

SEJ Journal

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Markets beckon abroad Are environmental industries missing the boat?

By PERRY BEEMAN

The sale of electric buses and time-release water overseas could be early signs of a coming boom in international trade in environmental technology. But one study group says U.S. industries are not picking up on the possibilities.

A recent report by the National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament contends that the U.S. is spending too much time and money promoting the sale of arms and not enough on export opportunities for environmental technology such as renewable energy and clean cars.

Authors Miriam Pemberton and Michael Renner, in the report "A Tale of Two Markets: Trade in Arms and Environmental Technologies," found

that the environmental-technology export market is \$45 billion, compared with a \$32 billion arms-export market.

Prospects for environmental technology are far brighter than those for arms exports, Pemberton and Renner wrote. They took the government to task for spending 12 dollars to promote arms sales for every dollar spent on envirotech initiatives. Yet the arms and envirotech exports each support about the same number of jobs, 350,000, the report said.

In addition, Pemberton and Renner wrote, one dollar of U.S. taxpayers' money brings in two dollars from arms export revenues. Each buck of tax going to the envirotech market brings back \$25 from that market, the report said.

The authors laud the Clinton

Administration for writing a billion dollars into the 1999 budget to help environmental technology, but maintain it would be difficult to move a \$9 trillion economy with that much cash. The commission calls itself a non-profit, non-partisan research and public education organization dedicated to educating the public on the need and the means for an orderly transfer of military resources to civilian use.

The issue would make good fodder for a "Crossfire"-type TV program, but there's little debating that the markets are there for the right product. In the past few years, envirotech companies large and small have broken into new global arenas.

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First Heinz Fellow shares experiences

Reporting from Africa

By CHRIS BOWMAN

Four years ago I shared a blissful year as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard with two dozen journalists from around the world. Some, like Barbara Cieszewska who covers environmental issues for the Polish business daily *Rzeczpospolita*, had met challenges I've never faced as an environmental reporter for *The Sacramento Bee*.

The imposition of martial law in the 1980s forced Cieszewska out of the newsroom and into a secretive double life. In the daytime she was a seamstress raising two girls. At night she reported for the underground press under constant threat of arrest.

Hearing such stories made me realize that I had a lot to learn, professionally and personally. I decided that I wanted to work somewhere abroad where journalists are seriously challenged and environmental conditions are truly critical.

My chance came last summer when I won the inaugural Senator John Heinz Fellowship, designed to combine the training of overseas journalists with reporting on international environmental issues. Under terms of the fellowship, the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) in Washington, D.C. would post one U.S. journalist per year for up to

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Realigned board more effective

Fewer committees, new duties expected to boost SEJ programs

Kevin Carmody, who's been on the SEJ board since the organization began, had turned pale from fatigue. "Are you OK?" someone asked.

Carmody hadn't slept the night before. He'd worked till 2:00 A.M., then come home to find his new daughter awake. Then he climbed onto a plane a few hours later for a SEJ board meeting. Now he sat in a meeting room in Kansas City, his face as white as the jug of milk behind him.

SEJ vice president David Ropeik, meanwhile, was stuck in Boston, socked in by another New England ice storm. He'd never made it to the board's January meeting, despite a valiant try.

These examples should give you a taste of your board's dedication. Members may sense that the SEJ board devotes much time and effort to the organization. But I doubt that they realize how much.

Your board, if afflicted by anything, suffers from wanting to do too much. Wanting to do a lot is not always a bad thing. Over the years, SEJ has achieved more than its founders ever thought it might. Each year, we pull off a marvelous national conference. We've topped 1,000 members. We've launched a variety of successful programs, including this journal. And we attract thousands of dollars in foundation funds each year to help us pursue our mission.

But the board had come to Kansas City to assess the board's effectiveness, and to address any problems identified in that assessment. Kansas City consultant John Deadwyler was hired to help in the task.

Also high on the board's priority list for the Kansas City retreat was jump-starting new fund-raising initiatives for the organization and addressing SEJ's financial future. One question: How could SEJ finally build a healthy endowment that might carry us through the normal ebbs and flows of relying on foundation dollars?

Out of the day-long retreat, which was followed by a three-hour board meeting on Sunday morning, came a number of new efforts that should help the SEJ board achieve more. Here's a sampling:

Every time an idea or opportunity came our way, we used to form a committee. We had so many committees (15) that

we couldn't even fit a meeting of each one into any given year.

Now we'll have just five committees. Three of them are specified in the SEJ bylaws as central to our governance: executive, finance, and membership. Those three will remain, although the finance committee will become the finance/fundraising committee. Under it, the idea of an SEJ endowment will be explored this year.

Report from the society's president



By
Mike
Mansur

Among the many non-governance committees that we once had, we kept the future national conference sites committee, which is essential if SEJ is to continue finding the right place to hold our annual event that consumes about half of the SEJ budget each year.

Under a new program committee, the SEJ board will place its key program initiatives for the year. This year they include: Improved outreach to editors and newsrooms, academics, and students; finding and developing new volunteers and future leaders; and exploring new publications. There are also a number of current programs the committee must oversee.

The SEJ first vice president will assume a new role on the board, that of program committee chair. The SEJ bylaws state that the first vice president will step into the president's spot if the president resigns. But previously, the board had not formally given the position any other duties. The new role for the first vice president will begin after board officers are elected at the next SEJ national conference in September at UCLA.

This year you should also see a concerted effort to recruit more members to SEJ. Membership committee chair Jim Bruggers has drafted a plan that includes these initiatives:

- Offer a one-year reduced-fee membership to members of other journalism organizations. We expect to propose this in April to the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Council of Presidents.

- Launch a "member-get-a-member" campaign. We'll begin by asking board members, regional coordinators, and other prominent SEJ volunteers to recruit at least two new members.

- Offer a half-priced, one-year membership to persons who join before July 1999. Former members will not qualify.

- Sponsor a member. Members can contribute the dues for someone in a smaller media outlet that can't afford the membership.

I used to think naively that if SEJ went about its business and did it well, members would flock to us. For a time, that worked. But in today's hectic world, SEJ has to do a better job of making itself known and recruiting new members.

I'd personally like to invite every SEJ member to recruit a friend or colleague, making sure they're qualified for SEJ membership. If you do, let us know and we'll make sure you're given credit in whatever recruitment initiatives are launched this year.

SEJ will also need new leaders. In placing a priority on this effort, the SEJ board plans a leadership retreat similar to the one held at the University of Colorado in Boulder in 1996. It will take place in Montana, about the same time that Frank Allen will hold his High Country Institute for editors. (See opposite page.)

An SEJ task force led by executive director Beth Parke and board member Peter Thomson is developing a way to recruit and select about a dozen SEJ members to this retreat in late-June and early July. Please watch for details on the SEJ listserv and don't hesitate to contact Beth, Peter, or myself about persons—including yourself—who you think should be encouraged to take a leadership position in SEJ. ♦



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

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Leadership retreat planned

SEJ will be inviting a small group of members to gather this summer on the campus of the University of Montana in Missoula to talk about what might lie ahead for SEJ and environmental journalism over the next five years. Activities at the Leadership Retreat July 1-3 will explore challenges and opportunities for better reporting on the environment and new ideas for the future work of SEJ.

Participants will also spend an evening with a small group of editors who will be in the neighborhood finishing up a week-long expedition with the Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources, led by Frank Allen.

Attendance at the SEJ's group will be determined through a competitive application process established by a task force of the SEJ board. Lodging, meals, and airfare subsidy will be provided. Spouses and partners are welcome, but at their own expense.

Members who have had some experience with organizing SEJ regional conferences, leading panels or tours for SEJ national conferences, or contributing to *SEJournal* are especially encouraged to apply. But SEJ planners would like to hear from any member with ideas and enthusiasm to contribute. Contact the SEJ office for details. Applications are due March 31 and invitations will be announced in April.

Letter

To the editor:

I enjoyed reading Leora Broydo's recent *SEJournal* article, "USDA seeds would make crops sterile." Certainly the creation of so-called "terminator genes" that would render the seeds useless after one growing season is controversial. It would end long-time seed-saving practices employed by producers to save costs.

The controversy echoes a similar one that occurred in the 1930's with the arrival of corn hybrids—seeds bred with higher-yielding traits but whose progeny were sterile. What producers found was that the corn hybrids were so superior in yield and other characteristics that they more than made up the additional cost of having to buy seed every year. Nearly 100 percent of the corn crop today is hybrid.

Also, nearly 83 percent of all the soybeans planted in the U.S. in 1998 were new seed, not saved seed from last year's crop, according to David Tugend, vice president of client services with Doane Marketing Research in St. Louis. That tells you something about the desirability of getting new seed.

To what extent the trade-off in cost is worth it remains to be seen. And certainly there are questions as to the effects all this will have in developing countries. But it isn't a given that all seeds will eventually contain the "terminator" technology.

It's hardly shocking that a seed/chemical company, or any business for that matter, would spend millions on a new product then expect customers to pay for it. One thing that is certain is that this type of technology, like the genetic enhancements to the crops themselves, will continue. The genies don't generally go back into their bottles; we just learn to benefit from the positives and manage the negatives.

—Des Keller, Business Editor
Progressive Farmer magazine

Ranking NGOs: SEJ members list likes and dislikes

By PAUL ROGERS

Environmental organizations trying to win the attention and respect of journalists covering the environment beat might want to consider some advice: Don't hang as many banners from smokestacks. Do your science homework before turning on the bullhorn. And leave the movie stars at home.

Those are three of the leading themes that emerged from a recent informal survey of the Society of Environmental Journalists.

In the anonymous survey, reporters on the SEJ listserv ranked The Nature Conservancy, the button-downed king of land trusts based in Arlington, Va., as the most effective and most credible environmental group in a list of 15 of America's largest environmental outfits.

Coming in a near second was the Environmental Defense Fund, a New York group known for its lawsuits and advocacy of economic incentives on issues including emissions trading, global warming, and toxic chemical reduction.

At the bottom of both the credibility and the effectiveness lists were Earth First! and Greenpeace, two groups known for their high-visibility protests.

Bottom line: Reporters seem to respect groups that back up claims with significant amounts of scientific research, and those striving to build coalitions with business, government, and academia. Those groups that are the most confrontational, the most theatrical, and the most militant seem to be held in lower regard by the press, the survey found.

Lights, camera, no action? Asked if they would be more or less likely to attend a news conference if the environmental organization hosting it included a movie star (Woody Harrelson, Ted Danson, and Robert Redford are regulars), a resounding 63 percent of reporters said they would be less likely to attend; 9 percent said more likely, and 28 percent said it would make no difference.

I conducted the survey in December as fodder for a classroom talk I gave at the University of California-Berkeley School of Natural Resources. It drew responses from 35 SEJ members. While that wasn't a sweeping, scientific poll of SEJ members' attitudes, it did seem to provide a useful snapshot of views.

With some exceptions, most responses were surprisingly similar. Reporters from major urban newspapers often espoused similar opinions as reporters from smaller newspapers and broadcast outlets.

Asked for example, what annoys them the most about the environmental movement, reporters gave the following sampling of answers:

- "Inaccuracy and exaggeration."
- "Willingness to act without data. Emotion-based."
- "Incessant self-righteousness."
- "Overblown rhetoric."
- "Holier-than-thou attitude... inability to see more than one side of an issue. Stunts like living in a tree for a year. Hysterical screaming about an issue."
- "The tendency to characterize some journalists as biased because the journalist doesn't completely embrace their view-

point (which really isn't our job).

- "A general unwillingness to face the larger ethical and philosophical implications of their issues and positions (e.g., the Sierra Club and population growth)."
- "They are always so willing to believe anything that supports their beliefs and so ready to discount what contradicts their beliefs."

Among the answers to the question: "What do you respect the most about the environmental movement?" were the following:

- "Fighting battles against incredible odds."
- "They're still not in it for the money, which does more to establish moral authority and credibility than anything else."
- "The dedication of people."
- "Public spirit."
- "Perseverance, persistence, and more perseverance."
- "Attempts at making public agencies accountable."

- "Groups that state their facts objectively and with the least emotional righteousness."

- "Get away from D.C., New York, or San Francisco and the people involved, no matter how misguided, or agenda-driven, are truly concerned about the welfare of future generations. They are not selfishly driven."

And finally, to the question: "What could the environmental movement do to increase its credibility with you?"

- "Support their positions with facts, not rhetoric."
- "Stop polarizing every issue to sell memberships."
- "No more bull, alarmism, or posturing. Makes them sound like the House Judiciary Committee."
- "Lower the volume of some rhetoric, double-check those allegations and facts. Acknowledge uncertainty, and that there aren't always bad guys."
- "Figure out how to build coalitions."
- "Not much. It's the other side that has the credibility problems."
- "Be completely honest, even about their own work. Many have done this once I have gotten to know them better."
- "A willingness to discuss the relative merits of the other side... I am convinced there would be more and better coverage of environmental issues if there was less confrontation and more focus on the issues behind the issue."
- "Drive nothing but Geos."

On the rankings, journalists were asked to assign each group two scores on a scale from 1 to 10—for both credibility and effectiveness—with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the top score.

Rounding out the list of most credible, after The Nature Conservancy (7.7) and EDF (7.2), were (in order): Natural Resources Defense Council (7.0), League of Conservation Voters (6.8), World Wildlife Fund (6.8), Sierra Club (6.7), Audubon Society (6.5), National Wildlife Federation (6.5), Center for Marine Conservation (6.4), Wilderness Society (6.2), Defenders of Wildlife (5.7), Public Interest Research Groups (5.4), Ducks Unlimited (5.3), Greenpeace (4.7) and Earth First! (3.2)

The effectiveness scores showed that after The Nature Conservancy (7.8) and EDF (7.1), were (in order): the Sierra Club (7.0), Natural Resources Defense Council (7.0), World Wildlife Fund (6.8), League of Conservation Voters (6.8), Sierra Club (6.7), Audubon Society (6.5), National Wildlife Federation (6.5), Center for Marine Conservation (6.4), Wilderness Society (6.2), Defenders of Wildlife (5.7), Public Interest Research Groups (5.4), Ducks Unlimited (5.3), Greenpeace (4.7) and Earth First! (3.2)

(Continued next page)





Ohio native **Dale Willman** is moving back home—sort of. The former environmental correspondent for *CNN Radio* has become the midwest editor for *National Public Radio*. Willman returns to NPR where he had been a newscaster before becoming the host of Monitor Radio's "Early Edition."

Bruce Ritchie is looking forward to covering western issues as the new environmental reporter for *The Press-Enterprise* in Riverside, Calif. Ritchie got a taste of the West as a Ted Scripps Fellow in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He is excited by the paper's "strong commitment to in-depth projects and computer-assisted reporting." Before the fellowship, Ritchie was the environmental reporter for the *Gainesville Sun*.

Ritchie will have big shoes to fill. He has taken the job vacated by SEJ board member **Gary Polakovic**. Polakovic is heading to a desk in the Ventura County office of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Moving up the editorial ladder at *Chemical Week* is **Peter Fairley**, promoted from Washington bureau chief to senior editor for Technology and Environment. While he will write the occasional feature, he'll spend most of his days editing reporters based in London, New York, and Washington. The new position takes him closer to his first love—science.

For the fourth year in a row, **Bill Hinchberger** has been elected president of the Association of Foreign Correspondents in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Hinchberger, a freelance writer, says covering environmental issues in Brazil has one big drawback—statistics and back-

ground data are hard to come by. Hinchberger says that means reporters must work extra hard just getting story ideas ready to pitch.

Once again, environmental reporters were honored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at their Annual Meeting in Anaheim, Calif. in January. *National Public Radio* science

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

reporter **David Baron** took top honors in the radio category for "Montserrat Volcano Science." The report placed the listener at the scene of the volcanic eruption on the Caribbean Island of Montserrat and offered a clear explanation of volcano science. This is Baron's third AAAS award, an achievement matched by only a handful of other journalists.

John McQuaid, **Mark Schleifstein**, **Lynne Jensen**, **Andrew Boyd**, and **Scott Threlkeld** of the *Times-Picayune* in New Orleans won the competition in the large newspaper category for an exhaustive report capturing the drama behind the battle against the Formosan termite, which is threatening homes and historic architecture throughout the South.

Florida Today reporters **Robyn Suriano** and **Todd Halvorson** captured the prize in the small newspaper category by explaining the risks associated with NASA's Cassini space probe.

The prize in the magazine category went to **Mark Schoofs** of the *Village*

Voice for his seven-part series on the scientific advances and ethical considerations of genetic engineering.

Public television's *NOVA* broadcast "Warnings from the Ice," which gave a clear explanation of scientific concepts involved in climate change research on the west Antarctic Ice Sheet, won in television broadcast.

Deborah Nelson, **Jim Simon**, **Eric Nalder**, and **Danny Westneat** of the *Seattle Times* won the John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism for "Trading Away the West." The six-part series examined the swaps of public land for private land in which the public interest is shortchanged.

