

SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

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Green retreat

Environmental bills battered in Congress while election sets stage for radical reform

By MAYA WEBER

After a 103rd Congress marked by the defeat of an ambitious agenda on environmental legislation, environmentalists have awakened from the latest election to find their already tenuous grip on Congress greatly eroded.

The new GOP-controlled Congress promises a fundamental shake-up on environmental legislation, most dramatically in the House, where key allies of environmentalists have been dethroned. Regulatory reform amendments opposed by environmentalists and key House Democratic committee chairmen now stand a solid chance of passage.

Republicans have assigned a high priority to those amendments, which dogged environmental legislation this past Congress, in a thick package of

reforms known as their "Contract with America," which will figure prominently in the House legislative agenda for the first 100 days of the 104th Congress.

Once dubbed the "unholy trinity," those reforms include required cost-benefit analysis, "takings" compensation and prohibition of unfunded federal mandates.

Environmental reporters will have plenty to chase on Capitol Hill. GOP-backed environmental bills are more likely to be aimed at scaling back perceived excesses in existing statutes rather than tightening or expanding regulation. The failure of this year's efforts to revise major statutes leaves a healthy plate for the new Congress. Among the leftovers are the forms of the Safe Drinking

(Continued on page 19)

SEJ presidency changes hands: Emilia Askari succeeds Jim Detjen

By BRUCE RITCHIE

Emilia Askari of the *Detroit Free Press* was elected as the new president of the Society of Environmental Journalists in October during the society's annual conference in Utah.

Askari was selected by fellow SEJ board members at a board of directors meeting on Oct. 8. She succeeds founding President Jim Detjen of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, who as of January will fill the Knight Chair of Journalism at Michigan State University.

Conference coverage starts on Page 9



Askari

Askari, who had been vice president, said she expects SEJ to remain on its "consensus agenda" that includes strengthening regional programs and establishing a strong financial base.

"Jim was and, really, is a good leader who draws a lot of" (Continued on page 3)

New president's agenda for SEJ

As SEJ's new president, I invite every member to help shape the future of this organization dedicated to increasing the quality of environmental journalism.

SEJ has come a long way in five years. From a small group that operated out of a member's desk, we have become a sophisticated organization with more than 1,000 members, a superlative staff and a \$250,000 annual budget.

But SEJ still needs volunteers. We want and need your ideas and energy.

My top goal as president is to make SEJ even more useful to its members. With your help, I hope SEJ will build on the tremendous successes of the past by continuing to expand and improve its services as budgets allow.

My second goal as president is to seek the guidance of SEJ's board and staff in planning for the organization's long-term financial stability.

Today, SEJ is running mainly on "start-up" grants from foundations. We do not expect those grants to be renewed. SEJ has not just started up, it has ignited. Now, our challenge is to keep running smoothly while continuing to grow and improve.

We hope the same foundations that helped launch SEJ will continue to support it through grants for specific programs such as national and regional conferences, expanded publications, an improved on-line forum, an awards program, and an international directory of environmental journalists.

Which programs will claim the largest share of the organization's attention? That depends on several variables, such as which programs attract the most volunteer energy from SEJ members and the most money from funders.

If, like me, you would like to see more SEJ regional programs, please step forward and help organize some. I recommend that you call SEJ members Scott Powers of the *Columbus Dispatch* or Sara Thurin Rollin of BNA. Both have helped plan excellent regional workshops. You can reach Scott at (614)461-5233; Sara's number is (202)452-4200.

On the SEJ board, both vice presi-

dents also have taken a lead in planning regional conferences. Rae Tyson of *USA Today* can be reached at (703) 276-3424 while Tom Meersman of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* is at (612) 673-4414.

If, like several other SEJ board members, you want SEJ to launch an awards program, please help make it happen. For such a program to work, we need major sponsors. If you know where we can find one or two, please contact board

Report from the society's president

By
**Emilia
Askari**



member Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star* at (816) 234-4433.

Meanwhile, many SEJ members are already working to make SEJ's 1995 conference the best yet, a very tall order indeed. The people to call with suggestions on everything from the program to the food are board member David Ropeik, who is on fellowship this year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or treasurer Steve Curwood of National Public Radio's Living on Earth program. David can be reached at (617) 253-6709 while Steve is at (617) 868-8810.

The 1995 conference is scheduled for Oct. 26 to 29 in Boston.

If you're frustrated by SEJ's on-line resources, please contact board member and freelancer Amy Gahran at (201) 694-9043. She's working with Russ Clemings and Bruce Ritchie to upgrade them.

The SEJournal has steadily improved over the years. It is an ambitious publication that demands a tremendous amount of time and attention. If you

have some to spare, please call Kevin Carmody or Adam Glenn. Kevin, a freelance journalist who serves as SEJ Secretary and SEJournal Co-editor, can be reached at (312) 871-8911. Adam, SEJournal Co-editor and Tufts Univ. graduate student, is at (617) 441-2906.

Former SEJ President Jim Detjen is taking the lead on making connections for SEJ with environmental journalists in other countries. As you'll read in more detail elsewhere in this issue of the SEJournal, Jim was recently elected president of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists. I was elected to the group's governing council. Next year, the international journalists will be joining SEJ members at our Boston conference. If you want to help host our foreign colleagues, please call Jim, SEJ's Chairman of International Programs, in his new office at Michigan State University. In January, his number there will be (517) 353-6430.

Other areas where SEJ needs your help include long-term fund-raising and interacting with other journalism groups. In particular, we need people to raise money for fellowships to bring journalists of color and journalists from particular regions of the United States to our conferences. Please call SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke at (215) 247-9710 if you can help.

If you have other concerns about SEJ or suggestions about what we should be doing, please call me or Beth any time. You can reach me toll-free at (800) 678-6400, ext. 4536.

SEJ's next board meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 7, in Washington, D.C. Any member is welcome to attend. Please call the SEJ office in early January for details on where and when the board will meet.

Among the items on the agenda:

- Which top media leaders should we ask to serve on SEJ's new advisory board?
- Creation of goals and timetables for various board committees.
- Planning for the 1995 conference.
- Discussion on a proposal to appoint an academic and an associate member to

(Continued on page 3)

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

SEJ Board of Directors: President, Emilia Askari, *Detroit Free Press*, (800) 678-6400; Vice President, Rae Tyson, *USA Today*, (703) 276-3424; Vice President, Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-4414; Secretary, Kevin Carmody, (312) 871-8911; Treasurer, Steve Curwood, NPR's *Living On Earth*, (617) 868-8810; Marla Cone, *The Los Angeles Times*, (800) 528-4637, ext. 73497; Jim Detjen, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (215) 854-2438; Julie Edelson, *Inside Washington Publishers*, (313) 769-7780; Amy Gahran, (201) 694-9043; Randy Lee Loftis, *Dallas Morning News*, (214) 977-8483; Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, (313) 761-6927; Wevonneda Minis, *Charleston Post & Courier*, (803) 937-5705; Dave Ropeik, WCVB-TV in Boston, (617) 449-0400.

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Presidency ... (from page 1)

people into the process," she said. "He was a real role model for me. I'm going to try to do the same thing."

Detjen will serve as chairman of SEJ's advisory board as it is being formed in the coming months and will direct the group's international journalism programs. He also will continue to write periodically about environmental issues for the *Inquirer*.

"I feel good," Detjen said of SEJ's future. "I feel the organization has really developed from an idea to a useful organization for environmental journalists."

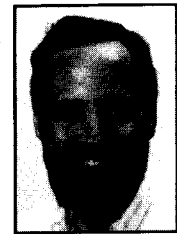
Before joining the *Free Press*, Askari covered a variety of beats at the *Miami Herald* and the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*. A graduate of Brown University, she earned a masters degree in Journalism from Columbia University in 1983.

Rae Tyson of *USA Today* was re-elected vice president and Tom Meersman of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* was elected as the second vice president. Re-elected treasurer was Steve Curwood of National Public Radio's *Living on Earth* and, as board secretary, Kevin Carmody, a Chicago-based freelance writer.

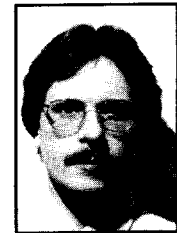
Preceding election of officers, the SEJ members voted to fill five slots on the board of directors — electing one new board member, Amy Gahran, while re-electing Askari, Carmody, Detjen and Meersman, all for three-year terms. Gahran served as SEJ's records manager, the only staff position during the organization's startup phase, and until recently wrote with *Energy User News*.



Detjen



Meersman



Carmody



Gahran

Column ... (from page 2)

attend SEJ board meetings as non-voting participants.

Please see articles on this proposal in this edition of the SEJournal. If you have a strong opinion on this topic, please contact me or any board member before Jan. 7.

Our second board meeting of the year is slated for the weekend of March 24 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Again, the doors will be open to all members.

Several current members of the board have indicated that they will not run for re-election in October. That means there will be several new board members next year. Attending one of this year's board meetings is an excellent way to decide if you are interested in running for a board spot.

I encourage you all to invest in your own growth and the improvement of our profession by volunteering for SEJ.

We're open to your ideas and eager to work with you.

IFEJ now gaining momentum

By JIM DETJEN

From such far-flung places as Uruguay, Madagascar, Nepal and South Africa, reporters converged on Paris in November to participate in the second conference of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ).

The meeting, held at UNESCO headquarters from Nov. 2 to 5, was bigger and less chaotic than the organization's founding meeting in Dresden, Germany last year.

But it was just as stimulating.

Algerian journalists told how their colleagues were being shot and killed for reporting the news. Russian journalists described the difficulty they have faced in ferreting out information about Siberian oil spills and other environmental calamities in the former Soviet Union. Malaysian reporters talked about being put in jail for reporting news their government opposes.

All told, about 150 environmental journalists from 52 nations attended the meeting. The number of participants was more than double the attendance of the founding meeting in Dresden when about 70 journalists representing 25 countries attended.

At this year's conference the participants formally adopted organizational statutes and elected officers and an administrative council for the next three years. I was elected to a three-year term as IFEJ president. SEJ president Emilia Askari was elected to a three-year term as a member of the 19-member administrative council.

Other officers include: Darryl D'Monte, India, vice president; Nicole Lauroy, France, vice president; Valentin Thurn, Germany, secretary; Michael Schweres-Fichtner, Germany, vice secretary; Victor Bacchetta, Uruguay, vice secretary; Jan Lothigius, Sweden, vice secretary; and Wolfgang Fruehauf, Germany, treasurer.

Also elected to terms on the administrative council are: Louise Gouverne and Claude-Marie Vadrot, France; Marta

Sarvari, Hungary; Hin Yue Pang, Malaysia; Gonzalo de Los Santos, Uruguay; Dan Stoica, Rumania; M'Hamed Rebah, Algeria; Inger Marit Kolstadbraten, Norway and Andrei Shamrai, Russia.

Lively discussions occurred throughout the assembly as journalists discussed problems and issues facing reporters in their own countries. Cultures clashed and language differences made it difficult sometimes to understand what was happening. Discussions were translated into English, French and Russian.

IFEJ approved a resolution calling on nations to enact laws patterned after the Freedom of Information acts in the United States and Sweden. The body also formally condemned the attacks and killings of journalists that has occurred in recent months in Algeria and parts of the former Soviet Union.

IFEJ passed a formal resolution supporting the free exchange of environmental information worldwide and calling upon nations to enact laws patterned after the Freedom of Information acts in the United States and Sweden.

The body also formally condemned the attacks and killings of journalists that have occurred in recent months in Algeria and parts of the former Soviet Union. These resolutions will be sent to the European Union, the United Nations and the legislatures in countries around the world.

Some of the larger delegations (four or more representatives) at this year's meeting came from France, Germany, the Ukraine, Brazil, Spain, Hungary, Russia and the United States. Also present were journalists from Japan, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Algeria, Ghana, Rumania, Norway, England, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Cuba, Mexico, Canada and more than 20 other countries.

The federation — which seeks to link together environmental journalism organizations around the world — was

founded to foster the free exchange of environmental information. The hope is that IFEJ will enable journalists in different countries to work together in reporting and writing about environmental issues.

So far, IFEJ remains a loosely-knit federation of environmental journalism organizations. Its officers communicate mostly by faxes, e-mail, letters and an occasional long-distance phone call. It has only a rudimentary budget and its headquarters is in a one-room office occupied by the French environmental journalists' organization.

IFEJ is at a fledgling stage. How successful and useful it will become as an organization depends a great deal upon its success in fundraising. The organization has already submitted grant requests to both UNESCO and the United Nations Environmental Program to help support some of IFEJ's planned activities. SEJ will assist IFEJ in a number of these efforts.

Among the programs in the planning stage are:

- Publishing an international directory of environmental journalists. This would probably be done in two phases. First, a short directory listing the names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses of environmental journalism organizations, key support groups and a partial listing of environmental journalists. If fundraising efforts are successful, we would proceed to a second phase of a directory that would seek to identify and list as many of the estimated 5,000 environmental journalists in the world as possible.
- Creating a newsletter. This would be smaller and less frequent than the SEJournal. My hope is that the first issue will be published sometime in 1995.
- Developing an e-mail system that could be used by journalists around the globe. Two possible models are the NEMO system used by the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers in Paris or the TogetherNet system set up by the Together Foundation for Global Unity

in Burlington, Vt. for UNEP and other international organizations.

• Organizing the 1995 IFEJ conference in conjunction with the SEJ conference in Boston from Oct. 26 to 29, 1995. Both the SEJ and IFEJ councils have agreed to work together and planning has already begun. If you have ideas for international programs, speakers or panelists please contact either me, Emilia Askari,

David Ropeik, Steve Curwood or Beth Parke.

If you know of the names of environmental journalism organizations or environmental journalists around the world who might be interested in IFEJ activities, please give me a call at 517-355-5794. I'd also welcome assistance in tracking down the names of foundations that might support IFEJ activities.

Jim Detjen is the founding SEJ president and one of the co-founders of IFEJ. A former staff writer for The Philadelphia Inquirer, he now holds the Knight Chair of Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University. East Lansing, MI 48824-1212. You can also reach him via fax at 517-432-1244 or via E-mail at JamesD6474AOL.COM .

IFEJ notebook: It's a dangerous profession

By **SCOTT BRONSTEIN**

M'Hamed Rebah is an environmental reporter in Algeria. In the last year, he has lost 26 colleagues, killed by terrorists. More than a dozen were close friends.

They were killed, he explained, because the extremist group fighting the government and trying to pull the country toward a fundamentalist Islamic state does not tolerate independent journalists. "[They died] for the simple crime that they are journalists working for a free press," said Rebah. "It doesn't matter whether you're a political reporter at a paper, an environmental reporter, or even a chauffeur for someone inside a paper. Anyone connected with this profession is now in serious danger."

Rebah, who was in Paris for the recent IFEJ meeting (see main story), has himself recently decided to no longer include his byline on his stories, but only his initials. He would probably no longer use even those, removing them as have other journalists, upon his return from the meeting, he said.

In an effort to help Algerian journalists, Rebah, this reporter and another from France, drafted a resolution decrying the violence and conditions there. While it was passed unanimously by the IFEJ, it seemed so futile—a simple declaration by a group of environmental reporters, most of whom know next to nothing about Algeria. But for Rebah, the public outcry could only help, and he encouraged similar stands in the future by the group and its member organizations such as SEJ.

The Paris meeting made it clear that the right of free access to information is a privilege taken for granted in

the U.S.

Many of the journalists in attendance—from Asia, India, South America, Eastern Europe, Russia, and even Western Europe—were fascinated by Jim Detjen's session on the U.S. Freedom of Information Act law. Many said they are rarely granted information from officials and have no guarantee under law to have access.

Only the Swedish constitution and the U.S. FOIA were considered as international models strong enough to protect the right of access to information. The FOIA, however, was seen as second-best compared with the Swedish law, which guarantees access to information within 24 hours of a request. A general European law, vague and non-binding, was called "totally unacceptable" by the reporter.

As a result of conversations about the need for an international law providing access to information, a group of IFEJ attendees drafted a resolution that was passed overwhelmingly, though some reporters there felt it could have been even stronger.

Equally surprising to some of us, the question of reporter ethics is approached quite differently in many other countries. Question over what is acceptable or unacceptable as gifts from sources became a point of heated discussion in Paris. All through France right now, for instance, reporters typically accept gifts of meals, lodging or fully paid travel from companies and sources they are writing about.

In fact, the IFEJ conference itself was a case in point, when it turned out that many of the lunches, dinners and travel by reporters to the conference

were paid for by companies such as Gaz de France, considered by some French environmental groups as the antithesis of an environmentally sound company.

The debate over such conflicts of interest that has begun within the international environmental community was in large part brought about by IFEJ itself. But for many reporters from France, India and other countries, accepting such favors is not only common, but necessary.

"Without these, we would never travel at all in our country on assignment," said Darryl D'Monte, IFEJ board member and a journalist from India. "This is how it's done here, and I don't really see that is has to compromise us in any way," added Claude Marie Vaudrot, who organized the conference.

Others disagree. "This is totally against our principles as good, respectable reporters," said Jan Lothigius, a journalist from Stockholm, after he found that little necklaces were left in small leather pouches on all the plates prior to one four-course lunch with wine, paid for by the clothes company Esprit.

"I hope our new, international group can get away from things like this, or it may seriously strain our credibility," added Lars Akerman, a science editor at a Swedish TV station.

Scott Bronstein, chief environment reporter for the Atlanta Journal Constitution and a contributor to NPR, is currently in Paris on a two-month German Marshall Fund fellowship, working as an environment reporter for the French national daily newspaper, La Croix.

Outdoor writers drawn into fray

Florida net-fishing advocates paint writers as partisans

By **BRUCE RITCHIE**

Newspaper outdoor writers, often the opinionated cousins of their newsroom colleagues on the environmental beat, became an issue themselves in a recent Florida debate over a proposed state constitutional amendment to ban inshore net fishing.

The amendment was approved on Nov. 8 with about 70 percent of votes cast in favor of the measure. Opponents have vowed to take legal action to block the measure, which takes effect on July 1.

Net ban supporters said the ban was needed to protect fisheries and other marine life, including dolphins and sea turtles. Opponents said the ban was an attempt by recreational anglers to grab more fish for themselves.

Campaign literature issued by an opposition group urged the public to be wary of news media coverage, especially by outdoor writers. Indeed, some outdoor writers used their columns to endorse the ban.

"When you read your newspaper, remember 'sports' writers advocate 'sport' fishin.," stated an Organized Fishermen of Florida pamphlet.

"Often they are columnists, not reporters, and so they may not be fair or objective. They often go on fishing trips paid for by equipment companies," the pamphlet stated.

Outdoor writing, like environmental journalism, is a broad term, and the two beats at newspapers provide room for overlap.

Newspaper outdoor writers long have published columns with hunting and fishing tips, but their roles within the media are changing, said Glenn Sapir, president of the 2,000-member Outdoor Writers Association of America.

They increasingly find themselves covering recreational and environmental issues, Sapir said. He considers many outdoor writers to be "advocates" for outdoor recreation.

Sapir is outdoor editor for Gannett suburban newspapers in New York state

and editor of *Outdoor Bytes* magazine on CompuServe.

In Florida, several outdoor writers published columns endorsing the net ban and blasting claims by opponents. Some writers included photographs of marine mammals supposedly killed in fishing nets.

Net ban opponents claimed the photographs were misleading or suggested they were faked by groups supporting the ban.

The Save Our Sealife campaign supporting the ban was chaired by Karl Wickstrom, publisher of *Florida Sportsman* magazine.

While many environmental groups supported the net ban, opponents portrayed the issue as a battle between commercial fishermen and recreational anglers, including their allied outdoor writers.

Net fisherman Richard Van Munster of Riviera Beach said the outdoor writers "sit in a little circle, and the circle is the princes of the water front" — wealthy anglers with power boats parked at expensive marinas.

"One of them told me, he said, 'Listen Richard, I don't write for the commercial fishing industry.' He said, 'I write for the recreational anglers,'" Van Munster said.

"What is that? Does the First Amendment cover that? If so, then we are in sad shape. That is the worst," he said.

Richard Bowles of Gainesville, an outspoken net ban supporter, said outdoor writers did a better job of covering the net ban debate than other beat reporters because they knew more about the issues involved.

Bowles was outdoor writer for *The Gainesville Sun* from 1978 to 1993 and twice was named fishing columnist of the year by the Florida Outdoor Writers Association.

His reasons for leaving the newspaper included concern that he could not write about the net ban issue without bias because of the knowledge he had

gained from covering marine fisheries issues.

"Anybody on the water covering marine fisheries can hardly take any other position" than in support of the ban, Bowles said.

Sapir said he is not aware of outdoor writers in other states being drawn into a public debate as they were in Florida on the net ban issue.

Meanwhile, outdoor writers are struggling with the issue of accepting trips and sporting goods.

Sapir calls the freebies an "economic necessity" for covering outdoor issues.

