

SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

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Bush on environment

Leading Republican candidate reveals team and policies

Editor's note: the environmental posture of front-running Democratic candidates will be explored in future issues of SEJournal.

By MARGIE KRIZ

In politics as in sports, you can't tell the players without a scorecard. That's especially true for Republican presidential contender Texas Gov. George W. Bush, who has been long on raising money and short on talking about his policy positions—particularly on environmental issues.

So how green would Bush be if elected President? For a clue, look to his track record in Texas and the crew of conservative advisers he's asked to help develop the environmental agenda for

his Republican presidential campaign.

Bush, a former oil wildcatter who grew up in the petroleum-drenched culture of Midland, Texas, has been accused of being too close to the state's oil, gas, and chemical industries. In fact, he rode into the governor's mansion in 1994 with a campaign critical of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to designate 33 counties in central Texas as critical habitat for the nearly extinct golden-cheeked warbler. Bush argued that protecting the bird would hurt the Texas economy and ran ads accusing his Democratic opponent Gov. Ann Richards of putting "birds above our families and jobs."

Once elected governor, Bush was accused by environmentalists of filling

his administration's environmental posts with industry lawyers. The result, said Texas Public Citizen director Tom "Smitty" Smith, Bush's environmental policies have been "of, by, and for the corporations."

Activists say Bush's record on environmental issues is as hazy as the air over Houston. "It's not so much that I consider him to be anti-environmental, in terms of taking aggressive steps against environmental protection," said Ken Kramer, head of the Texas Sierra Club. "But whenever he's dealt with environmental issues, he's sided with the laissez faire attitude of business."

During this year's legislative session, Bush blocked attempts to require

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Fellows examine endangered Hawaiian flora

Lessons from Paradise

By DAVID ROPEIK

To the first-time visitor, natural Hawaii is a world of discovery. There is so much to see—the surging Pacific on countless beaches, dramatic volcanic terrain, lush stretches of rainforest.

But there are lessons this splendid natural world can teach that lie beyond the quick tourist glance of a casual visitor. The National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG), headquartered on the island of Kauai, began to teach some of those lessons at the first annual five-day fellowship program for environmental journalists this past May.

The NTBG was chartered by Congress (thus the 'national' in the name) and is entirely privately funded.

Its mission is to study and help preserve tropical flora. It has five sites—three on Kauai, one on Maui, and one in Florida. The course for journalists is part of the NTBG's mission to proselytize the faith of protecting tropical plants.

Dr. Paul Cox, biologist, ethnobotanist, and NTBG director, made clear from his introductory lecture that the students weren't brought in to learn about the NTBG, nor to necessarily produce stories or articles about it. The idea of the course, Cox explained, is to teach about tropical plants, and their importance to the natural world, the economic world, and to the cultures that still rely on them.

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A priceless moment

Sitting on the lawn of the Barbra Streisand Center for Conservancy Studies, I listened to Barry Lopez explain why we—from the daily newspaper reporter to the once-every-few-years book author—pursue stories about the land and our place on it, and I told myself this was another “SEJ moment.”

An SEJ moment, to me, is some image, often from a national conference, that I’ll carry with me like a boy’s first walk into the woods; it’s something that will stay with me, possibly, for a lifetime or, at least, until my brain begins to shrink; it’s a special moment that you know someday you’ll call up from the archives of your brain. You bring it out for encouragement. You may even call it up repeatedly to help you refocus on why you practice this craft of environment writing or reporting.

Lopez’ speech and the other sessions on Sunday at the Barbra Streisand Ranch, a place as stupefying in its beauty (even in its unnatural way) as any I’ve walked into, crowned SEJ’s splendid Ninth National Conference in LA, hosted by the University of California, Los Angeles.

No doubt, others were struck by the Lopez moment. Jay Letto, the conference coordinator, told Lopez that the author’s remarks about his home missing him while he was off on one of his many travels, nearly knocked him out of his chair.

Later, on the flight back over the seemingly uninhabited West (a trick that being 30,000 feet in the air can play on you), I thought over and over that Lopez had articulated exactly why I do what I do for SEJ. It’s about searching for community and about striving to find meaning.

Yeah, I know. I can hear it now. Some hard-bitten reporters will say, “No, it’s about how useful you are to me.” Indeed, one of SEJ’s goals is to be as useful in a timely manner as we can. It would be great if every reporter in America who is on deadline with a question about an environmental story could easily and quickly obtain the information needed through SEJ—whether it be the web site, the listserv, the *SEJournal*, or any of the other services we offer or will offer to members.

But a sense of community, I believe, is what has kept me and propelled me to try to improve SEJ. Leave it to Lopez, who has so well explored community and its disruption and destruction in his books, to put his finger on the SEJ community and its value.

“So in everything you do in your own home, in your professional relationships and in your work on the streets as reporters, look for, aid and abet community—that defies the notion that we’re all here in the end just to consume,” Lopez said.

Report from the society’s president

By
Mike
Mansur



And preserve your own professional community, he advised. “Take care of each other,” Lopez said. “Everybody here has been alone in a newsroom wondering if it was worth it....Call each other. Get on the phone with each other. When you see someone else’s story, send them a postcard...Let each other know, “You’re not alone in this.”

“There is a name for what you do. It’s in the name of your professional organization. But that is not who you are. You’re a group of men and women who have a skill with language and a desire in some way to see the human condition bettered and that’s who we are first...That’s community.”

To aid and abet the SEJ community, consider a spot on the SEJ board. The board plans to fill the board slot vacated by Marla Cone in coming weeks and we encourage you, if interested, to contact the SEJ office or board president Mike Mansur immediately.

The new board member should be named in December and will be able to take part in the board’s January meeting in Washington, D.C. SEJ bylaws allow the board to appoint a replacement to serve until the next SEJ election, which will be next October at SEJ’s 10th national conference hosted by Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich.

The location and agenda for that meeting are still to be set, but D.C. members are encouraged to get together with the board or attend its meeting.

At its meeting in Los Angeles, the SEJ board set priorities for the year 2000. This, in a way, is an achievement in itself since the board has never set priorities for a year in advance of the year.

The board hopes that SEJ’s financial support will grow and it will pursue new grants and funding, led in those efforts, of course, by SEJ executive director Beth Parke.

The goals approved by the board:

- Revise and update the SEJ website and the *SEJournal*.
- Reinvigorate the SEJ newsroom outreach program.
- Pursue development of an SEJ book on environmental journalism and the possibility of an SEJ award program.

SEJ will continue, of course, to maintain and improve its current programs.

Any SEJ members with comments, ideas, suggestions about the priorities or any other SEJ matter are encouraged to contact the board, the SEJ office, or the board president.