Two honorable mentions were also announced. **Tom Knudson** and **Nancy Vogel** of the *Sacramento Bee* were honored for their report on problems with the nation's flood control program.

Houston Chronicle reporter **Jim Morris** was also mentioned for his investigation of worker health problems at vinyl chloride plants and the industry's efforts to contain evidence that the chemical caused cancer. The John B. Oakes Award is administered by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Moving up in the journalism world? Finally selling that book to a publisher? Taking some time off to study? Changing jobs? Send all professional news to George Homsy at ghomsy@world.std.com, Fax: (617) 868-8659, Tel: (617) 520-6857, Address: Living on Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

NGOs...(continued)

Wildlife Fund (6.7), Audubon Society (6.4), National Wildlife Federation (6.3), Center for Marine Conservation (6.1), League of Conservation Voters (6.0), Wilderness Society (5.9), Public Interest Research Groups (5.6), Defenders of Wildlife (5.4), Ducks Unlimited (5.1), Greenpeace (5.0) and Earth First! (4.1).

Noteworthy were two groups, the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters. The Sierra Club won high marks for effectiveness (7.0), but ranked lower on credibility (6.7). This could be due to the fact that it is one of the nation's oldest and best-known environmental organizations and holds significant influence in the halls of political power. At the same time, some recent Sierra Club positions, such as advocating an end to all logging on public lands and draining Glen Canyon Dam, have been

criticized as too extreme.

Similarly, the League of Conservation Voters scored well on credibility (6.8), but lower on effectiveness (6.0). This might be because the group takes empirical surveys of key votes by members of Congress and state legislatures, coming up with yearly scorecards on environmental issues. Yet, in its endorsements, the league overwhelmingly selects Democrats, leading some movers and shakers every year to discount it as more of a Democratic cheerleading organization than a true non-partisan judge of policy.

Thanks to all who participated. Sleep easy. I've thrown out the raw survey results and killed your e-mails from my computer. Your opinions will remain yours alone.

Paul Rogers is the environment writer at the San Jose Mercury News. He is reachable at progers@sjmercury.com



On to LA in '99

Chattanooga draws praise

By JAY LETTO

Southern charm and hospitality did not go unnoticed as the University of Tennessee and the city of Chattanooga drew rave reviews as hosts for the 1998 SEJ National Conference last October. Although comments on evaluation sheets now tabulated were mixed, the conference overall was described as "excellent."

Of 496 who attended the organization's eighth national conference, 221 were SEJ members. For most it was their first trip to the self-proclaimed "sustainable city." Most SEJers obviously

Chattanooga has received probably the most press of any SEJ conference yet.

left impressed by Chattanooga's accomplishments, as the city garnered probably the most press coverage of any SEJ conference yet.

Planning is now under way for the ninth National Conference, hosted by UCLA in Los Angeles, September 16-19. Highlights will include writing seminars at Barbara Streisand's Ranch near Malibu; a plenary session on Hollywood, the Press, and the Environment; and a plenary session on The Environment in the New Millennium. Look for your conference brochure in the mail in April.

This year 32 returned evaluation forms on the '98 conference, including 28 from SEJ members. With the exception of the opening plenary and the "Extremely Undignified Party," which were both generally bombs, Chattanooga may have received the best overall evaluation yet. Where there were criticisms, improvements will be attempted in LA.

Comments were, as usual, mixed. In many cases, it's hard to believe that people are talking about the same event.

For example, the Ted Turner keynote drew this comment in one evaluation: "Stunning, stimulating. A tour de force." Another evaluator wrote: "Positively awful. Was he invited because he has money to give us?"

For the Environmental Justice panel, one wrote: "One of the best SEJ panels I've ever attended. Gary Lee was a fantastic, well-organized moderator." But another wrote: "Not very illuminating. With so much backlash against the environmental justice movement, this was an excellent opportunity to examine the issue in depth, but this panel had flat presentations and not much new information."

Twenty-seven out of 32 evaluators said this is the only national journalists conference they attended in 1998. Attendees liked having the concurrent sessions broken down by Theme Rooms. They complained about low attendance and lack of balance in The Podium theme, however, and it will probably be dropped.

People like the Thursday tours, but as in past years, want more time outdoors and less on the bus or in lecture rooms. The mini-tours consistently get great reviews.

There were several complaints about the conference site being at a different location each day, making it difficult to find sessions. Many wanted more time and information to allow them to explore the city.

For most attendees, the Aquarium was the highlight—especially the jellyfish—and the Sylvia Earle slideshow and dinner were very popular. The concurrent panels received perhaps the most consistent praise of any SEJ conference yet. Attendees particularly liked: Covering Nonprofits, Is Science for Sale?, Pfiesteria Hysteria, Breaking Ground: Reporters Tackle a Sprawling New Beat, Ground Zero in the Hog Wars, Alien Invaders, CEO Forum, and Photojournalism Workshop. Sales of audiotapes of various sessions totaled 211.

For the first time, even the membership meeting took good reviews, perhaps owing to the free food and general good camaraderie at this conference. Still, one person wrote: "Okay, we've got food. Now let's try to get good food."

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

CU takes bids for Scripps Fellowships

Applications are now being accepted from full-time U.S. journalists for the Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Journalism. Five fellows will be chosen to spend the 1999-2000 academic year at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The program is open to print, photo, or broadcast journalists with a minimum of five years' professional experience who are interested in deepening their knowledge of environmental issues. Applicants may include, but are not limited to, general assignment reporters, editors, producers, business writers, environmental reporters, and full-time freelancers. Prior experience in covering the environment is not required. Applicants chosen as fellows must agree to return to their jobs following the fellowship program.

The fellowship covers tuition and fees and pays a \$28,000 stipend for the nine-month academic year, which runs from mid-August to mid-May. The program is made possible by a grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation Ted Scripps Memorial Fund.

Current (1998-99) fellows are David Baron of *National Public Radio*, Boston; Jennifer Bowles of *Associated Press*, Los Angeles; Paula Dobbyn of *KTOO-FM*, Juneau, Alaska; Cate Gilles of the *Navajo Times*, Window Rock, Ariz.; and Todd Hartman of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*.

For information on how to apply see item in Calendar, p.14. ❖

1999 funding for SEJ

SEJ has received grants or pledges of support for 1999 programs from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (\$75,000), the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (\$25,000), the W. Alton Jones Foundation (\$75,000), and the Turner Foundation (\$20,000).

In each case, the amount listed represents the second payment of a two-year grant announced in 1998.

Support for SEJ's 1999 national conference has been pledged by *The Los Angeles Times* (\$20,000) and UCLA (catering, facilities, transportation, and services valued at \$95,000).



Column name change stirs comment

Changing the name of *SEJournal's* "Green Beat" section to "The Beat" launched a raft of comments from SEJ members, on the SEJ listserv and by phone.

The name change was prompted by the comments of a newspaper editor who saw the *SEJournal* for the first time. He assumed from the column headlined "Green Beat" that it was a publication produced by environmental activists. The editor added that after reading "Green Beat" he saw that the copy appeared to be an objective summarizing of environmental stories. But his initial reaction plus similar comments from journalists in the past led *SEJournal* editor Noel Grove to change the name to avoid similar misconceptions.

"...as I see it, changing the name will not turn one environmentally responsible reporter into a raving polluter," said Grove on the listserv and in phone conversations. "But it might guarantee that a number of those who are skeptical about environmental problems take us altogether seriously. In my mind, that justifies the change."

Reactions from members were mixed.

"I don't think changing the name of the column is going to change anyone's opinion of whether environmental reporters are environmentalists," commented Mark Schleifstein of the *New Orleans Times Picayune*. "That's a tag we're going to have to explain away almost every time we talk with either a new environmentalist interview or a new business interview. Deal with it."

Chuck Quirnbach with Wisconsin Public Radio agreed: "I didn't see any sinister problem with 'Green Beat'....the beat is, after all, largely reporting about green issues..pro/con."

"I prefer the term Green Beat," said Rich Williams of the *Nashua* (N.H.) *Telegraph*, "After all, does Police Beat denote bias toward the cops, and Crime Beat bias toward criminals?"

"SEJ's reputation is very important, and as long as I'm a board member I'm going to work to protect that reputation," said Jim Bruggers of the *Contra Costa Times*, who acknowledged that the choice was Grove's but added that it had the backing of several board members. "This seemed like a small change that won't in any way alter the group's mission, and cer-

tainly won't affect how any of us does our jobs. But if we can win over a few more skeptical editors, including those at prestigious news outlets, I say all the better."

"I work in an area with heavy industry and a very active environmental community and work real hard to maintain an "objective" image," offered Mike Dunne of the *Baton Rouge Advocate*. "The word "Green" carries a lot of baggage here (on both sides of the fence). As "The Beat" reporter for Louisiana, I think it helps by dropping it."

Author Phil Shabecoff, founder of *Greenwire* and formerly of the *New York Times*, weighed in: "We ought not let the biases of our editors determine how we think of our beat. One of the reasons SEJ was founded was to fight against the chilling attitudes of media managers who equate covering the environment with being an environmentalist. We need to educate the ignorant, not knuckle under to them. Be not afraid."

Perry Beeman of the *Des Moines Register* disagreed: "I welcome the change to "The Beat." To me, it's just a simple

way to avoid accusations that reporters are taking sides."

Merritt Clifton of *ANIMAL PEOPLE*, in disagreeing with the change, offered a history lesson on use of the word "green" in journalism, concluding with the following: "The green beat is our turf. The political greens are the poachers, should there be any question whatever of who had the name first."

Jim Schwab, American Planning Association, held with the name change: "Dropping the 'Green' from the 'Beat' is a smart move to preserve the sanctity of our own professional identity."

Jay Gourley of the Natural Resources News Service suggested: "If discretion makes the 'War Department' the 'Defense Department' and the 'Green Beat' the 'The Beat', then what can those nitwits at the 'National Cancer Institute' be thinking?"

Stuart Leavenworth of the *Raleigh News and Observer* tossed in a concluding note: "Dang. I wish folks would contribute to the '(Green) Beat' as much as they debate its name."

—Noel Grove

New SEJ members from 11/17/98-2/8/99

ARIZONA

- David Canny (Associate), *Creative Environments*, Tucson

CALIFORNIA

- Cheryl Colopy (Active), *KQED FM News*, San Francisco
- Patricia Murkland (Active), *The Press Enterprise*, Riverside

COLORADO

- Laura Carlson (Active), Colorado Public Radio, Grand Junction
- Barbara Jean Maynard (Academic), Colorado State University, Fort Collins
- Molly Miller (Active), *Mother Earth News*, Fort Collins

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Joel Berg (Active), Fieldston Publications, Inc, *AIR Daily*, Washington
- Roger D. Stone (Associate), *Atlantic Coastwatch*, Washington

HAWAII

- Teresa Dawson (Active), *Environment Hawai'i*, Kailua
- Heidi Kai Guth (Active), *Environment Hawai'i*, Honolulu

IDAHO

- John Roach (Active), Environmental News Network, Ketchum

MAINE

- Peter Salmansohn (Associate), National

Audubon Society, Bremen

MASSACHUSETTS

- Bob Nesson (Active), Nesson Media Boston, Inc.,
- Boyce Rensberger (Acad.), Knight Science Journalism Fellowships, MIT, Cambridge
- Frances Ryan (Academic), Antioch New England Graduate School, Hatfield

MICHIGAN

- Xigen Li (Academic), Michigan State University, East Lansing

MISSOURI

- Terri Baumgardner (Active), Blue Springs

NEW JERSEY

- Sharon Guynup (Academic), New York University, Hoboken

NEW YORK

- Joyce Gramza (Active), Sci & Tech News Network (STN2), Rochester

OREGON

- Robert W. Millis (Academic), Eugene Lang College, Portland

VIRGINIA

- Patricia A. Ware (Active), Bureau of National Affairs, Alexandria

CANADA

- Gordon W. Stewart (Associate), 3 S Group, Victoria, BC

ENGLAND

- Neena Bhandari (Active), Middlesex



What about that man in Nantucket?

Things can't get much worse, than these efforts in verse...

With this column, GABI may be setting a new trend. Maybe the print media's answer to the visual generation is writing all copy in rhyme. Just think of it, the *New York Times* in iambic pentameter. News delivered with an entertainment value to challenge the "Today" show.

In previous columns GABI asked for limericks relating to the environmental beat. Here are a few offerings that made it past the censure board. The rest have been sent to Larry Flynt.

Board member David Ropeik with WCVB-TV in Boston weighed in with a string of limericks relating to the environmental reporting biz:

Why the public relies on the press
Is a mystery, anyone's guess
Our bias is strong
We're too often wrong
And the owners' deep greed is a mess

They don't care what citizens know
Just to make their big bottom line grow
Complete information
On town state or nation
Won't make for a profitable show

Reporters all want the big scoop
The dirtiest, nastiest poop
The big front page score
So our ego can soar
Fairness is out of the loop

The facts that add drama play high
The ones that do not are passed by
The public gets told
In copy so bold

That their world should be making
them cry

And the satellite/internet pace
Slams the news into everyone's face
Without wise reflection
Or thoughtful dissection
Just an endless electronic race

With the truth such a victim of mauling
The public BELIEVES the sky's falling
This bastardization
Of straight information
By the press can be somewhat appalling.

remain anonymous. Wonder why.

A reporter who covered dioxin
Accidentally dined on the toxin
PCBs in the stew
Cut his sperm count to two
Now a test tube's what he keeps his
rocks in.

And that's it for the sparse anthology of printable environmental verse. So we conclude with the following comment:

With the GABI page clearly in hock,
And submissions no longer in stock,
GABI has to conclude
From withholdings so rude
That you all suffer from limerick
block.

Grin & Bare It

Whew! Maybe a little comic relief is in order. This also from David:

The reporter, when naming his source
Got his facts from the mouth of the horse
"How'd you get him to speak?"
Asked his boss with a tweak
"His name's Mr. Ed, boss, of course."

Chris Rigel at headquarters adds a note of sympathy:

Conscientious enviro reporters
Suffer from many disorders
They sift toxic soils
And get rashes and boils
Without editorial supporters

And this, from someone who preferred to

Let's try a new tack. David Ropeik wrote in a previous issue about capsizing in a canoe and having it shown on the evening news. SEJ editor Noel Grove, walking in an alley in Lagos, Nigeria, once had garbage tossed on him from the window of an upstairs apartment. What was your most embarrassing or most uncomfortable moment while on the beat? Think, right now, don't put it off, write it down, and send it to GABI for the next issue.

Any humorous stories that relate to the environmental beat should be submitted by e-mail to Noel Grove at ngrove1253@aol.com, or by regular mail to him at Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 20118.

New foundation gives millions for environment

The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has announced 14 multi-year grants totaling \$10 million to protect and restore the environment and promote the sustainable use of land and other natural resources. Recipients include The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Among projects receiving support will be a new nature education center in Boston; a "Forest Bank" in the Clinch Valley of Virginia to promote sustainable forest management; land

conservation to protect wildlife in the 18-million-acre Greater Yellowstone ecosystem; environmental internships for students at Duke, Michigan, and Yale; and ecosystem research and training for leaders in land use planning in the tri-state New York region.

After her death in 1993, philanthropist Doris Duke left her considerable fortune to the Foundation for use in preserving the environment. This is the second round of grants since it was formed in 1997. ♦

Speakers in MSU lecture series

Honors heaped on four careers

The list of honors and accomplishments goes on and on for four environmental journalists who will speak this semester at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich., as part of the Environmental Journalism Program's spring 1999 lecture series.

The four include two Pulitzer Prize winners, a two-time winner of the Meeman award, and a winner of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" who also wrote a best-selling environmental book. Three are members of SEJ. The lectures are free to the public.

The series began Feb. 15 with SEJ member Mark Schleifstein, who won a Pulitzer in 1997 for a series of articles in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, where he has been a reporter since 1984.

On Monday, March 15, SEJ board member Marla Cone, an environmental writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, will speak at 2:00 P.M. in room 145 of the Communication Arts Building. Cone is a two-time winner of the Edward J. Meeman Award for environmental writing, offered by the Scripps Howard Foundation.

On Friday, March 19, SEJ member Donella (Dana) H. Meadows, co-author of the classic environmental book *The Limits to Growth*, will speak at 10:30 A.M. in room 147 of the Communication Arts Building and at 2:00 P.M. in the Kiva in Erickson Hall.

On Monday, April 19, Gary Cohn, who won the *Baltimore Sun's* 1998 Pulitzer Prize, will speak at 4:00 P.M. in room 145 of the Communication Arts Building.



Mark Schleifstein

Schleifstein was one of three reporters and a photographer who in 1995 and 1996 conducted a 13-month investigation of the future of the world's fisheries. The resulting eight-day, 56-page series entitled "Oceans of Trouble: Are the World's Fisheries Doomed?" won the 1997 Pulitzer for Public Service, the 1997 Sigma Delta Chi Award for Public Service from the Society of Professional

Journalists. The series also was a finalist for the Meeman Award.

