possible. Second, information providers must explain the significance of environmental data by providing contextual information such as information about the comparative risk of chemicals, the quality of scientific assessments or facility data, or a description of what can and is being done about a problem.

A serious commitment to "environmental information stewardship" by public agencies means hard work and new investments. Some argue that primary responsibility for data quality lies with the private sector. EPA officials have said publicly that the best way to improve data quality on facilities is to disseminate what is available, knowing that some of the data is inaccurate, and wait for the adverse reactions to prompt the business community to update the files.

This approach is the abdication of stewardship. Facility operators have a responsibility to file accurate reports, but the government has an obligation to establish reasonable procedures to allow for discovery and correction of errors, which may have been made by the facility submitting the data or by the government's information managers. The dissemination of inaccurate data in EPA's public resources hurts legitimate private interests, undercuts EPA's credibility and does a major disservice to the public.

Stewardship also necessitates a careful assessment of public information needs and an ongoing effort to determine how the public uses existing resources and what the priorities for the future should be. To date, EPA has primarily relied on public interest groups as its source of information about public needs. While these groups deserve to be heard, the Agency must also seek to understand the needs of average citizens. EPA has done very little in this regard.

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*Mark Greenwood, a partner at the Washington law firm Ropes & Gray, serves as counsel to the Coalition for Effective Environmental Information, an industry association. He worked at EPA for 16 years.*

# Disclosure: Industry emission reports arm Davids against Goliaths

By GARY D. BASS

In a democratic society, information is power. In today's Information Age, access to information has allowed journalists in the United States to pursue greater public accountability and, in general, seek the truth. It has empowered citizens to tackle economic, social, and environmental justice issues, and it has made the public a wiser consumer.

In the environmental area, the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) has proved to be an equalizing force beyond compare. The 1986 law creating the TRI required manufacturing facilities to report annually on releases of toxic chemicals to the air, water, and land. EPA was mandated to make this data accessible to the public "through computer telecommunications and other means to any person."

Today, anyone can use the Internet or consult a paper copy to learn about toxic releases in their community. Time and again the TRI proved that, when armed with information, a small band of Davids can slay the corporate Goliaths. The scale has tilted away from powerful, special interests operating in secret to a more balanced and publicly accountable situation. So it should be no surprise that industry has paid public lip service to the values of the TRI while working hard behind the scenes to gut the program.

During the ill-fated 1995-96 congressional fight over the Republican's Contract with America, industry used its weight to insert provisions in regulatory "reform" legislation to undermine the program. This year, several industries launched an intense lobby campaign against EPA's move to require additional companies to report under the TRI, and industry has pronounced EPA's intention to require reporting on chemical use a "battle royal."

Against this background, it should be no surprise that the public interest community is skeptical when industry raises ideas for "improving" public access. Mark Greenwood has suggested that EPA must embrace "environmental information stewardship." To the extent that Greenwood is proposing improved management and

access to government information, the concept should be applauded. To the extent that "stewardship" becomes another back door way to gut public access or stymie EPA's implementation of public protections, it must be vilified.

The federal government does face some real information management challenges. EPA and other agencies need to develop a comprehensive plan for managing information through its entire life cycle, from collection to dissemination to maintenance and archiving. Such a plan

*It should be no surprise that industry has paid public lip service to the values of the TRI while working to gut the program.*

would improve enforcement, help the public by amplifying the right-to-know agenda, and help the regulated community by eliminating redundant and duplicative reporting requirements.

Data quality and quantity can be improved. Most information collected by EPA is self-reported by industry, and disclosure will press businesses to ensure that their reports are accurate. The range of environmental, public health, and economic information made available to the public should be expanded. EPA's proposal to add chemical use information is one example. In addition, the data must be presented in user-friendly form by, for instance, cross-linking databases.

On the issue of protecting trade secrets, while there are legitimate trade secrets that should be protected, confidentiality must not become a euphemism for thwarting the public's right-to-know. Since TRI began, industry has complained about loss of trade secrets. Despite years of claims of likely industrial espionage, there has not been one concrete example of damage wrought by TRI.

Under TRI, unlike other disclosure regimes such as the Toxics Substances Control Act (TSCA), industry must justify its claims of confidentiality. As a result, trade secret claims are 10 to 1500 times less frequent under TRI than under TSCA, depending on how you count them. In fact, at no time have TRI trade secret

claims exceeded two-hundredths of one percent of TRI forms submitted. In 1995, there were 13 claims among more than 73,000 forms submitted. Right-to-know is not about forcing Coca-Cola or any other company to divulge their secret formula.

EPA should move aggressively to adopt the trade secret principles used under TRI as an over-arching agency policy. This new policy should require parties to substantiate confidentiality claims at the time of filing by showing that: (a) disclosure is likely to cause substantial harm to the competitive position of the company; (b) the information has not been disclosed by industry to any other person, except those bound by confidentiality agreements; and (c) chemical identity

can not be readily "reverse engineered" by industry insiders from other public information. There should be penalties for false trade secret claims and filings should be signed by a high level corporate official.

Increasingly, industry's new mantra is global competition—and that right-to-know puts U.S. companies at an economic disadvantage because foreign competitors do not face similar disclosure requirements. If industry believes this, we suggest that it work with the public interest community to promote universal right-to-know policies. Use the power of trade agreements, which business strongly supports, to accelerate the international spread of public access policies.

By no means is right-to-know a "solution," but it is a powerful tool. Some may see similarities between what Greenwood proposes and what we suggest. To the extent that the objectives are similar, let the debate begin. Beware, however: letting industry direct policy on the public's right-to-know is like letting Richard Nixon control how much information to reveal about Watergate. Accountability and democracy demand more.

*Dr. Gary Bass is executive director of OMB Watch, a nonprofit research and advocacy group that provides environmental data to the public through RTK NET services.*

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# Study shows dioxins in chicken

## Government agencies scurry to find sources, determine risks

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

Government researchers found a much higher dioxin contamination than expected in the U.S. chicken supply during a re-evaluation of the health risks from dioxins and related chemicals.

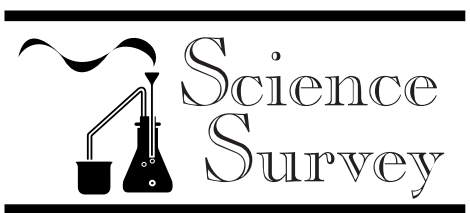
As of mid-June the data and conclusions from the 80-chicken study had not been broadly disseminated and the federal agencies were not prepared to issue statements about whether the findings were significant or posed a public health threat. Risk assessments that would help put the data into context were not yet completed, officials said.

The data from the chicken and other food studies are supposed to be incorporated into the exposure analysis for the Environmental Protection Agency's huge dioxin risk reassessment that will be used as the scientific basis for pollution control regulations. The study is still ongoing. An investigation into possible sources of the dioxin contamination in chicken feed, water supply, litter, and other environmental media are underway, according to officials.

"Based on what we know now, the dioxin levels found in samples don't present an immediate risk to the public," said officials from the EPA and Food and Drug Administration. Neither the government nor food producers have ever done extensive dioxin-in-food testing because the studies are very expensive and difficult and companies are not required by law or regulation to test for this contaminant.