In September SEJ received a grant of \$50,000 from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to underwrite the Society’s 1999 national conference in Los Angeles. Also contributing to the conference fund: Times Mirror, Inc. and *Los Angeles Times* (\$20,000), The McClatchy Company (\$3,000), BNA, Inc. (\$2,500), *Sacramento Bee* (\$2,000), *San Jose Mercury News* (\$2,000), *Contra Costa Times/Knight Ridder* (\$1,000), *San Diego Union-Tribune* (\$1000), and *Ventura County Star* (\$500). ♦

SEJournal

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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 more than 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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Letter

To the Editor,

In an anecdote about how reporters "dumb down" the complexity of the real world ("The Reporting Life: A View From the Other Side, *SEJournal*, Summer 1999), Peter Page refers to a story in the *Star-Ledger* about a report on shark fisheries in which Dr. Merry Camhi, a staff scientist and respected shark expert with National Audubon Society's Living Oceans Program, is quoted as saying that New Jersey is doing nothing to protect declining shark populations, and that its regulations are weaker than Federal standards. Page notes that buried in the story was the fact that "99% of the sharks landed in New Jersey are caught in federal waters." Writes Page, "...if New Jersey banned shark fishing in state waters and executed people found fishing sharks, almost exactly the same number of sharks would be caught."

What Camhi writes in her report, and what Page surely knows, is that (1) the National Marine Fisheries Service has urged that all states institute shark management regimes conforming to federal standards; and (2) while 98.5 percent of sharks landed in New Jersey come from federal waters outside its control, the state waters, especially Great Bay and Delaware Bay, provide important pupping, nursery grounds, and juvenile habitat for sandbar and other sharks. As a result, many of those sharks caught in state waters are either mature gravid females or juveniles. Given the nature of shark biology—slow growth, late maturation, long life, low fecundity—those are the two segments of the population you would want to protect.

Michael A. Rivlin
Highlands, NJ

Correction

Michael E. Abrams, whose account of offering his university journalism students labs in outdoor biology appeared in the Summer *SEJournal*, was incorrectly identified in the byline as Michael E. Adams. Later copies came off the presses with the correct byline. *SEJournal* regrets the error.

Classified

Help Wanted

Science writer needed for university research magazine. Degree in hard science and at least two years journalism experience preferred. Must be detail oriented and able to turn complex scientific/technical material into easily understandable, sparkling prose. Send résumé, clips, and names/phone numbers of three references to: UGA, Human Resources Building, Athens, GA 30602-4135.

SEJournal submission deadlines

Winter '00.....	January 15, 2000
Spring '00.....	April 15, 2000
Summer '00.....	July 15, 2000
Fall '00.....	October 15, 2000

Send submissions to assistant editor Chris Rigel at 340 Euclid Ave., Ambler, PA 19002 or rigel@voicenet.com. Submissions to "The Beat" should be sent to your state correspondent (see page 22) or to Chris Rigel.

A sampling of sessions at national conference

New ground broken in LA

The SEJ annual conference reached the Pacific Ocean in September for the first time in the organization's 10-year history, drawing some 560 attendees to a world of megapolitic issues. With more tours than ever before, a film festival, numerous plenaries, and a live wolf in attendance, the conference broke new ground on a number of levels. Evaluations of the event submitted by members are being analyzed and will be presented in a future issue of *SEJournal*.

A complete recounting of events would fill a sizable book. For those who were unable to make it to conference, and for those who have never made it to the bash, following are a few samples of tours and sessions as reported by various SEJ members:

- The all-day tour Thursday morning entitled "Epicenter of Extinction" covered the last big parcel of undeveloped land in Orange County and conflicts over the plants and animals that live there. About two dozen conference-goers heard lively discussions about an ambitious—and controversial—habitat conservation plan for the Irvine Company's acreage along the coast from Newport Beach to Laguna Beach.

The agreement sets aside tens of thousands of acres in perpetuity for habitat preservation, but the set-aside is sliced down the middle by a new toll road. Throughout the vicinity, giant earthmovers have sculpted the rugged dry hills into pricey, heavily watered subdivisions. At lunch, some in the group took a brief hike for a peek at an endangered plant, the Laguna Beach Liveforever, and wondered if the progress would belie that name.

—Russ Clemings.

- Discussions on the Santa Monica Mountains tour began under a spreading valley oak as Art Eck, superintendent of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, explained his office's attempts to battle LA expansion. His goal is to preserve at least some of the natural Santa Monica Mountain environment, once as biologically diverse as any in North America. Among the challenges are giant home sites landscaped with non-native plant species, roads, and an operating landfill.

The rewards of preservation can be great, Eck said. He's seen urban youth marvel at the natural world they can find so near home, while others find it foreign and scary. He remembers seeing a child frightened at observing water running over the ground.

The group also hiked a portion of the mountains where Joe

Edmiston is executive director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. "We have people (today)," he warned, "who without significant government action will not be exposed to nature." —Mike Mansur

- A bus-load left just after noon to tour NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, where participants learned how orbiting satellites helped scientists accurately predict the most recent major El Niño ocean warming event, as well as its flip side, La Niña. Other experts talked about the search for extraterrestrial life, explaining the steps NASA takes to avoid contaminating other planets with human germs and demonstrating how the robotic vehicle navigated around Mars. The group was not attacked by a bug-eyed green spaceman (a plastic blow-up) that inhabited the simulated Martian landscape.

—Jim Bruggers

- Environmental and civil rights organizations are forging new ties as they struggle to turn the concept of "environmental justice" into a rallying cry among their respective memberships, attendees learned at the Environmental Justice panel at 9 a.m. Friday. "That intersection has created a whole new language, terminology and definition of environmentalism," said Carlos Porras, an organizer with the Communities for a Better Environment in Los Angeles.

Porras pointed out that in one school year in the low-income Hispanic and black communities of the highly

polluted Alameda Corridor, out of 11 pregnant teachers, seven miscarried, including four stillborn children. The South Coast Air Quality Management District, which regulates air emissions in the Los Angeles area, forced industries in the corridor to reduce their pollution.

But concerns over continuing cancer cases in the corridor caused the coalition to file a formal environmental justice complaint under Title 6 of the federal Civil Rights Act against the district and the state to stop an emissions trading program that would have allowed corridor industries to buy the right to continue

to emit pollutants by buying up old motor vehicles and scrapping them. Such threats of lawsuits and pressure from low-income and ethnic communities have resulted in some major wins for environmental and community groups.

—Mark Schleifstein

- SEJers who ventured into the main engineering building on a UCLA mini-tour Friday afternoon saw a room-sized



Keynote speaker David Brower



Attendees check out the Mars Polar Lander

replication of a street gutter in which researchers are testing various ways of capturing some of the trash, oil and grease, suspended solids, pesticides, fertilizers, animal wastes, metals, and contaminated sand that washes off the urban landscape. Michael Stenstrom, UCLA professor of civil and environmental engineering, showed off the various "catch basin inserts" that the university received from a handful of manufacturers for testing. Various screens, grates, mesh, or sorbent filters are being employed to capture stormwater gunk before it enters the underground pipeline network that will take it to a river or ocean.

Coastal communities are experimenting with ways to collect and treat stormwater runoff, but that option is prohibitively expensive in most cases. The goal is to capture potentially hazardous materials near their source. That provides a huge market for manufacturers of catch basin inserts, who are trying to devise products that are affordable (in the range of \$500 per installation) and easy enough for city crews to remove periodically for cleaning or replacement.

—Tom Meersman

• Environment reporters today face bigger obstacles than their predecessors, but print and broadcast editors see some different hurdles, learned those who attended the "Boss Talk" panel Friday afternoon. Newspaper reporters assigned to the environment beat are often perceived by editors as being too close to the issues they cover, said David Lauter, specialist editor at the *Los Angeles Times*. Lauter said he is asked by other editors, "Aren't those guys all just a bunch of advocates?" His honest, stock response is that none of the reporters he has supervised fit that description.