Recently, Schleifstein was part of a team of three reporters and two photographers who conducted a year-long investigation into the effects of the Formosan termite and other introduced species on New Orleans and the United States. The five-day, 48-page series, entitled "Home Wreckers: How the Formosan termite is devastating New Orleans," won first place in the 1998 national science-writing contest of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



Marla Cone

three years in a row from the Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism. Her projects include studies of the lingering ecological damage from the pesticide DDT, the spread of toxic algae, and the impact chemical pollutants have had on reproduction and the immune system.

Meadows was originally trained as a scientist, earning a bachelor's degree from Carleton College in 1963 and a Ph.D. in biophysics from Harvard University in 1968. She was part of a team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1972 that produced a global computer model that analyzed world trends affecting the environment. She was the principal author of *The Limits to Growth*, which detailed the model's predictions that population and industrial growth rates were unsustainable and would lead to environmental catastrophe during the next century. The book sold nine million copies and was published in 28 languages.



Donella Meadows

In 1985 she began writing a weekly

newspaper column, "The Global Citizen," which comments on world events from a systems point of view. During 1988 to 1990 she helped develop a 10-part Public Broadcasting Service series called "Race to Save the Planet" at *WGBH-TV* in Boston. She is currently writing a college textbook to accompany the programs as part of an Annenberg/CPB telecourse.

In 1991 she was selected as one of 10 Pew Scholars in Conservation and the Environment. In 1994 she was awarded a five-year MacArthur Fellowship by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She has taught environmental journalism and environmental studies at Dartmouth College since 1972.

Cohn, a journalist for more than 20 years, earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and political science at the State University of New York at Buffalo and completed a year of law school at the University of California at Berkeley. He took a year's leave of absence from law school to work as a reporter and decided on a career in journalism.



Gary Cohn

Cohn has worked for columnist Jack Anderson in Washington, D.C., at the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and since 1993 at the *Baltimore Sun*. He has reported and written investigative articles on issues ranging from corruption inside Philadelphia's largest municipal union to the inability of police to overcome language barriers and solve crimes involving Hispanic farm workers.

In 1997 he co-authored a three-part series for the *Sun* detailing harm to workers and the environment when obsolete ships are dismantled. Entitled "The Shipbreakers," it won the 1998 Pulitzer prize for investigative reporting, a George Polk Award, the Investigative Reporters and Editors Award, the Selden Ring Award for Investigative Journalism, an Overseas Press Club of America and Sigma Delta Chi's first prize for investigative reporting. ♦

Is safety stretching the science?

EPA considers kids and pesticides

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

In the coming months, the Environmental Protection Agency is expected to establish a policy that applies special safety protection for children in the regulation of pesticides. The policy, mandated by Congress, is expected to evolve from agency regulatory practices and from EPA's science-guided risk assessment practices.

Already advocacy groups are taking aim at the emerging policy, and pesticide makers and users voice concern that EPA's interpretation of when to apply the 10-fold (10x) safety factor will make some safe pesticides illegal. Environment and children's health activists say they are concerned EPA will not follow Congress' directions to apply the safety measure broadly.

The scientific evidence to show children are made ill by legal pesticide exposures is lacking. However, some studies in scientific journals show increased incidence of childhood cancers, birth defects, and other childhood illnesses. These illnesses usually are not linked to specific causes, but are measurable changes.

The focus on pesticides and kids comes from a provision that was added to the U.S. pesticide law in 1996 by the Food Quality Protection Act. The provision does not address children's illnesses caused by pesticide misuse or accidents. Rather, it directs EPA to add an extra 10x safety factor to protect children in its computations leading up to setting legal pesticide limits, unless reliable scientific information is available to prove the extra protection is not needed. Safety factors are mathematical values usually applied to toxicological laboratory data to translate the information into a form that is usable for regulation.

"If a pesticide is not safe for children, it will not be used," said Dr. Lynn Goldman, assistant administrator for pesticides and toxics, in a 1997 speech not long after the pesticide law was revised. Under the revised law, EPA must make a positive finding that each pesticide residue is safe for children, Goldman said. Previously, the pesticide law failed to account for the "special vulnerabilities of children," she said. Goldman, a pediatrician, served at EPA from 1993-1998.

Several environmental advocacy

groups have issued studies claiming that after years of EPA's failure to consider pesticide threats to children, the very young are overexposed to chemical pesticides and experience special health risks as a result. In response to the reports, the American Crop Protection Association in October 1998 issued a statement saying it supports the 1996 law's goal of additional protection for infants and children. The manufacturers also have initiated research to determine how all children come in contact with pesticide residues.



Even without a completed policy on how to apply the 10x safety factor and on what constitutes reliable scientific information (the only criteria in the law for skipping the protection), the agency has kept reviewing and approving pesticides and setting legal residue limits. As of

December 1998, EPA said it removed the extra kids' protection in 54 percent of the pesticides cases reviewed, reduced the safety factor from 10 in 26 percent of the cases, and retained the full 10x in about 20 percent of the cases.

Dr. David Wallinga, a senior scientist and physician for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said EPA must not depart from the use of the additional, child-protective 10x factor until the agency has collected enough information about pesticides' toxicities and children's exposures.

Some EPA scientists and science advisors suggest that achieving this public policy goal may be stretching the available science either to its limits or beyond its limits. For example, in July 1998, EPA regulatory scientists asked a panel of non-agency science advisors whether the government is requiring the right kind of toxicological data from manufacturers to determine a pesticide's safety for children. The science advisors did not reach consensus on how to respond, in part because they did not have an EPA review of the usefulness of certain tests.

In response to another question from EPA, the advisors noted that actually measuring the sensitivity of various sub-populations, such as children, may not be "feasible at this time." The advisors also said there would be cases when EPA knows children will be exposed to a pesticide, but that the extra 10x safety factor may not be warranted because children may not be the most sensitive population EPA must protect. One scientist who declined to be identified said another sub-population that may be especially sensitive to chemical exposures is the elderly. Focus on children may shift resources from other larger health threats to other groups, the scientist said.

EPA has sole jurisdiction to determine what pesticides can be safely used on what crops. Through its product registration and licensing process, EPA sets legal pesticide residue levels for each crop.

While there is a clear congressional mandate and there are strong lobbies for the environment and children's health, it is not yet clear what changes to EPA's regulatory practices can be justified by science and which by public opinion. ❖

RESOURCES:

Books: *Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children*, (National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.) 1993; *Similarities & Differences Between Children & Adults*, (International Life Sciences Institute, Washington, D.C.) 1992.

Reports "Putting Children First: Making Pesticide Levels in Food Safer for Infants and Children," Natural Resources Defense Council, April 1998; "The Food Quality Protection Act," American Crop Protection Association; "Overexposed: Organophosphate Insecticides in Children's Food," Environmental Working Group, January 1998.

Groups: American Crop Protection Association, <http://www.acpa.org>; Environmental Protection Agency, <http://www.epa.gov>; Environmental Working Group, <http://www.ewg.org>; National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, <http://www.ncamp.org>; Natural Resources Defense Council, <http://www.nrdc.org>.

Going online to study nuclear waste

By MARY MANNING AND STEVE KANIGHER

Last year we collaborated on a five-day series appearing from May 31 until June 4 in the *Las Vegas SUN* on the federal government's Yucca Mountain Project, slated to be the nation's first repository for high-level nuclear wastes from commercial nuclear power plants.

We estimate that it might have taken us more than six months to research our project by traditional reporting methods. But by using the Internet and other computer research techniques, we were able to fully investigate the politics and the science at Yucca Mountain, 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas, in about three months.

We contacted and interviewed scientists by e-mail, researched contractors and other companies by looking at web sites, and examined patterns of political contributions by running queries on publicly available databases over the Internet. The series examined "Science vs. Politics" in its look at both the scientific issues and political maneuvers that made Yucca Mountain the only U.S. site under study by the federal government as a high-level nuclear waste repository.

Background information on politicians, pro-nuclear lobbyists, and anti-nuclear groups were all available at various web sites through one of five dedicated computers available in the *SUN*'s newsroom. We started with the names of major political players such as Senators Frank Murkowski and Larry Craig, who are leading the congressional pack that wanted to put nuclear waste in Nevada.

Kanigher did his initial research on where political funds went and to whom by exploring the Internet. He tracked campaign contributions, nuclear political action committee (PAC) monies, and how much money had been spent on the nuclear waste management project.

By starting with individual senators and congressman, we found nuclear PACs that contributed to their campaigns, then tracked the nuclear funds through Federal Election Commission records, all available on the web.

For example, after following the trail of nuclear industry funds into congressional pockets from initial searches conducted on the web, Kanigher sent the computer-generated information and his questions to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan congressional watchdog group in Washington, D.C. For a \$75 fee, the center analyzed the information and offered a detailed road map of how the nuclear PACs spent their money.

Among other things, our research showed that 66 PACs representing operators and manufacturers of nuclear power plans gave nearly \$10 million to congressional candidates between the 1994 election cycle and March 1, 1998. The top 10 House recipients sat on either the Commerce or Appropriations committees.

The Center for Responsive Politics provided invaluable assistance by phone, fax, and e-mail. The main phone number is (202) 857-0044 to get a reporter started. The website is <http://www.crp.org/>. Another helpful organization is the Federal Election Commission, main phone number (202) 219-3440. The FEC's data is available on the web at <http://www.tray.com/fecinfo/>.

While Kanigher studied political giving, Manning tracked scientific leads and research articles. She corresponded with scientists in New Mexico, Texas, and Siberia on the issue of deep, hot water that may be rising inside Yucca Mountain and could disrupt the engineered repository.

"With e-mail interviews, the questions can be precise, and follow-up questions and clarifications can be completed in one day, even in Siberia, rather than playing telephone tag or using snail-mail over days," Manning said.

The Internet also has web pages for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the agency in charge of licensing a nuclear repository, as well as the independent scientific panel called the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board. The NRC's web site is <http://www.nrc.gov/> and you can e-mail the NWTRB at info@nwtrb.gov.

Many of the private companies working at Yucca Mountain have web sites as well. We visited some to glean information about their operations. For example, the biggest private contractor is TRW Environmental Safety Systems Inc., a subsidiary of TRW Inc. of Cleveland. With more than \$251 million in contracts this fiscal year, the company is in charge of the engineering, design, and management of the Yucca Mountain project. To check TRW's background, see its filings in the Securities and Exchange Commission's EDGAR database at <http://www.sec.gov/>.

Both of us still spent plenty of time on the telephone and conducting in-person interviews to fill in gaps left from information plucked from cyberspace. While the *SUN* encourages all its reporters to use the Internet as much as possible, we want to warn journalists and editors that computer research is a tool, not the end-all for getting the story. "Besides computer-assisted searches, you have to do a lot of interviews and use other sources to verify information," Kanigher said.

Mary Manning and Steve Kanigher are reporters for the Las Vegas SUN newspaper.

Tips for Internet searches:

- Start with something you know—a person's or company's name, place, or a key word from your project. Enter those terms into a search engine, such as Yahoo or AltaVista. This will lead to major web sites linked to your original request and a wealth of information, much more than you need. But a pattern of information will emerge.
- Look carefully at how often each web site you visit is updated. Some sites are so out-of-date they are better as historical sources, not news sources.
- Once you have computer-generated information, double-check it with other sources. Consider the Internet one valuable source. You still need to tie up loose ends through other sources.

Mary Manning: manning@lasvegassun.com
Steve Kanigher: steve@lasvegassun.com

FEBRUARY

28-March 3. **Generating a Cleaner Tomorrow: National Hydropower Association Annual Conference** (with sessions on habitat conservation, role in reducing carbon emissions' relicensing, and the safety of aging dams). Washington, DC. Contact: John McCarville, NHA, 122 C St., NW, 4th Fl., Washington, DC 20001. Ph: (202) 383-2530; Fax: (202) 383-2531; Web: www.hydro.org

28-March 4. **High Level [Radioactive] Waste, Low Level Wastes, Mixed Wastes and Environmental Restoration Conference** (with sessions on groundwater and soil contamination, naturally occurring radioactive materials, and new waste-treatment/containment technologies). Tucson. Contact: WM Symposia, Inc., P.O. Box 13202, Tucson, AZ 85732-3202. Ph: (520) 292-5652; Fax: (520) 696-0487; E-mail: info@wmsym.org; Web: www.wmsym.org.

MARCH

8-11. **Triennial International Oil Spill Conference** (with sessions on such topics as environmental tradeoffs of spill response alternatives, tracking spills, evaluating the role and toxicity of dispersants, bioremediation of oiled ecosystems, and efficacy of burning for cleanup). Seattle. Contact: Susan Hahn, American Petroleum Institute, 1220 L. St., NW, Washington DC 20005. Ph: (202) 682-8118; Fax: (202) 682-8115; Web: www.iosc.org.

8-11. **Contaminated Soils and Water: Analysis, Fate, Environmental and Public Health Effects, and Remediation Conference** (with sessions on environmental forensics, biological remediation using garden plants, special problems at naval facilities, and cleaning up hydrocarbons from soils and water). Oxnard, Calif., Contact: Association for the Environmental Health of Soils, 150 Fearing St., Amherst, MA 01002. Ph: (413) 549-5561; Fax: (413) 549-0579; Web: www.aehs.com.

10. **The World Bank: Lending for the Environment.** Washington, DC. Contact: Sarah Cambridge, World Bank. Ph: (202) 473-2272; Fax: (202) 522-7131; E-mail: Scambridge@worldbank.org.

14-18. **Society of Toxicology annual meeting.** New Orleans. Contact: SOT, 1767 Business Center Dr., Ste. 302, Reston, VA 20190-5332. Ph: (703) 438-3115; Fax: (703) 438-3313; E-mail: sothq@toxicology.org/meet.html.

20. **Annual International Wildlife Law Conference** (with case studies on controlling trade in endangered species, legal efforts to conserve tigers, problems with regional treaties). Washington, DC. Contact: David Fabre, Detroit College of Law, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48828. E-mail: favre@pilot.msu.edu or Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy: jiwlp@earthling.net.

21-26. **American Chemical Society spring national meeting** (with sessions on such topics as application of green chemistry to

household and industrial products, research on tap water contaminants, engineering plants for pest resistance, and a mock trial asking "Are pesticides endocrine disrupters?"). Anaheim. Contact: Nancy Blount, ACS News Office, 1155 16th St., NW, Washington DC 20036. Ph: (202) 872-4451; Fax: (202) 872-4370; E-mail: n_blount@acs.org.

28-31. **Electromagnetic Fields Science Seminar** (with presentations on the latest human and animal epidemiology, and discussion of whether "prudent avoidance" is warranted). Denver. Contact: Robert S. Banks Associates, P.O. Box 141049, Minneapolis, MN 55414-6049. Ph: (612) 623-4600; Fax: (612) 623-3645; E-mail: vlprock@rsba.com.

APRIL

7-9. **Hydrogen: Setting the Standard for a Global Energy System** (the annual meeting of the National Hydrogen Association). Vienna, VA. Contact: Taneen Carvell, Meeting Planner, NHA, 1800 M St. NW, Ste. 300, Washington DC 20036-5802. Ph: (202) 223-5547; Fax: (202) 223-5537; E-mail: nha@ttcorp.com; Web: www.ttcorp.com/nha/am99.htm.

11-14. **Renewable and Advanced Energy Systems for the 21st Century.** Maui, Hawaii. Contact: Dawna Rosenkrantz, Texas A&M University, Energy Systems Laboratory, Room 053 WERC, College Station, TX 77843-3581. Ph: (409) 847-8950; Fax: (409) 862-8687; E-mail: drosen@esl.tamu.edu; Web: www.mengr.tamu.edu/ASME/Maui.htm.

12-15. **Power Plant Impacts on Aquatic Resources Conference** (sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute). Atlanta. Contact: Barbara Klein, Press Coordinator, EPRI, P.O. Box 10412, Palo Alto, CA 94303-9964. Ph: (800) 313-3774; Fax: (650) 855-2121; E-mail: askepri@epri.com; Web: www.epri.com.

15-17. **Communities Working for Wetlands conference** (with case studies of community-based partnerships and build-your-own-wetlands projects). San Francisco. Contact: Terrene Institute, 4 Herbert St., Alexandria, VA 22305. Ph: (703) 548-5473; Fax: (703) 548-6299; E-mail: terrconf@erols.com; Web: www.terrene.org.

19-22. **In Situ and On-Site Bioremediation: An International Symposium.** San Diego. Contact: Joan Purvis, The Conference Group, 1989 W. Fifth Ave., Ste. 5, Columbus, OH 43212-1912. Ph: (800) 783-6338; Fax: (614) 488-5747; E-mail: conference-group@compuserve.com; Web: www.battelle.org/environment/er/biosymp.html

19-22. **Symposium on Environmental Toxicology and Risk Assessment** (with sessions on such topics as endocrine disrupters, aquatic toxicology, PCBs, logging, and measuring cultural impacts of risk on Native Americans). Seattle. Contact: Fred Price, Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 8283 Greensboro Dr., McLean, VA 22102. Ph: (703) 902-3152; Fax: (703) 902-3356; E-mail: fred@bah.com.