Of the 80 chickens studied, two birds had elevated dioxin levels compared to the rest of the sample group, said Denise Kearns, an EPA spokeswoman, who added that the random sample of birds came from 24 states. The dioxin levels were about 1.8 parts per trillion for 78 birds, and 16.8 ppt and 19.2 ppt in the elevated samples. The continuing investigation is focused on the south central United States, she said.

Following the discovery of the two "hot" chickens in the large study, federal



researchers "snatched" two more chickens from the same area as a double check. The scientists became more concerned when these chickens showed dioxin levels around 30 ppt, higher than the "hot" chickens.

Because dioxins are not intentionally produced, serve no function in manufacturing, and are ubiquitous in the environment, all U.S. agencies have struggled to find appropriate and feasible regulatory controls.

Dioxins are a class of 75 chemicals that have caused cancer in all laboratory animals tested. Most studied is TCDD, 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, which became famous as a contaminant in Agent Orange, a defoliant used in the Vietnam War. Scientists have shown that substances with similar chemical structures as dioxins, such as a subgroup of polychlorinated biphenyls, are capable of causing similar health effects because they react with cells in the same manner as TCDD.

The chicken study is the third food-supply study the federal government has done in recent years as part of the EPA's dioxin reassessment project, which was launched in 1991. The 80 chicken study was designed and conducted by EPA and Agriculture Department scientists and is considered scientifically sound.

The high dioxin levels came as a sur-

prise, officials said, because chicken meat is not as fat-laden as other meats previously studied by EPA and USDA. Dioxins are known to be stored in the fat cells of animals and humans. The levels in chicken were higher than those seen in separate government studies of beef and pork.

Top government officials spent most of May and June trying to figure out what the chicken data meant. Unfortunately the U.S. federal government does not know whether the chicken contamination is significant enough to pose a health threat. Nor does it have a health standard that would establish a safe-level of dioxin contamination in foods to use in comparison with the chicken data. The U.S. food safety laws require that a maximum pesticide residue limit be set before any foodstuff that was treated with a commercial pesticide product can be legally sold in the United States. There is no similar federal regulation for dioxins.

For more than 15 years U.S. environmental groups have urged EPA to either ban dioxin emissions, if possible, or highly regulate its release into the environment. In the mid-1980s a flurry of public concern emerged when environmentalists showed that dioxins were leaching from paper milk cartons. The concern about dioxin-in-milk prompted the FDA to evaluate all food contact paper as a possible route of human exposure to dioxins. EPA and numerous state environmental regulators also strengthened their regulations of pollution stemming from paper mills that were linked to the dioxin contamination.

As the U.S. federal government evaluates the chicken contamination issue, it must also decide whether to act on a recent determination by an international group of scientists who agreed that data linking dioxin exposure to ill-health effects was significant enough to label TCDD as a "known human carcinogen." The scientists, including some from the U.S., met in February, under the auspices of the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyons, France.

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*Sara Thurin Rollin is a reporter for the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.*

**For more information:**

- **USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service:**  
Tom Billy (202) 720-7025  
Joanna Pierce, communications/  
press office: 720-4623.
- **EPA press office** (202) 260-4355
- **FDA press office:**  
Lawrence Bachorik (301) 443-1130

# Digging out dirt on Las Vegas

## Boat rides, billionaire help pinpoint the dangers of growth

By MARY MANNING

When the *Las Vegas Sun* Newspaper decided to focus on growth in Southern Nevada, it opened a Pandora's box of environmental quality issues that local officials did not want to talk about. The late billionaire Howard Hughes had a handle on these problems more than 30 years ago, and became a posthumous ally as I dug into coverage of them.

My first major investigations began after an Internet search showed that 43 Las Vegas Valley residents had died during 1994 in a cryptosporidiosis outbreak investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The disease is caused by a parasite that triggers diarrhea and painful abdominal cramps in healthy people, but can kill people with suppressed immune systems. The Southern Nevada outbreak remains the second largest in the United States, right behind Milwaukee, where 400,000 people became ill and 100 died in 1993.

Crypto organisms can survive chlorine and other treatments, and are difficult to detect. In Las Vegas they survived one of the most modern treatment facilities in the world. Both the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Clark County Sanitation District are enhancing their water and wastewater treatment systems to catch crypto before it comes out the tap.

There have been no reported cases in Las Vegas this year, for the first time in four years.

In 1996 after two months' research, I wrote a two-part series on how this happened. The articles explained how three sewage discharge pipelines drain into the Las Vegas Wash and then to Las Vegas Bay, where six miles from those outflows lies Southern Nevada's drinking water intake line. The Las Vegas Wash is the natural channel that drains the entire valley's watershed. Every drop of treated effluent, floodwaters and surface runoff flows through it.

In effect, Las Vegas uses Lake Mead as a toilet, then drinks from it. Drinking-water officials in Southern Nevada were ignoring wastewater treatment officials, or at least not sharing common information, such as water sampling results. There are 1.1 million residents today and the city could double its population within five years. Also drinking and flushing are more than 31 million visitors a year. That adds up to the State of California making water demands on this desert community.

The newspaper wasn't the only one worried. Teams of federal scientists boated into the Las Vegas Wash, the Las Vegas Bay and onto Lake Mead, sampling water, sediments and fish. Last year I accompanied limnologist James LaBounty of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation onto the lake where we tracked a plume of filthy water, literally a dirty river within the lake. Other scientists had discovered chlorophyll at levels in the

350 milligram range in hot summer months, but on this cold December day we recorded 400 milligrams of it and bacteria too high to count.

Around that time, I received an e-mail from an old friend living in Idaho that included two paragraphs from a memo written by billionaire Howard Hughes, who went to Governor Paul Laxalt in 1968 and tried to stop the Southern Nevada Water System, the delivery pipe for our drinking water. Nearly 30 years ago, Hughes feared contamination.

"When I spoke to Governor Laxalt, I told him I was truly and urgently alarmed, the way authorities are rushing in the Southern Nevada Water Project," Hughes wrote. "I told him the entire plan was not palatable."

Hughes, then the richest man in the world, was also a brilliant engineer and could see which way the sewage flowed. I spent three weeks reading six books, digging into archives and eventually interviewing Hughes' top aide in Nevada, Robert Maheu. Thanks to this bit of history, I developed a three-part series, starting with the polluted plume, reporting the Hughes memos and ending with a possible solution: restoring 2,000 acres of water-filtering wetlands destroyed by the rushing effluent over the past 20 years. The series ran this February,

with a photograph of the plume visible on the bay's surface, which I captured from cliffs above the man-made reservoir. Photographer Aaron Mayes and I spent a day in Las Vegas Wash recording the 50-foot cuts into its banks from the roaring waters of surface runoff that carried sewage and other pollutants with it.

Las Vegas water problems haven't gone away. But as a result of research and publicity on the problems, federal, state, and local authorities have formed the Lake Mead Water Quality Forum involving water and wastewater experts, and the public. Now all can share information, from current research to the latest on endocrine disrupters. At the end of May, the National Park Service also posted signs in the Las Vegas Wash and the Las Vegas Bay, so families fishing and snacking along the shoreline won't paddle in possibly contaminated waters and then eat their bags of chips.