He said he gets a "kick" from sports editors who set rules against outdoor writers taking freebies and then "flash their press card" to get into a ballpark, eat a meal on the host ball club and then expect to write objectively.

Tom Wharton, outdoor editor at *The Salt Lake Tribune*, said the newspaper outdoor writers are slowly trying to "wean" themselves from free trips and equipment but sometimes they are necessary.

The Tribune requires payment for trips. But sometimes estimating the cost is difficult, he said, such as last year when he needed use of a state snowmobile to cover a story.

Wharton defended the opinion columns written by outdoor writers, saying some of the nation's best journalism can be found in them.

And he thinks good communication is needed between outdoor writers and environmental reporters. Publishing outdoor columns side-by-side with articles by environmental reporters is one approach that can benefit readers, he said.

"I think the smart papers kind of take a team approach at that and realize each of the writers have their strengths and biases and use those strengths and biases for their strength rather than a weakness," he said.

Bruce Ritchie is a reporter with The Gainesville Sun and an active SEJ member.

Board poised to add advisory positions

By RAE TYSON

When the founders of the Society of Environmental Journalists crafted the group's legal framework, one goal was paramount: SEJ would be an organization of professional journalists.

Though some of the other journalism specialty groups allow non-journalists as active members, we felt to do so would compromise the intent — and reputation — of SEJ. We were particularly committed to barring those applicants who had no affiliation whatsoever with journalism.

Most of you are aware that this standard has permeated every membership decision we've ever made. And, as far as I know, every active, voting member — 652 of them currently — is a working journalist.

And when we wrote the bylaws, the language was clear: Only active members could elect the board and only active members could serve.

So, is the board contradicting itself by advocating new, non-voting positions on academic and associate members?

Absolutely not. Let me explain.

Those same founders created two additional membership categories — associate and academic. Academic was intended for journalism educators and students. Right now, 173 — 17.3% — of our membership is academic.

Associate membership was intended to accommodate journalists who didn't meet the key criteria for active status: Working full-time for publications (or programs) that are available to the general public.

Most commonly, SEJ's associate members work in non-journalism jobs and do their journalism on a part-time basis. A small percentage of our associate members work at publications that are not available to the general public. Public relations and/or lobbying work automatically disqualifies an applicant for any category of membership.

At this point, we have 175 associate members, which is 17.5% of the membership.

When you add the two categories together, it translates into 34.8% of all SEJ members without a voice on the board.

Why does it matter?

It matters because both academic and associate members deserve to have someone at the table. Simply put, they need an advocate who can argue for their interests when crucial programming and funding decisions are made by the board.

And the best way to promote that advocacy is to have two non-voting members — one each for academic and associate members.

Initially, the two new members would be appointed by the board. Starting next year, each group would elect its own board member.

None of us knows how — or if — this will work. Nor do we know if this will lead to new voting positions on the board — a change that would require a bylaws revision.

But we do feel that it is time that SEJ more fully recognize the needs of two groups that are a vital part of our organization.

Rae Tyson, environment editor at USA Today, is founding vice-president of SEJ and membership chairman.

In these times of shrinking resources, it's nice to see some organizations beefing up their environmental coverage. *Knight-Ridder* took a big leap forward by hiring **Heather Dewar** as its first national environmental correspondent. Dewar has relocated to Washington, D.C. from Florida, where she spent the past four-and-a-half years covering wetlands, groundwater and endangered species issues as environmental reporter for the *Miami Herald*.

Scott Bronstein has been based in Paris for much of October and November. No, *the Atlanta Journal-Constitution* is not opening up an environmental bureau in Europe. Bronstein was on a fellowship through the French-American Foundation and sponsored by the German Marshall Fund. By the time you read this, he would have spent more than a month covering environment for "La Croix" a leading French newspaper.

Former SEJ Treasurer **Noel Grove** is "busier than he almost cares to be" since he left *National Geographic*. After 25 years at *Geographic*, Grove said he

took advantage of corporate downsizing to try out life as a freelancer. The biggest project on his plate involves traveling

Media on the Move Compiled by George Homsy

around the world writing reports for the Interamerican Institute for Global Change Research. The Institute is developing strategies to deal with everything from climate change to biodiversity. He also doing some writing for his former employers at the *Geographic*.

It was e-mail that kept **Nancy Shute** in touch with the outside world during her stay in the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in the Russian Far East. Shute, one of the first foreigners to visit the city in seven decades, spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar teaching journalism at the Kamchatka Pedagogical Institute. Despite blackouts, water shortages and the infamous Russian bureaucracy Shute and her students started an En-

glish language newspaper. Circulation reached 1,000 by the time she left. Now she's back in Washington, D.C. working on magazine articles and, hopefully, a book about her experiences.

Also in academia, but this time on the receiving end, is SEJ board member **David Ropeik**. He took a nine month leave from his job as environmental reporter for *WCVB-TV* in Boston to become a Knight Science Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He says he is working "way harder than I normally would, but it doesn't feel like work because I'm choosing what I want to do." Ropeik does admit missing the collegiality of the news room, but he'll be getting plenty of that soon. He's organizing the 1995 SEJ conference which will be held at MIT.

Start a fellowship? Change jobs? Win a special honor? Let us know. To contribute to **Media On The Move**, send news about you or your colleagues to: George Homsy at *Living On Earth*, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 868-8810, Fax: (617) 868-8659, Email: livingearth@igc.apc.org

Plenary explores 'tabloidization'

By KEIKO OHNUMA

PROVO — Bumped off the front page by bizarre murders and salacious scandal, environmental journalists agreed on one thing: Their stories can't afford to be dull.

"Many people are not interested in reading about some bureaucratic skirmish that won't affect their lives for years," Mei-Mei Chan, executive editor of the *Idaho Falls Post-Register*, advised hundreds of colleagues during the SEJ conference plenary. "Perhaps it's time to take a fresh look at what you're doing and how you're doing it."

An apparent trend toward tabloid-style news coverage prompted the Society of Environmental Journalists to ask a dozen editors, reporters, scientists and policymakers, "Why isn't the environment a bigger story?" Some of the plenary panelists didn't like this question. Some questioned its implications. Some simply neglected to answer. But all agreed that environmental reporters walk an increasingly fine line between accurate reporting and colorful writing, between responsibility and advocacy.

In the struggle to hold on to readers and viewers, news organizations get caught in a trap, said founding SEJ president Jim Detjen. As audiences become less able to distinguish between news and entertainment, the traditional news media have begun to embrace "a kind of checkout-counter journalism" that threatens to erode the credibility of the press.

Reporters blame editors and news management. Environmental topics are a hard sell, even when viewers are directly affected, said Erin Hayes, an award-winning correspondent for ABC News in Chicago.

Part of the problem is the complexity of the issues, Hayes said. Murder carries no such dilemma. "Murder, bad—there's no dilemma about how to cover it," she explained. "But if you've got 40 parts per million dioxin in a river, (media management) is worried about the

shades of gray. They're worried they don't understand the issue, they're not sure you understand the issue, and they're not convinced that it's interesting."

Editors on the panel turned the focus back to reporters, challenging them to inject more relevance, meaning, and interest in their stories for both readers and editors. "You know what types of stories certain editors tend to like—stories that capture their imagination and that touch them," said Chan. "Figure out

A complete transcript of this plenary is available, while copies last, from the SEJ office. Or check the SEJ bulletin board on America On Line. A transcript of Don Fry's session and minutes of the SEJ Annual Meeting should also be available on-line soon.

what your editors want, and twist your story so that it works."

"Concentrate on what people want," echoed Rick Rodriguez, managing editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, a paper that regularly devotes months of reporting time and dozens of pages to coverage of environmental topics. "Look at the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the neighborhoods we live in," Rodriguez said. He noted that stories that offer immediacy are the ones that merit six months of a reporter's time.

KTTV Fox reporter David Garcia, known to Los Angeles viewers as "Earth Man," offered an example of a story he did on rainforest preservation that established this kind of relevance and immediacy. Garcia traced the rainforest ecosystem's link to viewers' lives from their morning cup of coffee to their bedtime hot chocolate to possible cures for AIDS and prostate cancer. "We need to turn the corner from making the environment an everyday issue into an everyday lifestyle," Garcia said.

Others on the panel—especially non-journalists—worried about the effects of such newsroom tactics on the mission of providing accurate information.

Chemist F. Sherwood Rowland of the University of California at Irvine

said he still can't guess what will stir reporters, even after 20 years of taking their calls. His first reports on damage to the ozone from chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were all but ignored by the press. As the years passed, the media rode waves of public fascination with "bizarre" stories about aerosol cans and the ozone hole over Antarctica, Rowland said.

Today, the body of scientific evidence on CFCs and the ozone involves hundreds of researchers and comprises thousands of scientific papers, Rowland pointed out. Yet some authorities quoted in the media appear not to have read updates for 10 or 15 years, he claimed. The chemist urged reporters to strive for a "working scientist level" of understanding, and to beware of Washington-based policy groups claiming to speak for science.

Not only the public, but also policymakers depend on accurate news reports to digest technical information, said Lee Thomas, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. "The experiences I had with the impact of environmental coverage shaping policy was tremendous," said Thomas, testifying to his own reliance on press clippings both at the EPA and in his current position as senior vice president at Georgia Pacific Corp.

Biased, nuance-laden coverage can even cast a shadow on world diplomacy, said Noel J. Brown, regional director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Brown, who helped stage the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, recalled media disinterest in consensus at the summit, and the single-minded focus on whether President Bush would or would not sign the treaty. "My sense is that if it's contentious enough, if it's bad enough, you report it," Brown said. "There's a problem between the praiseworthy versus the newsworthy."

The problem of environmental journalism may, in fact, be one of creative journalism, the diplomat suggested. Author Michael Fumento was not so

diplomatic.

Too much reporting on science is politically motivated, biased and inaccurate, said Fumento, author of "The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS" and "Science Under Siege: Balancing Technology and the Environment." To argue his case, Fumento read from a *USA Today* article about a draft EPA study of the toxicity of a 1987 dioxin spill in Times Beach, Mo. The target of the author's scorn turned out to be SEJ Vice President Rae Tyson, who absorbed the attack in stoic silence.

According to Fumento, the *USA Today* article failed to mention any evidence that dioxin posed no health risk, or of the change of heart by federal health official Vernon Houk about his decision to evacuate Times Beach. The only scientist quoted was a member of the advocacy group Physicians for Social Responsibility, he said.

"This is not journalism," said Fumento, a fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. "There is not even the least effort to show that there may be two sides to the story."

Crime and celebrities are not killing off serious journalism, Fumento concluded. Environmental journalism is losing ground because the public is losing confidence in the press.

Fumento's arguments took several hits, first when fellow panelist Hayes



Photo by Joseph South, BYU

Former EPA Administrator Lee Thomas and ABC News correspondent Erin Hayes take a break after hours of discussion during the plenary.

noted that Houk's professional credibility had eroded in recent years. Later, during questions from the audience, Kathy Sagan of *Family Circle* pointed out that Houk had died before the EPA draft dioxin report was released, making it impossible for any reporter to contact him for comment on it. Sagan also noted that it was not Houk, but Lee Thomas, who had ordered the Times Beach evacuation. All eyes turned to Thomas, who confirmed that fact and added that he would have made the same decision today as he did on 1984.

Seated next to Fumento but hailing from the other end of the political spectrum, Native American rights activist Winona LaDuke jokingly restrained herself from yanking the microphone away from Fumento for an impassioned speech. The media's portrayal of environmental issues parallels its portrayal of many Native communities, according to LaDuke, environment program director for the Seventh Generation Fund in Minnesota. Both issues are

marginalized and trivialized, pushed to the back of the newspaper and of public consciousness in order to support the supremacy of an urban, industrialized world view, she claimed.

"It takes very little time to trash an ecosystem. It takes a long time to talk about (it)," said LaDuke.

The activist urged journalists to put aside debates over parts per million and adopt a long-term view. Native communities make decisions based on their impact on the next seven generations—a model for responsible citizenry and responsible journalism, she said. "Remember that where there are indigenous people, there are still intact ecosystems," LaDuke concluded. "There is something to be learned from that."

In a similar spirit, Noel Brown, admitting to "heresy," pleaded with journalists to "report sometimes the good news," to give some evidence that the world is making some progress.

"We need some shared sense of achievement," Brown said. "The media might be able to provide that."

Keiko Onhuma is a staff writer for the Oakland (Calif.) Tribune and the Alameda Newspaper Group, currently assigned to the business desk. She previously worked for three years as an editor at the San Francisco-based Sierra magazine and continues to write freelance articles.



Photo by Joseph South, BYU

Noel Brown of the United Nation's Environment Programme chats with a conference attendee.

Detjen questions the profession's direction

Editor's Note: Jim Detjen's plenary-opening comments are excerpted below:

I believe that the media's interest in and coverage of environmental issues peaked about Earth Day 1990 and has gradually declined since then. A major reason for this decline was a national recession which shifted public and the media's attention to economic issues such as the loss of jobs and the inadequacy of health insurance.

I should caution, however, that I have seen no good studies documenting a decline in environmental coverage. It is based more on anecdotal evidence I have heard from environmental journalists around the country — of environmental beats being scaled back or eliminated and of resources being diminished.

And, in fact, there are some signs of growth in the field. SEJ has grown steadily since it was founded in 1990 and today has more than 1,000 members. A number of papers have increased their environmental coverage, particularly in the area of how environmental laws affect business.

I am worried, however, about a number of trends that affect environmental journalism and other serious reporting about important public issues. An underlying force that is driving these trends, I believe, is economic — the demand for increased profits by media corporations.

The first trend is the substitution of entertainment values for news values. Newspapers are gradually losing readers and television networks are losing viewers as new media — ranging from cable TV to on-line computer services — grow. As people's lives become busier and more demanding, fewer are reading newspapers and watching network news.

Unfortunately, many newspaper editors and TV news directors are attempting to regain these lost readers and viewers by trying to emulate the sensational stories that appear in the *National Enquirer* and on TV shows such as *Geraldo!* and *Hard Copy*. From Lorena Bobbitt to Michael Jackson to Tonya Harding to O.J. Simpson, the media is exploiting the public's fascination with celebrities and sensational crimes.

In the hopes of boosting ratings and

selling more papers, the line is being increasingly blurred between what is news and what is entertainment. A kind of checkout counter journalism has seeped into traditional news media.

A second trend that concerns me is that many news organizations have cut their budgets for serious news. News staffs have been significantly reduced at many newspapers and TV stations. Foreign and domestic bureaus have been closed. The threat of libel suits has seriously reduced the amount of investigative and project reporting being done by some of the media.

The net result is that many TV stations and newspapers are providing less news of value to their readers. Some news organizations are trying to camouflage this fact with flashy layouts and color graphics. But viewers and readers aren't stupid. They see that less news is being provided — and as a result, fewer are watching and reading.

A third trend is related to the first two and a bit harder to describe. In a recent article in *American Journalism Review*, Neal Gabler described it as the shift in emphasis in American journalism from the information function to the story function during the past decade.

Another way of putting this is the erosion in the traditional mission of the press. The framers of the U.S. Constitution gave the news media protection under the First Amendment because of the importance of providing the public with information needed to make political, social and moral judgments in a democracy. This protection carries with it a responsibility to provide useful and accurate reporting about important public issues.

Let me describe how Tad Bartimus, an AP reporter, has put it: "I worry that soon none of us, you or me or our neighbors, will be able to tell the difference between the information we need to know — that we must know — to retain a democracy, and the information we can do without. Some journalists — and I say some — are losing the ability to differentiate between the Persian Gulf War and a Joan Collins' facelift. I worry about how we equalize the trivial and the

monumental."

At many papers, editors are telling reporters to write colorful yarns about bizarre crimes or predicaments and are putting those stories on the front page. Meanwhile, serious reporting about complicated environmental and governmental issues is being scaled back.

I believe this is a short-sighted approach that is counter-productive. A sensational story about O.J. Simpson may temporarily sell a few more papers on the newsstand. But as readers and viewers realize that real substance has been lost, they stop buying papers and watching TV news.

This short-sighted approach is also eroding the credibility of the news media. A recent Gallup poll found that the percentage of the public expressing a great deal of confidence in the newspapers dropped from 51% in 1979 to 29% today. An NBC-*Wall Street Journal* poll found that only 21% of the public believes the media is very or mostly honest. This is below the 37% who feel that President Clinton is honest.

I believe that one of the reasons for this loss of confidence is the blurring of the line between entertainment and news. The public is confusing daily newspapers with the *National Enquirer* and local TV news with *Hard Copy*. We have climbed into bed with the sensational fringes of the industry and we are paying for it in lost credibility and eroding sales.

But all is not lost. I believe the news media can recapture its traditional readers and viewers if we return to what we do best: report the news. Rather than scaring up bizarre stories about celebrities and crimes, we should return to providing useful information that enables people to cope better in an increasingly complex world.

This is especially true of environmental issues. Inform readers about what's happening to the air they breathe, the water they drink and the food they eat. Tell them how safe and reliable their local power plant is and whether a local waste dump is endangering their health.

Provide them with thoughtful and useful information — and I think they'll keep coming back for more.

EPA's Browner assails partisan obstructionism

By **BRENDA ABRAHAM**

PROVO—Partisan obstructionism in Congress might derail environmental legislation, but Americans still believe that the government has an obligation to protect their air, water and land, EPA Administrator Carol Browner said as the 103rd Congress drew to a close.

Speaking to SEJ members via satellite from Washington, Browner appeared angry as she criticized Republicans who had already helped kill legislation such as Superfund reform. Browner was to have spoken live at the SEJ conference Oct. 13, but remained in the capital to testify on behalf of passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act reauthorization.

"What we've run into is gridlock and obstructionism that is truly unprecedented," Browner said. "When I looked at the front page of the newspaper today, I saw Republicans literally rejoicing in gridlock, rejoicing in obstructionism — in so many words.

These Republican have cared more about their re-election efforts than about the 70 million people living near toxic dumpsites, the children who will suffer real and permanent health effects from lead-contaminated soil, the farmworkers suffering from exposure to dangerous pesticides."

She said "simplistic rhetoric and sound bites" have contributed to the problem by allowing Congress to ignore real and difficult issues.

Browner said that if the losses in Congress continued to mount, she will use every single available tool to fight to protect the health of the American people. Tools other than legislation include regulation, enforcement, education and permitting, she said.

"One of the first things I undertook was to undo Anne Gorsuch's dismantling of EPA's enforcement arm," Browner said. "This year we collected the largest fines in history. In the coming year, we'll expand our criminal enforcement program."

Other new initiatives will include:

- Regulations, effective Jan. 1, to protect farmworkers from pesticide exposure.
- A policy that considers the special diet and metabolism of children when EPA acts on pesticide registrations.
- Expansion of list of chemicals subject to the disclosure under provisions of the community right-to-know law.
- First-ever standards for medical-waste incinerators, possibly one of the largest sources of dioxin exposure.

She also said that she will work to stop the current system of shifting pollution from one place to another and, once the mess is cleaned up, she said, the EPA will focus on prevention.

As far as Superfund Reform was concerned, Browner said, the bill died because of politics. Simply put, she said, the Republicans were making a point of not giving President Clinton a victory.

Browner also said that pollution problems are far more complicated today than they were 15 to 20 years ago. But that doesn't mean the health effects are less important, she said, noting that 100 people died in Milwaukee and several hundred thousand were sickened by contaminated drinking water.

Browner was asked about plans to reintroduce Superfund reform. Apart from continuing to work with the Congressional leadership, she said that she will continue to do as much as possible within the existing laws. However, she said, EPA simply cannot do some of the things that people want done until there is a change in the existing laws.

"It still takes too long and costs too much to clean up those (Superfund) sites," Browner said. "Small business is still burdened by unfair costs, and people are still rightfully worried about the toxic dumps sitting in their backyards" as "one in four people still live within four miles of a toxic dump site."

Brenda Abraham is Assistant Editor trainee for Council Fires, a newspaper based in Plummer, Idaho serving the Coeur D'Alene tribe.

Letter from ASNE head

Below is the text of a letter from Gregory E. Favre, President of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), to the attendees of the SEJ conference. Favre is Executive Editor of the Sacramento Bee.

I regret that I am unable to attend the National Conference for the Society of Environmental Journalists at BYU, but, on behalf of ASNE, I want to extend my best wishes to all those in attendance.

SEJ is a growing and extremely important organization. Environmental reporting has been overlooked by too many news outlets for too long. At least 50 percent of our newspapers and 75 percent of our television stations do not have full-time environmental reporters and that is a shame.

Informed, intelligent, balanced, fair reporting on the complex mix of stories on the agenda in every community will elevate the private and public debate on these issues that hang so heavy over our futures and those of our children and grandchildren

With a push from people such as those participating in the SEJ conference we have made a start, but it is just a start. Many of us have written about the wonders and the tragedies of our natural resources, but there is much more for us to do, especially as our population increases and becomes more diverse.