19-30. **Seventh Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.** New York City. Contact: Commission on Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2 United Nations Plaza, 22nd Fl., New York, NY 10017. Fax: (212) 963-1267; E-mail: dsd@un.org; Web: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd7guid.htm.

22-23. **Canadian Pollution Roundtable** (featuring presentation of case studies on how pollution-prevention attempts worked). Vancouver, BC. Contact: Sue McKinlay, Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, 100 Charlotte St., Sarnia, Ontario, Canada N7T 4R2. Ph: (519) 337-3423; Fax: (519) 337-3486; E-mail: c2p2@sarnia.com; Web: c2p2.sarnia.com/conferences/CP2RT/intro.html.

26-30. **International Zebra Mussel & Aquatic Nuisance Species Conference** (with presentations on dozens of noxious non-native species, including the green and Chinese-mitten crabs, Eurasian ruffe, hydrilla, and alligator weed that cause significant damage to marine and freshwater environments). Duluth. Contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, Conference Administrator, 1027 Pembroke St., East, Ste. 200, Pembroke, Ontario, Canada K8A 3M4. Ph: (800) 868-8776; Fax: (613) 732-3386; E-mail: profedge@renc.igs.net; Web: www.zebraconf.org

MAY

2-5. **Sustainable America National Town Meeting** (organized by the President's Council on Sustainable Development). Detroit. Contact: Sustainable America National Town Meeting, 7010 Little River Turnpike, Ste. 300, Annandale, VA 22003. Ph: (888) 333-6878; E-mail: ntm@getf.org; Web: www.sustainableamerica.org.

3-5. **First International Conference on Indoor Air Health: Impacts, Issues, and Solutions.** Denver. Contact: Wendy Raeder, NSF International Air Health Conf., 3475 Plymouth Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Ph: (734) 769-8010 ext. 205; Fax: (734) 769-0109; e-mail: raeder@nsf.org.

4-6. **Technologies to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Engineering/Economic Analyses of Conserved Energy and Carbon**(an international workshop sponsored by the International Energy Agency in Paris). Washington DC. Contact: John Newman, IEA. Ph: (33)1-4057-6715; Fax: (33)1-4057-6749; E-mail: john.newman@iea.org.

10-12. **Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change to Water Resources of the United States** (sponsored by the American Water Resources Association). Atlanta. Contact: AWRA, Atlanta Specialty Conference, 950 Herndon Parkway, Ste. 300, Herndon, VA 20170-5531. Ph: (703) 904-1225; Fax: (703) 576-8643; E-mail: awrahq@aol.com; Web: www.awra.org/meetings/Atlanta99/call.htm.

10-14. **International Conference on Incineration and Thermal Treatment Technologies** (with sessions on such topics as innovative emissions-control technologies, emerging technologies to treat wastes thermally, using wastes for energy, and envi-

ronmental justice implications of waste treatment technologies). Orlando. Contact: Lori B. Cohen, University of California, EH&S, 300 University Tower, Irvine, CA 92697-2725. Ph: (949) 824-5859; Fax: (949) 824-1900; E-mail: lbarnow@uci.edu; Web: www.abs.uci.edu/depts/ehs/

23-27. **Wilderness Science in a Time of Change** (organized by the US Forest Service's Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute). Missoula. Contact: David N. Cole, ALWRI, USDA Forest Service, Missoula, MT 59812. Ph: (406) 542-4199; E-mail: Cole_David/rmrs_missoula@fs.fed.us; Web: www.umt.edu/wildscience.

26-28. **Combustion and Global Climate Change: Canada's Challenges and Solutions.** Calgary, Alberta. Contact: CC'99 Coordinator, Canadian Environment Industry Association, 350 Sparks St., Ste. 208, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8. Ph: (613) 236-6222; Fax: (613) 236-6850; E-mail: info@ceia-acie.ca; Web: www.combustion-net.com/cc99cfp.htm.

SELECT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

March 21-25. **Inter-American Dialog on Water Resources: Facing the Emerging Water Crisis in the 21st Century.** Panama City. Contact: Centro del Agua del Tropico Humedo para America Latina y el Caribe, Calzada de Amador, Casa 152-A, P.O. Box 87332, Zona 7, Panama, Republic of Panama. Ph: (507) 228-7072; Fax: (507) 228-3311; E-mail: cathd3@sinfo.net; Web: www2.usma.ac.pa/~cathalac/dialogue3.htm.

May 5-8. **Global Warming: Climate, Environment, and Health for the 21st Century** (with sessions on such topics as strategies for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation of the environmental, role of oceans, managing carbon, and other environmental topics, including mercury pollution, pesticide effects, and environmental conservation). Fujiyoshida Yamanashi, Japan. Contact: GW10 Conference, SUPCON, P.O. Box 5275, Woodridge, IL 60517-0275. Ph: (630) 910-1551; Fax: (630) 910-1561; Web: www.GlobalWarming.net.

May 10-19. **Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands.** San Jose, Costa Rica. Contact: David Peck, Executive Assistant for Communications, convention on Wetlands, rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland. E-mail: dep@hq.iucn.org; Web: ramsar.org/mtg/gbf/announce.html.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

March 1 for the **Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Journalism** at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Five fellows will receive a \$28,000 stipend to spend the next academic year in independent study in a program administered by school's Center for Environmental Journalism. Applicant must have at least five years' professional journalism experience and return to their current jobs at the end of the program. Contact: Center for Environmental Journalism, University of Colorado, Campus Box 287, Boulder, CO 80309-0287. E-mail: cej@stripe.colorado.edu; Web: campuspress.colorado.edu/cej.html

Calendar

March 1 to become one of six **Knight Science Journalism Fellows** for the 1999-2000 academic year at MIT to cover science, medicine, or the environment. Applicants, who must have at least three years' professional experience, will be selected "primarily on the excellence of their work and their potential to have an impact on the public." Fellows will receive a stipend of \$35,000 for the 9-month stint in Cambridge. Contact: Boyce Rensberger, Knight Science Journalism Fellowships, MIT E32-300, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph: (617) 253-3442; Fax: (617) 258-8100; E-mail: boyce@mit.edu; Web: web.mit.edu/ksjf/www/.

March 14 for **Robert Kozik Award for Environmental Reporting**. This competition seeks to reward excellence in environmental reporting on local, national, and international levels in 1998. Print and broadcast journalists will compete for one prize: \$1,000 and a medal. Contact: National Press Club, Office of the General Manager. Ph: (202) 662-8744; E-mail: infocenter@npcpress.org.

April 1 for the **Harry E. Schlenz Medal** for "taking up the banner of the water environment" via some communications endeavor such as journalism, film, or video productions. Only individuals employed principally outside of the water-environment profession are eligible. Contact: Florence Smoot at the Water Environment Federation. Ph: (703) 684-2400; E-mail: fsmoot@wef.org.

May 1 for **National Science Foundation** sponsored visits to Antarctica during the 1999-2000 field season. Visits typically last a week or two, but can go considerably longer, based on the need of the journalist. Reporters or their employers must pay round-trip transportation and accommodation in Christchurch, New Zealand (if traveling to McMurdo or South Pole stations) or to Punta Arenas, Chile (if going to Palmer station). They must also pay for pre-trip visit to NSF headquarters in Washington, DC for planning. NSF provides housing, transportation, food, and cold-weather clothing for journalists while they are in Antarctica. Applicants will be chosen on the basis of their detailed reporting plans, especially those that display background knowledge of the research conducted at these stations. Contact: Mary Hanson, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd, Ste. 1245, Arlington, VA 22230. Ph: (703) 306-1070; E-mail: mhanson@nsf.gov.

June 15 for the **Pew Fellowships in International Journalism**, administered by the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The program will offer 14 journalists intensive travel and study for research involving foreign affairs. The program begins with two months of seminars with experts at SAIS, then five months of travel to research an important international topic or story, then another two-week stint at SAIS to discuss each fellow's findings. Applicants must have at least three years professional experience. The program offers free accommodations at SAIS, a \$2,000 monthly stipend, and expenses for the international travel. Contact: Pew Fellowships Program, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, 1619 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington DC 20036. Ph: (202) 663-7761; Fax: (202) 663-

7762; E-mail: pew@mail.jhuwash.jhu.edu

As soon as possible for the Reuters and International Union for Conservation of Nature Media **Awards for excellence in environmental reporting**. Winner, selected from each of IUCN's eight global regions, will be offered fellowships and training opportunities. A global winner will be selected in late 1999 from the eight and receive a carved trophy. Contact: Javed Ahmad, IUCN, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland. Ph: (41)22-999-0001; Fax: (41)22-999-0010; E-mail: mail@hq.iucn.org or rtrfoundation@easynet.co.uk. ♦

Corrections: In the Fall '98 issue of *SEJournal* (volume 8 No. 3), a story on page 3 on Board election results should have included Marla Cone, *Los Angeles Times*, as having been reelected for a three-year term. Our apologies for the omission.

Two Iowa Beat stories included the wrong email address for ag reporter Dan Zinkand. Try him at iftnews@fyi.com.

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How bad is your worst-case scenario?

By PAUL ORUM

EDITOR'S NOTE: Andrew Brengle reported in the Fall issue of SEJournal that industries are required to describe what could go wrong in handling high-hazard chemicals. Paul Orum now suggests questions to ask companies in covering this issue.

Starting no later than June 21, 1999, some 66,000 facilities that use extremely hazardous substances are required by the Clean Air Act, section 112(r), to disclose to workers and the public what could go wrong in chemical accidents, from the most-likely accidents to worst-case scenarios. The scenarios are part of larger Risk Management Plans, and are typically shown on a map as a worst-case circle or "vulnerability zone" around a facility.

Below are sample questions that every plant manager should be able to answer.

Questions for companies:

- What chemicals do you have on-site that can hurt families where they live, work, or play?
- How many people could be killed or hurt in the worst-case circle around your facility (including in homes, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, office buildings, highways, jails, sports arenas, and shopping malls)?
- How confident can the public be that sensors and alarms will alert it to a chemical release, particularly at night?
- If a release happens, how will people get information to protect their families?
- What if property values go down for those living in the worst-case circle? Will your company negotiate buyouts or otherwise compensate them?
- How much insurance does the company have to cover potential losses within the worst-case release zone? Was it ever denied liability insurance for safety reasons?
- What practical steps are being taken against potential sabotage, such as reducing hazards, widening buffer zones, and increasing site security?
- What steps have been taken to fix "year 2000" computer problems that could cause a release?
- How many victims (including those contaminated) can local firefighters, emergency medical services, and hospitals handle in a worst-case release?
- Is your worst-case scenario distance shorter than EPA's (using EPA's reference table of worst-case dispersion distances)? If so, why?
- Will you put supporting documents in the local library (such as process hazards analyses, offsite consequences analyses, safety audits, and hazard reduction plans)?

Hazard reduction questions:

- What safety changes are planned to reduce chemical hazards? Are you considering:
 - Substituting less hazardous chemicals?
 - Reducing storage quantities and shipping?

- Switching to ambient temperatures and pressures?
- Simplifying processes to anticipate errors?
- Using safer shipping and handling?
- Installing secondary containment?
- Adding automatic sensors and shutoffs?
- Adding devices to neutralize or destroy leaks?
- If so, on what schedule do you plan these changes?
- How much will these changes reduce the worst-case vulnerability zone? By when do you plan to reduce your vulnerability zone to zero?



"Shelter in place" questions

- If you are telling people to "shelter in place," do you have any real-life examples that sheltering works in a major release?
- How long will it take (in minutes) for:
 - you to find a leak?
 - you to decide to report?
 - you to notify the fire department?
 - the fire chief to arrive on-scene?
 - the chief to order protective action?
 - responders to notify the public?
 - workers and neighbors to shelter-in-place?
 - workers and neighbors to evacuate?
 - all of these events added together?
- How long will it take (in minutes) for:
 - a toxic cloud to reach my house (school, library, hospital, etc.)?
 - toxic gases to filter into places where people "shelter in place"?
- Given these time estimates, how big is the zone where neither sheltering nor evacuation will work?

Paul Orum is associated with the Working Group on Community Right-to-Know in Washington, D.C.

Environment scholarships offered for high schoolers

High school seniors in the United States who like to write and are interested in science, nature, and the environment may be eligible for a new \$1,000 scholarship being offered by the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University (MSU).

The annual winner will receive a plaque and a \$1,000 scholarship to attend MSU to study environmental and science journalism. The winner will also be invited to the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association dinner and conference to be held on April 21. They may also work closely with top journalists and educators on research projects at MSU.

The training institute is to be held June 1—5 at the school. Applications must be postmarked by April 1. ❖

New West Tales

Lasso the Wind—Away to the New West
by Tim Egan
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1998
274 pp., \$25 (hardcover)

There's a lot of talk about the "New West" nowadays. Journalists, college professors, and book writers are all taking a swipe at describing how the Old West — the domain of Native Americans, miners, ranchers, and loggers — is quickly giving way to high-tech industries, coffee shops, resort towns for the rich, and rapidly growing cities. The West's vast open spaces, meanwhile, have become a wilderness refuge for hordes of city slickers packing mountain bikes, kayaks, and fly rods.

Review and Interview

Tim Egan, 44, the Seattle bureau chief for *The New York Times*, has weighed into this fuzzy transition-in-the-making with numerous articles about Old West-New West flash points over the last decade. Before moving on to a new post as the *Times*' national roving reporter, Egan took a six-month leave of absence with his family in Tuscany, Italy, to write *Lasso the Wind—Away to the New West*.

As a long-time western journalist myself, I looked forward to reading Egan's book because he has such a marvelous way of casting a broad net around a story line and finding a deeper meaning, one that somehow reflects on America on the whole.



Photo by Marek Zaranski ©

Egan says his training at the *Times* has been helpful in writing an even bigger story in book format. "My editors are always forcing me to look for the larger story," he says. "You have to step outside of your own realm and think about a story as an outsider."

This is Egan's third book since the late 1980s. A Spokane, Wash., native, he went directly from the University of Washington journalism school to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. In 1988, he was working as a contract writer for *The New*



York Times, and got a big break working the Exxon-Valdez oil spill.

"I was on the front page 10 days in a row," he says. "It made me realize there's a huge audience for stories that tell people about the environment and the land. And when a story runs in the *Times*, you can make a big difference."

In writing *Lasso the Wind*, Egan says he tried to expand the historical canvas of the 11-state region. "In the West, we have this short, dinky stapled history," he says. "For a story teller, this is absolutely the frontier."

And so Egan takes readers to explore a number of nifty but obscure case studies that expand the definition of the true West. He goes to "Plymouth Rock West," Acoma, N.M., elev. 7,000 feet, which is "possibly the oldest continuously inhabited city in the United States." He visits Lake Havasu City, Ariz., a town built around the transplanted London Bridge.

Those stories do expand our understanding of the true West. But they don't say much about the West in transition.

Egan delves into plenty of New West issues, however, in a dozen case studies that mix personal experiences with real-life characters and succinct history lessons. He writes about "industrial tourism"—the new supposed economic godsend for communities that relied on boom-and-bust extractive industries—while searching for rock paintings in southern Utah.

He pens a delightful chapter on Las Vegas, a town that came to life from a "melding of technology and sleaze." In Vegas, the biggest boom town in the West, developers and residents guzzle water like there's no tomorrow, a chronic issue that will bite them in the future.

Egan travels to Catron County, N.M., and Joseph, Ore., both well-known sites where ranchers and loggers have enacted county "custom and culture" ordinances in hopes of preserving their way of life. Again, Egan goes beyond the obvious bookends of the debate to something bigger. The debate in Joseph, for instance, moves quickly from loggers hanging two environmentalists in effigy to the Nez Perce tribe receiving a small piece of their original homeland.

He showcases the increasing influence and presence of Latinos by profiling a rodeo scene in Sunnyside, Wash. And he touches on the giant dilemma faced by the Superfund city of Butte, Mont., whose streets, homes and buildings are falling into a giant mile-wide pit full of 30 billion gallons of mining wastes.

It becomes quite clear that Egan has little patience or hope for ranchers in the interior West, suggesting that ostriches and buffalo will replace them. Here Egan's comments smack of an arrogant urban bias. Ostrich and bison ranchers sound interesting, but they account for a tiny percent of the whole. Moreover, if western ranchers go away, subdivisions, trailer parks, and absentee landowners will replace vast pasturelands in dozens of mountain valleys. It'd be the Seattle equivalent of allowing urban sprawl to devour Mount Rainier.

This point underscores a larger issue: Egan never ties his essays together to tell us what the New West trends mean. Maybe he believes it's too early to tell. "It may be easier to lasso the wind than to find a sustaining story for the American West," he says in the introduction. "Still, as storytellers it is our obligation to keep trying."