This environmental writer feels grateful that by informing and educating the community about some of the negative effects of a seven percent growth rate, maybe she has helped offer them and their many visitors a cool, clean drink of water.

*In effect, Las Vegas uses Lake Mead as a toilet, then drinks from it. There are 1.1 million residents today and the city could double its population within five years. Also drinking and flushing are more than 31 million visitors a year. That adds up to the State of California making water demands on this desert community.*

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*Mary Manning writes for the Las Vegas Sun newspaper and has been covering environmental issues from nuclear wastes to chemical pollution for 30 years. She is the first environmental sciences Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

# Yukking with the greens

## *The Cartoon Guide to The Environment*

by Larry Gonick and Alice Outwater

Harper Perennial. (year)

230 pages. \$14.00



Reading a textbook on the environment? Maybe you'll learn something. You probably won't have much fun. How about a book of cartoons on the environment? You might not learn much, but at least you can look forward to a few laughs. Larry Gonick, a contributing editor to *Discover* magazine, and Alice Outwater, a wastewater engineer, have come up with a combination. *A Cartoon Guide to the Environment* teaches.

It entertains. You'll learn. And you'll laugh.

Essentially, this is a textbook with basic scientific lessons you'd get in a freshman ecology class, and explanations of major environmental issues like ozone depletion and global climate change, along with thoughtful examination of the systemic roots of those problems. There is also a good measure of Save-The-World polemic throughout, from the Man vs. Nature cover art to the closing admonition to live sustainably and "Don't forget to turn out the lights."

But neither the teaching nor the preaching slow things down. Gonick's wonderful art and his easy wit make the book a delight. I can't remember having this much fun reading a textbook.

So there are basic explanations of the carbon, nitrogen and phosphorous cycles, of allopatric and sympatric speciation, and r and k reproductive strategies. And there are cartoons along the way, like the fellow with the bird dropping on his head, muttering his #\*\$&@! cartoon profanities while his friend says "No, you should say "Thanks for the phosphorous." In the cartoon on ozone depletion, a chlorine atom is portrayed as an evil-looking little Pac Man with a malicious grin hungrily chasing down O3 molecules and chewing up their molecular bonds. It's the first time I ever thought of the process of ozone depletion as cute.

Things get more political and less scientific as the book progresses. There is an unapologetically stark chapter about human impact on biodiversity. "We warn you," the authors promise "it isn't a pretty picture." Later they add "At some point we have to face the fact that we are just part of a limited biosphere. There is only so much matter and energy available." And the female cartoon character-narrator, presumably Outwater, declares in the next cartoon: "In the long run, this can mean only one thing; A no-growth economy, in which people enjoy a good quality of life but don't consume so much stuff." Sounds more like Paul Ehrlich or Donella Meadows than a text book.

Ultimately, it's probably fair to call this book a political tract that summons science in support of its save-the-world message. It is also undeniably funny, witty, entertaining, and informative,

though it's wise to be wary of "facts" presented along with such a singular point of view.

*The Cartoon Guide To the Environment* is an ideal read for people who don't know much about environmental issues, and want to learn more. Even environmental journalists well-grounded on those issues, however, will learn a lot, and they'll have a lot of fun too.

—David Ropeik

## Solar Power to the People

### *Who Owns the Sun?: People, Politics and the Struggle for a Solar Economy*

by Daniel M. Berman and John T. O'Connor

Chelsea Green. 1997,

\$24.95

During the oil embargo in the early 1970s, President Richard M. Nixon promised that America would be free of energy imports by 1980. Five years later, President Jimmy Carter put a solar water heater on the White House roof.

The solar hot water heater is long gone from the White House roof. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, both of whom campaigned on energy efficiency and independence, have let renewable energy go to the wayside. Berman and O'Connor contend that because politicians' declarations have done little to foster long-term and widespread use of



solar energy, citizens should take the matter into their own hands—not by joining militias, but by taking back the power of the oil industry and unresponsive utility companies and democratizing their electricity.

Berman, a journalist, teacher, and director of the Jobs and Environment Campaign, and O'Connor, founder of the National Toxics Campaign, document "the business strategies behind the public rhetoric of the energy giants," and analyze decentralized and innovative energy providers in the United States and Europe. Because states are deregulating electric power, citizens need to organize now to ensure that they have viable solar options, the authors say.

Even if consumers don't get stuck with a \$264 billion bill to pay for and retire the nation's nuclear power plants, they still be losers in the deregulation process. Berman and O'Connor contend there will be no beneficial competition for residential consumers, and that poorer communities, which may have higher rates of bill nonpayment, may see their service deteriorate. The authors advocate the need for publicly owned, democratically operated utilities as the only way to energy independence.

A substantial percentage of New Hampshire rate payers have had the opportunity to choose their electricity providers, and they have been barraged with information and offers from competing suppliers. Is that test case an exception to their rule? Have the competing utilities offered solar power options? Though the deregulation experiment has been going on for about a year, it may be too recent for the authors to have fully analyzed it, though it does merit mention, given their critique of private utilities and passion for public control.

—Suzanne Spencer



# Society of Environmental Journalists Application for Membership

### Instructions:

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

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

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

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Payment Information:

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

Check Enclosed



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

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

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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

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

If yes, provide details and dates: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Is your employer or organization, or the organizations to which you submit works, supported by or affiliated with any organization or movement not principally in the business of conveying news to the general public?

Yes       No

If yes, what organization or movement? \_\_\_\_\_

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

advertising    paid subscriptions    membership dues    other

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Office Use Only	Notes
Status Assigantion: _____	
Date of Acceptance: _____	



## JULY

## August

20-23. **Estrogens in the Environment** (sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences). Arlington, VA. Contact: National Toxicology Program Liaison Office. Ph: (919) 541-0530; Fx: (919) 541-0295; E-mail: britton@niehs.nih.gov

20-26 **Coastal Zone 1997**, the 10th biennial international conference on coastal-zone management (with sessions on public health, sustainable development, oil spills, and coastal engineering). Boston. Contact: Chantal Lefebvre, Urban Harbors Institute, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Blve., Boston, MA 02125. Ph: (6174) 287-5576; E-mail: lefebvre@umb.edu; Web: <http://infinitefaculty.com/cz97/>

21-23. **International Low-Level (Radioactive) Waste Conference** (sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute). Providence, RI. Contact: Lori Adams, EPRI. P.O. Box 10412, Palo Alto, CA 94303-9743. Ph: (414) 855-8763; FX: (415) 855-2041.