So it is the task of all of us in journalism not only to encourage more traditional environmental reporting, but to also make sure that we talk more and more about all of these issues that affect people. about the value of our resources, about the human dangers, about the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, about global warming, deforestation, overpopulation, the exploitation of the world's oceans, and the list goes on.

SEJ has and will continue to be a leader in an area of our craft that touches us all. I commend you for all your past work and wish you well in the future.

Panels offer overview of key issues

On-line computer resources

PROVO—Reporters looking for environmental resources on-line have a host of specialized scientific databases, libraries, reference materials and information from various agencies available to them via bulletin boards and the internet. The trick, obviously, is knowing how to find and access these resources. This session demonstrated a few of the tools used during electronic research, including gopher, telnet,archie, veronica, FTP, World Wide Web and WAIS.

For beginners, the resource guides gave tips on how to find information on virtually any topic: the Internet Yellow Pages covers existing databases, Usenet and mailing lists; Internet Mailing Lists alphabetically gives names and detailed descriptions of various lists and how to subscribe to them. A printed handout described such e-mail wonders as Profnet (sends your requests for info to 660 academic institutions, federal agencies and corporate research sites in 16 countries, which in turn forward your requests to experts) and the Computer-Assisted Reporting List (where several hundred journalists help each other find Internet info and describe their database work).

The session was led by Miguel Llanos, special projects editor of the *Seattle Times*, and resource guides Stanford Mukasa of Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Mrinalini Rajwar, a Massachusetts telecomputing consultant; and Ken Strayhorn, art director for Duke News Service. Among their

advice: subscribe immediately to receive EPA press releases; try a few news groups for up-to-the-minute info and discussion on environmental topics; set up "bookmarks"—the equivalent to dropping breadcrumbs to mark your trail—so you can find a specific site again.

— Katherine Fong

The endocrine disruptors

PROVO — A panel of researchers discussed the growing body of evidence linking relatively small exposures to organochlorines and other toxic substances to disruptions in the endocrine systems of humans and other wildlife. The panel, moderated by Steve Curwood of National Public Radio's *Living on Earth*, included Theo Colborn, senior scientist with the World Wildlife Fund; Earl Gray, chief of developmental reproduction and toxicology at the EPA's Health Effects Research Laboratory; Steven Safe, professor of toxicology at Texas A&M University; and Frederick S. von Saal, professor of developmental biology and reproductive physiology at the University of Missouri.

Though organochlorines are suspected of causing a variety of disorders in the reproductive, immune and neurological systems, the panel focused much of its discussion on the intergenerational health effects in males, such as declining sperm counts in younger men. Colborn cited the correlation between wide-scale human (including fetal) exposure to PCBs,

Energy secretary puts on impressive show

By MATARI JONES

CAMP WILLIAMS—The U.S. Department of Energy has a new attitude, so said Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary.

Utilizing a cordless microphone and demonstrating more energy than some rock performers, O'Leary told SEJ conference attendees that she intends to create an agency that celebrates openness, seizes post-Cold War opportunities and has an orientation toward the protection of natural resources.

"This is not your father's DOE," O'Leary said as she pointed to an overhead projector machine showing her predecessors—six white males. "The world as we knew it, hot or cold, is over."

Although the theme drew laughter, O'Leary stressed the fact that the previous DOE was an agency clinging to a past war no longer fought, absent of

focus and out of touch with its customer base. "It's time to step away from the Cold War and step into opportunities for global cooperation," she said. "Repetitive and arrogant noncompliance with environmental laws will no longer be tolerated."

For example, O'Leary described it as "unconscionable" that nuclear sites simply close their doors. "You can't simply lock the door without cleaning up, decommissioning and defueling," she said. "We must protect the environment while maintaining economic stability."

O'Leary's goals include improving energy conservation and energy regulation, and declassifying documents pertaining to radioactive testing.

She pointed out that the disclosure of human radiation experiments "requires guts...and we will take some hard knocks...but we've got to continue to face up to it."

If the focus of O'Leary's administration has changed, so have the faces. Now there are more women and more people of color in an agency where white males once dominated. "What was lacking was a diversity of opinion, race and sex," she said. "We need consensus and conciliation."

Although O'Leary's presentation was impressive, a number of journalists afterward questioned its slickness and said colleagues needed to be vigilant in probing whether real and substantive changes will accompany the public relations flash. The Department of Energy is the nation's fourth-largest landholder, controlling more than 2.5 million acres at 53 sites.

Matari S. Jones has an internship as a media communications specialist at Texas A&M University, from which she received her degree in 1993.

Conference

DDT and other manmade chemicals to a 50 percent drop in sperm count from what men were producing 50 years ago.

Safe cast doubt on some of the existing studies. "There is no consistent correlation between increased incidence [of low sperm count] and level of chemicals," he said, adding that the impact of chemicals depended on their potency and the level of exposure. But von Saal asserted that the evidence clearly showed that estrogens disturb embryonic development.

— **Katherine Fong**

Property rights and 'Wise Use'

PROVO — The seminar on property rights issues, related to the "wise use" movement, drew an overflow crowd and sparked some of the most heated debate at the Society of Environmental Journalists' fourth annual conference.

Margaret Ann "Peggy" Reigle, founder of the Fairness to Land Owners Committee near Cambridge, Md., blamed government, environmentalists, and the news media for ignoring land owners' rights.

"It is because of the government's oppression and abuse of the mom-and-pop landowners, and the power and arrogance of the environmental industry, that the private property rights movement is growing," Reigle said. She formed her group in 1989 to protest expanding federal regulation of

wetlands on Maryland's Eastern Shore and across the country.

John Echeverria, general counsel for the National Audubon Society, said "property rights" is a ploy of well-financed special interests to stonewall environmental laws and regulations, Echeverria said, and he ridiculed Reigle's claim to represent small, "mom-and-pop" landowners.

Controversy over property rights "exists because of some demagogues in Congress who are using this to derail legislation on policy grounds," Echeverria said.

Dick Manning, a rancher from Catron County, New Mexico, accused environmentalists of ignoring the economic impact of land use regulations.

"It amazes me that we have environmental groups saying they're interested in the environment and yet they have ceased all development of the land," Manning said.

Though less heated in his delivery, Tim Hermach, director of the Native Forest Council, also sounded in no mood to compromise.

"I have no problem with property rights, but I believe they're subordinate to the public right of safety and well-being," he said. Resources such as native forests and wetlands, air, water, topsoil, and prairie are either in short supply or already exhausted, he contended, adding "We're not talking about wise use. We're talking about using (resources) up."

—**Matthew Mak**

Western writers offer insights anyone can use

By **KATHARINE FONG**

Three noted Western writers chose very different ways to discuss their craft at the Sunday morning plenary session, held outdoors at the Sundance Institute's Summer Theater. Moderated by writing coach Don Fry, the panel included Terry Tempest Williams, author of "Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place" and "Unspoken Hunger: Stories from the Field"; William Least Heat-Moon, author of "Blue Highways" and "PrairyErth"; and Andrew Revkin, author of "The Burning Season" and, forthcoming, "The Last Shaman."

Williams, whose family history of cancer may be connected to the government's nuclear testing program in Nevada, sees good writing as being "affecting and effective; it brings change in the world." The obligation of the writer, she says, is to "summon the tribe," to tell the stories that belong to one's community and so become part of community-and larger-consciousness. In observing many environmental writers' language ("bloodless, a language of separation") Williams suggested a

return to a more personal language - using "home" instead of "habitat," "individuals" instead of "population," etc. "What are we afraid of?" she asked. "Life is sacred." Such sacrilegious acts as strip-mining, clear-cutting and pollution of our air and water are not acceptable, says Williams, and writers should make their indignation known. "Our indignation will allow us to tell our stories beautifully."

William Least-Heat Moon spoke of his journey from unemployed teacher, evicted from his house, to Western writer. His story, he told the audience, might prove a useful example of how to break away from "industrial journalism" to writing on one's own. Least-Heat Moon followed his passions and idiosyncrasies, which he found he had held since a young boy: a love for the outdoors, a fascination with maps, and a yen for travel. "Blue Highways" evolved from three months on the road in 1978, when he set off with \$450 and a few gasoline credit cards. On America's back roads, he discovered his "path of emergence, a spiraling out from self and ego to em-

brace the universe." Instead of writing a travelogue, Least-Heat Moon detailed this emergence.

While a senior editor at Discover magazine, Andrew Revkin went to the Amazon after activist Chico Mendes died, and used Mendes' story to chronicle the devastation of Brazil's rainforest in "The Burning Season". Revkin finds "exploiting a personal narrative" to tell a larger story unfortunate but necessary; his book was adapted into an HBO movie with an all-star cast. His new work follows the same pattern: based on efforts to preserve the knowledge of a 90-year-old hereditary chief of a native British Columbian tribe, "The Last Shaman" examines a culture on the brink of extinction. In his writing, says Revkin, he "cannot extricate the human element from the environmental story," so he strives to make the people in his work as real as possible.

Katharine Fong is managing editor of San Francisco-based Mother Jones magazine.

GIS helps map biodiversity

PROVO — Six years ago, when wildfires ravaged two million acres of animal habitat in Yellowstone National Park, the grizzly bear was one of the displaced species.

The conflagration made life difficult for the grizzlies' park managers in more ways than one. Maps of the bears' habitat that had taken five years to chart suddenly became useless when the grizzlies moved to escape the fires' onslaught.

But with advanced computer technology called Geographic Information Systems, or GIS, the National Park Service was able to redraw the grizzly habitat maps in less than 18 weeks. This mapping helps wildlife managers monitor the grizzlies and other species.

GIS and biodiversity were the topics of one of the seminars sponsored by the Society of Environmental Journalists at Brigham Young University.

GIS involves "inputting" environmental information, such as species types, soil and climate conditions, into computers for comprehensive analysis. Through a process called "gap analysis," scientists can map out these different elements in a specific land area to see the "big picture."

GIS-aided gap analysis has been used to locate and quantify Alaska's 10 million acres of wetlands. It has helped study the fate of sockeye salmon that swim 900 miles up the Snake River in Idaho to spawn, with 80 to 90 percent of them never making it back. It also has helped analyze the environmental impact of commercial practices like "tie-hacking," in which streams and rivers are used to transport timber.

GIS data can be used by government agencies and others to make decisions about future land use and development.

Military planners use it to build roads without damaging surrounding ecosystems.

"Gap analysis provides a new way to look at the world," said Sara Vickerson of the Defenders of Wildlife, one of the panelists at the seminar.

That new view of the world is limited right now because many universities and government agencies lack the money or staff to use Geographic Information Systems. Through seminars like this one, proponents of GIS hope that funding will grow as word spreads of its benefits.

—Matthew Mak

Population vs. consumption

PROVO—At a panel discussion on looking beyond the United Nation's Cairo conference when covering population issues, and on bringing population stories closer to home, panelists focused on covering the closely related issue of consumption in all its forms.

Reporting strategies discussed at the panel "Covering Population as a Local Issue" ranged from linking population shifts from cities to suburbs and rural areas, to examining resource use and the destruction of critical habitats for threatened or endangered species.

Paul Raeburn, science editor for Associated Press and moderator of the panel, pointed out that although other issues get more coverage than population, "population underlies all the environmental issues we write about."

One audience member argued that population and consumption are separate issues, and that the primary problem in the U.S. is consumption, not population, he said.

"Numbers are one dimension of the equation," responded

Fry: Best stories don't tell facts, they explain

By MATTHEW MAK

Many conventions of journalism, including the inverted pyramid, timid editors and an emphasis on political conflict, get in the way of good explanatory journalism, says veteran writing coach Don Fry.

"News is (about) the bizarre, about high status—very much focused on events, on politics," Fry said at a writing workshop at Sundance.

"For most editors," Fry acknowledged, "environmental stories are not high-status stories."

His advice: "Essentially, you have to raise the status of the story—a lot."

But raising the story's status is only half the battle. Covering the environment can be complicated, clouded by confusing scientific figures. Science-based stories usually involve:

- information that is difficult to comprehend;
- controversial findings, as in the case of second-hand cigarette smoke;
- more than a two-sided conflict.

"In environmental writing, there aren't nine sides, there are 112, and they overlap," Fry said. For that reason, he stresses clarity and readability. "A reader who is wondering is not reading."

Traditional news writing, with its inverted pyramid story structure, definitely is not the model to follow, Fry emphasized. "Everything in the inverted pyramid is (less interesting) than what you just read."

Instead, Fry recommended the classic beginning-middle-end structure for environmental stories. The middle should have the bulk of the information—in parts, but not too many. The end

should help the reader better remember the main parts. He also suggests using "gold coins," or "nuggets of information" that entice readers to continue.

The key to good writing, Fry says, is to throw out all the information that does not contribute to the story's main points, no matter how snappy the quote or colorful the anecdote. If they do not really fit, Fry says, "kill the babies—they have to die."

Fry also recommends writing in anecdotal, or story-telling style. That brings the story to the reader on a personal level, he says, by focusing on the main "actors" — much like the "actors" in a high-status Page One story.

Matthew Mak writes for USA Today and is based at the newspaper's headquarters in Arlington, Va.

Noel Brown, director of the North American regional office of the United Nation's Environment Programme. "It's also a question of consumption."

Tim Wheeler, environment reporter for The Baltimore Sun, said that his own research corrected his mistaken impression that the average birth rate in the U.S. has dropped. Taking into account the increased U.S. average birth rate and American consumption patterns, "we're the Bigfoot out there," he said.

— Lynn Bonner

Heaven, Earth and journalism

PROVO— Participants in the panel "Heaven and Earth: Reporting, Religion and Environment" pointed to rabbinical laws and biblical passages to support the viewpoint that environmentalism has religious roots.

Panelists acknowledged that, in at least certain instances, religious teachings and interpretations of the Bible are in conflict with some environmental stands.

Population in all but two of Utah's counties is growing 10 percent per year, reported Jack D. Brotherson, professor of botany and range studies at Brigham Young University. Although some of that growth is the result of people moving into Utah, he pointed out that the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints, also known as the Mormon church, has a strong tradition of large families.

"There's no stepping around that. It's very set. Couples are not told to limit families," said Brotherton, a state president in the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints.

Calvin B. Dewitt, director of the Ausable Institute of Environmental Studies in Mancelona, Mich., opposed the view that placing limits on the use of resources goes against

Biblical scripture.

"The scriptures have very strong teachings to people who are trying to break their limits and think there are no limits present. We do have limits. There's no way around it. It's a finite planet."

— Lynn Bonner

Trading air pollution credits

PROVO—At a session dubbed "Clearing the Air: A Closer Look at Pollution Trading," a panel of experts debated whether trading emission allowances or pollution credits actually helps reduce air pollution.

Adam Diamant, analyst for the Environmental Defense Fund, argued that emission trading is one of the best ways to reduce air pollution, especially from utility power generation plants. The practice allows companies that fail to meet mandated limits on emissions of certain air pollutants to buy credits from companies that, by investing in pollution control equipment earlier than required, are emitting fewer tons of pollutants than now allowed.

"The bottom line is that some emission trading programs have been successful, and some have not," countered David Harrison, vice president of National Economic Research Associates Inc., Mass. "The promise and the performance have often been quite different. This is not really a panacea."

Harrison said that there are many difficulties "in translating this simple concept into practice."

The 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act allowed the marketplace to help determine how costs would be addressed in reducing pollution, according to Frank Allen, dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Montana and former environmental reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*.

Rowland: Ozone critics don't know chemistry

By LYNN BONNER

SUNDANCE—Some skeptics who question whether ozone layer depletion is a real phenomenon don't know their chemistry, according to a scientist who issued some of the earliest warnings about chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

In his primer on ultraviolet radiation and the ozone layer, F. Sherwood Rowland, Donald Bren research professor of chemistry at the University of California at Irvine, said that some prominent people who have disagreed on the extent or existence of ozone loss either aren't scientists or don't understand the chemical reactions involved.

Some questions on ozone depletion continue to be asked over and over, even though experiments and measurements have long provided answers,

Rowland said. "No seemingly scientific objection ever goes away," Rowland said.

Since CFCs are heavier than air, some chemists ask why they don't sink. That was a plausible question to ask in 1974, Rowland responded. However, since then samples taken from the stratosphere in 1975 clearly showed the presence of CFCs. In the atmosphere, CFCs can reach the upper atmosphere due to the churning action of wind, Rowland explained.

Rowland also noted that sometimes inaccurate scientific papers gain currency and are quoted in media reports years after they are discredited.

In a wide-ranging question and answer session, Rowland said that measurements of phytoplankton activity in the Antarctic, as well as experiments with frog eggs, suggest some ecological ef-

fects of ozone loss. However, there isn't much information on the ecological consequences of stratospheric ozone depletion, he said. He also pointed out that he knows of no direct effects on humans, such as increased incidences of skin cancer, that have been linked directly to ozone depletion.

Most skin cancers are due to repeated exposure to the sun over many years. "In the last decade or so, there has been less ozone, but not so much less that people would be getting skin cancer in five years, rather than in 25 years," Rowland said.

Lynn Bonner recently left The Day of New London, Conn., to join the reporting staff at the Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer.

This viewpoint represented a shift from the command-and-control approach to pollution control to a market-based approach, Allen said. Initially there was a lot of uncertainty about this strategy, he observed, but now emission credits have become an accepted "commodity."

Richard Stroup, senior associate at the Political Economy Research Center in Montana, noted that emission trading is not really a marketplace policy.

"Under these policies, emissions and allocations are set politically and bureaucratically. This has nothing to do with the market," he said.

— Deborah Barfield

How the West was changed

PROVO — Nowhere is the changing face of the West more apparent than around Escalante, a small canyon town in southern Utah with a reputation for stunning natural beauty and ugly human conflict. A panel of academics, activists, and journalists explored the changes and the tensions that are rocking this small town and the rest of this region.

With a population of only 800, Escalante sits in "one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world," according to panelist Jon Christensen, Great Basin regional editor of *High Country News*.

Yet the town also has had the distinction of being named twice as one of the nation's 10 "most endangered communities" by the National Association of Counties.

It's a place that visitors come to care deeply about, said Howard Berkes, Rocky Mountain correspondent for National

Public Radio and the panel's moderator. Those visitors are now fighting to preserve the area's natural beauty, which puts them in conflict with longtime residents wedded to traditional ranching, timbering and mining.

Residents who can trace their roots back to Mormon pioneers raise hay in the valley, let their cattle roam freely across the canyon and cut timber from the mountains above town. Some say they want to mine coal from the ridges above town as well.

It is not clear who is responsible, and each side blames the other. But violence has broken out. Some cattle have been shot, apparently intentionally. Berkes said there have been skirmishes "right on Main Street," where an environmentalist was hung in effigy. Another had his well salted. Yet another had dynamite thrown into his home.

Many dissimilar voices are now demanding a say in the future of Escalante and of the West as a whole, according to the panel. Other panelists were Joseph Chapman, dean of the College of Natural Resources at Utah State University; Scott Groene, staff attorney for Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance; Louise Liston, a native of Escalante and commissioner of surrounding Garfield County; and Brooke Williams, an economic and environmental consultant.

— Terri Hansen

Chlorine ban: To be or not?

PROVO — "Is a chlorine phaseout necessary?"

That was the question posed by Rae Tyson, environmental reporter and editor of *USA Today*, during a panel discus-

FWS chief: Human and wildlife health linked

By DEBORAH BARFIELD

SUNDANCE—The importance of fish and wildlife issues has reached new heights, even becoming part of international trade talks, said Mollie Beattie, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"I'm very happy to have the issues on the table," Beattie said. "Fish and wildlife resources have become implicit indicators of sustainable use and sustainable development. Therefore there are fish and wildlife issues tied up in things like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the North American Free Trade Agreement."

Fish and wildlife issues also can be viewed as indicators of the soundness of natural resources, she said. As an example, she cited being able to trace pollution to the disappearance of fish. By protecting the habitat of endangered aquatic animals — including unattrac-

tive ones like snails — laws like the Endangered Species Act are also protect human health by preserving drinking water supplies and recreational waters.

Despite increased federal interest in environmental issues, including fish and wildlife issues, the environment seems to have "fallen off the screens" of many Americans, Beattie claimed. She attributed this shift in public interest not to a lack of public concern, but because many Americans "think they've done it," through federal measures such as the Clean Water Act. "They've really gone on to other concerns," she said.

Beattie also noted that, despite demonstrable connections between fish and wildlife issues and the quality of air and water — which the public ranks as high priorities — the public ranks biodiversity conservation and fish and wildlife issues low.

Beattie said the media shares some

of the blame for such ignorance, pointing to the lack of comprehensive reporting on such issues as endangered species. Often, she said, this particular issue is caricatured as a juxtaposition between jobs and animals.

In the extreme, media inaccuracies border on the absurd, she said. For example, she cited an article which said Nazis discovered ecology. "It's been getting really wild," she said. "People are really willing to believe this stuff."