Lasso the Wind is not the last word on the New West by any means, but it's an important and entertaining contribution to the discussion.
—Stephen Stuebner



Whistleblowers

Science Under Siege: The Politicians' War on Nature and Truth

By Todd Wilkinson

(Forward by David Brower, Introduction by Jim Baca)

Johnson Books, 1998, 363 pp., \$18 (paperback)

Regardless of which "beat" you follow,

a good reporter is supposed to remain skeptical, while striving for deeper understanding. If you follow a particular issue or controversy long enough, you'll begin to develop a deeper understanding not only of the issue, but of the players.

Occasionally that knowledge may cause you to overcome your fundamental skepticism about a particular party to that controversy, to tend to believe or sympathize with one side more than the other.

This is dangerous, dicey ground for journalists. When you believe you have uncovered overwhelming evidence that one side of a controversy is basically credible and well-intentioned, and the other is not, are you then obligated to convey that judgement to your readers? Or should you stick to simply presenting facts with minimal analysis or judgement? Or is there some appropriate middle ground?

Veteran journalist Todd Wilkinson has wrestled with this particular journalistic demon, and opted to take sides with regard to the issue of whistleblowers in our nation's key federal resource-management agencies. In his new book, *Science Under Siege*, Wilkinson unabashedly sympathizes with the whistleblowers he profiles, and holds them to be inherently more credible than the agencies they're fighting.

However, in the prologue to this book Wilkinson reveals that his current perspective was not his starting point:

"Truth be told, at the outset of this journey I had doubts about whistleblowers. I expected to encounter whiners whose stories pressed the limits of believability. Yes, in the beginning I was skeptical. I went to the nation's capital with a view skewed by what I had heard about the people who break rank and question authority because the bureaucracies no longer work.

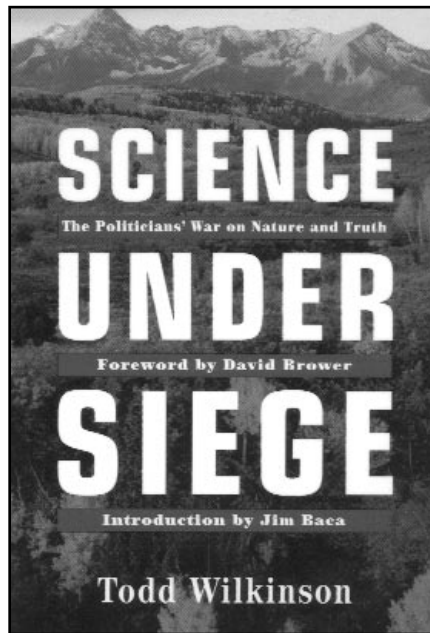
"Maybe you too cling to the same stereotype. Be honest. What kind of person comes to mind when you hear the term whistleblower? Invariably, the pejorative perception of the average whistleblower is of a burned-out, disgruntled, antisocial, troublemaking martyr. Castigated as insubordinate nonconformists, outlaws, and snitches, they are civil servants of whom their superiors say it is best to ignore.

"Don't listen to whistleblowers," a spokesperson for the U.S. Forest Service said. 'They represent the

fringe; they're renegades with a bone to pick,' added a public relations specialist at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

"If you print what they say, it may be difficult for you, Mr. Wilkinson, to get our cooperation on stories you write in the future,' warned another federal flak. [emphasis in original]

"I wondered: If they could threaten me merely for writing about whistleblowers, what were they actually doing [to the whistleblowers themselves]?"



I don't doubt that Wilkinson did not make his decision to side with the whistleblowers lightly. This book thoroughly recounts the facts and events (some of which are quite shocking and Kafkaesque) that led him to this brand of journalism. Based on what this book contains, his research and reporting work seem largely sound. But, in a way, that only deepens the dilemma that this book presents to the environmental journalism community.

More than most beats, the environment beat carries a lot of "advocacy" baggage. More than most beats, we're generally supposed to bend over backwards to present wildly different perspectives and actions as potentially equally credible and appropriate. Many of us take a lot of heat when we neglect those gymnastics.

Although it's possible for scientific data to be interpreted in various—even contradictory—ways, sometimes it can speak pretty clearly. That doesn't always

make reporting easier. Often, it makes it harder, because it challenges us to reconsider the assumptions underlying the news stories we write.

Wilkinson offers some persuasive example of science speaking clearly and then being throttled by politics and bureaucracy.

For instance, Ron Kerbo, chief of cave protection for the National Park Service, worked to demonstrate the importance of karstic systems to the water supply as well as the value of the biodiversity contained in fragile cave ecosystems, only to end up fighting against his own employer and other federal agencies to protect one of the world's largest cave systems from oil and natural gas exploration.

Similarly, former BLM hydrologist Ben Lomeli, who studied southern Arizona's San Pedro river and riparian area, found himself pitted against developers and a local military base who were in denial that water is a limited resource in that arid climate, as well as his own superiors who were loath to anger these local power bases.

The book enumerates quashed studies, direct and implied threats, harassment, transfers, and firings. It includes extensive interviews with whistleblowers as well as officials from the federal agencies they oppose and members of environmental groups as well as representatives of private-sector interests threatened by whistleblower activities. All of this helps to give the reader enough information to make up his or her mind despite Wilkinson's opinions.

Or does it? The catch is that whenever a journalist slips into the realm of sympathizing with one side of the issue, no matter how well-founded or carefully considered that decision is, it automatically puts readers and other journalists on guard. The scathing tone in which Wilkinson discusses the actions of federal agencies and his highly sympathetic recounting of whistleblowers' personal stories don't help much in this regard, either.

Whether you approve of Wilkinson's approach or not, this book should prove especially intriguing to environmental journalists. It puts you face to face with one of the key challenges of this profession—when, if ever, is it appropriate to "take sides" in an environmental controversy that you're covering.

—Amy Gahran

Endocrine disrupters: A hot topic

By LIANE CASTEN

They're doing it again! Years ago, when Rachel Carson published her watershed book, *Silent Spring*, the public relations attack on her and her science was swift and strong. The effort was backed by the very chemical industries most responsible for the harmful DDT emissions.

Now, with the growing body of information about endocrine disrupters and the havoc they seem to be wreaking on wildlife and the people, the Heartland Institute, a Chicago-based conservative think tank, has sponsored a piece written by the "distinguished science journalist," Michael Fumento. Thus, I propose that similar tactics are in play today. Big dollars are at stake and industry is anxious to blunt the effect of this information.

The culprits: the organo-chlorine group of chemicals basic to many herbicides and pesticides, to PVCs, and to solvents. The process of manufacturing or disposing of them unleashes such chemicals as DDT, PCBs, and dioxins. Now called Persistent Organic Pollutants or POPs, scientists have identified them as not only potentially causing cancer, but also being capable of disrupting the endocrine system.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) wrote its recommendations "to sunset the industrial uses of chlorine" in 1993. This agency has been joined by scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency (not the regulatory branch, which is under industry pressure) who have now finalized but not yet published their re-evaluation of dioxin (TCCD). EPA found in its 1994 draft that dioxin not only causes cancer, it is capable of affecting the endocrine systems of wildlife and the developing human fetus. Others with similar opinions include Dr. Theo Colborn of the World Wildlife Institute and co-author of the well-researched book, *Our Stolen Future*; the American Public Health Association; various independent scientists; and environmental groups such as Greenpeace. They are all saying the same thing—phase out industrial uses of chlorine. This despite Fumento's statement, "There is no agreement about which chemicals will be involved."

Industry is fighting back with big budgets—especially those connected to

the Chemical Manufacturers Association (both chlorine-producing Dow Chemical and Bovine Growth Hormone-producing Monsanto are CMA members), the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, National Association of Manufacturers, the American Plastics Council, Chlorine Chemistry Council, Com Ed, Philip Morris, Society of Plastics Industry, and Union Carbide. These companies and groups—many of them serious polluters—are a sampling of the Heartland Institute's many financial supporters.

Viewpoints

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

There will always be some scientist willing to take industry money to find results that are compatible with industry's agenda: keep the profits coming. And there will always be some study that will not parallel what has become a mountain of incriminating evidence. That evidence, published over a very long stretch of time, deals with endocrine disrupters and the damage to life forms.

EPA has reviewed 300 scientific studies of hormone disruption. Dr. Robert Huggett, EPA's assistant administrator for research, states that these studies "demonstrate that exposure to certain endocrine disrupting chemicals can lead to disturbing health effects in animals, including cancer, sterility and developmental problems." There is no invisible protective screen insuring humans will not also be harmed.

In July 1998, I attended an EPA regional conference, "Children at Risk: Environmental Health Issues in the Great Lakes Region," where scientists testified that children—most vulnerable to these assaults—were their "top priority." Of special concern were PCBs and the consequent neuro-developmental effects of exposure. One in four children live near one of the 1,400 Superfund sites in the U.S. which contain solvents and PCBs as prominent toxins. Identified were birth defects, lower birth weight, developmental delays, and childhood leukemia.

The National Cancer Advisory Board

(NCAB), an official body of NCI, issued a stinging indictment of the nation's cancer programs in 1994. The report says, "Cancers developing in the reproductive tissues such as the breast, ovary, endometrium and prostate account for nearly 30% of all cancers. Investigators have shown there is a relationship between the level and duration of hormone exposure and tumor development in these hormonally sensitive tissues." Some organochlorines, called xenoestrogens or poison estrogens, mimic hormones. A 1994 *Journal of American Medical Association* article called them "more pervasive and problematic than ever suspected."

In the polluted Great Lakes region (filled with dioxins and thousands of other organochlorines from industrial pollution), wild birds are now found horribly deformed. Bottom fish like carp are showing tumors, and salmon have distended thyroids. The damaged animals were exposed to the same toxins. Many are eaten by humans.

I cannot speak about the pharmaceutical industry, but the plastics and farming industries can change. The billion-dollar businesses Fumento is trying to protect might spend less on PR and instead do good-will research to find alternatives to their products. We don't need dioxin-producing chlorine to bleach pulp and paper. We can whiten with hydrogen peroxide, successfully done in Europe, Russia, Canada, and parts of the U.S. Try autoclaving and recycling hospital waste and eliminate some dioxin from incinerator emissions. Try finding substitutes for PVC products.

As for farming, eliminate all pesticides and herbicides, help the farmers start Integrated Pest Management programs and commit to organic farming, for which there is growing consumer demand.

Sorry, Mr. Fumento. You are on the wrong side. Did you ever wonder, while industry may pay a price to re-tool and find alternative methods, how much more money is being spent on the multitude of health problems which these POPs are costing the U.S. population?

Liane Casten is the author of Breast Cancer: Poisons, Profits and Prevention.

Markets...(from page 1)

Packaged irrigation

Just ask Kent Corley. He's with a Santa Rosa, Calif.-based company called DRiWATER, which markets water in the form of a slow-release gel. This has been a godsend to nations trying to reforest arid lands, and also has been used on mine reclamations and on roadside plantings in California and nine other states.

Corley, a company spokesman, said the product was developed by food chemist Lee Avera, the man who invented the process that gave us Skippy peanut butter. Avera found a way to bind water with a food-grade cellulose gum, the same stuff that holds ice cream together. The only other ingredient is a bit of aluminum sulfate. The resulting, gelatinous blob is 98 percent water and is non-toxic.

A quart of the product, packaged in a cardboard container and buried next to a tree, feeds water slowly for three months, drip by drip. "When the gel touches soil, the naturally occurring bacteria in soil breaks down the cellulose gum," Corley said. "It works in conjunction with nature and turns it back to liquid."

Before it does, it looks like clear Jello. Avera invented DRiWATER in the late 1980s. It was patented in 1988. His research began, he said, when he was disturbed by clear-cutting and global-warming and wanted to help the environment.

The company makes the gel in California and in a plant in the Cairo, Egypt, area. Another plant is planned in Tunisia. U.S. sales were \$1 million last year and are projected to hit \$5 million this year. The company won't release international sales figures, but Corley said Egyptian sales alone last year were worth several million dollars.

Egypt has planted 1.5 million trees in a new Cairo-area city called The Sixth of October, using DRiWATER for irrigation. Close to 16 million more trees are on the way. "The scope is pretty amazing when you go out there and see it," Corley said. "It's really mind-blowing to look at the Sahara Desert with nothing there and then all of a sudden see a million trees."

The product can provide full irrigation for the trees until their roots are big enough to reach groundwater. DRiWATER irrigation uses 85 percent less water than conventional techniques, Corley says, because it doesn't lose as much to evaporation and leaching. Kuwait is buying a million quarts of the gel. Canada, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Greece, and Japan are other markets. On average, a quart sells for 50 cents for foreign commercial projects, \$1.40 in the U.S. In retail markets, the tab averages \$2.40 a quart.

Corley said DRiWATER could aid the fight against world hunger as it moves into the agriculture arena. It could be distributed as aid to developing countries.

A summary of the commission report is online at <http://www.webcom.com/ncecd/taleoftwomarkets.html>

The full report is available for \$15 at 733 15th St., NW, Suite 1020, Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 234-9382 x214 **Fax:** (202) 319-3558

Email: ncecd@igc.apc.org

"These people have no water, and no chance of drawing anything," Corley said. "If they can grow food on their own in an area where there is no other way to get it, we will do miracles in trying to stop starvation."

Clean vehicles sell

In Chattanooga, Tenn., the challenge was tackling a different environmental problem—pollution from vehicles powered by gasoline and diesel fuels. The result: Advanced Vehicle Systems, which sells hybrid-electric buses in the U.S. and is preparing to market them in Costa Rica and other countries.

President Joe Ferguson said the company formed to establish the fleet that now offers free rides in downtown Chattanooga, where officials have worked for years to re-establish the city as a center of sustainable development. Chattanooga



Photo by Alan Peck Courtesy of the Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau

AVS electric shuttles are targeted for world-wide export

had some of the dirtiest air in America when the project began.

AVS makes full-size buses that run on batteries that are backed up by a generator that can burn compressed natural gas and a variety of other fuels. The no-emission operation has caught the eye of officials from Costa Rica, Mexico, and other developing countries.

In addition to Chattanooga, where 17 electric buses run in a revamped downtown district, the buses have been a big hit in the trendy Miami Beach tourist area. Seven buses began runs in the Florida vacation zone in January and had topped a million riders—more than 50 percent above projections—by the end of October.

Costa Rican President Jose Maria Figueres visited Chattanooga last year to see the buses, and a follow-up session in Costa Rica came as President Clinton met with Central America leaders there.

Ferguson said a recent Chattanooga electric-vehicle summit of international representatives, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, led to the creation of a still-unnamed nonprofit organization to explore other markets for the vehicles. A key target:

(Continued on next page)

Markets...(from page 19)

heavily developed cities with air-pollution problems. Plans call for electric buses in Mexico City, Johannesburg, Cairo, Delhi, and Santiago, Chile. A no-frills 22-foot model goes for about \$168,000. Costa Rica eventually may buy a dozen or so buses, Ferguson said. The country could use banana peels, coffee, or sugar cane to produce ethanol to run the on-board generator used to charge the batteries.

Ferguson said new equipment will allow quicker recharging of batteries and a single-charge range of more than 100 miles. His company is now developing 30- to 35-foot-long buses.

Time for wind power?

Wind power also offers potential for the U.S. to increase its environmental-technology sales. The American Wind Energy Association reports that industry giants Zond Energy Systems (Enron Wind Corp.), NEG Micon USA, and Bergey Windpower are among many wind-generator companies that export their wares.

Africa...(from page 1)

three months in a developing country or new democracy of the fellow's choice.

I chose Zimbabwe, the former British colony of Rhodesia, in Southern Africa. I wanted to report on the country's "ecological apartheid," where, despite 18 years of independence and black majority rule, a mostly white minority still has a lock on the natural wealth. I also was drawn by the region's interest in boosting environmental coverage, most notably the state-run *Herald*, the nation's largest daily newspaper.

Most of Zimbabwe's environmental problems are due to the historical concentration of the rural masses on poor land.

There's no right or wrong way to be a Heinz Fellow. ICFJ provides a stipend, a respectable expense budget, and the freedom to teach and report as the fellow sees fit. The program runs on a grant from The Teresa and H. John Heinz III Foundation. It is named in honor of the late U.S. Sen. H. John Heinz of Pennsylvania who championed the idea that market forces should be harnessed to work for the environment and not against it.

This would be the first time Zimbabwe journalists would have professional training in environmental reporting. I began last June in the capital city of Harare, pitching my training program to editors and producers, journalist associations, university journalism instructors, and several non-governmental organizations that were interested in promoting more and better environmental reporting. Most welcomed my proposal.

I worked mainly one-on-one with print journalists who are

The Worldwatch Institute says it's a good time to be in the market. In 1998, installations pushed the wind-energy capacity to a new worldwide record. Companies installed 35 percent more capacity than they did in 1997. That brought the total capacity to 21 billion kilowatts this year, enough to power 3.5 million homes, the institute says.