21-23. **Innovative Remediation Technologies (from "bioslurping" and phytoremediation to the use of surfactants, heat, and granular iron)**. Boston. Contact: IBC USA Conferences, 225 Turnpike Rd., Southborough, MA 01772-1749. Ph: (508) 481-6400; Fx: (508) 481-7911; E-mail: reg@ibcusa.com; <http://www.ibcusa.com/conf/innovative>

22-23. **Environmental Cleanup Technologies Conference—Midwest Marketplace** (sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency). Chicago. Contact: JoAnn Saville, SAIC, 768 N. Bethlehem Pike, Ste. 205, Lower Gwynedd, PA 19002. Ph: (800) 783-3870; Fx: (215) 628-8916; E-mail: jo-ann.m.saville@cpx.saic.com

23-26. **Managing Ecosystems on a Watershed Basis** (the annual meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, with sessions on wetlands management, ecosystem restoration, tillage erosion, and determining which degraded environments are worthwhile restoring). Toronto. Contact: SWCS, 7515 NE Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA 50021-9764. Ph: (515) 289-2331 or 1-(800) THE-SOIL; Fx: (515) 289-1227; E-mail: swcs@swcs.org; WEB: <http://www.swcs.org>

30-31. **Sustainable Agriculture** (with sessions on biological controls, manure management, constructed wetlands, and nitrogen management). Ames, IA. Contact: Rich Pirog, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, 209 Curtiss Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1050. Ph: (515) 294-3711.

30-August 2. **Midwest Oak-Savanna and Woodland Conference** (on the ecology, conservation, and restoration of these woodlands). Madison. Contact: Alan Haney, College of natural Resources, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Ph: (715) 346-2955; E-mail: ahaney@uwsp.edu; Web: <http://www.uwsp.edu/acad/cnr/oaksavan/wiconf97.htm>

3-7. **Biodiversity: Global Issues** (annual meeting of the American Institute of Biological Sciences). Montreal. Contact: Marilyn Maury, AIBS, 1444 Eye St., NW, Ste. 200, Washington, DC 20005. Ph: (202) 628-1500; E-mail: mmaury@aibs.org; WEB: <http://www.aibs.org>

4-8. **Disturbance in Boreal Forest Ecosystems: Human Impacts and Natural Processes** (sponsored by the International Boreal Forest Research Association). Duluth. Contact: Elizabeth Schmucker, USDA Forest Service-FFASR (1C-Aud), 201 14th St., SW, Washington, DC 20250. Ph: (202) 205-1561; E-mail: ibfra97@worldweb.net

10-14. **American Society of Agricultural Engineers annual meeting** (with sessions on technologies to control pesticide drift, sustainable agriculture technologies, soil erosion, gaseous emissions from agricultural sources, and wetlands restoration). Minneapolis. Contact: Susan Buntjer, ASAE, 2950 Niles Rd., St. Joseph, MI 49085-9659. Ph:(619) 428-6327; E-mail: buntjer@asae.org; WEB: <http://asae.org/>

11-14. **Changing Ecosystems: Natural and Human Influences** (sponsored by the Ecological Society of America). Albuquerque. Contact: Fred Wagner, Ecology Center, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5205. Ph: (801) 797-2555; E-mail: ecol@cc.usu.edu

17-22. **The Practice of Pollution Prevention: A critical evaluation** (sponsored by the Engineering Foundation). Crested Butte, CO. Ph: (212) 705-7836; Fx: (212) 705-7441; E-mail: engfbd@aol.com

18-20. **Putting the Native Back into Wild Trout**. Bozeman, MT. Contact: Robert Gresswell, US Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, 3200 SW Jefferson Way, Corvallis, OR 97456. Ph: (541) 750-7410; E-mail: gresswer@ccmail.orst.edu

25-28. **Fisheries at Interfaces: Habitats, Disciplines, and Cultures** (sponsored by the American Fisheries Society). Monterey, CA. Contact: Betsy Fritz, AFS, 5410 Grosvenor La., Ste. 110, Bethesda, MD 20814-2199. Ph: (301) 897-8616, ext. 212; Fx:( 301) 897-8096; E-mail: main@fisheries.org

24-29. **Making a Business from Biomass in Energy, Environment, Chemicals, Fibers and Materials** (the third Biomass Conference of the Americas). Montreal. Contact: Joan Ross, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Center for Renewable Chemical Technologies and Materials, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, CO 80401-3393. Fx: (303) 275-2905; E-mail: rossj@teplink.nrel.gov, or Ralph P. Overend: overendr@teplink.nrel.gov

25-28. **Third Biomass Conference of the Americas**. Montreal. Contact: Joan Ross, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, CO 80401. Ph: (303)-275-4321; Fx:

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# Calendar

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(303) 275-4320; WEB: <http://www.nrel.gov/bioam/>

25-29. **Combined Utility Air Pollutant Control Symposium** (sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency). Washington, D.C. Contact: Lori Adams, EPRI. P.O. Box 10412, Palo Alto, CA 94303-9743. Ph: (414) 855-8763; Fx: (415) 855-2041.

25-29. **Dioxin '97** (with sessions on toxicology, risk assessment, wildlife effects, human exposures, and health effects). Indianapolis. Contact: Indiana University Conference Bureau, Indiana Memorial Union, Room 671, Bloomington, IN 47405. Ph: (812) 855-4661; Fx: (812) 855-8077; E-mail: [cbadir@indiana.edu](mailto:cbadir@indiana.edu)

27-30. **Bridging Natural and Social Landscapes** (sponsored by the Natural Areas Association and Exotic Pest Plant Council, it will explore the role of natural areas in society). Portland, OR. Contact: NAA, 1997 Conference Information, P.O. Box 23712, Tigard, OR 97281-3712.

## September

1-6 **World Congress on Water: Perspective on water resources in the 21st Century**. Montreal. Contact: Aly M. Shady, Canadian International Development Agency, 200 Promenade du Portage, Hull, Quebec, Canada, K1A 0G4. Ph: (819) 994-4098; Fx: (819) 953-3348; E-mail: [aly\\_shady@acdica.gc.ca](mailto:aly_shady@acdica.gc.ca)

10 **Zebra Mussels: Lessons learned in the Great Lakes** (a national videoconference. There is no charge to downlink the conference, but you must pre-register by Aug. 31 to guarantee delivery of satellite coordinates and site materials in your state). Contact: Patrice Charlebois, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Ph: (847) 872-0140; Fx: (847) 872-8679; E-mail: [p\\_char@ix.netcom.com](mailto:p_char@ix.netcom.com); Web: <http://www.aes.purdue.edu/acs/zm/regs.html>

28-30. **The Human Experience in Greater Yellowstone** (described as the fourth biennial conference on the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem). Yellowstone National Park, WY. Contact: Joy Perius. Ph: (307) 344-2209; Web: <http://www.nps.gov/yell/ycr.htm>

28-October 1. **Lead Tech '97** (with sessions on new trends in lead detection, cleanup, and health effects, sponsored by IAQ Publications). Arlington, VA. Contact: IAQ Publications, 7920 Norfolk Ave., Ste. 900, Bethesda, MD 20814. Ph: (800) 394-0115; Fx: (301) 913-0119; Web: <http://www.iaqpubs.com>

## October

2-5. **SEJ annual meeting**. Tucson. (see p. 5)

3-5. **Center for Health, Environment, and Justice National Grassroots Convention** (sponsored by CHEJ, formerly the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste). Contact: P.O. Box 6806, Falls Church, VA 22040-6806. Ph: (703) 237-2249.