Meanwhile, more serious issues are being debated, she said. The debates address topics such as how much biodiversity is enough, how do we look at endangered species, how problems can be addressed, and what are the signals that we're pushing the ecosystem near or beyond its limits.

Deborah Barfield works for Knight Ridder News Service in Washington.

sion on the future of chlorinated chemical compounds.

Supporters of phasing out chlorine cite the 1987 recommendation of the International Joint Commission (IJC) of the United States and Canada, with responsibility for protecting and restoring the ecological health of the Great Lakes.

"Why are we giving chemicals constitutional rights?" asked Greenpeace campaigner Bonnie Rice. She noted that a recently completed Environmental Protection Agency study links dioxin, a chlorinated hydrocarbon, with immune system damage to humans and animals.

Attorney Gordon Durnil, chairman of the IJC at the time of its recommendation, said the commission's call for a chlorine phaseout was based on "solid scientific evidence" and came after two years' of debate and study. Industry at the time offered a 30-year timetable for phasing out chlorinated compounds.

But industry opposes a nationwide phaseout. Bill Carroll, a chemical company executive on loan to the Chlorine Chemical Council, said elimination of chlorine could wipe out many valuable products and services. He cited polyvinyl chloride pipe used in plumbing and sewer lines as one example, and noted also that chlorine is widely used as a disinfectant to protect public drinking water systems from contamination with bacteria.

— Terri Hansen

Write for readers, not sources

PROVO—A call for environmental journalists to put their readers, not their sources, front and center was the underlying message at the panel discussion "Voices of Experience from the Environment Beat," at Brigham Young University.

"Help your readers and not your sources," said Steven Nash, reporter and editor of *Atlantic News Features*. "Reporters need to characterize their stories in terms of the level of risk and threat, because people want to know the medical effects."

Panelists included *Washington Post* reporter Gary Lee; Jack Nelson, a professor of communications at Brigham Young University; ABC News Correspondent Erin Hayes; and Nash.

The veterans also offered these tips:

- Ask officials to define their statements in plain English, not "science-talk."
- If an event or issue has been exaggerated or downplayed, clarify the facts.
- Learn how to read basic environmental records.
- Get past the PR people and talk to knowledgeable sources such as nurses, doctors and inspectors—people who really know what's going on.
- Localize stories.
- Report the good things along with the bad.

— Matari Jones

West sees enviro racism too

PROVO—Lower environmental standards, reduced enforcement of environmental laws, non-union jobs, and tax abatements attract polluters to minority communities, said participants in the "Environmental Justice: The Western Angle" panel discussion.

"Large companies relocate to states such as Arizona, Colorado and Texas to create jobs on one hand, but systematically compromise the welfare of the people they are supposedly taking care of," said Jeanne Gauna, director of the SouthWest Organizing Program.

Randy Loftis of the *Dallas Morning News* said reporters need to dig for the truth. "The truth will energize the community to get involved," he claimed. "The government keeps good records. Everything is written down somewhere."

Loftis also pointed out that editors need to take an active role with environmental reporting. "Editors need to get involved because reporters are powerless to carry out policy," he said. "Challenge your editors and try and change the way they think."

— Matari Jones

Forest Service chief pledges to follow laws

By **TERRI HANSEN**

SUNDANCE—The tiny purple ribbon pinned to Jack Ward Thomas's lapel is a remembrance of the 26 firefighters who lost their lives battling this year's spate of forest fires, including 12 who perished on Storm King Mountain.

Thomas, the 13th chief of the U.S. Forest Service, outlined his plans for reshaping the controversial agency to nearly 25 journalists at a session at Sundance Institute, site of part of SEJ's fourth annual conference.

Facing five years of budget and staffing cutbacks mandated by the

Clinton administration, Thomas nevertheless vowed to work within those constraints to "reinvent" the forest service.

As one example of the service's changing direction, Thomas noted he recently recommended the appointment of someone to strengthen management of wilderness lands.

"We've fallen behind in trail maintenance, recovery of areas that have been overused and the utilization of those areas for education," he said. "People think of wilderness as a playground."

Besides its value for recreation, the nation's wilderness areas serve an important role as the scientific "baseline"

for evaluating the impacts of manipulating government lands for various purposes, he said.

A career forest service employee, Thomas repeatedly emphasized his intention to see that his agency complies with federal laws. While not specifically criticizing his predecessors, and acknowledging there are many areas in which statutes conflict, Thomas implied that in the past some forest service officials chose not to comply with environmental protection laws.

— Terri Hansen is News from Indian Country's Pacific Northwest bureau chief

Journalists battle scenic splendor

By DAVID HELVARG

The fourth annual SEJ conference in the scenic mountains of Utah was a testament to the power of environmental journalists to communicate vitally important issues like tax-deductible business travel to their editors and accountants, and a river ran through it. That is, a river ran through it for those of us staying at Sundance. For those put up at the Provo Park Hotel, a major street ran past it.

Still, issues of class, lodging and nationality (Le Bus she burns beaucoup fuel, no?) failed to diminish the interest of more than 400 journalists visiting Brigham Young University, the Sundance Institute and scattered dumps, wastelands and toxic army bases around the state trying to understand key issues like range and dust management, environmental justice, the role of endocrine disrupters and why Mormon theology substitutes sugar for caffeine.

The opening reception Thursday night at Sundance reflected SEJ leadership's thrift and good planning, since a two-drink ticket at 6,000 feet is worth four free drinks at sea level. "Can environment be a bigger story?" and "Where the hell is the coffee?" were twin themes at the next morning's plenary at BYU, where the ever avuncular (if somewhat masochistic) Tom Winship blamed editors for the sorry state of the media. Other participants included Erin Hayes, Mei-Mei Chan, Rick Rodriguez and L.A.'s "Earth Man." They blamed management's fascination with sensationalized stories like O.J. Simpson for the underreporting of complex scientific issues like organochlorine's possible links to decreasing sperm count which may indicate every man in America is being turned into a John Wayne Bobbitt by the hormone-hacking, pesticide-drenched vegetables we're consuming!

Michael Fumento, author of the "The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS" and "Death Squads in Arkansas: The Bill Clinton Story," accused environmental journalists of blatant bias by failing, for example, to quote the late Vernon Houk on dioxin or the late Captain Ahab on

whaling conservation. He suggested that unless our reporting improves the public won't believe us when a genuine environmental crisis occurs, such as inadequate parking in our National Parks.

Friday's sessions included "The Changing Face of the West (Gene Autry to Ralph Lauren)," "Rainforest Prospecting (Under the 1987 Mining Law) and "Endocrine Disrupters," where a reporter from the *New York Times* argued that an average male is 100-1,000 times more likely to be killed by the estrogen contained in his wife than estrogen-like

Humor

analogs in the environment.

Lunch included a live video-screen conference with EPA's Carol Browner, whose Superfund exposures appeared to have resulted in her head's growth to about 30 times normal size. Her uplink satellite appearance at least confirmed Al Gore's ongoing commitment to the information highway.

Saturday's Le Bus tours (which doubled as testbeds for the impact of long-duration fossil fuel consumption on human bladders) included visits to a waste incinerator, a landfill (formerly designated as a garbage dump), an army CBW complex, mining site and cattle range. Sadly, SEJ leadership had to cancel their tours of the Salk Lake City slaughterhouse and Greenguys Portosan assembly plant.

I took the switchback tour of the "Green" Olympic site where nubile youths practiced aerial skijump flips into a large swimming pool on a scenic mountainside above a vast valley of newly settled California ranch homes on steroids. If Salt Lake's bid for the 2002 Olympics falls through, the organizers explained, they will use their new Olympic facility to try and lure a professional luge expansion team to their city.

Everyone seemed to enjoy their daytrips, although the people who took the Dugway Proving Grounds tour couldn't explain a faint lingering odor of burnt almonds that clung to them.

That evening, SEJ members came

together for a Western BBQ at Camp Williams, a National Guard base where we were honored with an ice sculpture, an open bar and a magician who could saw a reporter in half (and be acquitted by any jury south of Provo).

Peter Walsh, the assistant to the underdeputy subsecretary for environment at the Pentagon, explained the DOD's commitment to the pollution prevention in the development of new weaponry like the F-22 environmental fighter (designed to reduce overpopulation in the Third World). He was followed by Hazel O'Leary, whose rock 'n' roll multimedia presentation may have been the highlight of the conference. Numbers included, "This is not your father's DOE," "Big Hair with Bhutto" and promises of a post-Cold War mix including biomass from cotton twigs and safe nuclear reactors. Working the crowd like Sally Jesse Raphael, she unveiled a wind farm at Rocky Flats, a solar farm at the Nevada nuclear test site and plans to convert Hanford to production of soil-enriching ploughshares.

Sunday included small group sessions at Sundance with various honchos and honchettes (I was able to trade a Jack Ward Thomas for Mollie Beattie). Later, everyone climbed up the hill to a sun-drenched open-air amphitheater to meet and greet SEJ's new president, Emilia Askari. The resort developer, Bob Redford, offered a few words on the role of unbiased environmental reporting. Unfortunately at that point, with the sun beating down on us and the thin air straining our lungs, several of my colleagues began to swoon.

All in all, the conference was a well-worth-it experience despite the relative isolation imposed by the soaring mountain peaks that surrounded us. Fortunately, next year's conference will be at MIT, on the northern tier of a nicely polluted megalopolis where, if luck holds, we'll be able to get a close-up look at a polluted harbor and newly installed sewage plant.

Journalist David Helvarg recently published "The War Against the Greens."

Congress ... (from page 1)

Water Act — which GOP sources see as a political plus because of the push from states and localities — the Endangered Species Act, the Superfund toxic waste law, wetlands reform and other Clean Water Act issues, pesticide reform, mining reform and others, although Republicans may select a narrower agenda. The Farm Bill, a must-do measure also could be an area to watch, although the election results have dimmed some environmentalists' hopes of using the bill as a vehicle for curbing pollution related to farming and reducing pesticide use.

Some critics of the Clean Air Act are already viewing a more sympathetic congress as an opportunity to revisit the 1990 amendments to the act.

What happened to the ambitious agenda of the 103rd? Only one sizable bill—creating vast new protected areas in the California desert — squeaked across the finish line in the final hours. Superfund and drinking water reforms — two measures fueled largely by a demand for relief from businesses and localities — lasted the longest, crumbling in the final days. Efforts to revamp pesticide laws, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, petered out earlier in the Congress.

Many post-mortem accounts blamed Republican electoral ambitions for the sparse showing. After all, Senate Republicans were gleefully killing key administration initiatives. Partisan politics was rampant in Superfund and mining reform debates. But also to blame were environmentalists, the administration and Democratic committee chairmen who set an overly ambitious agenda. Each of the larger reauthorizations was highly controversial and faced its own set of obstacles.

Perhaps more importantly, many environmental measures became irretrievably entangled in battles over the increasingly popular anti-regulatory amendments. The amendments drew mounting support from conservative Democrats and Republicans, but split the House Democratic caucus and were seen as "bill killers" by key House Democratic committee chairmen.

The prime amendments were proposals to require risk assessments and cost-benefit analysis for all major regulations, "property rights" amendments requiring property owners to be compensated when federal environmental regulations decreased property values, and measures to halt the creation of "unfunded federal mandates," or laws that require states and localities to take some action without providing federal money to pay the costs. Environmentalists depicted these amendments as efforts to gut environmental laws while backers painted them as a way to inject reason to halt regulatory overkill.

The year did see some unique compromises — especially on Superfund and drinking water — and the failure of those efforts does not bode well for what appears to be a more polarized Congress. But with the power structure turned on its head, it is hard to predict whether last year's impasses will give way.

Here's a look at what happened in the 103rd:

SUPERFUND

There's no doubt that Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) played a key role in killing Superfund reform, saying publicly and privately on several occasions that he saw no reason for moving a bill this year. And Senate Republicans were ready with lists of amendments to kill the bill if it had emerged on the floor.

But they were hardly the bill's only problem. While the compromise legislation drew momentum from the backing of a broad coalition, spanning the Chemical Manufacturers Association to the Sierra Club, companies unsatisfied with the deals lobbied hard against them. The disgruntled included some insurers, oil companies, food processors and mining interests.

Democrats also slit their own throats by allowing a polarizing amendment to attach to the bill — expanding Davis-Bacon Act wage requirements to cleanups that are mostly privately funded. Efforts to extract that later to maintain bipartisan support invited a messy tangle

with labor unions. Reluctance of Democrats to face a tough labor vote before the election helped keep the bill off the House floor.

Already declared dead by most in the Senate, the bill finally collapsed in the House in a dispute over what amendments to allow for a floor vote — with Republicans and some conservative Democrats pushing for votes on risk and groundwater protection.

DRINKING WATER

Why Safe Drinking Water legislation collapsed is less clear. Compromises allowed a bill to clear the Senate in the spring. And a separate package—the product of months of agonizing negotiations among competing interests—miraculously passed the House with two weeks to go. But in the final days of the session, House and Senate staff failed to bridge the gap between the two versions, with competing pulls from Senate conservative Republicans and from the House's more liberal Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.).

The bill also became caught in amendments on risk assessment and private property takings. Some blamed Senate Republicans and a coalition of states, localities and water suppliers for pushing too hard to weaken standards on the Senate side. But the partisan politics evident on Superfund was less visible on this bill, where conservative Republicans were deeply engaged in negotiation.

CLEAN WATER

Clean Water Act reform died early in the session in the House Public Works and Transportation Committee, where Chairman Norm Mineta (D-Calif.) refused to let a bill containing amendments on risk, takings and unfunded mandates—pushed by the committee's conservative Democrats and Republicans—emerge from the panel. The legislation also faced huge chasms between competing interests on a range of issues, including wetlands and new controls on polluted runoff from farms.

Industry and agriculture strongly

opposed both the House and Senate versions, and formed a formidable coalition with state and local groups clamoring about unfunded mandates.

MINING

Mining reform also collapsed in the last two weeks of the session, potentially dooming for years to come future efforts for sweeping reform. However, allies of the industry could try for more modest changes this Congress. Huge gaps between House and Senate bills made prospects for a successful conference slim from the outset.

The House passed a sweeping reform measure championed by House Natural Resources Chairman George Miller (D-Calif.), and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Bennett Johnston (D-La.) encouraged the Senate to pass a slim bill as a "ticket to conference," hoping to write the bill in conference.

A Republican filibuster appeared likely from the start, led by westerners like Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), who defended the mining industry and saw a political boon in highlighting what they described as the Clinton administration's "War on the West." But Western Democrats like Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) helped sink Johnston's final compromise offer, although from the left Miller was not buying it either.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Rewrite of the Endangered Species Act was shelved early on, after a smaller initiative creating a National Biological Survey to coordinate wildlife and ecological information at the Interior Department became a magnet for amendments pushed under the property rights heading. Following the election, it's likely that Western conservatives will push for a dramatic rewrite of the act. It's unclear whether the new GOP leaders will focus their efforts on a generic property/takings measure or turn to a comprehensive rewrite of the act.

Maya Weber is staff reporter at CongressDaily, published by National Journal. She covered environment and energy issues throughout the 103rd Congress.

Enviro issues demand public policy scrutiny

By **HAROLD HENDERSON**

In theory, environmentalism is based on science. In practice, it's more like a religion.

Harsh criticism, especially when you consider that environmentalists have changed the way a lot of people think and have gotten a lot of laws passed in the last 25 to 30 years.

But, as political scientist Charles Rubin points out in his book "The Green Crusade", the environment is a public

issue unlike any other. "Opponents and proponents of

gun control do try to refute each other's readings of the meaning of the constitutional 'right to bear arms,'" Rubin says. "Those who are pro-life and those who are pro-choice do take explicit issue with each other over such things as a constitutional right to privacy, or when life and personhood begins."

Similar debates about environmentalism are rare, Rubin says: "Environmental popularizers tend to assume that critical disagreement springs either from ignorance or from a desire to protect well-entrenched, narrow interests. In neither case is it [thought] necessary to meet or refute the arguments on their own terms."

The reason for this, Rubin argues, is that the ideas of environmentalism's popularizers "have become common sense categories, detached from any knowledge of their origins.... In any discussion of an environmental question, it's only a matter of time before someone mentions 'limits to growth,' 'small is beautiful,' 'everything is connected to everything else,' or like notions."

Rubin's book is well-written and thoughtful. It deserves a serious response, and not least from those of us who write about the range of environmental issues..

In covering environmental issues from global warming to no-till agriculture, we journalists can easily make familiar kinds of mistakes: taking sides,

omitting the history (how did this source's last prediction fare?), misconstruing a single study as conclusive rather than part of the overall scientific mosaic, or casting victims and villains.

Lately, though, I've been noticing subtler mistakes — ones that involve, as Rubin suggests, forgetting that what we think of as "common sense" is often (a) recently invented and (b) debatable. Here are three that I try to watch out for:

(1) Nature as virgin. The notion that

Essay

the world can be divided into pristine wilderness and humanoid blight goes back to Henry David Thoreau at least. But people are part of nature — we can't live without altering it somehow — and at this point in human history no part of the natural world is pristine. In fact, as Rubin writes, "Most of what we experience as nature is really a result of nature and humanity working together. Yellowstone is a national park because of the rail barons, the last old growth forest in Europe is a remnant of aristocratic privilege, the stark beauty of Greek landscapes is a result of deforestation and erosion, the American Great Plains may exist because of the hunting fires of Native Americans, and many of our wildflowers are here only because of 'European imperialism.'" Clearly Disneyland doesn't belong in Denali, but humans do sometimes improve landscapes, and some kinds of development of already-disturbed land are better than others.

(2) Nature as defenseless. Related to the point above is the strange notion that living things lack recuperative powers, so that harm done to a creature or an ecosystem is assumed to be disastrous, permanent and irreversible. *Science* editor Philip Abelson, discussing the alleged danger of very small amounts of toxins in the September 9 issue, describes "the fact of natural large-scale repair of damaged DNA." In his new book, "Degrees of Disaster", Jeff Wheel-

(Continued on page 31)

Calendar

JANUARY

23-25. **Sustainable Agriculture and the 1995 Farm Bill** (sponsored by Council for Agric'l and Science Technology and Amer. Soc. for Agric'l Engineering). Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington DC. Contact: Jon Hilerl, ASAE, 2950 Niles Rd., St. Joseph, MI 49085. Ph:616/428-6327; FAX:616/429-3852

FEBRUARY

16-21. **Amer. Assn. for the Advancement of Science annual meeting** (with sessions on topics that range from biodiversity of tropical forests and oranutans; and regions threatened by global change; to sustainable agriculture; nuclear and chemical contamination in Russia and Kazakstan; Earth's carrying capacity; and implications of reduced pesticide use). Atlanta. Contact: Ellen Cooper, AAAS, 1333 H St., NW, Washington DC 20005. Ph:202/326-6431

20-22. **Winter Toxicology Forum** (with sessions on such topics as EMFs, cellular telephones and cancer; dioxin risks; and effects of ultraviolet light). Washington DC. Contact: Toxicology Forum, 1575 Eye St., NW, Wash DC 20005. Ph:202/659-0030;

21-24. **Zebra Mussel & Other Aquatic Nuisance Organisms** (sponsored by U.S. and Canadian agencies, the Elec. Power Res. Inst., and several utilities). Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto. Contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, The Professional Edge, 1219 Pembroke St., E. Pembroke, Ontario CANADA K8A 7R8. Ph: 800-868-8776; FAX:613/732-3386

27-March 2. **Int'l Oil spill Conf.** (major biennial meeting with sessions on policies and regs affecting spill responses and management, technology for cleanups and assessing damage, and analyses of case studies involving recent spills). Long Beach, Calif. Contact: Susan Hahn, Amer. Petroleum Inst., 1220 L St., NW, Washington DC 20005. Ph:202/682-8118; FAX:202/682-8115

MARCH

5-9. **Society of Toxicology annual meeting** (with sessions on topics that include health effects of particulate pol-

lution, hormone-mimicking pollutants, naturally occurring toxic substances in food, and water chlorination). Baltimore. Contact: SOT, 1767 Business Center Dr., Ste. 302, Reston, VA 22090-5332. Ph:703/438-3115

9-12. **Wolves and Humans 2000: A Global Perspective for Managing Conflict** (sponsored by International Wolf Center and University of Minn.). Duluth. Contact: Wolves and Humans, Continuing Educ. & Exten., Univ of Minn. 316 Darland Admin. Bldg., 10 University Dr., Duluth, MN 55812-2496. Ph:218/726-6819

13-17. **Biomass Burning and Global Change** (sponsored by the Amer. Geophysical Union). Williamsburg, VA. contact: Meetings Dept., AGU, 2000 Florida Ave NW, Wash. DC 20009. Ph:202/462-6900; FAX:202/328-0566

APRIL

2-6. **American Chemical Soc. annual meeting** (with hundreds of presentations on environmental topics ó especially pesticides and their effects, air and water pollutants, remediation of hazardous-waste sites, runoff of agricultural chemicals, clean coal technologies, and acid-rain controls). Anaheim. Contact: Vinod Jain, ACS News Service, 1155 16th St., NW, Washington DC 20036. Ph:202/872-4451; FAX:202/872-4370.