Most of that capacity is centered in just four countries, indicating that developing areas may be a huge new market for the generators, the report said.

Germany's wind power industry, just seven years old, now is producing as much electricity as two of its biggest coal-fired power plants, Worldwatch reported.

The commission report found that renewable energy sources, clean cars, and energy-efficient building materials are among the industries that could benefit from a stronger look at environmental-technology exports.

With gel-water, electric buses, and wind turbines already making their way around the globe, it's an issue well worth watching.

Perry Beeman is an environmental reporter for The Des Moines Register. He joined the paper in 1981.

developing the environment beat. My coaching covered the full range of reporting, from the inception of story ideas to the field reporting and writing. The training culminated in a three-day national workshop in Harare.

On the reporting end, I found plenty to write about. The land-locked country is blessed with mineral wealth, a rich variety of wildlife, and highly productive soil. Its black granite dresses up skyscrapers from Hong Kong to Brussels. Its flowers are shipped daily to Holland. Its tobacco is smoked all over Asia. You can catch brook trout in its Eastern Highlands, dodge hippos on canoe safaris down the Zambezi River, and hike in the midst of one of the world's most spectacular displays of falling water—Victoria Falls.

Foreign correspondents kept telling me that "anything can happen in Africa." I didn't fully appreciate what they meant until my interview with the headmaster of a primary school in the remote Zimbabwean village of Mahenye. I was distracted by the snake that slithered in the sand toward us as we talked. When it was within striking distance, I asked, "Excuse me, what kind of snake is that?"

The headmaster turned around. "A cobra," he said.

"If it bit," I asked, "how long would you live?"

"About a hour," he said, nonchalantly returning to his point in the interview. The snake grew bored and slithered on.

Victoria Falls, the Zambezi, even the wildlife make up the Zimbabwe enjoyed mainly by tourists and white Zimbabweans who make up less than two percent of the nation's 12.3 million people. The black majority survives on subsistence farming in the ecologically least productive and most fragile regions of the country. I was struck by this ecological apartheid, a legacy of Zimbabwe's colonial past.

In 1890 Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company seized most of the fertile land from black Africans who were thought to be wasting it. The expropriation continued up until the mid-1970s as colonials herded the peasant populations

Africa... (from page 20)

onto "native reserves," or communal lands, which were mostly tsetse fly-infested areas of low rainfall and poor soil. Although the laws that divided land along racial lines were repealed at independence in 1980, the social structure they shaped persists.

Most of Zimbabwe's environmental problems are due to this historical concentration of the rural masses on poor land. Whole villages are undergoing ecological collapse. People are starving or malnourished due to diminishing arable land. Rivers and reservoirs are literally disappearing under tons of silt from man-caused erosion. Villagers walk farther each year to gather wood and water.

Reporters with the most resources and training are focused on relatively small ecological threats.



Journalists facing truly devastating ills are often ill-equipped to cover them.

The shortage of good land has driven many poor men to work in the cities for months at a time apart from their wives and children. The family separation and high mobility, eased by a well-developed system of highways and public transit buses, partly accounts for Zimbabwe's emergence as one of the world's deadly centers of the AIDS pandemic. About one out of every four adults in Zimbabwe may now be infected with HIV, which is spread there mostly through heterosexual encounters.

The Zimbabwe media's coverage of these issues has been spotty at best. Reporting is driven too much by handouts, meetings, and officialdom. Reporters don't do enough shoeleathering, and they are generally weak in their questioning and use of sources. Stories often are littered with empty phrases

like "sustainable development" and "biodiversity."

Part of the problem, obviously, is a lack of resources to train and equip reporters. Also, most journalists work for government-controlled media where their range of reporting is restricted. Zimbabwe has the most restrictive press freedom in all of Africa, according to the International Center Against Censorship. Still, Zimbabwe reporters have the means to access a lot more information than they realize.

I tried to show how they could improve the quality and breadth of their sources and be more enterprising in their approach. Like many reporters in the U.S., Zimbabwe journalists tend to cover environmental conflicts like political stories. They quote extremists at opposite ends of a controversy under the pre-

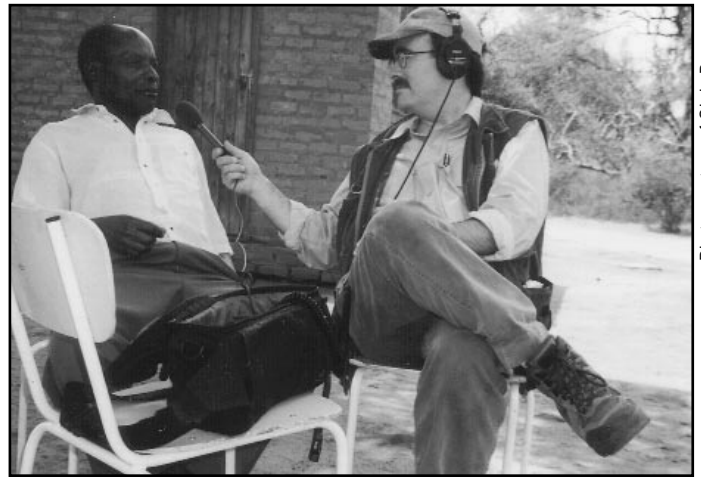


Photo courtesy of Chris Bowman

Chris Bowman interviews a school headmaster

tense of balance. Or, worse, they tap only a single source. These approaches offer little or no insight into the causes or consequences of the environmental problems at stake.

I offered a different template for environmental reporting, one that is more multi-dimensional, as in, not coincidentally, an ecosystem.

To me, the mission of environmental reporters is to discover and illuminate the links in the web of life, where everything is connected to everything else. But there's a big disconnect in the global web of journalists that thwarts the mission. That is, reporters with the most resources and training are focused mostly on the relatively small ecological threats in the affluent world, while journalists facing the truly devastating ills of desertification, lethal air and water pollution, and runaway diseases are generally ill-equipped to cover them.

The Heinz Fellowship offers a rare opportunity to address this gross disparity while still having fun reporting in some awesomely exotic places.

Chris Bowman has covered environmental issues for The Sacramento Bee for the past 13 years. He was the first U.S. journalist to be appointed Environmental Nieman Fellow at Harvard.

New Heinz Fellow named for '99

Jonathan Maslow of the Cape May County Herald newspaper in New Jersey has been named the Senator John Heinz Fellow for 1999.

Maslow will spend eight weeks in Guyana on the tropical Caribbean rim of South America, according to Susan Talalay, Heinz Fellowship Director at ICFJ. Maslow is interested in investigating the exploitation of timber and gold, which he says is occurring without effective environmental controls, protection of indigenous rights, and adequate media coverage.

A native of New Jersey, Maslow has traveled as a journalist to remote corners of the world, from the Darien jungle of Panama to the Kara Kum Desert of Turkmenistan. He is the author of five books, producer of three documentary films, and contributor to many major newspapers and magazines.

As testament to his adventurous spirit, 50-year-old Maslow swam across the 3,900-foot-wide Tennessee River in Chattanooga last October during a break from SEJ's annual conference. ❖



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The Beat Correspondents

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The 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 for possible mention in The Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state(s) or, if none are listed, contact Beat editor Chris Rigel at (215) 836-9970 or rigel@voicenet.com.

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

ARIZONA

► The plight of the Mexican gray wolf continues to warrant extensive coverage in Arizona and New Mexico. Scientists are trying to reintroduce the rare animals to the environment but someone keeps shooting them. Environmental reporters Mike Taugher of the *Albuquerque Journal* and Steve Yozwiak of the *Arizona Republic* in Phoenix have written numerous articles over the past few months chronicling the reintroduction controversy, including releasing animals spray-painted with fluorescent orange and pink swatches to make them more easily identifiable as endangered. John Dougherty of *Phoenix New Times* took a longer term view in an in-depth report on Dec. 17, documenting how the government's flawed reintroduction program helped put the wolves in the crosshairs of ranchers and other opponents. Contact Dougherty at jdougherty@newtimes.com or (602) 229-8445, Taugher at mtaugher@abqjournal.com or (505) 823-3833, Yozwiak at steve.yozwiak@pni.com or (602) 444-8810.

► The passing of environmental champion and former U.S. Rep. Mo Udall was headline news in Arizona. *Arizona Republic's* Steve Yozwiak detailed Udall's struggle to defend the environment in a Dec. 14 report. Contact Yozwiak at (602) 444-8810 or steve.yozwiak@pni.com.

► "Unpleasantville" was the headline summing up a Dec. 3 lengthy report in *Phoenix New Times* on the environmental and health consequences of decades of copper mining in the tiny town of Hayden, Ariz. The story, by staff writer Chris Farnsworth, looked at the plight of dozens of Hayden residents who suffer from illnesses ranging from cancer to birth defects. For more information contact Farnsworth at cfarnsworth@newtimes.com or (602) 229-8430.

► The three million acre swath of Bureau of Land Management land between the Grand Canyon and the Utah border, unromantically known as the Arizona Strip, is getting more visitors than usual these days. In late November, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt toured

the monument and suggested that nearly 400,000 acres of the wide-open desert land are worthy of stronger federal protection—possibly national monument status. The Department of Interior is trying to build support for the idea in Congress, hoping to avoid a replay of the political backlash following the establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah in late 1996. Michelle Nijhuis reported on this story in the Dec. 21 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact Nijhuis at michelle@hcn.org or (970) 527-4898, or find the story at www.hcn.org.

ARKANSAS

► A November 20 article in the *Arkansas Times* says Arkansas is plagued with problems from the growing poultry and hog industry, logging, contaminated waterways, sprawl, and toxic chemical pollution. Not all the news is bad, however. Arkansas taxes are boosting revenue for state preservation programs. Land swaps are bringing thousands of acres into public ownership in the Ouachitas and the lower White River basin. Three new national wildlife refuges have been established since 1991. Solid waste and recycling programs have been initiated, and educational programs are placing students knee-deep in the environment. The *Arkansas Times* story can be downloaded at <http://www.arktimes.com>.

► Conservation and fishing groups have threatened to sue if the federal government doesn't do something about Arkansas' polluted lakes and streams. Hank Bates, attorney and Sierra Club spokesman, said that under the federal Clean Water Act the state has the primary responsibility for cleanliness of lakes and rivers. If the state doesn't fulfill its duties, the EPA must be forced to respond. He said the main threat to lakes and streams is pollution from agricultural runoff, pesticide application, clear-cutting, hog farms, chicken farms, and gravel mining. The Nov. 18 *Southwest Times Record* story can be downloaded at www.swtimes.com.

CALIFORNIA

► In one of the more unusual

cleanups in America, Unical Corp. is destroying part of a California beach town to remove a massive petroleum leak. Unical is digging up the heart of Avila Beach's commercial district and its popular public beach to remove 100,000 cubic yards of sand and soil tainted with 400,000 gallons of petroleum products. Seventy of the town's 400 residents will have to be permanently or temporarily relocated. For information on the Sept. 14, 1998 story, contact David Sneed, *San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune*. (Or check <http://www.sanluisobispo.com>. The main-bar of the special section can be found at: <http://vh1428.infi.net/oldstories/0998/avila2.html>)

► University of California at Davis researchers have isolated a micro-organism with a robust appetite for MTBE, the gasoline additive that has polluted soil and water across the country. According to an Oct. 9 story in the *Sacramento Bee*, the discovery offers great potential for a relatively cheap, quick way to clean up the estimated 10,000 sites in California contaminated by MTBE, including 20 public drinking systems. The microbes identified at UC Davis already have eliminated MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether, that was vaporized into the air at a wastewater treatment plant. Within a year, UC Davis researchers hope to test the microbes on contaminated groundwater and soil. Contact Nancy Vogel, nvogel@sacbee.com or (916) 731-8487

► The Endangered Species Act, which turned 25 in December, has been criticized by those who chronicle environmental extremism as the single most destructive economy-thrasher laws on the books. Free-market advocates say the ESA crushes economic growth and tramples private property rights. Their stories abound: Kangaroo rats saved; 29 homes burn to the ground. Spotted owls vs. lumberjacks: thousands out of work. And, of course, the legendary snail darter that brought work to a stop on a \$165 million dam in Tennessee. But has the economic fallout been that severe? Though it has cost developers, ranchers, fishermen, and farmers plenty, the Dec. 27 story says it is not as bad as it is portrayed. Contact Chris Bowman, *Sacramento Bee*, at cbowman@ns.net or (916) 321-1069.

► In the 1930s and 1940s, Monterey's waterfront exploded into a nationally known mecca of clanking and steaming sardine canneries, immortalized by John Steinbeck in his 1945 novel "Cannery Row." Suddenly the silvery fish disappeared. Fifty years after one of the most spectacular—and financially ruinous—wildlife collapses in U.S. history, California's sardines are back. According to the Jan. 11 story, the fishery flourishes because of warmer water conditions, which sardines prefer (they are, after all, named for the balmy Island of Sardinia in the Mediterranean Sea), historic population swings; and a statewide ban on sardine fishing from 1967 to 1986 which helped sardines bounce back quickly. Call Paul Rogers, (408) 920-5045, *San Jose Mercury News*.

► According to a Nov. 26 *San Jose Mercury News* story, wild turkeys—the skittish cousins of your holiday Butterball and Benjamin Franklin's jocular choice for the national bird—have exploded in numbers over the past two generations. They now rank with America's most remarkable wildlife comeback stories. Contact Paul Rogers, (408) 920-5045, *San Jose Mercury News*.

► Navy personnel jogging on Alameda Island on the eastern shore of the Bay once had a secret glimpse of San Francisco, a dramatic view stretching from Bayview to the Transamerica Pyramid with the Bay Bridge to the far right. One day this southwest corner of Alameda Point, a haven for migrating and resident birds, will be open to everyone. According to the Jan. 31 story, nearly 1,000 acres of the former Alameda Naval Air Station will become the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. But not until the U.S. Navy cleans up 72 acres of a dangerous dump—a stew of garbage, toxic chemicals, oil, pesticides, medical wastes, tear gas agents, asbestos, and radium buried between the mid-1950s and 1978. Call Jane Kay, (415) 777-8704, *San Francisco Examiner*.

COLORADO

► Colorado's famous mining town of Leadville will soon see its last operat-

ing mine shut down. Asarco's Black Cloud mine announced Jan. 19 that it will close at the end of the month. The closure means the loss of 100 high-paying jobs in the now-destitute town that once spawned the fortunes of such famous families as Guggenheim and Dow and is now struggling with a toxic mining legacy. Miners at the Black Cloud extracted lead, zinc, gold, and silver from as far as 1,650 feet beneath Ball Mountain. Contact Steve Lipsher, *Denver Post*, at newsroom@denverpost.com or (303) 820-1577.

► *New York Times* reporter James Brooke wrote a comprehensive piece Jan. 19 on the rising tension in Colorado between ski resorts and environmentalists. The *Times* story reported on the growing effort by ski resorts to expand their boundaries and develop real estate alongside the slopes as a way to make up for lagging ski revenues. Environmentalists see this "industrial tourism" as a major threat, edging out concerns over logging, mining, and cattle grazing on public and private lands in the Rockies. Contact Brooke at (303) 620-9200.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► Efforts to curb the amount of sea life destroyed as "bycatch" by commercial fishing and how those efforts effect fishermen were explored in a front-page *Washington Post* story by staff writer Joby Warrick on Jan. 7. The article may be downloaded for a fee through <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/archives/front.htm>. For information contact Warrick at warrick@washpost.com or (202) 334-7292.

► A Jan. 11 article in *Daily Environment Report* says researchers from the Johns Hopkins University are promoting tests that do not use animals as part of a nationwide effort to generate basic health- and environmental-effects data on 2,800 chemicals produced in high volumes. Lower costs to the chemical makers expected to sponsor the studies—rather than animal rights—are the selling point for using the tests. Contact Sara Thurin Rollin at (202) 452-4584.

► Couch upholstery for your com-

poster? That's what DesignTex, a major U.S. producer of fabrics, has in its new line of "sustainable textiles," according to a Home section article in the Jan. 14 *Washington Post*. The developers of the fabric say it is benign for the environment and for workers who produce it because manufacturing involves no carcinogens, mutagens, heavy metals, or endocrine disrupters. Plus, the upholstery can be composted when it wears out. Freelancer Jane Friedman wrote the piece and can be contacted through the Home section desk at (202) 334-4409.

FLORIDA

► Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney plans to fight Georgia-Pacific in court if the company's Putnam County paper mill doesn't agree to a "dramatic reduction" in pollution entering the St. Johns River, the *Times-Union* reported on Dec. 20. In a follow-up story on Jan. 17, an EPA scientist concluded that the mill is outdated and will need "a lot of work" to operate efficiently. Contact staff writer Steve Patterson at (904) 359-4280.