3-5. **Natural Resources and the Environment in an Era of Deregulation** (sponsored by McMaster University, with sessions on economics and challenges in the practical management of resources. Hamilton, Ontario. Contact: Andrew Muller, Dept. of Economics, McMaster University. Ph: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23831; E-mail: [mullera@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mullera@mcmaster.ca)

8-11. **Fishery Stock Assessment Models for the 21st Century** (sponsored by Alaska Sea Grant). Anchorage. Contact: Brenda Baxter, Alaska Sea Grant College Program, University of Alaska, P.O. Box 755040, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5040. Ph: (907) 474-6701; Fx: (907) 474-6285.

12-14. **The State of Our Estuaries** (an international conference of the Estuarine Research Federation). Providence, RI. Contact: ERF. Ph: (410) 458-0997.

17-18. **Environmental hearing: Women, Health & Environment: Action for Cancer Prevention** (sponsored by Women's Environment & Development Organization (and Greenpeace). Contact Taalibah Kariem-White, (215) 924-4309

26-29. **International Neurotoxicology Conference: Manganese—Are there effects of long-term, low-level exposures?** Little Rock. Contact: Joan M. Cranmer, Dept. of Pediatrics, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, 1120 Marshall St., Rm. 304, Little Rock, AR 72202. Fx: (501) 320-4978; E-mail: [cranmerjoanm@exchange.uams.edu](mailto:cranmerjoanm@exchange.uams.edu)

## November

2-6. **Annual Review of Research on Biological Effects of Electric and Magnetic Fields from the Generation, Delivery and Use of Electricity** (sponsored the Electric Power Research Institute and Department of Energy). San Diego. Contact: William Wisecup, W/L Associates, Ph: (301) 663-4252; Fx: (301) 371-8955; E-mail: [75230.1222@compuserve.com](mailto:75230.1222@compuserve.com)

16-20. **Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry annual meeting** (sessions including watershed management, life-cycle assessment of products, endocrine disrupters, contaminants in the Sierra Nevada, and oil spills). San Francisco. Contact: Rod Parrish, SETAC, Ph: (904) 469-1500; Fx: (904) 469-9778; E-mail: [rparrish@setac.org](mailto:rparrish@setac.org); WEB: <http://www.setac.org>

## Application Deadlines

August 1. The Whitaker Foundation is accepting awards entries for the American Association for the Advancement of Science's **science journalism awards**. Entrants must have published nominated work (up to 3 submissions) between June 30, 1996 and July 1, 1997. It's open to newspaper, magazine and broadcast stories on nonmedical topics that were intended for a general audience. Contact: AAAS Office of News and Information, 1200 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005. Ph: (202) 326-6440; Fx: (202)-789-0455.

### Meeman archives...(from page 3)

case, Jonathan said that wasn't needed and that he was working to raise funds to preserve it.

Perhaps, one of the most telling examples of Jonathan's stewardship of the collection occurred at SEJ's Boston conference in 1995.

Jonathan brought with him some of the most recent entries to display. At the end of the conference, these entries were left on the floor piled among trash to be carted away by custodians. SEJ president Emilia Askari, SEJ executive director Beth Parke, and I loaded them into a box and I carried them back to MSU for safekeeping.

When I gave them back to Jonathan, I asked for reassurance that they would be preserved, which assurance he gave. I again offered to drive to Ann Arbor to pick up the collection if the archives ever were in jeopardy. He assured me that they were not. Within 10 months Jonathan threw these away and most of the rest of the collection, the most valuable archive of environmental journalism in the country.

There is one positive note in all of this. We now have at MSU sixteen filing cabinet drawers of copies of the Meeman Archives brought from Ann Arbor (the original documents were thrown away) and are working to catalog them and make them accessible to journalists, which was SEJ's goal all along. We are also working to rebuild the collection and to obtain copies of many of the articles that were thrown away. We would welcome copies of outstanding environmental reporting by SEJ members to add to our collection.

—Jim Detjen

Knight Chair, Michigan State University  
founding SEJ President

#### To the editor:

I am not a journalist, but as Director of the Meeman Archive for the last 15 years, I have come to recognize the differences between good and bad journalism. Your unsigned article, "Portions of the Meeman Archive Trashed," was the latter. It violated all the standards of responsible journalism. It was inaccurate, incomplete

and maliciously insinuating. SEJ should be ashamed to have printed it.

If the reporter or the editor had contacted me, I could easily have corrected the skewed picture you painted of me and my colleague, Jonathan friendly, and our handling of the Archive.

For well over a year he and I—and the Scripps Howard Foundation—tried to find a way to preserve the original articles in the Archive. In conversations with the University of Colorado, to which the Ted Scripps Fellowships program was transferred, and with Michigan State University, we were explicit about our inability to continue to maintain the Archive and about what would happen to it if no new home was found. While I am pleased that Michigan State now says it will develop the Archive, that decision simply came too late. We didn't suddenly throw the Archive away; we bowed to the fact that no one seemed to want it.

I have often felt that SEJ was dishearteningly unaware of the role the Archive played in the creation of the society. University of Michigan students, with moral and financial support from David Stolberg, now retired from Scripps Howard, keyboarded the entries to start the Archive and then, excited about the work they saw, arranged to put the award winners in touch with one another. That led rapidly to the creation of a founding board for the Society.

SEJ was only one of the good things that grew out of the Meeman Archive. We at Michigan did not take our responsibility for that resource lightly. Watching a resource we had created disappear because of the indifference of the institutions that could have saved it hurt deeply. Your article, with its unwarranted criticism, adds to that hurt. You should check the facts—and then you should apologize.

—Paul F. Nowak

Director, Meeman Archive  
University of Michigan

#### Len Ackland responds:

The Center for Environmental Journalism's (CEJ) March 11, 1996

proposal to host the Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Journalism noted that we were interested in talking with the Scripps Howard Foundation about moving the Meeman Archives to Colorado. The Foundation sponsors both the Fellowships and the Meeman Awards, but as separate projects.

After the Foundation awarded the CEJ the Fellowships program in August, a Foundation staffer asked me to check into the Archives but said that the foundation was not prepared to fund their upkeep.

I talked on September 24, 1996 with Paul Nowak, the University of Michigan caretaker of the Meeman Archives. He explained that Michigan began receiving the Meeman entries in 1982 and had picked up some of the earlier entries. His group prepared electronic abstracts of the contest winners and also copied an estimated 1,500 articles. That copying stopped in about 1992, he said, after the foundation decided not to give more funding for the archives.

Nowak said the electronic abstracting stopped in 1995 and that entries from recent years were simply stored in boxes. He described the Archives as "in pretty shabby condition right now."

Nowak estimated that the cost of handling the archives properly would run about \$30,000 a year. Short of that, Nowak suggested that for about \$800 he could pull the winning entries and mail them to a designated location and store the rest in a storage vault. I sent the foundation a memo describing all of this and offering CEJ facilities for storing the Archives.