3-6. **6th Global Warming Int'l Conf.** (with sessions expected on such topics as ways to reduce carbon-dioxide buildup, greenhouse-gas production rates by nation, microbial and health effects, and future of energy, transportation and materials). San Francisco. Contact: International Program Committee, 1 Heritage Plaza, POBox 5275, Woodridge, IL 60517-0275. Ph:708/910-1551

12-13. **National Council on Radiation Protection annual meeting** (which will focus on reconstructing doses to the public from events that occurred in the absence of detailed monitoring ówith case studies on downwinders of the Hanford defense reactors and Chernobyl accident, and on Japanese bomb survivors). Arlington, VA. Contact: Roger Ney, NCRP, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 800, Bethesda, MD 20814-3095. Ph:800/229-2652

MAY

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

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

WORKSHOPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Jan. 14-15. **Reporting on the Science of Climate Change** is a free workshop that will be conducted by the Environmental Health Center and co-sponsored by SEJ in conjunction with the American Meteorological Society's annual meeting, in Dallas. Contact: EHC, 1019 19th St., NW #401, Washington DC 20036. Ph:202/293-2270 ext. 6271 or 6272; FAX:202/293-0032

Jan. 31 deadline for U.S. applicants to the **Nieman Fellowships for Environmental Journalists at Harvard Univ.** Foreign applicants have until March 1 to apply. Contact: Nieman Foundation, One Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Ph:617/495-2237; FAX:617/495-8976

Feb. 24-26. **The Foundation for American Communications** is sponsoring a course on environmental risk for mid-career journalists. Open to first 40 qualified applicants. If you're interested, contact: FACS, 3800 Barham Blvd, Ste. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90068. Ph:213/851-7372; FAX:213/851-9186

March 1. Deadline for **MIT's Knight Science Journalism Fellowships**. Three years experience covering science and tech required. The Program offers a \$26,000 stipend and up to \$2,000 to relocate in the Boston area for the academic year. Contact: Victor K. McElheny, Knight Fellowships, MIT, Bldg 9, Rm 315, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph:617/253-2336

Lehigh unveils computer 'web' for journalists

By **KEN FRIEDMAN**

Lehigh University's Science and Environmental Writing Program is pleased to announce the birth this summer of its World Wide Web server for environmental journalists.

World Wide Web (WWW) is a growing electronic community of universities, government agencies, businesses, private individuals and others who post information they hope will be of interest to others, making it accessible via the Internet. Although the depth of information available is still limited, the speed of additions to WWW is so rapid no one can keep up.

Because WWW will become a highly useful tool in the near future as people place more and more information on it, Lehigh's Science and Environmental Writing Program has started a

server, or "home page" as it is called, to create a menu of resources for environmental writing students and professional environmental writers. This home page can be viewed with Mosaic, Lynx, Cello or any other software that reads WWW documents. Your Internet access pro-

Online Bits & Bytes

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

vider should be able to tell you which browser, if any, is available for your use.

Lehigh's home page contains several menus of information for journalists and menus of addresses of other

information sites around the world. All the user has to do is click a mouse button or press a specified key to "jump" to available addresses. You can jump to the White House, EPA, Census Bureau, Missouri Botanical Gardens, and dozens of other places. More of these links are being added all the time.

To reach the Lehigh home page for environmental writers, use this address, known as a URL:

<http://www.lehigh.edu/injrl/public/www-data/s&emenu.html>

Below is a list of sites already on the server.

Ken Friedman is an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA, and an academic member of SEJ.

List of sites on Lehigh server

- Canada's Atmospheric Environmental Service
- Australian National Botanic Gardens
- Missouri Botanical Garden
- Biodiversity, Australia
- Biodiversity, Brazil
- Biodiversity, Costa Rica
- Biodiversity and Biological Collections gopher at Harvard
- Botany, Brazil
- Census Bureau, U.S.
- Chemical hazards, U.S. Dept. of Energy
- Chemical and Material Backgrounders
- Emergency Response Guidebook
- Chemicals, The Press, and The Public: A Journalist's Guide to Reporting on Chemicals in the Community
- Material Safety Data Sheet Archive
- EPA 350 toxic substances factsheet gopher
- Global Change Master Directory at NASA
- Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research
- Congress/Senate Environmental Scorecard ratings
- Electronic Green Journal
- Power Lines gopher
- EMF Clearinghouse
- Endangered Species
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- The Envirolink Network
- Environment Gopher at the University of Virginia
- The Environment (Community)
- Environmental Resources Center
- Environmental Journalism

- Meeman Archive (Archive at University of Michigan contains entries in Meeman contest for environmental reporting.)
- Environmental Protection Agency gopher
- EPA futures gopher
- Southeastern Biological Science Center
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Index of US Fisheries
- Geology and the Fishery of Georges Bank
- Northwest Fisheries Science Center
- Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
- U.S. Geological Survey
- National Institutes of Health
- Health Sciences NEWS, University of Florida
- Yahoo Environmental Health server at Stanford
- Groundwater Section, Canadian Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) gopher
- U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) gopher
- United Nations programs gopher
- World Health Organization #1 and #2 gophers
- Institute of Medicine
- Medical Education Information Center
- National Library of Medicine
- Australian Environmental Resources Information Network (ERIN)
- Natural Resources Canada Gopher Service
- National Academy of Sciences

- National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA)
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory Environmental Sciences Division
- Univ. of Toronto Environmental Home Page
- Australian Oceanographic Data Center
- Bedford Institute of Oceanography, Habitat Ecology Division
- Center for Coastal Studies at Scripps Institute of Oceanography
- National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC) Index at NOAA Oceanic Information Center
- Physical Oceanography Distributed Active Archive Center at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- Marine Sciences Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole
- Yahoo Oceanography server at Stanford
- U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)
- Ozone Hole, Antarctic server
- Pollution Research Group at University of Natal, South Africa
- U.S. National Park Service
- British Columbia Ministry of Lands and Parks, Canada
- Population Studies Center at the Univ. of Michigan
- Solid Waste Landfills gopher
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- National Toxicology Program
- Cascades Volcano Observatory
- Zoology, Brazil

Get EPA info via Internet e-mail

By KEN FRIEDMAN

If you are lonesome for e-mail, EPA will send you all the latest environmental information via e-mail with little effort on your part via listservs, the bulk mail of the Internet.

To subscribe to any of these mailing lists, send an electronic mail message to the Internet address:

listserv@unixmail.rtpnc.epa.gov

The text of the message should read: subscribe <name of list, as given below> <your first name> <your last name>

The subject line may contain anything you want.

Here are the names of the EPA lists:

- EPAFR-CONTENTS contains the full-text table of contents of the Federal Register with page number citations.
- EPA-MEETINGS contains all meeting notices. Program-specific meetings are duplicated in this section.
- EPA-SAB contains all material relating to the Science Advisory Board.
- EPA-IMPACT contains all environmental impact statements in the Federal Register.
- EPA-SPECIES contains all endangered species documents issued in the Federal Register.
- EPA-GENERAL contains all general EPA nonprogram-specific documents, presidential documents related to environmental issues and other agency environmental documents other than environmental impact and endangered species actions.
- EPA-AIR contains all Office of Air and Radiation documents.
- EPA-PEST contains all Office of Pesticide Program documents.
- EPA-TOX contains Office of Pollution and Toxic Substances documents excluding Community Right-To-Know (Toxic Release Inventory) documents.
- EPA-TRI contains Community-Right-to-Know Toxic Release Inventory documents.
- EPA-WASTE contains all Hazardous and Solid Waste documents.
- EPA-WATER contains all Office of Water documents.
- EPA-PRESS contains press releases from EPA.

For more information on the EPA listservs, contact John Richards by telephone at (202) 260-2253; by fax at (202) 260-3884; or via the Internet at richards.john@epamail.epa.gov.

Field fellowship in Alaska offers look at real science

Editors' note: Last summer, Rich Stone of Science Magazine spent a week at an environmental research station at northern Alaska's Toolik Lake on a fellowship sponsored by the Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory. To give the flavor of his experience with the scientists there and to encourage kindred spirits to explore the possibility of pursuing similar fellowships, Stone filed this account of his experiences above the Arctic circle. His regular SEJournal column, Science Survey, will return next issue.

By RICH STONE

July 1. Flying over the Brooks Range of Northern Alaska felt as refreshing as a tall ice tea in mid-summer. Some 4,500 miles to the southeast lay Washington, D.C., and the reek of Metro bus exhaust, the lawyerly chatter of pedestrians, and the scum that settles in a glass of District tap water. On this day, Washingtonians not unlike myself were having to put up with the vile trappings of civilization. I, meanwhile, was lucky to be far away, on a MarkAir flight from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay.

But my reason for traveling to one of the remotest regions of the world was not to flee our techno-blighted society. Instead, I'd come to gain insight into how society is unwittingly altering the generally pristine Arctic environment.

Out the plane's window I saw a patchwork of puddles set amidst a treeless green tundra, a refuge for caribou and grizzlies. This is Alaska's North Slope. Much of the year the Slope is a frozen wasteland shunned by most life forms. But in the summer, it awakens and gives birth to millions of mosquitoes and hundreds of streams that ferry melted snow from the Brooks Range to the Arctic Ocean. The Slope has witnessed this inexorable cycle of life and death for eons.

I arrived in Deadhorse, Alaska, the airport that serves Prudhoe Bay, a town that only exists because of the nearby Arctic Ocean oil fields. I met Ed Keltjan,

one of the staff at the Toolik Lake site. Ed and I waited at the baggage carousel for my duffel and a box of supplies I'd been asked to transport to the site. The box came off, then the conveyor belt stopped. My duffel hadn't arrived—in fact, I found out a few minutes later, it was still in Fairbanks.

What to do next? Ed didn't know. He said only that we wouldn't be able to wait for the next flight to arrive, 6 hours later. MarkAir's solution was to send it to Toolik via a trucking company, Linden Transport. The question was when the next Linden truck would be heading south from Prudhoe—could be a day, two days, three days, who knows. I just had to sit tight at the site with the clothes on my back, my camera, sunglasses, wallet, and "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison.

After picking up a \$3.30 toothbrush at the Prudhoe general store (little more than a trailer on stilts), Ed and I head down the Dalton Highway. A gravel road technically closed to the public, the Dalton Highway was built in 1974 as a service road for the TransAlaska Pipeline.

Along the highway, the tundra looks just as barren on the ground as it does from the air. Saw geese, a swan, and a few ravens. Ed pointed out a herd of musk ox in the distance; they looked like little black blobs because my binocs were still en route to Deadhorse.

But one would be deluded to think the Arctic is immune to humankind's spoiling touch. The tundra's carbon-rich soil, and the tussock plants that tenaciously cling to it, hide troubling biochemical changes. For some reason, instead of absorbing carbon dioxide—a "greenhouse" gas—as it has done for thousands of years, the Arctic's ecosystems have begun to release it into the air.

That may sound harmless enough, considering that animals normally exhale carbon dioxide and plants breathe it in. But scientists think the Earth is out of balance, that there aren't enough plants or other "sinks" to keep consuming the

rising levels of carbon dioxide that's spewed into the air by cars and industry.

The more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the warmer global temperatures are likely to get. Scientists don't know exactly what will happen if the world warms. Some regions will get more rain, others less, some regions will flood, others become like deserts. Only one thing is certain: If carbon dioxide levels continue to rise and end up triggering global warming, the world's climate will change.

Some scientists think the Arctic is changing already. For instance, over the last decade temperatures have risen about 3 degrees at Toolik Lake, located a couple dozen miles north of the Brooks Range. Toolik Lake is home to a thriving little summer camp, a transient environmental research community—I wouldn't go so far as to call it civilization. But the Toolik field station was where I hoped to learn why scientists were streaming to the Arctic to characterize and understand its ecosystems before humans irrevocably altered them.

About 170 miles south of the Arctic Ocean, we came over a rise and rumbled into the camp, a collection of trailers at the south end of Toolik Lake. Let's just say it looked rustic. Okay, more like a trailer park. A ramshackle trailer park, that is.

There, I met John Hobbie, a Woods Hole ecologist and principle investigator at Toolik. John, from Buffalo, showed me to my room—which we were to share for the week—and showed me around camp.

I later spoke with John about what I wanted to accomplish at Toolik. He told me that the field station was part of the National Science Foundation's Long Term Ecological Research Program, a network of 18 sites that do basic research as well as accumulate a baseline of data to monitor future environmental changes. We decided the best thing for me was to see as many groups in action at Toolik as possible.

I started that process shortly after arriving, when I went into the field with Woods Hole stream ecologist Bruce Peterson and a research assistant. They

were setting up an experiment to trickle heavy nitrogen into a Toolik tributary to explore where nutrients end up in the ecosystem. The land is soggy and gives when you step, and tussocks—gnarled jumbles of roots and grass perched on the tundra about a foot across—make walking tough.

But that first day was not all lost bags and hard work. First, there was dinner. Dinners are pretty good here; Friday night was seafood night, with fried shrimp, scallops, and mussels.

Friday was also sauna night. Thrice

The MBL fellowship program is likely to be expanded in 1995 to include grants for three to five journalists at sites in Alaska and perhaps Brazil and Sweden. For more information, call Pamela Clapp at Woods Hole, (505) 548-3705, or send an email message to pclapp@mbl.edu. The deadline for applications is March 1.

a week the sauna gets fired up, more for cleanliness than pleasure. There are no showers in camp—the camp must import its precious water—so the ritual is to bake in the sauna then jump in the lake or dump water over your body before soaping up. A wood stove heats a barrel of bath water outside the sauna. You bathe quickly to minimize exposure to the dreaded Arctic mosquitoes.

I can tell you that few things at Toolik are more gratifying than drowning mosquitoes by pouring bath water over your head.



July 2. Night never came, of course, because we were above the Arctic circle in early July, but after the long day I fell asleep easily. Got up bright and early for a full day's worth of work. Never mind it's a Saturday—each day here costs \$130 a person in support and logistics, so every day is a work day to many scientists at Toolik.

I went out on the lake with John to collect samples of water from a wood raft partitioned into six segments. The idea of the project is to study the diversity of microbes and their ecology in the lake. Next I joined Breck Bowden, a biogeochemist from the University of New Hampshire, for an experiment on a

Toolik tributary to look at flow dynamics by adding rhodamine, a purplish fluorescent dye.



July 3. Day three started out with a bang. John, who had been up and about already, burst into my room at 7 a.m. and said "You wanna see a grizzly!" I rushed outside (clothed, of course). Sure enough, this shaggy brown bear was traipsing near the camp; it jumped on a woodpile and seemed to enjoy romping on top of it. Meanwhile, John and Mike Abels, the camp manager, were brandishing shotguns loaded with blanks, ready to scare the bear if it tarried at camp too long.

Later that morning, about a dozen of us went for a hike in the Brooks Range. The day started out ominously: As we drove toward the range, we saw occasional bolts of lightning. We hiked about an hour or so to a bluff and ate lunch. Then came the tough part of the

hike: scrambling up skree, or loose rocks, up a 45-degree incline. Up and up and up, rocks tumbling down behind us. The mosquitoes were bad in the valley, but we lost them about half-way up. At the top the clouds gave way to warm sunshine. Exhilarating!

Getting down was the fun part. To save time, we rode snow chutes, stretches of snow hundreds of feet long. You get on your butt, take a long, thin rock for a break, and go. Even though my jeans got soaked, riding the chutes was a blast.

Getting back to camp I had dinner, a sauna, and started writing these notes. As I was writing, Mike yelled, "Wolf!" I ran outside and sure enough, a lone wolf was loping by the camp. I ran out and fetched the binocs—my bag of clothes had finally arrived today—and watched the wolf until I could no longer stand the mosquitoes, which tore away at my repellent-free skin.



July 4. In the morning I collected soil gas samples with George Kling, a University of Michigan ecologist. We were looking at nitrous oxide in the tussocks and inter-tussocks, to get a sense of how nutrients are exchanged between the tundra and air.

After lunch I examined zooplank-

ton and phytoplankton under the microscope, then went out to another lake called N1 (first lake north of Toolik) with a technician to fertilize it with phosphoric acid and nitrogen. The intent of the experiment—done on the entire lake—is to study the effects of increased nutrients on grayling fish and other lake denizens.

Then the real fun began. To celebrate the Fourth, Tony, the camp cook, prepared Australian lobster tails, Alaskan king crab legs, shrimp, crab salad, and T-bone steaks cooked to order. Not exactly hardship conditions up here!

After dinner the camp prepared for the Fourth of July parade. Each lab huddled in their respective trailer, busily making costumes or floats for the parade. Once the parade started at 8:30 p.m., it was clear that many people at Toolik in addition to myself were at least temporarily deranged. (I can claim a more permanent insanity.)

Two camp trucks were converted to floats: one a giant fish with fins made of tarpaulin, and another with plastic piping meant to convey the appearance of a helicopter. Three people dressed as the camp latrine, others came as tussocks, one as "Super Tech" with huge red elbow-length rubber gloves taped to his body, others were mosquitoes, still others were abominations I can't even describe.

The parade proceeded down Mainstreet Toolik—a 100-foot stretch of dirt between the research trailers and the living-quarter trailers, with photo-snapping spectators in front of the kitchen trailer on the south end and the wash-room on the north end. Bringing up the rear was Tony, who rode in the exit hatch of an Army water tank that had been abandoned at the site years ago. Tony, wearing a white wig made of rope, and a bra, was waist deep in the tank, smiling and scrubbing himself with a long-handled brush.

■ ■ ■

July 5. Hard to top the previous day! My plan was to head out to the Kuparuk River with the rhodamine team, but I missed the ride and was dropped off later by another team of scientists heading further down the river.

I was on my own, walking through



Stone and his mosquito net hat

the willow bushes that lined the river, whistling to warn bears I was coming. I ate lunch, took a few water samples, then headed down the river to visit with Bruce, Breck, and Cliff Dahm, a stream ecologist at the Seviellita LTER site in New Mexico. The mosquitoes were as bad as usual, but I was wearing a headnet so I wasn't miserable. Bruce did a "sweep" on Breck—a maneuver in which one swipes at another's clothes to kill as many mosquitoes as possible. He notched dozens of sweet little victims.

After dinner, I went with seven of the younger folk here—mainly REUs (Research Experience for Undergrads)—to see a spectacle about 45 minutes south of Toolik near Galbreath Lake. After hiking about a quarter mile, we saw it: aufeis, a bluish ice sheet at the base of the Philip Smith mountains.

A river ran through the aufeis, sculpting it into delicate overhangs and arches. We spelunked down one short tunnel with the stream at our feet and came into a cathedral-like opening; we were in the center of an aufeis torus. Stunning! Kind of like Superman's Arctic hangout. We clambered out through a narrower tunnel that led up to the top of the aufeis, which we followed for about a quarter mile to its end.

■ ■ ■

July 6. Last full day in camp. Most of the

day I interviewed scientists. In the morning, spoke with Terry Chapin, an ecologist at the University of California, Berkeley, and Sergei Zimov, a highly regarded atmospheric scientist from the Russian Far East.

In the late morning I chatted with University of Cincinnati zoologist Mike Miller, only person to have summured at Toolik every year since 1975. Mike travels the world, maintaining research projects in far flung locations. He is famous for malapropisms. John Hobbie recalls the time Miller asked a visiting scientist from which school he had received his "pigskin." He of course had meant to say "sheepskin."

Next I spoke with John O'Brien, an aquatic ecologist from the University of Kansas who has the old-salt look—white hair and a white beard under a Greek fisherman's hat. O'Brien related some touching anecdotes, including the time he nearly died while hiking in the Brooks Range and how that experience had changed his outlook on life.

After the interviews, some relaxation. Ecologist Anne Hershey of the University of Minnesota, Cliff Dahm, a grad student of Dahm's named John Morrice, and I went for a 3-hour hike up the Atigun Gorge, about 15 miles south of Toolik. The hike begins near an ominous-looking pipeline pump station—which Bruce says looks like something out of Star Wars—and wends its way along the Atigun River.

The hike's destination was a real treat: A 150-foot waterfall of an Atigun tributary that emanates from a rock tunnel near a cliff top. We saw a ram, horns and all, perched against the cliff's black shale.

That evening, before the sauna, I mustered the courage to dive into Toolik's frigid water. However, I made a grave mistake: I dove in before heating up in the sauna. The lake left me gasping for breath when I surfaced. I dove in twice more during the sauna session.

■ ■ ■

July 7. Woke up to a beautiful day, cool, crisp, and clear, with the Brooks Range smiling to the South. I had learned a lot about Toolik, its summer denizens, and their research. Sadly, it was time to go home.

Do minorities shy from beat?