► A federal jury found three executives of LCP Chemicals-Georgia Inc. guilty of illegally releasing and storing hazardous materials and endangering workers at the closed Brunswick chemical plant. The LCP plant was closed in Feb. 1994 and has been declared a Superfund cleanup site by the EPA, which said the 500-acre site is the worst case of corporate pollution in the Southeast and possibly the nation. Contact *Times-Union* staff writer Terry Dickson (904) 359-4280 for information on this Jan. 16 story.

► On Nov. 19, the *Times-Union* reported that the St. Johns River Water Management District, which regulates water use in 19 counties, is seeking a 75 percent reduction for the 44,692-acre Dee Dot Timberlands. This sprawling tract straddles Duval and St. Johns County and is owned by the Winn Dixie chain's Davis family, who use the water to maintain habitats for wildlife. The land is for timber farming and recreation, including hunting. The agency is completing a plan to conserve the regional drinking water supply and predicts a water shortage in that area by 2020. For more information,

contact Marcia Mattson, staff writer, at (904) 359-4280.

► The Marine Resources Center, in conjunction with the national Marine Fisheries Commission, is recruiting offshore boaters from southeast Georgia to northeast Florida to monitor the Northern Right whales. An estimated 300 whales remain, with 131 sightings involving 54 whales in 1997 during the official coastal migration season between December 1 and March 31. Contact Lawrence Dennis, boating columnist for the *Times-Union* at (904) 359-4280 about this Nov. 29 column.

► The *Times-Union* contributed to a Jan. 7 *Associated Press* article which reported eight manatee deaths in Duval and St. Johns counties during the first week of 1999 due to cold weather and boating collisions. Researchers estimate a remaining Florida population of 2,400, but manatees are dying more quickly than they can reproduce and face increasing threats from boats and habitat loss. Call staff writer Steve Patterson, (904) 359-4280.

► Because of unresolved phosphate mining issues, the state will not likely reach a deal to preserve thousands of acres of land in booming St. Johns County. Then-Governor Chiles had devised a plan for two state agencies to work together to purchase 26,000 acres of the Three Mile Swamp, a timber-filled stretch between U.S. 1 and Interstate 95. Contact staff writer Jim Saunders, (904) 359-4280, about this Dec. 12 coverage.

► The *Times-Union* ran a story on Dec. 12 about the unusual number of seldom-seen birds flocking to Florida, from warblers to an Antarctic gull. Audubon Society members and birdwatchers were to conduct an annual bird count on Dec. 26 and report the numbers to a national database. Contact Steve Patterson, staff writer, at (904) 359-4280.

► The *Times-Union* ran a lead story on Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney's unveiling of a \$312.8 million preservation plan that would buy several thousand acres of land, enhance the park system, and promote Jacksonville's image as a city where outdoor activities are part of everyday life. Delaney plans to fund this ambitious

greenway proposal with a combination of state, local, and federal dollars. The latest in a series of articles ran on Jan. 14 with Steve Patterson and David Bauerlein reporting. Call them at the *Times-Union*, (904) 359-4280.

► On Nov. 16, the *St. Petersburg Times* reported that a proposed ordinance to require stricter air pollution standards in Alachua County was narrowly defeated. Opponents of Jacksonville-based Florida Rock's \$80 million cement plant being built outside Gainesville led a citizen initiative to put the ordinance on the ballot. They collected enough signatures to force a referendum vote on the Clean Air Ordinance, which would have set higher standards than state or federal law requires. Contact Craig Pittman, environmental reporter, at craig@sptimes.com or (727) 893-8530.

GEORGIA

► Months of negotiations between Georgia state officials and the U.S. Department of Interior resulted in an agreement to fund land acquisitions and historic structure renovations on Georgia's Cumberland Island. Contact Gordon Jackson, *Times-Union* staff writer, (904) 359-4280, about this Dec. 22 story.

IDAHO

► The *Lewiston Tribune* has been writing a series of articles looking at the impact of breaching four dams on the lower Snake River in Washington to help restore endangered salmon and steelhead. Editorially, the *Tribune* has sat in the middle of the issue with the *Idaho Statesman* in Boise advocating removing the earthen section of the dams run by the Army Corps of Engineers while the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* opposes it. For more information contact Eric Barker at (208) 743-9411.

► The *Idaho Statesman* did a series of articles examining the state's air quality program after EPA auditors said its enforcement program was weak and ineffective. The newspaper showed how industry and the state's regulators spent two years negotiating behind closed doors on

its new Title 5 air permitting program reducing record-keeping and monitoring requirements. For more information contact Rocky Barker at (208)-377-6484.

► The FMC Corp. will pay \$11.8 million in fines—a national record—for environmental violations at its phosphorous plant near Pocatello, Idaho. In the fall of 1996, a fire in a settling pond at the plant sent a cloud of poisonous gas into the air. The gas may have wafted into the city of Pocatello or into Fort Hall Bottoms, a sacred hunting area used by the Shoshone-Bannock tribe, and may have killed livestock and wildlife.

FMC signed a settlement with the EPA last fall, agreeing to the hefty fine and promising to spend \$170 million over the next four years to improve operations at its plant. But the Shoshone-Bannock tribe has declined to sign on, saying the agreement allows the company to continue producing hazardous waste. Stephen Steubner reported on this story in the Feb. 1 edition of *High Country News*. Contact Steubner at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org. The story is also posted at www.hcn.org.

IOWA

► The University of Iowa plans to create a Web site describing every plant ever recorded in Iowa, complete with maps of all places each species has been recorded, *The Des Moines Register* reported Dec. 21. University of Iowa botanist Diana Horton reports that Texas is the only other state that has such an on-line service now. The site will list 300,000 records when completed in five years. For more information contact Perry Beeman at (515) 284-8538 or pbeeman@news.dmreg.com.

► *The Des Moines Register* reported on Dec. 14 that IGF Insurance Co. is launching a product that could lead farmers to reduce nitrogen applications on crop fields. That in turn could help reduce nitrate problems in Iowa's drinking water. It could also help ease the nitrogen load in the Gulf of Mexico's so-called "dead zone," an area of summertime low oxygen that kills some sea life and forces some species to swim out to sea, hurting Louisiana's lucrative fishing industry.

The insurance would require farmers to apply nitrogen according to guidelines

intended to prevent over-application. If yields dropped, the farmer would get a damage payment. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University hailed the pilot project as a common-sense approach that could help the environment and save farmers money. Contact Perry Beeman, (515) 284-8538 or pbeeman@news.dmreg.com.

► The Clean Water Act requires states to review their water quality standards every three years. Iowa hasn't done a full review for close to a decade, but the promise to do one this year already has sewage-plant operators across the state nervous. *The Des Moines Register* reported on Dec. 22. Plant officials told the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission recently that proposed changes meant to reflect EPA standards could mean huge increases in plant expenses—and in residents' sewer bills. For example, the small Iowa town of Cincinnati estimated the improvements would cost as much as \$1 million. The town's entire municipal budget is \$170,000 a year.

The debate is complicated by several parties having sued EPA over Iowa's lack of Total Maximum Daily Loads—pollution limits required by the Clean Water Act and ignored by many states until recently. Court action could force the state to pursue new standards. Contact Perry Beeman, pbeeman@news.dmreg.com or (515) 284-8538.

► In the Dec. 6 issue, *The Des Moines Register* reported that law-breaking metal recyclers routinely ignore federal regulations on disposing of hazardous wastes from older appliances. That in turn hurts law-abiding businesses that bid to properly dispose of appliances that contain PCB oil, ozone-depleting refrigerants, and mercury in switches and fluorescent tubes.

"There's no doubt that's true," said Joseph Obr of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "Some of them strip appliances and scrap them without even the pretense of doing it right." The Iowa Recycling Association is pushing for state licensing of the recyclers and salvage operations and is launching a program to educate landfill operators, appliance outlets, and others on proper disposal.

Contact Perry Beeman, (515) 284-8538 or pbeeman@news.dmreg.com.

► *The Des Moines Register* reported Nov. 22 that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has proposed a shorter state list of protected species. While the total number of species on the endangered species list would drop sharply, the number of species protected as endangered or threatened (with the same legal power) would fall slightly. The proposals have drawn sharp criticism from environmentalists and others. Especially controversial is a change in the state philosophy meant to take a more regional view of which species are in trouble, something critics say should be left to the federal government. Contact Perry Beeman, (515) 284-8538 or pbeeman@news.dmreg.com.

INDIANA

► In a story that sounded like it was straight out of the movies, four rare trumpeter swans arrived at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Indiana after following an ultralight aircraft on a 790-mile trip from Canada. In a life-imitates-art twist, the biologist flying the aircraft got involved in the project while working on the movie "Fly Away Home." For more information, contact Andrew Melnykovich at *The Courier-Journal* in Louisville, Ky., at (502) 582-4645 or Amelnyko@louisvil.gannett.com.

KENTUCKY

► A starling infestation at the county courthouse in Louisville created a flap when plans to poison the birds were met with protests from animal-rights activists. After considering a plan to chase the starlings away using a grape-flavored repellent, the county decided to poison them after all. Andrew Melnykovich, environmental writer at *The Courier-Journal*, has been following the controversy and also has taken a larger look at the starling problem. Contact him at (502) 582-4645 or Amelnyko@louisvil.gannett.com.

► The EPA and the FAA have joined forces to address smog-forming emissions from aircraft. Although aircraft are minor contributors to smog, they are coming

under greater scrutiny because they have been relatively uncontrolled compared to other polluters. For more information, contact Melnykovich at (502) 582-4645 or Amelnyko@louisvil.gannett.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

► The big environmental headlines in Massachusetts during December and January were mostly linked to the release of "A Civil Action" (John Travolta), which received wide critical acclaim and made an instant celebrity out of Jan Schlichtmann of Beverly, Mass., the real-life lawyer played by Travolta who took the case on behalf of eight families.

Although the outcome of the actual trial left the families feeling unsatisfied and Schlichtmann's law firm bankrupt, the release of the film has breathed new life into retelling what happened in Woburn, Mass. The court argument was, in its simplest form: the W.R. Grace Co. had dumped toxic solvents into the soil, which leached into the aquifer and were pumped by municipal wells into area homes. Children died of leukemia. A relatively small settlement was paid but W.R. Grace Co. did not admit causing the deaths or poisoning the wells. The company was later fined for lying to the EPA. Contact David Liscio, *Daily Evening Item*, at dliscio@aol.com or (781) 593-7700.

► New state regulations went into effect Jan. 1 regarding the disposal of cathode ray tubes (CRTs), better known as computer monitors and TV screens. State environmental officials said CRTs, which contain harmful lead-coated screens to protect viewers from radiation, have joined the list of recyclables, based on legislation spearheaded by the state Department of Environmental Protection. On July 1 the disposal ban becomes effective. Over the next six months, in an effort to expedite the new law, trash haulers in Massachusetts will no longer need a special state permit to transport junked TV sets and computer monitors. The permit was made unnecessary after CRTs were declassified as hazardous waste.

According to DEP spokesman Rick Lombardi, the ban should annually eliminate approximately 25,000 tons of solid waste in Massachusetts. Since the number of junked computer monitors is expected

to quadruple in the next six years, the new regulations are timely, he said.

► The pending cleanup of General Electric Co.'s property in Pittsfield and its sale of land to the city continues to make news, but GE is keeping a low profile in Lynn, where residential neighbors want more information about a 14-acre environmental brownfield. At least one city councilor has demanded that the company turn over documents about the extent of soil and groundwater contamination on the former industrial site. Ironically, the same councilor is an engineer employed by GE.

According to the Jan. 11 story, the contamination issue resurfaced because the city is looking for a site to build a new police station. Two of the four sites that the city hired an architectural consulting firm to analyze are owned by GE. The consultant's report made it clear that the GE sites are seriously contaminated, that the company at one point issued vapor monitors to residential and commercial neighbors. The reason: The underground plume of TCE-laden groundwater had spread beyond the GE property line. Contact David Liscio, *Daily Evening Item*, dliscio@aol.com or (781) 593-7700 extension 236.

► Commercial fishermen along the Massachusetts coast could feel the hook of a lawsuit filed to protect harbor porpoises. The Center for Marine Conservation and the Humane Society of the United States last November settled a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The suit, filed in the summer of 1998 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, charged that the government agency failed to protect Gulf of Maine harbor porpoises from death or injury due to incidental catches in New England gill-netting operations.

As part of a new catch-reduction plan to go into effect in January, fishermen will be required to use "pingers" on gill nets. The battery-powered devices emit a ping-pong sound that drives away the harbor porpoise before they get caught in the net. The story ran on Nov. 13. Contact David Liscio, *Daily Evening Item*, at dliscio@aol.com or (781) 593-7700, extension 236.

► Massachusetts Department of

Environmental Protection Commissioner David B. Struhs will leave his post in February to become Florida's secretary of environmental protection. Struhs was recruited by Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. Struhs was appointed DEP commissioner in May 1995 by then Gov. William F. Weld. During his tenure he was credited with implementing the nation's first new regulatory framework that replaces traditional permits with environmental performance standards for business. He also participated in the negotiations that led to the General Electric Co. clean-up of PCBs in Pittsfield and the Housatonic River. Contact David Liscio, Lynn *Daily Evening Item*, at dliscio@aol.com or (781) 593-7700, extension 236.

MARYLAND

► Slumping blue crab harvests have prompted Maryland and Virginia to look for new ways of reviving the Chesapeake Bay's last remaining major fishery. The two states agreed in January to spend \$100,000 over the next two years reviewing catch regulations to achieve a sustainable population. Crab harvests have fluctuated dramatically in recent years, with 1998 being the lowest of the decade; biological sampling suggests this year will be little better. With commercial fishermen rejecting the need for new catch restrictions, officials vowed not to make any changes until a comprehensive study is finished. For more information, contact Heather Dewar, *Baltimore Sun*, at (410) 332-6100.

MICHIGAN

► In a quiet bend of Michigan's Pine River, men on board a barge are driving 30-foot lengths of sheet metal into some of the most contaminated muck in the nation. If all goes as planned, workers will eventually remove 260,000 cubic yards of river muck holding 534,000 pounds of pesticides. Cleanup of the site, near the former Velsicol Chemical Co., will cost between \$28 and \$40 million and may be part of a new trend. As highly visible, land-based cleanups are completed, increasing attention is being paid to pollutants hidden under rivers that course through the nation's industrial areas, Dave

Poulson of Booth Newspapers reported. For more information about the Sept. 21 story, call Poulson at (517) 487-8888.

► A two-part enterprise report by *The Detroit News'* Jeremy Pearce explored environmental sources of cancer and took a look at the path that geneticists worldwide are following to flag and prevent cancers. Using federal data, Pearce calculated rates for three cancers down to the zip code level in the Detroit area. He found that researchers are rarely able to pin clusters to dumps, factories, or schools. Instead, cancers often group along racial, professional, or economic lines. Genetic studies are targeting a "multiple hit" theory that says victims probably suffer exposures at different times of life that make chromosomes mutate toward disease. The Nov. 1 and 2 series sifted through 360,000 state cancer files and used academic sources from across the nation. For more information, call Pearce at (313) 223-4825.

► After two years of dogged investigation, city officials in Muskegon, Mich., have fingered the midnight dumpers responsible for polluting a local creek. Unlike many environmental horror stories, the culprit in this case wasn't a profit-crazed corporate polluter. Rather, it was a bunch of rootless scavengers—raccoons. City officials say large numbers of urban raccoons defecate in storm sewers, sending fecal coliform bacteria into the creek that is sometimes used for swimming.

Residents believe high bacteria counts are reducing property values along the waterway; but city officials are unsure how to stop the animals. Screens placed to keep raccoons out of sewers would also trap debris. City officials aren't willing to trap or kill the intruders. For more information about the Oct. 21 story, contact Jeff Alexander, *Muskegon Chronicle*, at (616) 722-3161.

► In perhaps the nation's largest natural resources damages case, General Motors Corp. and the city of Saginaw, Mich., agreed to a \$28.22 million settlement last November. It was Michigan's largest natural resources lawsuit ever. General Motors will pay at least \$26 million to dredge cancer-causing chemicals from the Saginaw River. The Chippewa

tribe, state, and federal governments filed suit in 1994 over the dumping of PCBs, reported Carrie Spencer and Joel Kurth of the *Saginaw News*. The suit addressed violations of an 1819 treaty that ceded more than six million acres of land to the Chippewa tribe. For more information about the Nov. 24 story, call Spencer or Kurth at (517) 776-9682.

► More people are becoming interested in alternatives to poisons and pesticides, including a concept called Integrated Pest Management (IPM), say reporters from the Great Lakes Radio Consortium. The idea began as a way for farmers to reduce or completely eliminate pesticides. IPM is now making inroads in homes and schools, using space-age technology to send out ultrasonic waves and negative ions to combat pests. But how well do the gizmos work? Reporter Wendy Nelson examines IPM and compares it to conventional solutions. For more information on the Sept. 28 and Oct. 12 radio segments, call Nelson or managing editor David Hammond at (734) 647-3472. Or check the series out on the Consortium's website at www.glr.org.