In addition, I repeated our earlier suggestion that we would be interested in putting Meeman winners and other material on our Internet home page and would be willing to put together a funding proposal since the CEJ had no resources available for this project. I never heard back from the Foundation and, unfortunately, was so swamped preparing the Ted Scripps Fellowships program and other things, that I failed to follow up. Mea culpa for that. The next I heard was the dumpster story.

—Len Ackland

Director, Center for Environmental  
Journalism  
University of Colorado

# Green Beat Correspondents

## Contribute to Green Beat

The Green Beat is designed as an idea exchange for environmental journalists and educators. It relies on information submitted by reporters about important issues, outstanding coverage, and developments in environmental education and the communications profession on a state-by-state basis.

To submit ideas or copies of series for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state(s). They are:

**Alabama — Vacant**

**Alaska — Vacant.**

**Arizona and New Mexico — Vacant**

**Arkansas — Vacant**

**California:**

**Northern California — Vacant**

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

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

**Colorado** — 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, chogue@bna.com, (202) 452-4625, fax (202) 452-4150.

**Florida:**

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

**South Florida — Vacant.**

**Georgia and South Carolina — Vacant**

**Hawaii — Vacant**

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

**Illinois — Vacant**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Michigan — Vacant**

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

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

**Montana — Vacant**

**Nebraska — Vacant**

**New Jersey — Vacant**

**New York — Vacant**

**Nevada** — Mary Manning at the *Las Vegas Sun*, 800 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, (702) 259-4065 or Jon Christiansen of *Great Basin News*, 6185 Franktown Road, Carson City, NV 89704, manning@lasvegassun.com, (702) 882-3990.

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

**Oregon** — Orna Izakson, *The News Journal*, 261 S.W. 30th Street, Newport, OR 97356-3624, oiz@aol.com, (503) 265-8571.

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

**Puerto Rico/Caribbean Islands** — Albi

Ferre at *El Nuevo Dia*, Box 297, San Juan, PR 00902, (809) 793-7070, ext. 2165.

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

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

**Texas and Oklahoma:**

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

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

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

**Utah and Wyoming — Vacant**

**Virginia and North Carolina — Vacant**

**Washington State** — 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, kenward@newwave.net, (304) 348-1702.

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

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

## SEJ is urgently looking for Green Beat correspondents

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

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

To submit ideas or copies of stories for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state. If no correspondent is listed for that state, please email your submission to rigel@voicenet.com or fax to (215) 793-4377 or (215) 836-9972.

## California

► Because of a boom in the popularity of sport utility vehicles, national trends in fuel efficiency are heading down after 25 years of steady improvement following the 1970s energy crisis, reported the *San Jose Mercury News*. For the first time, Detroit's Big Three automakers have announced they expect to fail this year to meet the federal fuel efficiency standard of 20.7 miles per gallon for their fleets. Meanwhile, motorists don't care; America's reliance on foreign oil is at record levels and gasoline usage is at an all-time high. Reported on June 5. Call Paul Rogers at (408) 920-5045.

► Off the coast of Santa Cruz under a new moon, a rubber Zodiac boat bobbed in the ocean, carrying a group of scientists. Silently, they watched pairs of rare sea birds sleeping on the open waters. The boat slowly motored closer to the 8-inch birds. With the snap of a switch, a spotlight temporarily blinded and confused the prey. "Kir! Kir! Kir!" the birds softly called, fluttering to escape. The researchers deftly netted a bird. Thus began an effort to unravel the mystery of the endangered marbled murrelet, whose fleeting presence in California's ancient redwood forests is at the heart of a fierce controversy over logging. The story ran May 26 in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Call Jane Kay, (415) 777-8704.

► The *Contra Costa Times* reported that Mount Diablo State Park failed to take steps to protect a rare native strain of rainbow trout—suspected of being the last pure native rainbow trout in a 180-square mile watershed. After the story, a scientist offered to study the creek and local environmentalists vowed to restore habitat. Call Jim Bruggers at (510) 943-8246.

► With little attention from the Lower 48, state and federal officials in Alaska have bought 522,000 acres of land with money from the \$900 million civil settlement that Exxon paid state and federal government agencies following the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. Within three years, the target is to have purchased 750,000 acres. Put another way, Exxon has been forced to buy an area the size of Yosemite for parks and wildlife preserves

as penance for its oily mistake. From Seward, *San Jose Mercury News* reporter Paul Rogers wrote May 19 that much of the land, located across the scenic southern Alaska Coast and in Prince William Sound, was slated to be logged or developed. (With sidebar on what Capt. Joseph Hazelwood is up to these days).. Call (408) 920-5045.

► After years of study, biologists from the National Marine Fisheries Service have recommended proactive shooting of sea lions off California, Oregon, and Washington as a way to save endangered salmon populations. The recommendations, which go now to Congress, are expected to spark a battle between fishermen and animal rights activists. The *San Jose Mercury News* story ran March 29. Call Paul Rogers, (408) 920-5045.

► Twenty years after the San Mateo County Housing Authority built a federally subsidized housing project, Midway Village, nearly 40 percent of the 500 low-income, predominantly minority residents report serious illnesses—including reproductive and neurological problems, breathing and digestive difficulties, cancer, skin discoloration, and growths. For more than a decade of that time, residents did not know that they lived amid toxic waste from lampblack, a powdery carbon, and coal tar left behind from gas manufacturing a century ago. April 27. Call Jane Kay at the *San Francisco Examiner* at (415) 777-8704.

## Florida

► A population of more than 1 million in Jacksonville is taking its toll on Florida's largest river, according to a series in *The Florida Times-Union*. Fish with gaping sores began appearing in the the St. Johns River this spring for the first time this decade. Scientists say flesh-eating microorganisms may be attacking the fish. Grass beds where sea life begins turned white and died in some areas this spring. Efforts by the city to improve water quality are behind schedule, and agencies are reluctant to demand tighter protections without guarantees of benefits. Contact Steve Patterson, *Florida Times-Union*, (904) 359-4111.

► Local environmental regulators were virtually ignored when aerial malathion spraying began in Tampa Bay, *The Tampa Tribune* reported on June 30. The newspaper earlier reported that high levels of the pesticide were found in area lakes and ponds. Malathion was sprayed over residential areas to kill the medfly, a pest that state agriculture officials say threatens Florida's multi-billion dollar citrus crop. Critics say the state's malathion task force is violating provisions of a special EPA permit that requires buffer zones around major water bodies. Contact Chip Power, *Tampa Tribune*, (941) 284-2737.

► A new state brownfields law may legalize pollution next door to the state's most downtrodden residents, environmentalists charged in an *Orlando Sentinel* report. The law was touted as an environmentally friendly way to persuade developers to use abandoned city lots rather than virgin land. The law allows the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to give a clean bill of health for land that is still contaminated. The Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation is concerned the law sets another standard for environmental threats to inner city residents. Contact Katherine Bouma at *The Orlando Sentinel*, (407) 420-5055.