In local television it's rare to have an environment beat reporter, said Melinda MacIntire, assignment manager at *KRON-TV* in San Francisco. Thus, it's easy for many TV editors to overlook environment stories or bump them in favor of breaking stories that convey a greater sense of urgency.

MacIntire said most local stations are adding newscasts because they are profitable, but it also means there is a bigger news hole to fill. So, taking the two to three days to do an enterprise story on the environment is a luxury. Although such stories take extra time, it can be quite manageable if a station has a reporter who understands environment issues. *KRON* does, and it has paid off with about a dozen solid environment

packages every few months. Environment stories may still get bumped by breaking stories about robberies or missing persons, because they offer live shots in specific communities.

—Kevin Carmody

• In a Friday afternoon session on Cars and Sprawl, Shelley Poticha of the Congress for the New Urbanism pointed out that the last decades in America have seen an increase of single-use housing development that is two to four times the rate of population growth. The devastating consequences include disinvestment in central cities, the multiplication of sprawl, the increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, and the loss of agricultural lands and wilderness.

Her organization proposes redefining the quality of life in city cores. She cited the example of Milwaukee, where an investment of \$8 million revitalized the whole downtown district simply by building a boardwalk by the river. She believes that the urban neighborhood in reborn cities must bring together citizens of mixed incomes, and keep a human size to it. For example, uptown Dallas, a desert of concrete 10 years ago, has kept the original historic grid of streets and rebuilt the trolley system to bring back human and livable dimensions.

Robert Poole of the think tank Reason Foundation cited a study by the National Homebuilders Association concluding that 83 percent of the people polled would rather live in suburbs, even if it meant longer travel distances. During the discussion that ensued, it was admitted that the cheap price of gas and cars, fear of crime, and changes in zoning required to reorganize the new downtown areas of reborn cities could hamper the tentative revitalization of American cities, even if urban sprawl costs an average of \$40,000.00 more per unit.

—Jacques A. Rivard

• In the midst of island tours and urban insights, some conference-goers took time early Saturday morning to look at

(Continued on next page)



Actor Ed Begley holds forth at Friday luncheon.



CHRIS RIGEL©



Author Barry Lopez addresses SEJ nature in the raw. Despite drizzly weather, 15 armed with binoculars got long looks at rufous and Anna hummingbirds and lesser goldfinches at the UCLA campus on an informal bird walk led by Cheryl Hogue of BNA. Jim Woolf of the *Salt Lake Tribune* helped identify western birds. Several SEJ members expressed interest in organized bird-watching at future national conferences.

—Cheryl Hogue

- Among the basic and sobering facts presented in a video at the beginning of the Saturday morning plenary session on “The Megalopolis in the New Millennium”: Urbanization has sped up remarkably since 1950, when of a global population of 2.5 billion, one third were urban. Today, of six billion people, half are urban. The UN estimates that in 2025 two-thirds of the people on earth will live in cities. In 1999, there are 12 “megacities” with populations above 10 million. By 2015 the UN estimates there will be 26. Eight will be in the developing world.

Six panelists came up with the following consensus: cities can offer tremendous improvements in the quality of life, but because urban growth is happening in poorer countries, those potentials may never be realized.

Oscar Romo, environmental adviser

to the President of Mexico and mayors of Mexico City and Rio De Janeiro, agreed with other panelists that industrialized countries should help fund urban growth in poorer nations, but only if they are flexible and allow those nations to develop their cities in ways that reflect local culture, politics, and economics. Romo noted that some foreign aid programs refuse to loan money to urban development projects in poorer nations that don’t follow models based on cities in wealthier nations.

Denis Hayes, Earth Day organizer and president of The Bullitt Foundation, and Lynn Scarlett, executive director of The Reason Foundation, a free-market based policy group, found some common ground. Both felt that successful urbanization in the developing world would require new approaches to technology, such as cleaner cars and higher fuel consumption, and that there are strong economic incentives for the global economy to develop those alternatives.

Candace Skarlatos, director of environmental initiatives for The Bank of America, agreed that urbanization creates lending opportunities for the world’s financial institutions, but worried that novel approaches and untried technologies might present excessive risk for potential investors.

Robert Gottlieb, professor of Urban Policy at Occidental College, argued that “thinking locally” makes more sense than treating the issue on a sweeping global scale. Mark Ridley Thomas, city councilor from Los Angeles recently named

head of the council’s Environment Committee, seconded Romo’s comments that foreign lenders will have to respect social justice in the countries with growing cities if urban development is to be “done right.”

—David Ropeik

- Perhaps the most impressive outcome of the Saturday noon lunch and its panoply of celebrities was their self-effacement in the environmental arena. Danica McKellar, Winnie of “The Wonder Years,” admitted that she lacks any expertise in environmental matters but that she became an activist about the oceans after seeing litter on a beach. “All I know technically about the environment, I get off the Internet,” she said.

The animated Alexandra Paul, who has done stints on “Baywatch,” said when she joins demonstrations on environmental issues she never announces her presence to the press beforehand. She also revealed that she has written into all her acting contracts that she will not wear make-up that has been tested on laboratory animals.

Ed Begley of “St. Elsewhere” fame said he rides a bicycle when feasible and mixes his own shaving cream rather than use lathers with questionable propellants. He laughed good-naturedly along with the audience when Ted Danson of “Cheers” broke in to apologize because “my limo driver hit Ed Begley on his bicycle.”

Danson, perhaps the highest profile
(Continued on next page)

TOM VILOT©



Robert Gottlieb (left), Occidental College, and Mark Ridley-Thomas, LA City Council member, discussed rapid urbanization at the plenary session



environmentalist among those on stage, claimed no deep knowledge about marine matters despite founding an environmental group to save the oceans. "It's doubtful that anyone cares what Sam Malone thinks about oceans," he said laconically, "but while I'm shaking hands with senators and going 'yadda, yadda yadda,' my (technical) staff is talking behind the scenes with the senator's staff and things are getting done." —Noel Grove

• In one of three sessions Sunday morning at the Barbra Streisand Ranch that followed a well-received speech by author Barry Lopez (see President's Report, page 2) three other authors discussed how the environment has affected literary works. Daniel Botkin, who has written about the Lewis and Clark expe-



Author Lynn Cherry and producer Richard Milner take a piano break

dition, pointed out that the trip was the most carefully documented natural history report ever made up to that time and gives us a valuable base line to compare with developments in those areas today.

Susan Shillinglaw of The Steinbeck Society showed slides of the California landscape in John Steinbeck's early years and told how the social and economic stratification of society helped shape such works as *Grapes of Wrath* and *Cannery Row*. Jennifer Price, author of a new book *Flight Maps*, discussed how the associations most Americans have with nature are now acquired through stores on the mall such as The Nature Company and through the use of symbols such as the plastic lawn flamingo.

—Noel Grove

Memoirs of a conference organizer

By GARY POLAKOVIC

SEJ's Ninth National Conference was hours old on Thursday afternoon when I stole time to attend the first session, a dialog between scientists and journalists on the third floor of the Bradley International Hall at UCLA. I pretended to be a spectator, but I was actually ground control, hoping this contraption dubbed SEJ9 that I spent nearly three years building would fly.