By WEVONNEDA MINIS

It took 12 years of unexplained sores, rashes and illnesses for people in Columbia, Miss., to realize that Reichhold Chemicals Inc. hadn't had just a minor turpentine fire back in 1979, says Charlie Fairley.

And Fairley, vice president of Jesus People Against Pollution in Columbia, says he knows why.

"If a black reporter had been on the scene, we would have known something. We may not have known it all, but he would have told us something."

Ronnie Agnew, managing editor of the local *Hattiesburg American* daily newspaper, said he wasn't with the paper in the 1970s, but attributed any gaps in coverage to a small staff, not a lack of diversity.

As it turned out, Reichhold had a chemical explosion and buried toxic wastes in drums that leaked from the industrial property into their yards, Fairley says.

"We don't have any minority journalists covering the environment here and I think that it makes a great difference in the coverage," Fairley says. "Whites don't like to cover a big corporation if it damages the black community."

El Nuevo Herald environmental writer Angela Swafford, a 1993 SEJ minority fellow, wishes more minority journalists chose to cover the environment.

"We have to cover the issue with or without minority journalists," says Swafford, who is Hispanic. But she figures that minority journalists could bring an insight to environmental problems in minority communities.

"This is especially true when people in a community do not speak English," she says. "But it is also true in the African-American communities where there are cultural idiosyncracies."

While any smart journalist should be able to get the story, Swafford says, having a minority journalist cover the environment may mean that minority communities come to see it as one of

their issues.

But though some say minority reporters could add balance and tenacity to stories of environmental justice, many are uninterested in the beat.

When Norman Moody first dreamt of becoming a journalist, he imagined himself as a reporter deeply involved in covering very important issues — education and crime.

Today, the Hispanic journalist cov-

Although minority reporters could add balance and tenacity to environmental justice stories, many of those reporters are uninterested in the environment beat. It's not seen as sexy as covering crime or politics. Some see it as a 'white issue' and covering it means 'chasing down white men in suits.'

ers the crime beat for the *Leesburg Commercial Daily*, a small Central Florida newspaper that lacks an environmental reporter. But even if he were at a paper with an environmental beat, Moody says he would have a tough time choosing it over crime.

"I think that education and crime are still the most important beats at a lot of newspapers," he says.

In the mind of Maya Nishikawa, an Asian-American reporter with KGET in Bakersfield, Calif., the environment is not exactly where the hottest news is.

"It's just not as sexy as politics or crime," she says. "It's not highlighted as often."

Is it an issue of getting less air time if she concentrates on the environment?

No, says Nishikawa. "It's kind of sad that there isn't a little more emphasis on the environment in general, but it's definitely not a very big issue. It's sporadic."

Andrea Mays, an African-American news secretary at *USA Today* who expects to become a writer, says the environment is an important beat for someone to cover. But she doesn't want to be that someone.

"I want to focus on feature stories that give a more accurate portrayal of minority communities," she says.

Mays conceded that she may not care deeply about environment issues because she has not been exposed heavily to the issues.

"I just never considered turning in that direction. I've never considered it among the issues that gets my blood churning."

Finding other issues more attractive may partly account for why minority journalists rarely are environmental reporters, but it's not the only reason, says a *USA Today* editor.

Deborah Barrington, assignment editor for the paper's sports section, says that editors call on white reporters when they need an environmental story covered. Editors, she says, tend to feel that minorities are not well-versed enough to cover stories that people care

deeply about.

"When you cover the environment, you're talking about chasing down white men in suits. For a minority, getting the environmental beat can be a bone or a reward. But in the newsroom, the environment is perceived as a white issue."

Barrington says she is speaking about the profession in general, not *USA Today* in particular.

At *USA Today*, Rae Tyson, environment editor in the news section and SEJ vice president, says he has worked hard to promote diversity.

Two of the key writers on the paper's most recent major environmental project—on the financing of environmental groups—were an Asian-American woman and an African-American woman, he says.

But though *USA Today* has one of the most diverse staffs in the country, Tyson says, its top editors tend to be white.

"Every beat needs to be diverse; environment is no exception," says Tyson, who is white. "If you're going to cover issues in a diverse country, the best way to do it is with a staff that's diverse as well."

Dora Devera, an Asian-American intern at the *Post and Courier* in Charleston, S.C., says that given the opportu-

nity to have the beat she wants, she'd probably pick education. And she definitely would not choose the environment.

"Politics, business, sports and education, that's what people remember," Devera says. The University of South Carolina junior journalism student says that covering those issues would give her a sense of satisfaction that covering the environment would not.

But Devera also says that she would fear letting editors know if she were interested in covering the environment because she does not want to get pegged as the newsroom's trendy person.

"I don't want to be perceived as someone who jumps on the bandwagon because it's become OK to care about the environment," says Devera. "It's almost like a green light is on and now it's chic to cover the environment."

She agrees that protecting the environment is very important, but says, "I don't want to be on the shallow end of the business."

Wevonneda Minis writes for the Post & Courier in Charleston, S.C. A member of the SEJ Board of Directors since 1992, she chaired the 1993 SEJ national conference at Duke University in Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Detroit editor sees inner-city story

By EMILIA ASKARI

Many young journalists do time on the police beat, chasing ambulances full of assault victims. Robert McTyre was not one of them.

He followed a less conventional career path to become one of the best known journalists in Detroit. He rode inside ambulances for eight years as an emergency medical technician.

Today, McTyre is executive editor of *The Michigan Chronicle*, among the most influential of the 150 or so black newspapers in the United States. McTyre, an SEJ member since 1991, has a strong interest in environment issues. He spoke at SEJ's second annual conference about covering environmental news for small newspapers.

"We're probably the only black newspaper in the country that makes a big deal out of Earth Day," McTyre, 39, said in an interview. "We have a front-page story every year ... We say, 'It's not just the earth per se and the ozone layer. If you look around your own home in Detroit, there are many things you can do to make your neighborhood and your environment better.'"

"This is mostly for readers who don't bring a lot of empathy to the issue. When you talk to them about the environment, they think, 'Save the trees.' We help our readers see a relationship between their immediate, urban environment and larger environment issues ... Sometimes this is hard to do when people are worrying about drive-by shootings in their neighborhoods."

McTyre says he's been interested in environmental issues since high school.

During his stint as an EMT, McTyre

developed an appreciation for the power of the media. Often, he was a source for stories on problems with the Detroit area's emergency response system.

McTyre eventually quit the medical business, won a journalism scholarship from Wayne State University, and went to work as a general assignment reporter for the *Chronicle*. He has held the top editing job at the 40,000-circulation weekly for one year.

Most of the *Chronicle's* readers live in Detroit or nearby Pontiac. During the school year, a special edition of 50,000 copies is sent to Detroit public schools.

Many Detroiters dislike the mainstream media but trust McTyre and his full-time editorial staff of 10 to tell the truth about the environment, the mayor and other important topics.

The *Chronicle* has a racially integrated staff and a predominantly black readership. McTyre says he refers to it as a black paper because it's owned by a Chicago-based group of African Americans who own similar publications in Chicago, Louisville, Memphis and Pittsburgh.

Often, the *Chronicle* beats the local dailies. McTyre fondly recalls the time several years ago when he broke the story of some suburban business people's midnight dumping on vacant Detroit lots.

"We got a lot of response on that one," he chuckles, recalling some readers' enraged calls.

The dumping stopped, at least for awhile.

Although McTyre sees environmental justice gaining momentum in urban centers across the country, he thinks it will take 20 years before large numbers of people in Detroit and similar cities develop a keen awareness of environmental issues.

"Even though we're probably more affected by environmental problems than anybody else, it's going to take some time and some very fine journalism" to drive home the importance of the issue, McTyre said.

During an interview in August he predicted that the environmental justice movement would be stalled temporarily by the problems that Benjamin Chavis, an environmental justice advocate, was having as director of the National Association of Colored People. Chavis, accused by some members of mismanaging NAACP funds and other improprieties, was later ousted from his NAACP post.

Despite Chavis' troubles, McTyre believes environmental issues will eventually capture the attention of urban African Americans. He urged fellow reporters to cover not just the racial aspects of cities' environmental decay, but also the economics that led to the decay.

"Corporations have a side, too," he said. "It needs to be told."

Elected president of SEJ in October, Emilia Askari covers the environment for the Detroit Free Press. She previously worked for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner and the Miami Herald.



McTyre

PR machine outguns public and press

By JOHN C. STAUBER

Reporter beware, or be outgunned and outmaneuvered. Journalists who lack a healthy respect for the state-of-the-art strategies, tactics and high-tech capabilities of environmental public relations could get burned.

Environmental public relations, as practiced by Burson-Marsteller, Ketchum, Fleishman-Hillard and dozens of other firms, has become a pervasive, effective, and usually invisible specialty that draws more than \$100 million a year. Public relations is not qualitatively different when practiced by the Sierra Club or by Union Carbide. Those "who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses ... pull the wires which control the public mind," Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations, said in the 1920s.

But corporations have the resources to practice "greenwashing" on a grand scale. The top 10 companies that specialize in environmental PR saw it account for more than \$76 million of their revenues in 1993, down slightly from the past two years. Kevin McCauley, an editor at O'Dwyer's Directory of Public Relations Firms, says these firms are to a slight degree victims of their own success. With environmentalists doing so poorly in Congress, less of a corporate PR push is needed.

As the modern environmental movement is traced to Rachel Carson's 1962 best-seller "Silent Spring," so is the anti-environmental PR business. The dean of greenwashers, E. Bruce Harrison, cut his teeth leading the chemical industry's propaganda counterattack against "Silent Spring." Today his firm, which exclusively handles environmental issues, brings in more than \$6.5 million a year from clients including the American Automobile Manufacturers, ARCO, Clorox, Dow Chemical, Monsanto and Union Carbide. Harrison works for the wise-use Global Climate Coalition. In the past, he has even worked for the Environmental Protection Agency, with the bill going to the taxpayers.

While environmental groups wage their own PR campaigns, most amount to small in-house operations based on the conventional techniques of news conferences, media events and written press releases. In today's media environment, that's like combating General Schwartzkopf's Desert Storm forces with a patrol of muzzle-loaders. In contrast, transnational corporations and trade associations spend more than \$100 million a year on environmental PR pursuing a greener public image. But while projecting a green image,

toll-free dial-a-nutritionist number run by the ADA.

Monsanto also spread its BGH research dollars to universities and colleges, guaranteeing that plenty of researchers nationwide would go to bat for the product. Monsanto hired Virginia Weldon, a college professor and medical doctor, as a vice president to promote and defend BGH.

All these behind-the-scenes PR moves were part of a much larger strategy developed not by one or two companies, but with the assistance of a dozen PR firms.

Monsanto is currently using Hill & Knowlton, Dorf & Stanton, Edward Howard, Bonner & Associates, Edelman, E. Bruce Harrison, Ruder Finn, Burson-Marsteller, and others.

Now, let's imagine we are the executives of a large polluting corporation that's in need of some environmental spin doctoring. Who would we turn to for PR help? To influence public opinion we first need to understand and monitor public opinion. The Wirthlin Group would be a good bet to handle our opinion surveying. It works on clean water, clean air and agricultural issues. And it did a great job with Citizens for a Free Kuwait, the Kuwaiti-government front, which hired Wirthlin and Hill & Knowlton for \$10.8 million to sell Desert Storm to the American voters. Wirthlin identified themes and opinions, and even helped the Kuwaiti ambassador with a complete visual remake for his frequent TV appearances.

Next, we need to monitor the media. We want to have in our possession, as fast as possible, every news article or TV report about our company. For the print stories we can call Bacon's or Burrelle's. For the video, we might want to hire Video Monitoring Service, which will get us nearly every TV news report, within hours of its airing.

If we need to send out a print press release, we can use PR Newswire. Or, we can do it ourselves with the help of Spincontrol II software. It gives us de-

(Continued on page 30)

TOPIC: Public relations and public policy

companies simultaneously strive to defeat environmental reforms that hurt the bottom line.

To deal with this contradiction - a green image, a dark reality - corporate PR is interwoven with lobbying and advertising, in an approach called integrated communications.

Crisis management is a major corporate concern. When the Exxon Valdez fouled the ocean, when Union Carbide's chemical leak killed thousands in India, or when General Mills' Cheerios are contaminated with pesticide residue, the media circus begins. Virtually every major company has in place some form of trained PR emergency response team, ready for that dreaded call from Mike Wallace.

Companies often launch PR campaigns in advance of controversies. Monsanto began a sophisticated campaign to support its cow drug, bovine growth hormone (BGH), seven years before the Food & Drug Administration approved it. Monsanto's early opinion polling showed they had a major PR problem brewing—no one wanted drug-tainted milk.

Early on Monsanto contacted the American Medical Association and the American Dietetic Association to get them onboard. As approval neared, Monsanto paid for a pro-BGH video run on national cable TV under the auspices of the AMA. Monsanto also paid for a

Conflict undermines common ground

By DALE DIDION

Just as the end of the international cold war opened doors to remarkable partnership for artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs, the end of the cold war between environmentalists and big business in America presents opportunities for unprecedented successes for both.

As blind animosities give way to clear advantages, new unions increasingly are being formed between environmental groups and corporations to the benefit of the consumer and our country, as a whole. A "changing tide of environmentalism" is making this possible. The change reflects what I see as the maturing of the environmental movement over the past few decades.

In the environmental movement, the first activists were the dragon slayers, challenging companies publicly and forcing them to disclose sensitive internal information. With both sides taking extreme positions, there was little likelihood of the two parties ever communicating with each other, except perhaps in court.

Over time, these activists have built themselves into monoliths and coalitions. They found taking on companies to be a principal means of obtaining members and raising funds. Their staffs were built primarily out of fund-raisers, program directors, and attorneys. The attorneys would sue, the program directors would inform members and the media, and the fund-raisers would capitalize on the opportunity, literally.

This is changing. Memberships and leaders have matured, not just in age but also expectations. And while they continue to argue, fight, and even sue, some activists are finding that they can affect more long-lasting environmental change quickly by working with companies rather than against them. They realize that the old ways just aren't working, and that what the public wants is substance, not show.

People want to see something constructive going on in their lifetimes, and are no longer satisfied with rhetoric and lawsuits. They want genuine change that benefits the environment without

unduly disrupting people's lives. Even the more hard-line activist groups are calling me to exchange views and inform me of their projects.

The landmark task force between McDonald's Corporation and the Environmental Defense Fund a few years ago typifies these progressive relationships. In that effort, the two groups examined ways the fast-food company could reduce its solid waste. The task force came up with a 42-point plan that McDonald's

Viewpoints

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

embraced and put into effect—not only to reduce waste but also to improve its image to customers.

The McDonald's-EDF effort legitimized corporate-environmental partnerships for both sides. It represented a sharp about-face from the motto EDF adopted when it was founded in 1967: "Sue the bastards." The group's leaders now admit that while litigation can be effective, cooperation can be more expedient. But it's not just faster action that environmental activists are seeking from these relationships. In addition to being able to prove themselves to their constituents, these new partnerships help bring in new and younger members and money during a time when both are shrinking. A lot of these groups have talented lawyers and scientists on board and have to pay them real money to retain their services.

A win-win relationship exists when a project is established between a company and an environmental group. Through the partnership, the corporation receives the analytical expertise of one or more of the environmental group's professionals; and access to top-quality professionals is a tremendous benefit. Such relationships have raised eyebrows among some groups' members, but they can still work if both parties operate in good faith and strive to keep each other honest.

Relationships between environmental activists and corporations take a lot of planning and can involve a delicate initial interaction. I have seen several well-intentioned efforts go awry because one or both parties had the wrong expectations about the relationship. In some cases, the two parties never established the level of trust needed to accomplish either party's agenda.

Setting up a project and building a relationship takes time and patience. A partnership between Chevron and the World Wildlife Fund came together after many years of trust-building between the two groups. Teams from each organization visited the others' facilities, and met with top leaders to establish ground rules and lines of positive communication.

Confidentiality can be one sticking point. It may be in both parties' interests to keep the relationship out of the public eye, at least at first. If the company plans to reveal proprietary data, there must be nondisclosure agreements. It's also important to work out early how and when the relationship will be announced and what measures should be taken if word of the relationship leaks prematurely. When it inevitably does, having resolved these issues in advance will avoid ruffled feathers, or worse.

Companies should start small when establishing relationships, giving both sides ample time to see if the relationship will work.

There are a number of ways for companies to test the waters, some of which are virtually cost and risk-free.

Giving advice is one. Companies can help environmentalists form strategies regarding the industry's intentions, new product development, and the direction of the marketplace. Companies also can help raise money for the valuable work of environmentalists.

Frequently, environmental groups request that corporate representatives participate on their board of directors. This can create a beneficial symbiotic relationship.

Most important is effective dialogue. (Continued on page 31)

Stauber ... (from page 28)

tailed information on journalists at some 40,000 media outlets, and allows us to fax a simultaneous release to any size list we choose.

What about a video news release? We could call Porter/Novelli, the folks who handle Calgene's genetically engineered tomato. After the FDA approved the tomato, Porter/Novelli's video was delivered instantly by satellite nationwide. To the 100 million TV viewers who saw it, the footage was indistinguishable from objective reporting.

What if pesky eco-activists are parading outside our corporate headquarters, calling for boycotts? Experts are available who can provide intelligence about our opponents, and help us conquer and divide the activists, wear them down, or even co-opt them into working with us in a "strategic partnership." Three D.C.-area firms could handle the job: Burson-Marsteller; Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin (MBD), and Direct Impact. MBD brags that it "maintains extensive files on [activist] organizations and their leadership." Burson-Marsteller and Direct Impact have gone undercover to infiltrate and spy on activist groups for corporate clients.

How do we deal with a persistent reporter who seems intent on winning a Pulitzer at our expense? Perhaps a call to the reporter's higher-ups is in line, to remind them of the advertising revenues in jeopardy. Dean Rotbart, a former Wall Street Journal reporter, can lead a seminar for our company on how to affect coverage by going over the reporter's head.

There is always the matter of access.

How do we get quickly to the proper policy makers who might lend a hand? PR firms stock their offices with former politicians and staffers who can activate the old-boy network of either party. Hill & Knowlton CEO Howard Paster took a

'Green' PR revenues

Ten largest firms for 1993

Burson-Marsteller	\$17,959,000
Ketchum P R	15,300,000
Fleishman-Hillard	9,125,000
Shandwick	6,689,000
E. Bruce Harrison Co.	6,550,991
Edelman PR Worldwide	5,501,677
The Rowland Co	5,000,000
Pacific/West Comm.	4,869,481
Ruder Finn	3,000,000
Ogilvy Adams & Rinehart	2,800,000
TOTAL	\$76,795,149

Source: "O'Dwyer's Directory of Public Relations Firms", 1994 edition

one-year sabbatical to be Bill Clinton's point man with Congress. Surely he can put in a good word with the administration.

Our company could probably use a "white hat" advocate. Monsanto pays Carol Tucker Foreman, the head of Ralph Nader's Safe Food Coalition, to lobby against consumers' right to know whether their milk is from hormone-treated cows.

Let's keep an eye open for event sponsorship. Perhaps the biggest eco-publicity blast yet is next April, the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. The nonprofit group coordinating the event has happily accepted donations from 3M, Ralston Purina and Monsanto, among others, without screening for embarrass-

ing social or environmental problems.

Our company could use some grassroots clout to counter all those local activists deluging politicians with calls, letters, faxes and e-mail on behalf of the planet. Luckily, we can buy grassroots support. Bonner & Associates has hundreds of professional phone-callers ready to go to work on computer-generated lists. Our own army of citizen activists can be making hundreds or thousands of calls to politicians by this weekend. We could also ask for help from one of the best grassroots organizers in America, Ralph Reed, head of the Christian Coalition. He recently offered to help industry deal with eco-activists.

Maybe we need some long-term grassroots support from just plain old citizens. We could call Burson-Marsteller and ask them to organize a front group. They've done a great job for Philip Morris, organizing hundreds of thousands of puffers into the "National Smokers Alliance." And, of course, when we combine all these techniques and tactics, we've got our green PR bases covered. Expensive? Not compared to the cost of our corporation's advertising campaign. Besides, to paraphrase the eco-activists, "it's not easy looking green," it just takes lots of PR.

John C. Stauber is editor of "PR Watch," a quarterly newsletter published by Center for Media & Democracy Inc. that reports on the PR industry from a public interest perspective. For a free sample of PR Watch, write or call: PR Watch, 3318 Gregory Street, Madison, WI 53711, 608-233-3346.

MacLeish explores how humans shaped the land

Imagine standing on the peak of some impossible mountain, taking in a panoramic sweep of both place and time. "The Day Before America" is such a peak, providing a look at what is now the United States' portion of North America in the eons up to and including the European "encounter." Sometimes the view is wide-scoped, spanning ages in a chapter; sometimes telescopic, searching the Colorado dust for Bison Antiquus, 10

centimeters at a time.