## Iowa

► The *Des Moines Register* wrote several stories detailing the controversy that followed the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' failure to notify the public, and the Des Moines Water Works, of Sac City's bypassing of raw sewage into the Raccoon River, which provides drinking water to more than 250,000 Iowans, for over two weeks. The incident followed a series of hog-waste spills, a huge underground gasoline leak, and other pollution problems the state failed to report. The *Register* ran a blistering editorial cartoon of an Iowan diving into a polluted stream as a DNR worker says "I forgot to tell you something. Oh well." The DNR vowed to do a better job of informing the public and affected water supplies. Contact Perry Beeman, (515) 284-8538 or email, pbeeman@dmreg.com.

## Kansas

► An Orkin Exterminating Co. crew,

responding to a termite problem, injected Dursban into the ventilation system of a Harper, Kan., church. The congregation, months later, called in state investigators to confirm the contamination. Soon, the church was closed down and negotiations were ongoing with Orkin about cleaning the church and its ventilation system of the pesticide. Contact Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, (816) 234-4433.

► Murphy Farms of North Carolina, the nation's largest hog producer, has set its sights on Kansas. Hearings may be held on a draft permit that could become final in August. It would allow Murphy to operate a 14,300 head swine operation in southwest Kansas' Hodgeman County. For information, contact Craig Volland of the Sierra Club at (913) 334-0556.

### Kentucky

► Record rains in early March caused Kentucky's worst flooding in decades and created a story with many environmental angles. The *Courier-Journal* in Louisville traced the land-use decisions that allowed extensive development in floodplains, examined current floodplain regulations, and looked at the hydrology of flooding and the effect of high water on wildlife. Follow-up stories focused on a controversy over the state's allocation of money for the purchase of flood-prone properties. For more information, contact Andrew Melnykovich at (502) 582-4645.

► A late May spill of 10,000 pounds of highly toxic hydrogen fluoride at a Louisville DuPont plant made for some anxious moments, especially for people living near the city's Rubbertown chemical complex. The *Courier-Journal* looked at the plant's recent safety record and found it has improved, largely because of new OSHA regulations. Contact Melnykovich for more information.

► Large-scale hog farming is coming to western Kentucky, which recently had a similar surge in in mega chicken farms and processing plants. While there were only a few clucks of concern about the chickens, the prospect of hogs has generated squeals of protest from people aware of the industry's record in North Carolina and elsewhere. For details, con-

tact Jim Malone in *The Courier-Journal's* western Kentucky bureau in Paducah, (502) 443-1802.

► Alan Breed, the AP's eastern Kentucky correspondent, has taken a hard look at the state's program for cleaning up leaking underground storage tanks. His series showed that a few people and companies have cleaned up financially, while many property owners have paid exorbitantly for questionable cleanups. Contact Breed at (606) 432-4965.

### Maine

► *The New York Times*, *The Portland Press Herald*, and other media reported in June that the state of Maine has jumped ahead of proposed federal rules on dioxin discharges from paper mills into waterways, passing rules of its own that Gov. Angus King called "the tightest" in the nation. King, along with Maine state Sen. John Nutting, actually jumped into the Kennebec River on June 10 to celebrate the new rules. Environmentalists had hoped for even stronger rules that would have banned chlorine bleaching chemicals, and they say Maine missed an opportunity for innovative pollution prevention. But the new rules appear to be stronger than those proposed by the US Environmental Protection Agency, and they are on a faster timeline for enactment. The EPA rules will be effective in the fall. "It used to be said in politics, As Maine goes, so goes the nation. We ought to resurrect the slogan for approaches to dioxin regulation," said EPA-New England Administrator John P. DeVillars. The rules call for the most toxic form of dioxin to be reduced to nondetectable levels by July 31, 1998 in the mills. Dioxin discharges from the mills must end by Dec. 31, 2002. Less toxic furans must be reduced to nondetectable levels by 2000. State officials hope the rules will prove effective enough to allow them to lift warnings on consuming freshwater fish from three rivers with high dioxin levels. The paper companies operating the mills felt pressured by King and environmentalists to support the rules because of a referendum last fall to ban clearcutting and impose stiff new forest practice rules on the timber industry. The referendum nearly passed. Contact Dieter Bradbury, (207) 791-6328 or Joshua

Weinstein, (207) 791-6368 at the *Portland Press Herald*.

### New Hampshire

► The *New Hampshire Valley News* and other media reported in May that US Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and US Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) expect Congress to pass legislation this year intended to better protect 26 million acres of forest in northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. The senators first sponsored the Northern Forest Stewardship Act in 1995. The bill cleared the Senate last year but never made it through the House. It would provide federal funds for conservation and promote stewardship on private lands. Companion legislation would provide tax breaks to make it easier for family foresters to keep their land in production rather than sell it for development. The legislation grew out of a four-year study by the Northern Forest Lands Council, a group representing landowners, environmentalists, state officials and the timber industry from the four states, that in 1994 recommended steps on the local, state and federal levels to ease the ecologic and economic pressures on the forest, one of the last large contiguous tracts in the country. Contact Suzanne Spencer at the *Valley News*, (603) 298-8711).

### Massachusetts

► Here's another development in the continuing story about the impact the military has on the environment. In an unprecedented move, the EPA has ordered the National Guard to stop using live ammunition at the Massachusetts Military Reservation in Bourne, near Cape Cod. The move was made because of concerns that toxics in the ammunition are poisoning an aquifer that supplies drinking water for up to 500,000 people. National Guard officials were not pleased with the order issued in mid-May by EPA Regional Administrator John DeVillars, and sought unsuccessfully to have the order overturned. Groundwater contamination has been an increasing concern in the Cape Cod area.

► Should environmental organizations join forces with power companies to buy dirty electric generating plants? That was the question raised after the *Boston*

*Globe* reported in May that the Conservation Law Foundation of Boston has put in a bid to buy the generating facilities of New England Electric System in partnership with AES Corp. of Virginia. AES owns a number of electric generating facilities, some of which are fueled with coal. CLF said the plan was to acquire the NEES plants because they are significant sources of pollution and CLF wanted to work to close them and replace the generation with cleaner fuel sources. But news of the partnership outraged some environmental organizations, especially since CLF has been one of the biggest proponents in the environmental community in favor of restructuring the electric utility industry in New England and making it more competitive. CLF says it has now been eliminated from the bidding in the NEES sale, because its offer was too low. But more utility systems will be for sale, and CLF says it plans to make more offers. For details, contact Scott Allen, *Boston Globe*, (617) 929-3000.

► The *Boston Globe* reported on April 20 that the Conservation Law Foundation, New England's premier environmental group, was shifting from litigating against its adversaries to negotiating with them, following 31 years of "tough, in-your-face" advocacy rooted in the defense of federal environmental laws. The group, whose courtroom victories include the cleanup of Boston Harbor and an oil drilling ban on Georges Bank, believes the environmental times have changed. It says consensus is in, conflict is out, and there's more to be gained environmentally through the former than the latter. Others say such a shift could prove costly to CLF's image, and to the environment, leaving no other regional group with the scientific, political and legal savvy, the breadth of concerns, and the sheer will to fight for nature. But CLF is up to more than just consensus building. The group's executive director, Doug Foy, says CLF is also pursuing "transaction artistry." Rather than fight government agencies, municipalities or companies, it wants to broker deals between them that would benefit all sides. And it wants to be paid for its services, setting up a separate unit, CLF Services, to cut the deals. It is already brokering deals

between officials from two Massachusetts cities and builders to find ways of cutting through regulations to more quickly redevelop brownfields sites in the cities, and is being paid by EPA redevelopment money provided to the cities. Foy believes that when it comes to advocacy, laws and regulations have hit their limits. He also believes that environmental issues have become far more complex over the last decade, and in many cases simply do not lend themselves to litigation. Profit may be more an incentive to companies than principle when it comes to environmental good deeds, and indeed, profit and purpose may serve the same ends. Ultimately, it may be time for environmentalists to trust their enemies, he says. But others, including other environmental groups, say CLF cannot fight polluters while taking money from them, even if it leads to environmental good. It cannot advocate and arbitrate at the same time. Contact Robert Braile at the *Boston Globe*, (603) 772-6380.