In those anxious moments as energy, excitement, and creativity flowed through the room I felt prickles run up my neck and down my arms. It was the exhilaration of flight. The hard work by so many people to make the UCLA conference a success was hitting paydirt. We had liftoff!

A couple of years ago, the SEJ board committed to putting more national conferences in major U.S. cities. An increasingly populated America and urban planet required greater attention to the ascendancy of the megalopolises and the urban environment. Giant cities as venues will never be as lovely or hospitable as small towns (the LA mayor, a conference no-show, extends warmer welcomes to free-trade barriers), but if SEJ is to grow in stature and clout, we have to appear in the urban power centers of the nation.

Curiously, however, this conference was almost devoid of

politicians and other power brokers. That was due in part to the many other events competing for attention in LA. And the conference tilted harder toward science than policy, reflecting my bias and that of other conference organizers. Consequently, we may have missed opportunities to extend our influence. Invitations to six top officials in the Clinton administration were declined. One public information officer in Interior told me, "There just don't seem to be that many journalists who attend."

It took Marla Cone and me five years of searching to bring the big show to California, home to more SEJ members than any other state. Attendance was above average, numbering about 560. Participation by journalists was average, however—a disappointment given that we set outreach to our colleagues journalists. Listserv discussion provided these excuses: Kids started school in September; Yom Kippur; LA sucks; too expensive; Hurricane Floyd; too far away for East Coasters; no financial support from employers. Clearly, October is preferable for the national conference, but it was not an option at UCLA.

Last January the Board decided one of the goals for the national conference was to turn it into a money-maker, and we did that in '99 through aggressive fund raising. Still, there were missed opportunities. We turned away vendors for lack of space. The Board is now considering the addition of large but separate trade shows to future conferences.

But there were many highlights—the tours to Catalina Island and the Santa Monica Mountains, the Wildlife Film Festival, Brower's keynote. Regrets to those who departed early and missed church-in-the-park with Barry Lopez. Am I looking forward to future national conferences? You betcha. Especially since I won't have to organize them.

Board member Gary Polakovic reports on the environment for the Los Angeles Times.



SEJ in LA—gorgeous in green

By DAVID HELVARG

Editor's Note: In the interests of objectivity and humor, SEJournal occasionally allows author Helvarg an alternative look at annual conference. His views do not necessarily represent those of SEJ staff, board, membership, or the remainder of humankind.

Looking down as I fly into LA I can't help but think about the loss of diversity: of jaguars, cougars, impalas, broncos, stingrays, and barracudas. Today every car looks pretty much like a Ford Taurus, what we call the tragedy of the common.

SEJ has finally gotten its conference location right, I think, as my screenwriter friend picks me up at LAX so we can do lunch with a producer. From there it's off to UCLA's "Sunset Village," one of those expensive LA "theme" hotels, this one designed to look like a rundown college dorm.

Unfortunately SEJ's organizers showed a disturbing lack of cultural sensitivity towards our hosts, offering a "walking" tour of campus and failing to provide on-demand shuttle service between the village and conference center. Given the problem of smog in the city, locals long ago realized that being inside a car reduces individual exposure to harmful particles in the air. Pedestrians not only do harm to themselves, but force cars to slow down and speed up in what locals refer to as a fuel-wasteful "hit-and-run" maneuver, although Amory Lovins believes much of that braking energy could be recovered.

My first tour was of Catalina island which was to die for. In fact the head of the island conservancy thought that invasive species such as feral goats, pigs, and mule deer need to be eradicated, while the more popular buffalo could be rounded up and placed behind wire fences, what biologists refer to as the Serbian approach to ecological restoration.

Other tours included Extinction in Orange County, in which scientists demonstrated how if you put rare and endangered songbirds in charge of county financing, you'd still get a higher rate of return, and Space: the Final Environmental Frontier, in

which other scientists explained that even going to a dead, airless rock like the moon is a quicker way to get to Santa Monica than taking the 410 at rush-hour.

I'm sorry I missed the Baywatch tour, but luckily got to see Alexandra Paul at Friday's "Celebrities Are People Too" luncheon, where her proposal to recycle bad scripts has apparently been taken to heart by this season's TV producers.

On Friday's panel on Saving Megafauna Dave Foreman suggested that like bears and cougars, we are also large predators. "Or small vegetarians," responded Orna Izakson. The Bioremediation lab noted that PCBs in river sediment will naturally dissolve in 12,000 years, or about half the time GE's lawyers are prepared to use to challenge EPA clean-up orders.

In the afternoon I went to a panel on stormwater runoff in which a city official made the unbelievable claim that more crud flows into Santa Monica Bay after the first storm of winter than can be seen during an entire season of Fox television viewing.

Other panels suggested that if you combine global warming with genetic engineering, you've probably tuned back to Baywatch.

During the celeb luncheon Ted Danson said that some people probably don't want to hear what Sam Malone thinks about protecting the oceans, although I'm sure Diane the waitress would be happy to know he's taken up a new hobby.

The SEJ annual meeting was exciting as non-toxic paint drying. In the board elections one candidate offered to host a convention and party in New Orleans while another expressed concern about frog deformities. The compromise of course would be to eat frog legs in New Orleans at some future SEJ confab. Unfortunately a number of us had to grab pitchforks and leave early when word arrived that someone had brought a wolf into the village. I was viciously torn between the live wolf (that Defenders of Wildlife used for its spin) and the free drinks Earth Day 2000 was offering in another suite. By the time I staggered into

the wolf's lair the critter had gone. One reporter appeared to be seriously smitten having been licked (or perhaps tasted) by the canine shill.

That evening Dave Brower addressed the group before the all-night film festival and dorm-storming (the fish-sex music video showed some great tail). Brower recalled how California's population has expanded 12 times since he was a boy when salmon ran in most of the state's rivers and every morning he'd wake to the inspired trumpeting of native mastodons.

Saturday morning's plenary on Megalopolises was both urbane and informative, identifying the San Diego-Tijuana region for example as the first bi-national megacity with jello tequila shooters.

Denis Hayes of Earth Day pointed out that 81 percent of the world's population, if living here, would qualify for food stamps, while Lynn Scarlett of the free-market Reason Institute thought they'd just use their stamps to buy cigarettes and candy.

Later I discovered that my panel members from environmental law enforcement had busted most of the Companies with a Conscience panel. Meanwhile Paul Rogers ran a panel on covering wildfires, mudslides, El Niño, Earthquakes, The Phantom Menace, Eyes Wide Shut, and other recent disasters.

The conference's final dinner was held at the Long Beach Aquarium. The fish plate was delicious and made me glad we weren't dining at the zoo. The sea dragons were stunningly elegant, the spider crabs looked like they'd require a gallon of tartar sauce each, and the jellyfish reminded me of several editors I've known.

SEJ's "millennial" conference will be held next year in East Lansing, Mich., which I'm told is really quite stunning when compared to West Lansing. Remember, business travel tax deductions you write off for East Lansing will not be challenged by the IRS.

David Helvarg is an independent TV producer, journalist, and author based in Washington, D.C.