Glaciers, playing a primary role in shaping the skin of the land, are de-

Book Review The Day Before America
William H. MacLeish
Reviewed by Chris Rigel

scribed in their crawl south and subsequent retreat, in their effects on bodies of water and tree migration. Mastodons,

caribou, herds of camels, flat-headed peccaries are among the fauna roaming below the ice-line.

The real story here, however, is people: the first groups who may or may not have come over the Bering Strait, moving into the Southwest, eastward and westward. We watch them evolve from hunting bands to communities, witness the beginnings of agriculture and the domestication of animals.

Viewpoints

Throughout, we are led to observe the effects of human development on environment.

At times, William MacLeish skips across the Atlantic to study the evolving European peoples, offering a clearer perspective on the events occurring since the first wave of explorers sailed west. He examines the European expansion against the native American culture from both sides and offers his thoughts about our present environmental predicament.

"The Day Before America" incor-

porates a unique blend of knowledge from different peoples: Native American perspectives thread through the pages on which MacLeish's Mayflower heritage is evident.

While clearly describing the geological and demographic issues shaping the environmental history of this continent, the book's heart is found in this pooled wisdom, in words which awaken memories of ourselves long forgotten.

As MacLeish put it: "When people are asked —not polled, but asked with

concern and understanding — about what they most yearn to see, the answer, from young and old, is often grass. Lots of it, with maybe a few trees and water somewhere. Grass. Rugs may be representations of grass, the mantle of our natal grounds on the savannas. We sit inside, in cells carpeted with plastic nubbins, and the forager within each of us dreams of grass."

Chris Rigel is systems manager for SEJ at the society's Philadelphia office.

Didion ... (from page 29)

We are active in setting up dialogue sessions between key representatives of environmental groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and the federal government. We bring them together to discuss mutual concerns and problems. At the end of that dialogue, we are able to decide which issues we agree on, which problems we want to tackle together, and whether we want to do it now or five years down the road.

Having companies fund an issue-specific publication for the nonprofit is also effective in building relationships. The companies get substantial input into the content because the publication has their name on it. To add credibility, companies can get outsiders to review the document before publication. Another approach is for companies to spon-

sor a conference on some subject of mutual interest.

In the end, any environmental group can throw stones. The groups that survive and prosper are those that are constructively working on these relationships now. The same sentiment can be applied to corporations. Any corporation can pay a fine to the EPA. The corporations that will do well in the future are those that work with environmental groups to find win-win solutions.

If a company wants to be a leader in the environment, it has to take action. It's got to become a recognized expert in its area of environmental concern and make internal personnel, system, and operational changes. The company must understand the value of environmental activists as allies and potential partners.

In today's climate, such partnerships are what consumers look for in deciding and what gives one company the edge over another.

Dale Didion is the environmental practice director at the public affairs/relations firm Hill & Knowlton in Washington, D.C. His clients include some of the nation's leading forest products, high technology, mining, agricultural, entertainment, and transportation corporations. Before coming to Hill and Knowlton, Didion worked closely with national and grassroots environmental opinion leaders, government officials and business leaders to identify and promote activities to constructively address critical local and national problems.

Essay ... (from page 20)

wright finds a surprising amount of recuperation in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill. Mixed but still impressive are the second-growth forests of the upper midwest. The so-called "balance of nature" may be more resilient than we give it credit for; that's a fact question to investigate, not assume.

(3) Problems equal solutions. Even when everyone agrees there's a problem, they may disagree on solutions. I'd be embarrassed to mention this if it weren't so often overlooked. If U.S. drivers are using too much oil, the "obvious" panacea — raising CAFE standards — may simply make it cheaper for them to drive more miles and use more oil. If endangered species need protection, the "obvi-

ous" solution — regulating host properties heavily — may have the undesirable effect of turning their owners against rare plants and animals. Alternatives, such as a gasoline tax or a subsidy for landowners who harbor endangered species, have problems of their own. The point is that reasonable people who agree on the problem may disagree over what to do, without deserving to be cast as "destroyers of nature."

Speaking of "destroyers of nature," let me slip in a quick plus for civility — one resource that may indeed be in short supply. My experience is that those who dissent from environmental orthodoxy are more likely to be shunned or vilified than reasoned with, and that some dis-

senters are willing to exaggerate and lie to get their way. It would be something more than ironic if environmental issues — supposedly the domain of science — came to resemble a battleground between religions.

I can't promise that defining the problems more carefully and keeping an open mind on the issue of solutions will land more environment stories on the front page. But at least we can be confident that the stories themselves will be more reliable, and more independent of the special interests of our sources.

Harold Henderson is a staff writer at the Chicago Reader, a citywide weekly newspaper.

New Members

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from Aug. 12 through Dec. 5, 1994. Memberships recorded after Dec. 5 will appear in the SEJournal's Vol. 5, No. 1

ALABAMA

- Sean C. Reilly, The Anniston Star, Millbrook

ALASKA

- Deborah Mercy (Academic), Alaska's Marine Resources/Alaska Resource Issues Forum, University of Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory, Anchorage
- Mathew Zencey, Anchorage Daily News Anchorage

ARKANSAS

- David F. Kern, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock

ARIZONA

- Doug Campos-Outcalt (Academic), University of Arizona, Awatukee

CALIFORNIA

- David DeWitt, KCBA-TV, Salings
- Brian Hackney, News Department, KGO-TV, Novato
- Deborah Lehr, BNA California, Sacramento
- Jana J. Monji (Academic), L.A. Weekly, Pasadena
- Keiko Ohnuma, Oakland Tribune, Alameda News Group, Oakland

COLORADO

- Bruce Finley, Denver Post, Denver

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Deborah Barfield, Knight-Ridder News
- Chris Bright (Associate), World Watch Magazine, World Watch Institute
- Brian Broderick, Daily Environment Report, Bureau of National Affairs
- Ginny Finch (Associate), Office of Environment & Planning, FHWA (DOT)
- Wayne Jaquith, Natural Resources News Service, Public Education Center
- Nancy A. Olsen, Island Press
- Harlan Savage (Associate), Communications Department, Defenders of Wildlife
- Aissatou Sidimé (Academic), The American University
- John Suddath (Associate)
- Yuzo Suwa, Environmental Health Center, National Safety Council
- David A. Taylor (Associate)
- Andrea Torrice, Torrice Productions
- Joseph Trento, Natural Resources News Service, Public Education Center
- Daphne Wysham (Associate), Global Economy Project/Cancer Project, Institute for Policy Studies
- Karen Yourish, The Radioactive Exchange, Exchange Publications

FLORIDA

- David Olinger, St. Petersburg Times, St. Petersburg

IDAHO

- Brandon Loomis, Post Register, Idaho Falls

ILLINOIS

- LeAnn Spencer, Chicago Tribune, Chicago
- Mary Walter, Environmental Solutions, Advanstar Communications Inc., Elmhurst

INDIANA

- Whit Andrews, The Times, Munster
- Dwight Worker (Associate), Bloomington

IOWA

- Vera V. Towle (Associate), Muscatine

KANSAS

- Jean Hays, Wichita Eagle, Wichita

MAINE

- Marie Tessier (Associate), Bangor

MARYLAND

- Michael W. Fincham (Academic), University of Maryland Sea Grant, College Park
- Jack Greer (Academic), Maryland Sea Grant, Univ. of Maryland Sea Grant, College Park
- Andrew Hoerner (Academic), Center for Global Change, Univ. of Maryland, College Park

MASSACHUSETTS

- Clayton S. Collins, Profiles Magazine, Marblehead Communications, Boston

MICHIGAN

- Jeff Green, The Oakland Press, Pontiac

MISSOURI

- J. Scott Christianson (Associate), Columbia Daily Tribune, Columbia
- Mary Landers (Academic), Inquiry, University of Missouri, Columbia
- Joy Ross (Academic), Journalism School, University of Missouri, Columbia

MONTANA

- Constance J. Poter (Associate), Missoula

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Eric Aldrich, The Keene Sentinel, Keene
- Nelda F. Holder (Academic), Enviro Studies, Grad Program, Antioch NE, Keene
- Lisa K. Younger, Earth Work Magazine, Student Conservation Association, Charlestown

NEW YORK

- David Hunter, Chemical Week, New York
- Allison Lucas, Chemical Week, New York
- Julie Zeidner (Academic), Coastlines, New York Sea Grant Institute, Stony Brook

NEVADA

- Donica Mensing (Academic), Journalism Department, University of Nevada, Reno

NORTH CAROLINA

- Brandy E. Fisher (Academic), Environmental Health Perspectives, NIEHS, Chapel Hill

- Amy B. "Jeri" Gray (Academic), WRRRI News, Water Resources Research Institute of The University of North Carolina Raleigh
- Richard P. Milner, WQED-TV, Durham
- Taft Wireback, News & Record, Greensboro

OHIO

- Mark Aumen, Ohio Solid Waste Reporter/Ohio Environmental Reporter Ohio, Environmental News Service, Columbus
- David Beach (Associate), Ecocity Cleveland, Cleveland Heights

OKLAHOMA

- Cynthia C. Rozmaryn (Academic), The Edmund Report, KCSU-TV Edmund
- Cheri Soliday, Sac and Fox News Sac and Fox Nation Bristow

OREGON

- Jacqui Banaszynski, The Oregonian, Portland
- Kathie Durbin, Portland
- Robert C. Eure, The Oregonian, Portland
- Peter D. Sleeth, The Oregonian, Portland

PENNSYLVANIA

- Timothy Aeppel, The Wall Street Journal, Pittsburgh

TEXAS

- Matari S. Jones (Academic), Office of University Relations, Texas A&M University, College Station
- Judson R. Wood, Jr. (Associate), Rowlett

UTAH

- Julia Corbett (Academic), Department of Communication, Univ. of Utah, Salt Lake City
- Brian F. Goetz, Salt Lake City
- Shanna Lewis (Associate), North Fork Special Service District, Provo
- Dennis Rombo, Deseret News, Provo

VERMONT

- Suzanne Spencer, Norwich

VIRGINIA

- Dale Curtis, Greenwire, Falls Church
- Vincent Kiernan, New Scientist, Alexandria
- Cliff Kincaid (Associate), The Free American, Freedom Alliance, Sterling
- Mathew Mak, USA Today, Arlington

WASHINGTON

- Terri C. Hansen, News from Indian Country, Indian Country Communications, Long Beach
- Brent W. Merrill (Associate), NWIFC News, Northwest Indian Fisheries Comm., Mount Vernon
- Jennifer Schmidt, KPLU Public Radio, Seattle

WISCONSIN

- Steven E. Landfried (Associate), Evansville
- Laurence J. Wiland (Academic), University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, Mt. Horeb

FRANCE

- Olivier Milhomme, Presse Environment, Agence Innovapresse, Paris

Green Beat Correspondents

Contribute to Green Beat

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

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

Alaska — Vacant.

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

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

California:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Florida:

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

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

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

Idaho — Rocky Barker of the Post-Register,

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

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

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

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

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

Kentucky — Vacant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New York — Vacant.

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

Franktown Road, Carson City, NV 89704, (702) 885-2023.

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

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

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

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

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

Texas and Oklahoma:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please note openings for correspondents for several states. If you are interested, please contact Kevin Carmody at (312) 871-8911.

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ALABAMA

► Threatened Mobile Bay has been nominated for inclusion in the National Estuary Program. Inclusion would mean federal funding and help in protecting the Bay. For more information, contact Michael Hardy at the Mobile Press-Register, (205) 433-1551.

► PCBs were first commercially produced in Anniston, Ala. Not surprisingly, they are still around in the area's water and soil. The Anniston Star examined the extent of PCB contamination of the area's principal waterway and how state and federal regulators mostly ignored evidence of the problem for more than 20 years. Call Sean Reilly at (205) 264-8711.

ARKANSAS

► The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's development of an environmental justice index was the topic of an Oct. 26 speech covered by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette at Hot Springs, Ark. Barbara Greenfield, who directs the EPA Region 6 office handling media and community affairs, said a new EPA policy thrust includes development of an index, based on a community's population, racial and economic characteristics. The EPA will use this index to decide if it will issue a pollution permit or inspect a plant to see if it is complying with existing permits. For more information, contact David Kern at 501-378-3862.

► A waste tire collection program appears to be working in Central Arkansas, according to a report in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Over the past 18 months, illegal landfills, roadside ditches, backyards and garages in 13 Central Arkansas counties yielded more than one million scrap tires. Even with the success, officials are targeting for cleanup over the next year 10 more illegal tire piles, holding an estimated 645,000 tires. The state collects \$1.50 per new tire sold, and the money is used to collect and process discarded tires. The money is distributed to waste tire districts across the state to clean up tires. Contact David Kern at 501-378-3862.

CALIFORNIA

► California's toxic hot spots right-to-know law was meant to inform people who live near factories and other stationary pollution sources about the health risks they face. Yet, seven years after the law was passed, as many as 1.3 million people in the Los Angeles region exposed to risks above the level that triggers notification had not been notified. Records tracked by Los Angeles Daily News environment reporter Tony Knight show that the law has been successful in cutting toxic emissions as companies have scrambled to avoid informing neighbors of their cancer risks. But local air quality officials acknowledge that while toxic air emissions are killing people in the nation's worst air basis, they say the right-to-know program has been swamped by hundreds of scientifically complex health risk assessments submitted by the companies. The first notifications won't be submitted until 1995.

► Los Angeles Times media critic David Shaw's lengthy series, "Living Scared: Why do the Media Make Life Seem So Risky?" was published Sept. 12-14. The series focused on environment and health issues and was largely based on a premise expressed in a sub-head on the main article: "We're safer and healthier than ever — and also more afraid of what we eat drink and breath. Why the reality gap? Too often, critics say, the media's coverage fuels our fears." Critics of Shaw's series have said that his apparently exhaustive research didn't protect him from adopting some scientifically dubious assumptions and that, considering the mounting backlash against environmentalism in the media and Congress, the series was outdated long before it ran.

COLORADO

► The correlation between natural resource industry-PAC donations and voting on environmental issues was examined in a four-part (so far) series by the Colorado Daily. The study found that the top-10 recipients of timber, grazing, mining, energy and pesticide PAC

funds voted in favor of the industry position an average of 75 percent of the time. However, while only Colorado Sen. Hank Brown was consistently among the big-money recipients, all but two Colorado federal politicians were generally rated even harder on the environment by the League of Conservation Voters than those across the country who received the most PAC funds. The series, "On The Money Trail," began Sept. 13 and has been published bi-monthly. For more information or for copies of the articles, contact Colorado Daily staff writer Ron Baird at 303-443-6272.

► The travels of explorer-naturalist John C. Fremont were followed by Rocky Mountain News science writer Joseph Verrengia in an eight-part series looking into the impacts the settlement and continued growth of Colorado have had on the state's biodiversity in the last 150 years. Verrengia followed Fremont's path into the tundra, the high desert, the plains, the river basins and along the Front Range and wrote about what remains of the state's native flora and fauna, what's gone and what is still threatened. The series ran from Aug. 14-21. For copies of a reprint or for more information, contact George Douglas at the Rocky Mountain News, phone 303-892-2743

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► Imagine a bus that belches no black smoke and is nearly quiet as a golf cart. Such a vehicle powered by a fuel cell was showcased at the Department of Transportation's Future '94 exhibit in October. The 25-seat, 30-foot bus will soon cruise the campus of Georgetown University, ferrying students across the Potomac River to and from Arlington, Va. The university received a \$4.9 million grant from DOT to work on a 40-foot version the size of most mass-transit buses in the United States. Various parts of the bus were manufactured or assembled in Santa Barbara, Calif.; Baltimore, Md., and Belleville, N.J. Freelancer Greg Kitsock wrote about the bus in the October 7 issue of the Washington's alternative weekly, City

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Paper. He can be reached at (202) 342-0887.

► In its October cover story "More than Asphalt: Our Highway Dollars at Work" the national newsletter of the Women's Transportation Seminar launched a series of feature articles on innovative transportation-environment projects. The upcoming December story highlights state efforts to improve air quality from a congestion pricing pilot project in California to a high-tech emissions testing program in Illinois. For more information or for copies of both stories, call Ginny Finch, 202-366-4258, or fax your request to her at 202-366-3409.

FLORIDA

► Heather Dewar, formerly environmental reporter for The Miami Herald, started a new job in October with the Knight-Ridder newspapers chain as a national correspondent for environmental issues in Washington, DC. Dewar had been with The Herald since February 1989, covering environmental issues for the last 4 1/2 years. She was a finalist for a Meeman award in 1992 for her coverage of the environmental collapse of Florida Bay. She also has shared in two Pulitzers won by The Herald for non-environmental coverage. Her new work telephone number is (202) 350-2111.

► Several environmental reporters covered the Governor's Conference on Ecosystem Management held in Orlando on Sept. 20-21. Speakers Keith Grumbine of the Sierra Institute in California and conservation biologist Reed Noss of Corvallis, Ore. praised Florida's efforts towards ecosystem management as it compared to California's efforts under a similar name. Media coverage of the conference also focused on the environmental record of Gov. Lawton Chiles, who laid out his environmental record in a speech to the conference. Republican Jeb Bush appeared at the same motel a short time later and found himself answering questions on environmental issues, which were not a priority in his campaign.

ILLINOIS

► A new study commissioned by the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation contradicted widely-held beliefs of "environmental racism." The foundation studied 30 hazardous waste sites and performed demographic profiles of the people who lived adjacent to them. Led by University of Chicago researchers, the study found that 43 percent of the people living near the Superfund sites are white; 40 percent black. Although the study did not examine the full spectrum of environmentally undesirable facilities, waste incinerators, landfills and points of source pollution it is expected to expand to these types of sites. For more information call the Joyce Foundation, (312) 782-2464.

► In a landmark development that has national significance, the Chicago Board of Trade said it will sponsor a cash exchange (in the form of an electronic bulletin board) for companies trading recyclable commodities such as recyclable glass and PET and HDPE plastic. If successful, the program could expand to futures trading. In cooperation with the National Recycling Coalition, the Board of Trade's move is a watermark in establishing markets for recyclables. For more information, contact Kathleen Meade of the NRC, (202) 625-6406. Jim Ritter's Oct. 27 story (p.24) in the Chicago Sun-Times provided a brief overview.

► Prairie Restoration expert Stephen Packard of the Nature Conservancy was profiled in an October 16 Chicago Sun-Times story by Alf Siewers. Considered to be at the forefront of environmental activism in the Midwest, the NC has a network of 4,000 volunteers restoring 160 sites. For more information, call (312) 346-8166.

IDAHO

► The Spokesman-Review is making more frequent use of analysis pieces to follow up what are becoming routine stories about court decisions, rare animals and various twitches in the environmental bureaucracy. Example: In

North Idaho, where sturgeon live in the Kootenai River, the giant fish hasn't reproduced in 20 years. When it was listed as endangered in September, reporter Julie Titone followed up with a conversational piece on how river operators didn't act to avoid the dreaded listing even though the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told them precisely how they could. Titone can be reached in the Spokane newspaper's Coeur d'Alene office, 208-765-7126.

► Water, agriculture, salmon and urban growth were addressed in a comprehensive four-day series called "The Battle for Water" in the Idaho Falls Post Register Oct. 16-19. Paul Menser led a team of reporters, artists and photographers in presenting a clear, concise view of a complex subject. The series explained how draining Idaho's reservoirs by Federal agencies trying to save endangered salmon isn't working. It also showed how control of water is shifting from agricultural interests to urban interests as the population of Idaho and the West changes. For copies of the series contact Paul Menser, Idaho Falls Post Register, P.O. 1800, Idaho Falls, ID 83402.

INDIANA

► Tainted well water being used for drinking would seem incongruous in polished Indianapolis. The Indianapolis Star's Kyle Niederpruem reported in a two-part series in September that about a third of Marion County's population, as many as 250,000 people, depend on private wells for drinking water. Some of these wells are contaminated by salt piles, septic systems, landfills, or industrial spill sites. The cost to extend water mains and hook-up residences is expected to be massive. Just to connect 225 homes will cost nearly \$1 million. Niederpruem's stories swamped the health department with requests for water testing. For more information, contact her at (317) 633-9385.

LOUISIANA

► The Baton Rouge Advocate has done numerous stories in the last few

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months on endangered species in the state and the national fight over protection of endangered species. Information can be obtained from Environmental Editor Bob Anderson at (564) 383-1111.

MARYLAND

► A pioneering, but controversial Maryland law aimed at reducing lead-paint hazards in older housing has been thrown into limbo by squabbling between inner-city landlords and children's health advocates. The new law, which took effect Oct. 1, shields property owners from lead-poisoning lawsuits if they clean up peeling paint and relocate any children who still become poisoned to lead-safe housing. Dispute is over state regulations that would exempt landlords from having state verify cleanups by testing for presence of lead dust. Contact: Tim Wheeler, Baltimore Sun 410-332-6564.