### Missouri

► Times Beach will soon become a park. Having completed incineration of dioxin-contaminated dirt and other material from Times Beach and 26 other eastern Missouri dioxin sites in late June, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources announced that the old resort town on the Meramec River, 25 miles southwest of St. Louis, would become a state park commemorating Route 66. It may even feature a cafe from the pre-interstate era. For more information contact DNR spokeswoman Nina Thompson at (573) 751-1010.

### Oregon

► On April 25, the National Marine Fisheries Service decided not to list coho salmon as a threatened species along most of the Oregon coast. The agency based its decision on a precedent-setting and largely voluntary state plan, a memorandum of understanding outlining necessary improvements—mostly related to forestry—NMFS and the state would make to Oregon's plan, existing logging restrictions on federal land, and evidence that coho numbers were growing under a three-year harvest moratorium. The widely reported move was lauded as a significant victory for Oregon Gov. John

Kitzhaber and as a blueprint for future state efforts to bypass the federal Endangered Species Act. But only three weeks after NMFS' decision, *The (Portland) Oregonian* reported that temperature rises in the equatorial Pacific Ocean may signal an unprecedented fourth El Nino event in six years—events many blame for the salmon's decline. El Ninos lead to dryer conditions in the Pacific Northwest, lowering river levels and hindering salmon migrations. They also decrease ocean upwelling, which brings critical deep-sea nutrients to the fish. For more information, contact *Oregonian* reporter Jonathan Brinckman at (503) 221-8190, or JBrinckman@aol.com.

► The *Daily Astorian* on June 13 reported that a local man's 25-year history of logging violations could make him the first person in the United States to face serious jail time for destroying salmon habitat. Clarence Edward Horecny's case helped prompt a new state law authorizing the Oregon Department of Forestry to stop repeat offenders from logging until they pay their fines and correct their violations as much as economically feasible. Horecny, 69, faces three felonies and 17 misdemeanors for allegedly causing \$67,000 in damage to coho and chinook salmon nests by bulldozing a log jam in November 1996. For more information, contact *Astorian* reporter Zaz Hollander at (503) 325-3211, or zaz@pacifier.com.

► Rather than make further cuts in already brief fishing seasons, scientists and West Coast fishermen agree that buying back trawl fishing permits may be the best way to salvage both the fishing fleet and apparently flagging groundfish stocks. Fishermen want to fund the buy-back program through a percentage of the fishing earnings. But a new version of the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act calls for potentially deeper harvest cuts that could hinder efforts to generate money for the program. A June story in *The Daily Astorian* analyzed this Catch-22 in the fishery many turned to when salmon runs flagged, also looking at the controversy surrounding the assessments on which catch restrictions are based. For more

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# The Green Beat

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information, contact *Astorian* reporter Zaz Hollander at (503) 325-3211, or zaz@pacifier.com.

## Rhode Island

► Is bad odor worth going to jail for? Four farmers in Tiverton, RI face a total of 61 felony counts as a result of an investigation by the state's Department of Environmental Management that was triggered by neighbors' complaints of noxious odors. The farmers, John and Antone Moniz, and their sons, operate adjoining dairy and hog farms. Most of those who have been to the farms believe the odors came from clambellies and other fish parts that John Moniz began feeding his hogs last year. But the DEM investigators also discovered thousands of cubic yards of clamshells piled on the farms and charged the farmers with multiple counts of creating solid waste landfills. John was paid by a New Bedford shellfish dealer to take the shells. Antone says he didn't make any money off the deal; he simply took shells to pave an access road and lime his fields. Local farming officials believe DEM was wrong to arrest the farmers since clamshells are an agricultural material, not a solid waste. Meanwhile, some odors continue to offend neighbors. For details, contact Peter Lord, *Providence Journal*, (401) 277-7000.

► The Rhode Island House of Representatives has extended the term of a legislative commission that has been examining the performance of the state's Department of Environmental Management. The commission's proceedings

have been regularly covered by Anna Minicucci in her weekly outdoors column appearing in the *Warwick Beacon* and *Cranston Herald*. The DEM, with a staff of 550 and a \$71.5 million budget, executes all regulatory permits, operates the state's recreation areas and oversees activities such as hunting and forestry. Minicucci reports that the commission's investigative probe is likely to result in reform legislation to streamline the department. She can be reached by fax at (401) 464-6015 and e-mail: awriter203@earthlink.net.

## Wisconsin

► The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* is ending its "Focus Environment" page that ran every Tuesday for the past couple years, and also discontinuing most of its other special "Focus" pages that ran on other days. A *Journal Sentinel* editor says the work of Environment Reporter Don Behm will be incorporated into the daily paper. The syndicated feature, "Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet" will move to the newspaper's Monday Health section, and join a locally written science column that also appeared on the "Environment" page this spring. A national weather map will replace the "Focus" features on page 2B. For more information, contact Behm at (414) 227-2040.

► Local recycling officials say The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* is "undermining Wisconsin's recycling efforts" by using too little paper collected from the state's recycling programs. In all, about 17 state publications sought exceptions

from laws on recycled-material content last year. *Journal Sentinel* publisher Keith Spore blamed his paper's problems on delays encountered by newsprint suppliers, and said the *JS* plans to exceed the content goals this year. The claims against the *Journal Sentinel* had been reported in other media. The paper ran its own story on page 7 of its Business section. The dispute comes as Wisconsin legislators debate whether to end state funding of recycling by the year 2001. Keith Spore's phone number is (414) 227-2040.

## Canada

► A full-scale demonstration of a technology for destroying hazardous waste is nearing completion in St. Catharines, Ontario. Developed by Canadian scientist Doug Hallett, the technology uses hydrogen to break down PCBs, DDT, etc. into non-toxic constituents without the byproducts resulting from burning. Hallett's company, Eco Logic Inc. of Rockwood, Ontario, received a permit from Ontario's Ministry of Environment and Energy more than a year ago for a full-scale pilot test of the system on large quantities of PCB-laden liquids and solids at a General Motors plant in St. Catharines. The tests have not gone without what the ministry calls the usual start-up glitches, but the ministry also reports from ongoing air monitoring, stack tests, etc. that the system is more than meeting the standards for destroying toxic waste in Canada and the US. Latest coverage in the series ran April 16. Call Doug Draper at the *St. Catharines Standard*, (905) 684-7251.

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