Edwards wins Stolberg award

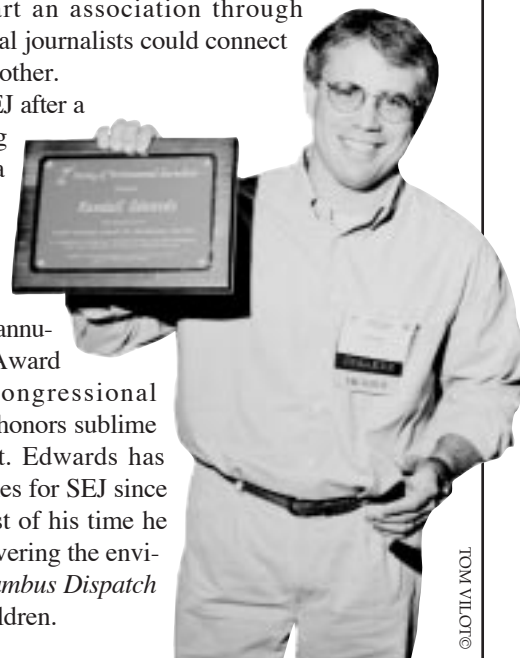
The first SEJ David Stolberg Award for Meritorious Service has been awarded to Randy Edwards, environment writer for the *Columbus Dispatch*. The award, which recognizes exceptional volunteer service to the SEJ community, was announced and presented at SEJ's membership meeting in Los Angeles.

Randy Edwards was recognized as giving tirelessly and creatively to SEJ over many years, cheerfully taking on tasks large and small. He has organized numerous Ohio regional conferences and reporting tours, moderated panels for national conferences, shared ideas and information through SEJ listservs and the *SEJournal*, participated in SEJ's 1999 leadership retreat, recruited new members, counted ballots with the SEJ elections committee, and spoken to Ohio students and radio audiences about environmental reporting.

The David Stolberg Award was established by the SEJ board in 1998 and named for the former Scripps-Howard editor, now retired, whose idea led to the founding of SEJ. While overseeing Scripps-Howard's journalism awards program in the late 1980s, Stolberg suggested to the Edward Meeman win-

ners that they start an association through which environmental journalists could connect with and help each other.

In a letter to SEJ after a ceremony honoring him in Chattanooga last year and announcing the annual award, Stolberg wrote: "By my lights, the annual David Stolberg Award is akin to the Congressional Medal. The Medal honors sublime heroism in combat. Edwards has fought in the trenches for SEJ since Sept. 1995. The rest of his time he divides between covering the environment at the *Columbus Dispatch* and raising five children.



Regional event

SEJ members trawl for news in Lake Erie

Twelve reporters and students aboard the MV Biolab research vessel headed into gentle breezes on October 12 to study the health of Lake Erie. The event, organized by *Columbus Dispatch* reporter Randy Edwards and *Toledo Blade's* Tom Henry, took place on Gibraltar Island, a tiny island just off Port Clinton, Ohio.

Also on board Biolab were Jeff Reutter, director of the Ohio Sea Grant College Program, John Hageman, Stone Lab's manager, and skipper Al Duff.

During the four-hour voyage, SEJers kept limnology (fresh-water science) data sheets logging wind direction, sunlight penetration, water temperature, and amount of oxygen present at

various depths.

A fishing net hauled in by reporters Don Hopey of the *Pittsburgh Press* and Bob Downing of the *Akron Beacon Journal* turned up 11 species of fish, including the infamous invasive gobi.

The fish that weren't thrown back stayed on ice for the afternoon lab session, where attendees learned the basics of fish identification and what all those inner parts are that some of us scrape out of trout. Later sessions included talks from Scudder Mackey, chief of the Lake Erie division of the Ohio Geological Survey, who talked about changing lake levels, and Joe Smith, president of the Bayside Fish Company, who described difficulties faced by the region's commercial fishermen.

One story that came out of the event ran on 1A of the *Dayton Daily News*, written by SEJ member and attendee Dale Dempsey. He and staff photographer Lisa Powell described the changes—for good and ill—Lake Erie has seen in the past three decades: pollution reduction, revival of marine life, and invasives like the gobi and zebra mussel.

The *Toledo Blade* ran two stories by Tom Henry. The first described fluctuating lake levels, and the cost of bailing out marinas, built on the assumption that Lake Erie water levels will remain high. A story about Gibraltar Island's landmark Cookes Castle ran two days later.

Funding for the event was provided by a grant from The George Gund Foundation with additional funds from the Ohio Sea Grant College Program, Ohio State University, and *The Columbus Dispatch*.

—Chris Rigel

CHRIS RIGEL ©



Reutter and Justine Edwards inspect a water sample



First this week, some advice for media members on the move: "live simply." Those words of wisdom come from expert box packer **Diane Raab** who is hitting the road again for the 29th time in 15 years. Raab has left her post as the city government reporter for the Sedona (Ariz.) *Red Rock News*. She is now the development director at public radio station *KRBD* in Ketchikan, Alaska. Raab says she wanted to try something new and missed being in Alaska.

The husband/wife reporting team of **Robert McClure** and **Sally Deneen** are traversing the nation from corner to corner for their next assignment. McClure and Deneen left Florida where he was the environmental reporter for the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* and she was a freelance writer. McClure is taking over the enviro beat at the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*. Deneen says one advantage of writing about the environment in the Pacific Northwest is that the community instinctively knows "how important each environmental issue is." The two will still maintain their Florida connections. They are co-authors of two travel books: *Florida Camping* and the *Florida Dog Lovers Companion*, both of which they update regularly.

Also in the Pacific Northwest, **Kathie Durbin** is developing a new "sprawl" beat for the *Columbian* in Vancouver, Wash. Durbin spent the past five years as a freelance journalist and has written two books about the politics of forest protection. The second is just out from Oregon State University Press and is called *Tongass: Pulp, Politics*

and the *Fight for the Alaska Rain Forest*. Durbin also helped launch the monthly newspaper called *Cascadia Times*.

Academic member **David Padgett** is now an assistant professor of geography at Tennessee State University in Nashville. Previously he was teaching at Oberlin College in Ohio. His specialty is environmental geography and over the next five years he plans to set up an environmental justice center at the school. The center will focus on getting "computers, the Internet, and laboratories into the hands of people in communities." He wants to empower local activists to gather data they need without waiting for professional scientists.

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Arriving back east just in time for autumn, **Deborah Schoch**, *The Los Angeles Times* environmental reporter is taking an academic year off to attend Harvard as one of the two Nieman Fellowships designated for environmental journalists. She is studying "in far more depth than daily deadlines allow" conservation biology and environmental economics. An international colleague, **Rakesh Kalshian**, who covers the environment for *Outlook* in New Delhi, India, is spending the year studying climate change.

And a new crew of Ted Scripps Fellows are hard at work at the

University of Colorado in Boulder. Radio reporters **Becky Rumsey** and **Lisa Busch** are joining *CNN*'s **Emily Murphy** and freelancer **Pat Joseph**. Rounding out this year's fellows is **Dan Grossman**, a print and radio reporter, formerly with *NPR*'s "Living on Earth," who is studying climate change "because it is the most important environmental problem we face today."