► Air pollution regulators in Maryland and 10 other East Coast states agreed in September to reduce smog-forming emissions from power plants and factories by up to two-thirds over the next five years. But environmentalists said the reductions in nitrogen oxides being required were not steep enough. Power plants and large factories would be able to curb their emissions largely through modifying existing plant burners. Nitrogen oxides, from power plants, auto exhaust and other combustion, are one of two major ingredients in formation of ozone, or smog, but have been largely ignored by regulators until recently. Meanwhile, Maryland gave the Environmental Protection Agency a watered-down, "basically voluntary" plan for curbing solo commuting in the smog-plagued Baltimore metro area. The Clean Air Act required Baltimore and other smoggy areas to reduce solo commuting by 25 percent, but outcry from the business community prompted Maryland to weaken requirements such that businesses need only draw up a plan for urging or inducing employees to car-pool or take transit during spring and summer. Changes to the unpopular program were blessed by EPA Administrator Carol Browner. Some businesses,

still unhappy with even having to write up a plan, have filed suit. Contact: Tim Wheeler, Baltimore Sun (410) 332-6564.

MASSACHUSETTS

► Eric Niiler of the Quincy Patriot Ledger produced a major story and a series of sidebars on Sept. 15, titled "Saving Georges Bank" about a new five-year study examining where the fish have gone off the coast of New England. Niiler reports that the study "is the largest single research project ever undertaken" in Georges Bank, which was long known as one of the richest fishing grounds in the world. Niiler spent two weeks in May aboard the Albatross IV which carried researchers involved in the project. A full page of color graphics was also part of the report. For more information, contact Niiler, who is the science and environment writer, at (617) 786-7200.

► In December the \$4.3 billion Deer Island sewage treatment plant is expected to open in Boston harbor. Yet even before it opened, excitement has been building in Boston because the harbor once denigrated by George Bush is actually getting cleaner. A series of programs designed to take advantage of the cleaner harbor are also beginning to be discussed, including making the Boston harbor islands part of the National Park system. For further information, contact Scott Allen, Boston Globe, at (617) 929-3000.

MINNESOTA

► The upper Mississippi River, a major transportation artery and a rich ecological system, is at a critical juncture. The Army Corps of Engineers wants to modernize, expand and possibly triple the barge-handling capacity of 14 of its old locks on the Mississippi and two on a tributary in a \$5 billion public works project that would begin early in the next century. The project, supported by firms that move grain, coal and other commodities on the river, has raised serious doubts among biologists and conservation officials from a five-state area. The scientists fear that portions of the upper Mississippi are on the verge of

ecological collapse, and that the Army Corps proposal may worsen problems that already exist, sediment in backwaters, chemical accumulation in fish and other aquatic life, and the need for more man-made levees to separate the river from its flood plain. Contact: Dean Rabuffoni at Minneapolis Star Tribune, (612) 673-1742.

► For the past two years, loggers in northern Minnesota have cut aspen trees at a rate faster than they can grow back, according to recent figures from a state agency. Pulp and paper mill officials dispute the estimates, and contend that most of the timber harvesting is being done in old stands that would soon rot and die. But environmental leaders say the over-cutting will affect wildlife, soils and tourism, and will eventually turn many forests into glorified tree farms. Contact: Charles Laszewski, St. Paul Pioneer Press, (612) 228-5464.

► Honeywell, Inc. recently launched the first mail-in plan in the nation to recycle thermostats. The initiative, available only to Minnesotans at this time, is designed to prevent mercury in any brand of thermostat from being sent to landfills or incinerators and eventually from entering the environment. Honeywell's program, which is free to consumers, was spurred in large part by a 1992 state law. Minnesota's concern about mercury contamination of northern lakes and fish has also provoked state laws that prohibit homeowners and businesses from throwing away fluorescent bulbs, and that require manufacturers to eliminate mercury from household batteries. Contact: Tom Meersman, Minneapolis Star-Tribune, (612) 673-7388.

MISSISSIPPI

► The EPA has proposed designating the Chemfax, Inc. plant in Gulfport, Mississippi as a Superfund site. The plant, which makes petroleum-based waxes and resins, was found in 1990 to be emitting extremely high levels of benzene and styrene. If listed, Chemfax would be the only current Superfund site on the Gulf Coast. Contact Sharon Ebner

at the Gulfport/Biloxi Sun Herald, (601) 896-2343.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

► The Boston Globe reported on Aug. 31 that a federal district court had ruled that the US Air Force had violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act in transferring Pease AFB to the state of New Hampshire in 1992. The base was the first in the country to close under the 1988 Base Closure and Realignment Act, and so the ruling may complicate base transfers nationwide. The judge said the Air Force had excluded the public from part of the review process, a NEPA violation. And it did not have a hazardous waste cleanup plan in place before the transfer occurred, a CERCLA violation, and an interpretation of the law that environmentalists called national precedent setting. Contact Robert Braile, The Boston Globe, 603-772-6380.

► The Boston Globe reported on Aug. 12 that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is about to improve the nation's largest salmon aquaculture project, involving an array of conical pens in 47 square miles of water. It is also the first ever to be operated so far off-shore, about 50 miles off the coasts of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. While its proponents say the project would create a new fishing industry to help replace the devastated regional industry, environmentalists say the project raises troubling questions about public trust rights on the ocean, as well as impacts to water quality and wild salmon stocks. Contact Scott Allen, the Boston Globe, 617-929-3112.

NEW JERSEY

► The Asbury Park Press in Neptune published a four-part series in October on mercury contamination in New Jersey, the nation and the world. Mercury is by far the leading cause of health advisories for fish consumption in the United States. New Jersey and five other states began warning residents this year

about mercury-tainted freshwater fish, bringing the total to at least 34 states with advisories. Women of child-bearing age, expectant mothers and their fetuses, nursing mothers and children are at greatest risk from methylmercury, a highly toxic, organic form of mercury that bioaccumulates in fish. However, only three states have warned residents about saltwater species shark and swordfish that are just as contaminated as the freshwater variety, New Jersey officials disregarded the recommendations of a state risk assessment panel, which suggested warnings for shark and swordfish. The Press bought 30 shark, swordfish and tuna steaks at local supermarkets and seafood stores and had them tested for mercury. All 30 samples had mercury levels high enough to trigger a state health advisory if those fish had come from fresh water. The Press also found that the EPA for years has aided in widespread fish contamination by allowing mercury levels to rise in America's freshwater lakes and streams up to 16 times higher than what its own scientists deem safe. The longstanding EPA-recommended method for measuring mercury in water has a detection limit of 200 parts per trillion, far above the agency's 12 ppt surface water standard. For information on the series and follow-up stories on mercury in nose sprays, on golf courses and in dental fillings, call reporter Todd Bates at 908-922-6000, Ext. 4361, reporter Kirk Moore at 609-597-7000, or investigative projects editor Mike Masterson at 908-922-6000, Ext. 4214.

NORTH CAROLINA

► The (Raleigh) News & Observer has published a two-part series, titled "Fishing for Trouble", about North Carolina's depleting fish stocks. The series documents declining fish and shellfish harvests due to pollution and overfishing. And it notes that the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission has failed to take the advice of its own biologists, who have warned the commission about the effects of overfishing. For more information, call Stuart Leavenworth at (919) 829-4859 or write him at stuartl@nando.net.

OHIO

► The Toledo Blade's Tom Henry spent the summer traveling the Great Lakes' shoreline. Henry was part of a Blade team that produced a 14-part series called "Our Changing Great Lakes." The series had about a page each Sunday starting in August and running into November. With weekly themes, Henry wrote about the effect of toxins on human health, the impact of toxins on ethnic subgroups, the invasion of exotic species such as zebra mussels and sea lampreys, leaching landfills, and emergency preparedness. There are some 4,500 landfills that are leaching into the Great Lakes' basin. Henry found, some five years after the Valdez spill, that emergency preparedness on the Great Lakes for oil and chemical spills still needs improvement. Contact Henry at (419) 245-6079.

PENNSYLVANIA

► The Federal Environment Protection Agency criticized Pennsylvania's system for classifying water quality. Peter Kostmeyer, EPA regional administrator, told the state to toughen its program for classifying and protecting state waterways or else. Among other problems, the state has failed to act on many streams submitted for special protection, wrote Don Hopey of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. He can be reached at 412-263-1983.

► The issue of development in Pennsylvania's state parks has again been brought to the forefront by a proposal for construction of a \$3 million lodge in Cook Forest State Park, according to the Erie Times-News. The 6,400-acre park contains significant stands of old growth forest, a rarity in the Northeast. Opposition to the lodge is led by Anthony Wayne Cook, grandson of the lumber baron who established the preserve.

RHODE ISLAND

► The Providence Journal-Bulletin launched a new environmental section beginning the first week in September. The newspaper plans to feature one ma-

jour story on the environment, along with other general news of the environment, on the front of the News II section the first Sunday of the month. The stories so far: a look at how Rhode Island's urban rivers are becoming cleaner; a report on Oxford Energy, a tire burning plant whose emissions are cleaner than anyone would have believed; and a story about how environmental issues were virtually ignored in Rhode Island's political campaigns this fall. Contact Peter Lord of the Journal-Bulletin for more information about the new section, (401) 737-3070.

► An in-depth look at how political clout and money can frustrate the toughest environment regulators was profiled by the Providence Journal-Bulletin on Aug. 21. The story described how a prominent Rhode Island developer defied the state's tough wetland laws when he built a major new shopping center in Warwick, R.I. In 1990 he agreed to spend more than \$500,000 to restore extensive wetlands that he had paved over. That work has yet to be completed. For more information, contact Bob Wyss at the Journal, (401) 277-7364.

TEXAS

► On Sept. 30, Texas Attorney General Dan Morales filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Waco alleging a variety of constitutional violations under the Endangered Species Act. Morales' suit alleges that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's interpretation of the harm provision under the ESA is "unconstitutionally vague" and that it violated the Fifth Amendment. The lawsuit, which was reported in the Oct. 6 issue of The Austin Chronicle, is the latest salvo over property rights in Texas. The Texas AG filed another suit in October on behalf of the state's General Land Office. The lawsuits won't reach trial until sometime next year. For more information, contact Robert Bryce at the Austin Chronicle, 512-454-5766 or E:mail: bryce@txinfinet.com.

► Two coal-fired power plants on the US-Mexico border continue to cause pollution problems in Texas. Known as

Carbon I and Carbon II, the power plants generate electricity for Mexico's burgeoning border region. They also pump millions of tons of pollutants including acid rain-causing sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere. Prevailing winds push those pollutants into Big Bend National Park and other regions of Texas. Recent studies by the EPA show the two plants will generate seven times more sulfur dioxide than would be allowed at similar plants in the U.S. Particulate standards on the plants are 10 times less stringent than U.S. standards and the nitrogen dioxide standard is one and a half times less stringent. Taken together, John Hall, chairman of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission estimates that if the two power plants were located in the U.S., they would be the seventh largest sulfur dioxide source in the country. An update on the power plants ran in the October issue of the Texas Environmental News. For more information, contact Robert Bryce at the Austin Chronicle, 512-454-5766 or E:mail: bryce@txinfinet.com.

► Environmentalists want sovereignty for American Indians. But how much sovereignty is too much? The clashes between states and tribes is discussed in an article published in The Christian Science Monitor on Nov. 7. While gambling has gained a lot of attention, tribal sovereignty may also allow tribes to store hazardous wastes. In Mississippi, Choctaw tribal leaders continue to negotiate on a hazardous waste dump. In New Mexico, the Mescalero Apache tribe has plans for a nuclear waste storage facility. Both projects have garnered widespread opposition from state and local authorities as well as environmental groups. Fred Peso, vice president of the Mescaleros says he doesn't look at the project as a test of sovereignty, but as "a private business enterprise." The Mescaleros expect to reach an agreement with a consortium of utilities sometime in November. If the deal is approved by tribal members, utilities could begin shipping spent fuel rods to the reservation within five years. For more information, contact Robert Bryce at the Austin Chronicle, 512-454-5766 or E:mail: bryce@txinfinet.com.

TENNESSEE

► Ciba-Geigy Corporation has set up a medical monitoring program for anyone who has ever been exposed to Galecron, a commercial agricultural pesticide removed from the market in 1988 after it was linked to bladder cancer in workers. Ciba-Geigy estimates that at least 20,000 people could be eligible for the program, which is part of a \$45 million class-action settlement agreement scheduled to be finalized on January 30, 1995. Three Memphis-area plants were involved in formulating Galecron during the 1970s. For a copy of this story, call Debbie Gilbert at The Memphis Flyer, 901-521-9000.

► In August, Memphis radio station WMC-AM 790 began airing a weekly environmental talk show, Earthwaves, hosted by SEJ member Melanie Patterson. Backed by one-year sponsorships from E.I. DuPont and Environmental Protection Systems, the Saturday evening show has been steadily gaining listeners. Call Patterson at 901-726-0584.

UTAH

► A Green River, Utah, company has built the first commercial refinery which converts waste oil into gasoline and diesel fuel. The Book Cliffs Energy Company's facility has just completed state and federal licensing and began full-scale production in October. The plant takes waste oil from garbage, tires, plastic and auto shops and converts the waste through catalytic cracking into fuel products. Further information: Rod Jackson, KTVX-TV, (801) 975-4418. John Hollenhorst, KSL-TV (801) 575-5500.

► The "Earthwatch" environmental coverage of SEJ member Rod Jackson with KTVX-TV has been awarded a Rocky Mountain Emmy for Community Service by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of NATAS as well as a Silver Medallion by the Utah Broadcasters Association. Additionally, a 30-minute special program entitled "Ecotourism" has been awarded the Gold Medallion from the

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UBA for Non-News Feature Program and a segment of that program was awarded a Silver Medallion for Non-News Feature Program-Segment. Jackson's environmental coverage was the only such coverage to be so honored by either organization.

VERMONT

► The Burlington Free Press reported on October 5 that Vermont state officials had found elevated lead levels in five of 34 samples of maple syrup they tested. The news set off a frenzy in the \$17 million New England syrup industry, which produces half of the nation's syrup. Vermont retested, found high lead levels in three of 116 samples, and ordered the three syrup dealers to shut down. Maine, New Hampshire and New York announced that they would test their syrups for lead. How the metal got into syrup remains a mystery, although the suspects include lead solder used in old syrup evaporators, pesticides with lead arsenate, and airborne lead emissions. Contact John Howland, Jr. The Burlington Free Press, 802-660-1842.

WASHINGTON

► "Saving the Salmon" was the topic of a six-page tab on the demise of wild Pacific salmon and proposals on restoring runs in The Olympian, Olympia, Wash. on Aug. 7. Text was provided by senior writer John Dodge and big color graphic by Fred Matamoros. Reprints were being made for schools. Call Dodge at (206) 754-5423.

► The wise-use movement in rural Washington was explored by reporter Eric Pryne in two Seattle Times articles. On Oct. 18, Pryne described support for Chelan County's version of the Catron County, NM ordinance. It requires federal land managers to submit plans to local officials for approval, and threatens state and federal officials with a year in jail and a \$10,000 fine if regulations violate property rights. More than 400 western counties are said to be considering such rules, despite claims they are unconstitutional. Oct. 19, Pryne profiled

Don Kehoe, who tells gullible audiences that the United Nations is taking over one-quarter of the state, with CIA help. Kehoe is the most extreme of right-wing critics of environmental groups proposal for greater wildlife protection in the North Cascades ecosystem. Pryne, (206)

464-2231, says the pieces may have been picked by the Knight-Ridder wire the following days.

► The Seattle Post-Intelligencer on Oct. 26 and 27 recapped the unusual intensity of wildfires in central Wash-

In Mid-November, The Spokesman-Review of Spokane, Wash., published a five-part investigation into cleanup efforts at one of the most contaminated sites in the western world: Hanford nuclear reservation. Reporters Karen Dorn Steele and Jim Lynch examined how costs have gotten out of control and who's profiteering from the boondoggle. Below, Lynch explains how they got the story. For more information, either reporter can be reached at (509) 459-5430

No person knows what's going on at Hanford.

Even the people in charge of cleaning up the decrepit weapons plant look through small windows at the river of money roaring past.

They know only part of the story.

The disjointed and secretive way Hanford does business, and the enormous scope and complexity of the cleanup, make it nearly impossible to learn where all the billions go.

Public cash pays for the unclassified cleanup work, but the budget fine print is still guarded much as it was during Hanford's top secret nuclear heyday.

Even when the books are opened, they are hard to decipher. A federal investigator says he sometimes finds five conflicting sets of budget numbers for the same project.

The reluctance to share these books was clear last April when The Spokesman-Review first called the U.S. Department of Energy for budget information.

The newspaper asked for detailed expenditures for the prior year, and a list of all ongoing cleanup projects.

The response took almost two weeks. It was a one-page fact sheet with a simplistic spending breakdown of the past three years.

A DOE spokesman said there was no list of ongoing projects, and that more detailed information "could take months."

Most of the newspaper's Freedom of Information Act requests for detailed information such as salary schedules and legal expenses hit snags, too.

The Energy Department, which is

accountable to the public, oversees the place. But Westinghouse Hanford Co. runs the show, controlling most of the money and the details. This private company is often less open than the agency it serves.

Westinghouse blocked repeated requests to interview a company finance officer and President LaMar Trego.

Trego runs a company that controls more than \$1 billion of public money, but he refused to discuss how that money is spent.

"Frankly, he's reluctant to talk to you," a spokesman said after the second request. "He chooses not to participate in this," the spokesman said after a third request.

Telling the story of Hanford's billions required going around these barricades. The work included many trips to the Tri-Cities and more than 100 interviews with federal investigators, Hanford workers and others.

Many people were nervous about losing their jobs. Most only spoke if their names were concealed. One would meet only at night at a public boat ramp.

The story also relied on more than eight feet of Hanford documents, most of which were obtained through unofficial means.

Despite some reluctance at DOE and Westinghouse, the story couldn't have been told without the generous help of many officials from both organizations.

Tom Bauman, a DOE spokesman, and John Britton, a Westinghouse spokesman, arranged tours, interviews and provided information essential to this project.

The Green Beat

ington and explored proposals to expand timber thinning and prescribed burning to reduce fire costs and hazards across the inland West. A century of fire suppression is mainly blamed for fueling fires and insect infestations. Stories by Rob Taylor, (206) 448-8337, described financial constraints on the proposed fixes and resistance from air regulators, environmental groups and rural residents. Some pieces went out on the NYT wire Oct. 27 and 28.

WEST VIRGINIA

► A weeklong series of stories published by The Charleston Gazette in early September raised new questions about plans for a \$1.1 billion pulp and paper mill along the Ohio River in Mason County, W.Va. Parsons & Whittemore Inc. wants to build the mill, but environmental groups are upset about the company's plans for chlorine bleaching that creates dioxin. Gazette reporter Ken Ward Jr. and photographer F. Brian Ferguson spent a week in Alabama examining a Parsons & Whittemore mill there. The weeklong series addresses both economic and environmental effects of the mill, including dioxin, clearcutting of forests and increased truck traffic. The series prompted dozens of letters to the editor, harsh criti-

cism from state environmental regulators, and an attack by Gov. Gaston Caperton, who said the series was unfair and had Parsons & Whittemore considering abandoning the project. For information, call Ward at 304-348-1703.

► A special report by the Huntington Herald-Dispatch examined the uses and needs of the Ohio River. The report, written by a team of Herald-Dispatch staffers, looked at commercial uses of the river and associated pollution. The report also addresses the problem of West Virginia communities that dump raw sewage into the river's tributaries. Call the Herald-Dispatch at 304-526-4000.

► The Charleston Gazette's Robert J. Byers described potential environmental problems created by the growing chicken processing industry in the state's Eastern Panhandle. Byers examined complaints about chicken blood leaking from refrigerated trucks onto highways and chicken manure polluting area creeks near Wampler's huge processing plant in Hardy County. Call Byers at 304-348-1236.

WISCONSIN

► October hearings on the high level nuclear waste storage plan raised some

questions about citizen and media access. Environmental groups complained the state Public Service Commission's decision to base most of the hearings near Wisconsin Electric's Point Beach nuclear plant in mostly rural Manitowoc County made it tougher for concerned citizens to attend, and made it less likely the news media would provide extensive coverage. The PSC rejected a request to hold more meetings in Milwaukee, saying the public and reporters did follow the Manitowoc hearings closely.

► Environmental reporter Don Behm earned above-the-fold treatment in the Sunday, Nov. 13, Milwaukee Journal for his look at fish consumption advisories in the Great Lakes Region. State advisories can offer inadequate advice on the risks of eating tainted species. For more information or copies of the piece, contact Behm at (414) 224-2000.

► With Exxon planning a large mine in northern Wisconsin, the state's largest business group offered reporters an excursion to a small existing mine owned by Kennecott at Ladysmith. The original invitation from the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce included a free bus ride and lunch. But as of press time, the bus and the lunch had been dropped.

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