MINNESOTA

► Minnesota regulators ruled in mid-January that Northern States Power Co. (NSP) must double the amount of electricity it receives from wind machines by 2012. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission decided that 400 megawatts of additional wind power is "in the public interest" and should be included in NSP's "portfolio" during the next 15 years. NSP already is required to build or buy 425 megawatts of wind-generated electricity by the end of 2002; that rule stems from a 1994 law that allowed the utility to increase radioactive waste storage near its Prairie Island nuclear plant in Red Wing, Minn. A 400-megawatt system will supply enough electricity for about 100,000 homes. Contact Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune*, meersman@startribune.com or (612) 673-7388.

► A first-of-its-kind federal study indicates that metropolitan areas across the U.S., including Minneapolis-St. Paul, contain high levels of hazardous contaminants in their outdoor air. The EPA's

Cumulative Exposure Project uses 1990 nationwide emissions data from vehicles, factories, incinerators, furnaces, and other sources, and combines the data with weather patterns in a computer model to simulate where air pollutants go. The result is a coast-to-coast snapshot of pollutants, featuring average outdoor concentrations for 148 contaminants in each of the 60,803 census tracts in the contiguous U.S.

The report does not address health concerns from the exposures, but other work published in scientific journals indicates that EPA's findings exceed "benchmark" levels for cancer in many places and constitute a potentially significant national public health concern. EPA authorities say they plan to refine their air modeling techniques and will apply them next year to 1996 data. Contact Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune* newspaper, (612) 673-7388 or meersman@startribune.com.

MISSISSIPPI

► The National Wildlife Federation has sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over its plan to dredge the Big Sunflower River basin. NWF says that despite the Corps' claim that its policies are now more environmentally conscientious, the agency has reverted to its old tactic of huge, expensive, damaging flood-control projects. U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott helped secure \$62 million for the dredging, and he's also been accused of pressuring federal environmental agencies to back away from criticizing the project. Bruce Reid reported this in the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* on Nov. 6. He can be contacted at (601) 961-7063.

► Sen. Trent Lott also stirred up ire when he tried to obtain federal funding for a Hancock County road project that would benefit his friend and fraternity brother. Dr. Bennett York wants to build a large regional landfill that would serve the entire Mississippi coast and some out-of-state communities. He wants to locate the dump inside the 125,000-acre buffer zone around NASA's Stennis Space Center. Residents fear there will be no limits to the landfill's growth, and they want the property left as it is. Lott has been accused of doing favors for York before; he allegedly gave his friend preferential treatment in U.S. Forest Service land transfers.

Bruce Reid, (601) 961-7063, wrote this story for the *Clarion-Ledger* Jan. 10.

MISSOURI

► Local environmental groups are taking advantage of a long-ignored requirement of the Clean Water Act to force action on polluted waterways within their states. The requirement says that every two years states should submit a list of their "impaired" rivers and lakes—those that don't comply with clean water standards—and a timetable to clean them up. This is the so-called 303d list. The Sierra Club teamed with the American Canoe Association recently to file such a suit in Missouri.

The lists themselves are a motherlode of information, identifying such environmental problems as atrazine and manure overloads from agriculture, faulty sewage treatment plants, and leaks from mining facilities. Ask your state water quality regulator—in Missouri it's the Department of Natural Resources—for a copy of the 303d list. Tom Uhlenbrock, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, (314) 862-2103.

MONTANA

► Since the mid-1980s, more than 3,000 Yellowstone bison have been shot or sent to slaughter in Montana after they wandered outside the national park's protected confines. Two winters ago 1,100 bison were killed along the park's northern and western boundaries, the largest slaughter of wild buffalo since the 19th century. The apparent reason for the killings is to safeguard state cattle herds against the bovine disease, brucellosis, which wild bison, as well as elk and other wildlife, carry.

There is growing controversy, however, over whether the Montana Department of Livestock's lethal means of managing bison in winter is really necessary, especially on national forest lands outside the park where cattle do not occupy grazing allotments until the middle of June.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which in the early 1990s prescribed the lethal measures, now recommends a "low-risk" strategy of tolerating nomadic bison that the state of Montana has ignored. Governor Marc Racicot

claims that other states might impose sanctions on Montana beef if the state does not kill bison. At present, the state of Montana, the National Park Service, and the USDA are finalizing a long-term bison management plan. Contact Todd Wilkinson at tawilk@aol.com.

NEVADA

► Nevada takes its roaming herds of horses very seriously. Consequently it was no surprise that every newspaper, television, and radio station in the state covered the deaths of 34 stray horses discovered shot to death in northern Nevada on Dec. 27. Strays are domestic horses that bred with wild horses roaming the West centuries ago. The animals were shot by three men who could be sentenced up to 15 years in prison for grand theft, grand larceny, and poisoning, maiming, or killing another person's animal.

NEW MEXICO

► Six conservation groups have asked U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to form a multi-agency task force to stop what they call attacks of "eco-terrorism." The environmental groups are upset over recent killings of endangered wolves and other problems, including diversions of water from the Rio Grande that killed endangered silvery minnows. Mike Taugher reported the story in the Nov. 21 *Albuquerque Journal*. Contact him at mtaugher@abqjournal.com or (505) 823-3833.

► An oil refining company paid one of the largest penalties ever in the state for violating federal clean air regulations, according to a Jan. 6 story by *Albuquerque Journal* environmental reporter Mike Taugher. The story details the violations and the EPA-led investigation that resulted in the penalty. Contact Taugher at mtaugher@abqjournal.com or (505) 823-3833.

► Ted Turner is taking over a bison herd in northern New Mexico, the latest twist in a 20-year-old deal between Penzoil Corp. and the U.S. Forest Service that was aimed at preserving 100,000 acres of land. Reporter Ben Neary details

the saga including environmentalists' outrage in a Jan. 17 story in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Contact Neary at (505) 986-3035 for more information.

► A group of anti-nuclear activists wants the state Health Department to study the effect of depleted-uranium munitions testing on Socorro residents as well as veterans of the Gulf War. A Dec. 25 story in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* by reporter Barbara Ferry discussed a recent trip by group members and other scientists and activists to Iraq to attend a conference on the health and environmental consequences of depleted uranium. Contact Ferry at (505) 986-3035.

NORTH CAROLINA

► In late 1998, *The News & Observer* of Raleigh published a six-part series on the urban innovations of several communities in the Southeast. The series, called "Blueprints," examined Virginia's HOV lanes, farmland preservation in Maryland, programs for the homeless in Louisville, and efforts to redevelop neighborhoods in Orlando, Charlotte, and Smyrna, Ga. For a reprint, contact Stuart Leavenworth at stuartl@nando.com or (800) 365-6115, ext. 4859. The series can also be viewed at www.news-observer.com/tri/blueprints.

► Chevron USA has put on hold plans to drill for oil on the North Carolina coast, citing low gas prices and opposition from environmentalists and politicians. The rich fishing grounds off North Carolina's barrier islands are as yet untouched by oil rigs, but Chevron announced in September 1997 that it planned to sink exploratory wells in an area it leased from the federal government during the Reagan Administration. Coastal residents, fishermen, environmentalists, and representatives of the state's massive tourism industry promised a fight. Contact *News & Observer's* James Eli Shiffer at jshiffer@nando.com or (800) 365-6115, ext. 5701.

► The world's largest hog slaughterhouse has landed in the middle of a squabble between the nation's ailing pork industry and North Carolina environmental regulators. Under a unique discharge permit,

the N.C. Division of Water Quality enforces a cap on the number of hogs killed at the Smithfield Packing Co. plant in Tar Heel out of concern for "secondary impacts"—if the plant expands, it will cause a proliferation in nearby hog farms in an area already dotted with swine waste lagoons. With an oversupply of hogs causing prices to drop to their lowest levels in years, Smithfield last year asked permission of the division to increase the number of pigs it can slaughter at its processing plant in the little town of Tar Heel. The state refused and the pork industry responded by an appeal to President Clinton for help. Contact Shiffer at The N&O, jshiffer@nando.com or (800) 365-6115, ext. 5701, for more information.

PENNSYLVANIA

► The *Philadelphia Inquirer* Business section put pollution-guzzling plants in the spotlight. Phytoremediation, the use of plants to clean up soil and water contamination, is estimated to grow into a \$370 million industry by 2005. Plants have been developed that neutralize mercury, TNT, and other pollutants, and have attracted the attention of multinational corporations such as Monsanto, DuPont, and Zeneca. The Jan. 28 story cited a 1997 EPA report that found biotechnological cleanup costs to be about 10 times cheaper than conventional cleanups such as incinerating polluted soil. David J. Wallace reported the story. The *Inquirer's* main number is (215) 854-2000.

► *The Philadelphia Inquirer* ran an editorial on Jan. 3 targeting sprawl as a new scourge threatening the Pennsylvania countryside. According to the *Inquirer*, the state's 10 largest metropolitan areas grew in population by 13 percent from 1960 to 1990, while land consumption topped 80 percent during those years. The editorial was in response to a report released by Governor Ridge's newly created 21st Century Environment Commission, which made sprawl the subject of its most compelling recommendations. The *Inquirer's* main number is (215) 854-2000.

SOUTH DAKOTA

► The Canadian-owned Brohm Mining Corp. has abandoned its Gilt Edge

gold mine, an open-pit mine located on private land in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Cleanup costs are estimated at \$20 million, far more than the \$6 million in reclamation bonds held by the state. Gov. Bill Janklow has gone to court to keep the company from fleeing, but he also backs a company proposal to expand the mine onto 17 acres of adjacent Forest Service land.

The governor hopes the expansion will generate enough money to keep taxpayers from footing the bill, but environmentalists say the company's proposal is "blackmail." Eric Whitney reported on this story in the Feb. 1 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact him at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at www.hcn.org.

TENNESSEE

► In the past, the state of Tennessee issued permits to water and sewage treatment facilities without regard to how many others might be polluting in the same area. Now, the state is looking at watersheds holistically, and if a stream or lake is already significantly polluted, no new permits will be issued. The new rule is a result of environmental groups threatening to sue the state for failure to enforce the Clean Water Act. About 26 percent of Tennessee's streams and 22 percent of its lakes are listed as "impaired." In the Nov. 13 edition of *The Tennessean*, Anne Paine focused on one of these bodies of water, the South Harpeth River, and examined the harm caused by municipal water and sewage treatment plants upstream. Paine can be reached at (615) 259-8071 or abpaine@aol.com.

► Memphis is sucking north Mississippi dry. The southwest Tennessee city draws its water from a vast aquifer known as the Memphis Sand, which happens to be contiguous with the aquifer that feeds DeSoto County, one of Mississippi's fastest-growing population centers. As Memphis' artesian wells pump more volume, the suction causes more water to flow north from Mississippi into Tennessee. There are no shortages yet, but officials are calling for a study to determine whether future water supplies will be adequate on both sides of the state line.

Tom Charlier reported this in the Nov. 16 *Commercial Appeal*. He can be reached at (901) 529-2572.

► Refined Metals Corp., a lead smelter that's been polluting Memphis for about half a century and has already paid about \$500,000 in fines, decided to close in January after the health department ordered the facility to either surrender its permits or pay a \$440,000 penalty plus make \$1 million worth of improvements. The EPA had designated a 1.5-mile-diameter zone around Refined Metals as one of only 10 sites in the nation out of compliance with federal ambient air standards for lead. Tom Charlier, (901) 529-2572, reported this *Commercial Appeal* story Jan. 9.

UTAH

► With Utah state officials putting up roadblocks on a plan to store high-level nuclear waste in the state, proponents of the plan are seeking relief through the federal government. Private Fuel Storage, a consortium of electric utilities hoping to store thousands of tons of spent nuclear fuel on the Goshute Indian reservation in Utah, has applied for rights of way on federal land to build a rail spur to the proposed storage site. The move comes after high-ranking state leaders vowed to place heavy restrictions on the use of state highways for the transportation of nuclear waste. For more information, contact Jerry Spangler, *The Deseret News*, (801) 237-2100.

► Compeq International, a Taiwan-based manufacturer of computer circuit boards, was slapped with a record \$1 million fine for dumping excessive quantities of copper into a Salt Lake City sewer system. The company, which earlier pleaded guilty to violating three felony counts of the Clean Water Act, also was ordered to pay \$350,000 to state, local, and regional environmental agencies. Together, the fines represent the largest penalties against a company in Utah history.

The company admitted to failing to adequately remove copper from wastewater before discharging it into the sewer. Federal environmental investigators measured copper levels up to 1,000 times above legally permitted levels. Contact Brent Israelsen, *Salt Lake Tribune*, (801) 237-2045.

► The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is expected to approve soon a controversial plan to place an earthen cap atop a 10.5-million-ton pile of radioactive tailings on the banks of the Colorado River near Moab, Utah. The plan also requires the tailings' owner, Atlas Minerals Corp., to pump and treat contaminated groundwater beneath the pile. Moab activists and the Grand County Commission have filed a federal lawsuit to force NRC to remove the pile to a remote site where the tailings will not threaten the river. Congressmen in Utah and California are drafting legislation to transfer jurisdiction from the NRC to the Department of Energy, which has the legal authority and experience to move radioactive tailings. Contact Jim Woolf, *Salt Lake Tribune*, (801) 237-2045.

VIRGINIA

► People who flocked to the southern Appalachian Mountains this past summer for a breath of fresh air got a lungful of trouble, according to an Oct. 1 report in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Ozone reached record levels in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park straddling the North Carolina-Tennessee line, and it reached the worst levels in a decade at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. For more information, contact reporter Rex Springston at (804) 649-6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

► State politicians and utility officials considered using a smokescreen of deception to thwart a nitrogen oxides reduction plan proposed by the EPA, the *Roanoke Times* reported June 21. Utilities and several Southern and Midwestern governors crafted a less-stringent alternative plan. A West Virginia official then suggested that the utilities pretend to oppose the alternative to make it look stricter than it was. Reporters Lois Caliri and Ron Nixon broke the story thanks to confidential e-mail from an electric industry source. For information, contact Nixon at ronn@roanoke.com.

WEST VIRGINIA

► The *Charleston Daily Mail* published a week-long series about EPA's ozone transport regulations. The series

The Beat

focused on the possible effects on West Virginia's coal industry, utilities, and manufacturers, and on potential electric rate increases for consumers. The series also included a look at projected health benefits and environmental impacts of the rules. Lead reporter on the series was Steve Myers, who can be reached at (800) 982-6397.

► The *Charleston Gazette* continued its series on mountaintop-removal coal mining with a report focusing on Blair, W.Va., and one company's efforts to force residents out so blasting could continue without regard to dust impacts. The newspaper published the contents of a sealed out-of-court settlement between the company and one family of former Blair residents. The series is available on the Internet at <http://www.wvgazette.com/mining>.

Mountaintop removal was also in the news with the announcement of a settlement of parts of a lawsuit brought by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy against federal and state regulators. Under the settlement, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will have to conduct lengthy environmental studies before permitting more valley fills, and various agencies will have to conduct a two-year environmental impact study of mountaintop removal's overall effects. For more infor-

mation, call Ken Ward Jr. at *The Charleston Gazette*, kenward@newwave.net or (304) 348-1702.

► Various media outlets, including West Virginia Public Radio and the *Charleston Gazette*, published detailed stories about the halt of negotiations between a private logging company and the U.S. Forest Service to protect portions of Blackwater Canyon, a scenic area near the Monongahela National Forest. The logging company, Allegheny Wood Products, wanted more money for the land than the Service was willing to accept as the basis for a property trade. Contact Ward, kenward@newwave.net or (304) 348-1702, for more information.

► Jenni Vincent of the *Fairmont Times-West Virginian* published a lengthy article about citizens fighting the state Division of Environmental Protection in environmental cases. The story focused on citizens who live along Guyses Run, a Marion County stream, who are trying to get DEP to force a coal company to clean up acid mine drainage at the site. Vincent can be reached at (304) 367-2500.

WISCONSIN

► *Wisconsin State Journal* reporter

Mike Flaherty contracted with the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute and wrote a report questioning the number of government employees serving the agriculture industry. Flaherty's Dec. 1998 document notes that the number of full-time commercial farms in Wisconsin continues to decrease, and he says lawmakers may want to look at which government agricultural programs need more accountability or may duplicate services. Flaherty mentions county, state, and federal land conservation efforts and Wisconsin's Farmland Protection Program. The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute is a conservative think-tank based in Milwaukee, and is funded by the Bradley Foundation. Contact Flaherty at (608)-252-6100.

► *Wisconsin State Journal* environment reporter Ron Seely questioned political connections between the state's cranberry industry and the administration of Governor Tommy Thompson, in a multi-part series that ran just before Thanksgiving 1998. For years, environmental groups have alleged that Thompson's support for cranberry growers has hampered efforts by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect wetlands and water quality. Thompson again denied any link. Seely can be reached at (608)-252-6100.

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