A number of reporters became scientists for a couple of weeks this past spring during the Science Writing Fellowship sponsored by the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass. They were: **David Ballingrud**, *St. Petersburg Times*; **Lori Cuthbert**, *Discovery Channel Online*; **Lisa Eckelbecker**, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*; **Graciela Rogerio**, *WABC-TV*; **Alexandra Witze**, *Dallas Morning News*; **James Erickson**, *Arizona Daily Star*; **Todd Bates**, *Asbury Park Press*; **Daniel Grossman**, *NPR*; **Mindy Pennybacker**, *The Green Guide*; **Perry Beeman**, *Des Moines Register*; **Michael Burns**, *Baltimore Sun*; **Cheryl Hogue**, *BNA*; **Carolyn Lesser**, author, **Gretel Schueller**, *Audubon Magazine*; and **Noreen Parks**, **Carole Potera**, **Nancy Cohen**, **John Miller**, and **Barbara Moran**, all freelance.

Don't let your move go unnoticed! If you have a new job, new book, new fellowship or new award, let your colleagues know. E-mail George Homsy at ghomsy@world.std.com or send a fax to (603) 947-9622.

TV newsman wins Ritzke fellowship

Matt Hammill, environment reporter at *WQAD-TV*, the *ABC* affiliate in Moline, Ill., has been awarded the third annual Rita M. Ritzke Memorial Fellowship for Broadcast Journalists. The award, sponsored by SEJ, is named annually and carries a \$1,000 prize.

Hammill has been a reporter at *WQAD* for 16 years and has been named "Best Reporter" in Illinois three times by the *Associated Press*. He is the impetus behind a weekly segment called "Earth Alert," which has been one of the

station's most popular features since 1990. It has introduced viewers to a broad spectrum of environmental issues that includes lead poisoning, environmentally related asthma, and urban sprawl. This year he also won a fellowship from the Radio & Television News Directors Foundation.

Fellowship judges said they were impressed with the consistently high journalistic quality of Hammill's pieces, which eclipsed the work of good reporters in much larger markets. The

judges also noted that the management at a small-market (88th) station apparently has made such a long-standing commitment to the coverage of serious and complex issues.

The Rita M. Ritzke Fellowship was established in 1996 through an endowment honoring the memory of Rita Mary Ritzke, a supervisor in the pathology laboratories at the Milwaukee County Medical Center who had a strong interest in the environment, science, and quality journalism. ♦



Board gets two new members, sets initiatives

The SEJ election in Los Angeles resulted in two new board members and two standing board members being re-elected. Re-elected were Mike Mansur and Sara Thurin Rollin. New to the board are Mark Schleifstein of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and Deborah Schoch of the *Los Angeles Times*. They replace Ann Goodman of *Tomorrow Magazine* and Gary Lee of the *Washington Post*.



Mark Schleifstein



Deborah Schoch

Votes tallied were from mail ballots and those cast at the annual membership meeting held Friday, Sept. 17.

After the membership meeting the

SEJ board elected officers for 2000. Mansur was re-elected president. Other results: Russ Clemings of the *Fresno Bee*, first vice president and program chair; Jim Bruggers, *Contra Costa Times*, re-elected as second vice president and membership chair; Rollin re-elected treasurer; and Peter Thomson, *NPR*, secretary.

The board also announced that it is seeking candidates to replace Marla Cone of the *LA Times*, who resigned from the board to pursue a Pew fellowship. Active members interested in this appointment should submit an e-mail or letter to SEJ President Mike Mansur (816-234-4433, or mmansur@kcstar.com, or c/o the SEJ office). Contact either Mansur or SEJ executive director Beth Parke (bparke@sej.org or 215-836-9970) for information about board service.

The board will appoint the new board member during December so the new member can attend the board meet-

ing Jan. 8 in Washington, D.C. The person named will serve until the next election, in October 2000, at which time they may seek re-election.

The SEJ board, at its Wednesday, Sept. 15 meeting, set new priorities for the year 2000. They include:

(1) Redesign of the SEJ Website and *SEJournal*.

(2) Revamping of the newsroom outreach program.

(3) Development of new publications (specifically, a book on environmental journalism) and a new awards program.

Current initiatives, such as stepped-up fund raising, development of an endowment, and a continued effort to boost membership, will continue. Members are encouraged to submit comments or suggestions on the new initiatives or other matters to board members or executive director Beth Parke. ♦

SEJ both stroked, attacked in recent publications

Editor & Publisher magazine recently printed a story by John Palen recapping SEJ's accomplishments in its first decade of existence and the challenges it faces as a maturing journalism organization.

The upbeat article, published in the Aug. 21 issue, appeared on pages 16-17. An assistant journalism professor at Central Michigan University, Palen has written a comprehensive history of SEJ.

The article noted that SEJ has far exceeded expectations as to the size of its membership, despite the early decision to exclude lobbyists, activists, and public relations people, and to refuse money from non-media corporations or activist groups. The article was headlined "It's not easy being green; Still, SEJ hasn't had a hard time exceeding expectations."

In a letter to the editor appearing in *E&P's* Sept. 4 issue, SEJ President Mike Mansur complimented the article, but noted that some SEJ members were disappointed by the headline for incorrectly implying an activist bias. "Most environment reporters don't like being labeled green," Mansur wrote. "They see themselves as journalists with a good and challenging beat—the environment—no

different in their objectivity or desire to be fair than another beat writer."

In a later letter to the editor, published Sept. 18 about the article on SEJ, Alan Caruba attacked SEJ and its members for promoting "baseless fears" about a host of "bogus" issues including acid rain, herbicide use, the "Alar scare," urban sprawl "and, of course, global warming, even though not one scintilla of climatological fact supports it."

Caruba signed the letter as founder of the National Anxiety Center of Maplewood, N.J. He also claimed that SEJ has "discredited science writing" and "is not an organization any serious, self-respecting journalist would want to join."

But, in reporting on Caruba's letter, *Jack O'Dwyer's (PR) Newsletter* seemed to tweak Caruba for how he signed the letter, noting that Caruba is actually a PR consultant who has long represented the pesticide industry. The *O'Dwyer's* piece, in the Sept. 29 edition, stated that Allied/Pioneer Pest Management Companies, a \$15 million pest control firm, is one of Caruba's PR clients and he was previously PR counselor to the N.J. Pest Control Association for a decade.

An article in the October issue of the *Progressive* magazine identifies Caruba's Anxiety Center and his Boring Institute as self-created platforms for publicity stunts intended to generate media coverage for his views. As noted in the *Progressive* article, written by Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, Caruba's Anxiety Center web site speaks of "a green genocide agenda" to "save the Earth by killing humans." It warns that "a supra-national bureaucracy composed of unelected Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) composed of greens" could well be the perfect instrument to destroy capitalism, U.S. constitutional freedoms, and humanity.

The pesticide industry's two primary trade organizations, the National Pest Control Association and the American Crop Protection Association, say they have no connection with Caruba, although he apparently did limited PR work for the APCA about 15 years ago, Stauber reported.

"We have no professional relationship with him and we have no plans to have one," said Gene Harrington of the NPCA.

Mansur opted not to respond in writing to Caruba's letter on behalf of SEJ. ♦



Adventures in La-La Land

The annual conference came and went with its usual gibes and glitches. Everyone, including freelancer David Helvarg, seemed to have a great time in Los Angeles, and then David sat down and knocked out his usual tongue-in-cheek (we hope) monologue on miscues real and imagined (page 8). We dread the copy that will emerge if ever David does *not* have a good time at conference.

Maybe it was the effect of UCLA and its proximity to Hollywood, but some of the *bon mots* had a R-rated flare. For example, GABI has it on good authority that one of the panelists at the luncheon known as "Hollywood Meets The Press," upon learning there would be no table to sit behind on stage, declared, "But I don't usually wear any panties!"

Doubtless an environmental consideration, focusing on diversion of cotton cropland to wild habitat, or the unethical treatment of silkworms. We thought we'd mention it, since it brings whole new meaning to a column called Grin and Bare It.

- Rod Jackson of ABC News, after lunching with his wife, Diane, and others at the speakers table, mounted the stage and did a good and fair-handed job of moderating the panel of celebs. Maybe too good. Maybe too fair-handed.

When it came time to field questions from the audience, Rod adhered faithfully and courageously to conference rules about taking questions first from SEJ members.

Unfortunately Diane was among the non-members raising her hand with a question for the celebs and Rod passed over her several times. Diane waved her hand more urgently as the end of the session neared but still the intrepid moderator failed to call on her.

"I'll bet he's in trouble when he gets home," joked a board member also at the table as the audience dispersed.

"Yeh," muttered Diane, "I think I feel a headache coming on tonight."

- Speaking of headaches, an officer of an organization that has given plenty

of them to corporate heads lent a helping hand to a conference panel member in a bind. Chris Bowman of the *Sacramento Bee* spent hours preparing for his Friday morning session, "One Thousand Words: Storytelling with Graphics and Pictures." Unfortunately, when the lights went out, his slides appeared on the screen upside down and backwards.

From the back of the room arose Darryl Cherney, a longtime leader of northern California's contingent of Earth First, a group better known for bending technology than for its technological bent. "I've got a lot of experience with these things," Cherney said, quickly removing each slide and turning it in the correct direction so the show could go on.

Grin & Bare It

- With members in numerous countries throughout the world we all know the reach of SEJ has extended far and wide, but a placard announcing the gathering place for one of the mini-tours must have been an eye-opener for the casual passerby. Among signs announcing tours to "Botanical Gardens" and "Storm Sewers" was one for the Mars Polar Lander project at UCLA that said simply, "Mars." Hope they made it back in time for David Brower.

- Another eye-opener, not funny, came after the conference when *SEJournal* editor Noel Grove took a flight from LA to Phoenix to visit a sister. As ye editor dozed off at 30,000 feet in clouds, the America West plane made a sudden, violent lurch upward, a maneuver that broke the legs of three flight attendants serving drinks and sprained the neck of a fourth.

After a few seconds the captain came on the intercom explaining that the ground proximity warning had come on falsely, with a spoken message to "Pull up! Pull up!" which he had to honor. The incident is now under investigation by the National Transportation

Safety Board.

- We go to the SEJ conference to learn to be better reporters, right? So what does a certain erudite reporter and SEJ board member do? Loses his notebook in the midst of sessions. So great are his powers of recollection, however, that he wrote one of the fine capsuleizations of conference sessions that appear elsewhere in the *SEJournal*. You'll never guess which one. Notebooks, who needs 'em?

- Straying from the conference (although between sessions you may have been reading this item as it appeared in print), we might mention that SEJ President Mike Mansur, environment writer at the *Kansas City Star* had a rare opportunity in 1995 to hang out with William Least Heat-Moon, as the Missouri author attempted to cross America in a boat. Heat-Moon's travel is the subject of his new book, *River-Horse: A Voyage Across America*, blue waters replacing blue highways this time.

Mansur now claims the best quip in Heat-Moon's new book. It can be found on page 222. Mansur, identified as "the Reporter," Heat-Moon, and Heat-Moon's co-pilot (a published writer whom the author later nicknamed Pilotis) were aboard the boat on the Missouri River, not far from Kansas City. Heat-Moon wrote:

"Pilotis, who recently completed a draft of a novel not yet satisfying, said, 'I wish I had the language of Shakespeare, the theme of Tolstoy, the plotting of Dickens, the humor of Twain, the industry of Balzac, the precision of Dickinson, and the swing of Babe Ruth.'

"Said the Reporter, 'If you had the last one, you wouldn't need the others.'"

Humorous or interesting stories that relate to environmental journalism should be sent to Chris Rigel at rigel@voicenet.com or by mail to 340 Euclid Avenue, Ambler Pa. 19002

SEJ Ninth National Conference Audio Cassette Tapes Order Form

Thursday, September 16

- _____ 5 Tapes T1 Smog, California Style
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Friday, September 17

- _____ Tape F1 Stanford University's "Connections Project"
Theme Rooms One — Concurrent Sessions: 9:00—10:15 A.M.
_____ Tape 1.1 Waterworld or Waterwhirled? Water Politics of the Southwest
_____ Tape 1.2 Online Reporting
_____ Tape 1.3 Lions & Tigers & Bears, Oh My! Saving Megafauna from Extinction
_____ Tape 1.4 Six Years Later: How Has Nafta Altered the Border Conflict?
_____ Tape 1.5 Environmental Justice: Can Communities Walk the Walk?
_____ Tape 1.6 Just (Let Nature) Do It: Is Bioremediation Better Than Traditional Cleanup

Methods?

- _____ Tape 1.7 Starting Out After J-School
Theme Rooms Two — Concurrent Sessions: 10:30—11:45 A.M.

- _____ Tape 2.1 Pacific Blues
_____ Tape 2.2 One Thousand Words: Storytelling With Graphic and Pictures
_____ Tape 2.3 The Heat is On
_____ Tape 2.4 Spreadsheet Earth
_____ Tape 2.5 Urban Face Lift
_____ Tape 2.6 Genetically-modified Crops: Ecological Risks and Benefits
_____ Tape 2.7 For (S)He's a Jolly Good Fellow

Plenary Session

- _____ Tape F2 Hollywood, the Press and the Environment
Theme Rooms Three — Concurrent Sessions: 2:30—3:45 P.M.
_____ Tape 3.1 Recreation on Public Lands: Are We Loving the Wilderness to Death?
_____ Tape 3.2 Boss Talk: Editors on the Environment
_____ Tape 3.3 Baja Bound: From Border Issues to Whales
_____ Tape 3.4 Market-Based Environmental Solutions
_____ Tape 3.5 Cars and Sprawl: A Symbiotic Relationship
_____ Tape 3.6 Pesticides: Are We Healthier With or Without Them?
_____ Tape 3.7 The State of Environmental Education in America: An End of the Century

Review

Keynote Address

- _____ Tape F3 60 Years of Environmental Activism: What Next Century Holds—David Brower

Saturday, September 18

- _____ 2 Tapes S1 The Megalopolis in the New Millennium

Press Conference

- _____ Tape S2 UCLA's Institute of the Environment: Environmental Report Card
Theme Rooms Four — Concurrent Sessions: 1:30—2:45 P.M.
_____ Tape 4.1 Thin Green Line: Environmental Law Enforcement Faces a Dangerous Future
_____ Tape 4.2 1999 Award Winners: The Best E Reporting
_____ Tape 4.3 Hands-On Web Resources for Environmental Reporting
_____ Tape 4.4 Is There a Local Angle in Population Stories?
_____ Tape 4.5 Asia's Financial Woes: Good or Bad for the Environment
_____ Tape 4.6 Water Blues: Can We Trust What Comes Out of the Tap?
_____ Tape 4.7 Under the Sea: Emerging Issues in Marine Research

Theme Rooms Five—Concurrent Sessions: 3:15—4:30 P.M.

- _____ Tape 5.1 Disasterland: Wildfires, Mudslides, El Niño, Earthquakes: Ensuring Your Coverage Isn't a Disaster
_____ Tape 5.3 Getting Primary Source Information: There's More to Life Than Indices
_____ Tape 5.4 Companies With a Conscience
_____ Tape 5.5 Smog U.S.A.: Latest Findings in Air Pollution

Sunday, September 19

- _____ Tape SU1 A Talk With Barry Lopez
_____ Tape SU2 Steinbeck, Lewis & Clark, and The Nature Company: 3 Eras of Environmental Literature
_____ Tape SU3 Telling Environmental Stories Better
_____ Tape SU4 So You Want to Write a Book

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As the Feds clam up, the press finds a voice

Analyzing pollution data

By BRUNO TEDESCHI

To anyone who's ever driven on the New Jersey Turnpike, it will come as no surprise that the Garden State is a hot spot for toxic air contaminants. The combination of oil refineries, chemical plants, and bumper-to-bumper traffic are enough to make even the heartiest travelers gasp for air.

What is the health effect for New Jersey residents who are forced to breathe this toxic stew every day? It's a question that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sought to answer in its nationwide Cumulative Exposure Project, or CEP.

The CEP is a massive nationwide database of estimated chemical exposure for every census tract in the United States. It was clear early on that our readers would be interested in this first-ever look at the nation's air, but regulators weren't about to give up their data without a fight.

The EPA was originally supposed to release the data in December, but at the request of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the agency decided to shelve its plans. (see *The Boston Globe*, January 17, 1999, "Air survey cites toxicity; EPA shelves data release," by Scott Allen). The conference and some state officials objected that the 1990 air pollution data do not reflect progress in the fight against air pollution in the 1990s, according to the *Globe*.

The CEP is the EPA's effort to understand how much toxic contamination the public is exposed to through air, water, and food. The air study is only one aspect of the CEP. Visit <http://www.epa.gov/oppeccumm/index.htm> for more information.

It wasn't until March when I came across a memo from New Jersey Environmental Commissioner Robert Shinn to Governor Whitman that I became interested in the CEP. In the memo, Shinn described the EPA study as the first comprehensive assessment of the public's exposure to toxic air pollutants, and warned the governor that it showed relatively high risks in much of the state.

Although the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had the data since December, the agency had no plans to release its own analysis with maps showing the areas where the chemical concentrations posed the most risk.

After rushing to get the story in the paper late Friday, we decided to follow up by getting the data and analyzing it ourselves. At first, the EPA was reluctant to release the data, but a few weeks after my Freedom of Information Act request, I received a CD-ROM with data for every state in the nation. The data was comma delimited, so it was easy to export into my Excel spreadsheet.

The files were vast and basically meaningless. The New Jersey file alone had 1,938 rows (one row for each census tract) and 148 columns (one column for each chemical) for a total of 286,000 individual pieces of data. Luckily, a few months earlier, my employers sent me to two courses at Rutgers University in Geographical Information Systems and had purchased a pro-

gram known as ArcView, which lists for about \$1,100. For those not familiar, Arcview (<http://www.esri.com>) and other programs like GeoMedia (<http://www.intergraph.com>), are "mapping programs" that can take any type of geographical data and place it on a map.

Before I brought the data into the mapping program, I first calculated the health risk posed by each chemical in each census tract using Excel. To do this, I downloaded the health benchmarks for the chemicals at <http://www.epa.gov/oppeccumm/air/air.htm>.

I would also suggest reading "Public Health Implications of 1990 Air Toxic Concentrations Across the United States," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Vol. 106, No. 5 pp. 245-251, May 1998 Woodruff et. al, which can also be downloaded from the CEP website.

A health benchmark is the level at which the chemical poses a one in a million risk of cancer. Not all of the 148 chemicals in the CEP study had health benchmarks, but for the ones that did, I calculated the ratio of concentration to health benchmark for each census tract. This is the number of times that the chemical exceeds the health benchmark.

In some cases the ratio was less than one. These are the cases where the level is below the benchmark. But in other cases, the level was well above one, sometimes 100 times and sometimes 1,000 times, which translates into a 1 in 100,000 cancer risk or 1 in 10,000 cancer risk. I added all the ratios across each census tract to give me a value that I called the total inhalation cancer risk, a term I lifted from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's toxic air website, <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/at-cep.html>.

One substance requiring special attention is polycyclic organic matter (POM), which is not one chemical, but a class of chemicals. Judy Woodruff at the EPA advised me to use the health benchmark for benzo(a)pyrene, the most potent component of POM, and then reduce the concentration of POM by a factor of 10. For more information on this see Memorandum: Interim Methodology to Derive a Cancer Potency Estimate for Polycyclic Organic Matter (POM), which is available on the CEP website.

In addition to finding the ratios, I also found out how many chemicals in each census tract exceeded the health benchmark. I did this using a simple formula in Excel that converted values less than one into zeros and values greater than or equal to one in ones. I then added the ones for each census tract to come up with the number of chemicals that exceed the health benchmark.

Once these basic calculations were completed, I exported the file as a dbf and brought it into ArcView. I linked the file to a theme in ArcView that had census tracts. (This was actually a little difficult because the census tract convention used by the EPA differed from the one in my base map. I have a detailed workaround for this minor problem for anyone who is interested.)

(Continued on next page)



At this point, if you know how to use a mapping program, the analysis is simple. Just select a field to map, and like magic, it appears on a map. I went through each of the chemicals and found about nine that looked to be of particular concern. We did a separate map of New Jersey for each of these chemicals with an explanation of what each chemical was, its source, its health impact, and what the state or federal government was doing to reduce its presence.

One of the problems we ran into here was how to key the maps. Some chemicals exceeded the benchmark by a factor of 10 and others exceeded by factors of 100. The software automatically chooses a key that takes into account the range on each individual map. So a chemical with a range of 1 to 10 might create a key of 1 to 2.5, 2.5 to 5, 5 to 7.5 and 7.5 to 10. A chemical with a range of 1 to 100 would give a key that is 10 times the 1 to 10 range. We felt it was important to use the same key across all the maps rather than using individual keys for each map, but this doesn't always provide the best display.

I also looked at the concentrations of chemicals in surrounding states to put New Jersey in context. So we published

one big map of the entire Northeast from Maryland to Massachusetts using the total inhalation cancer risk. The conclusion: highest risks were around urban areas, such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

As a follow-up, we did another story using the chronic health benchmarks rather than the cancer benchmarks. A few days before our story ran, the DEP, knowing that we were about to publish our maps, created its own web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/airmon/airtoxics/>.

The EPA is expected to release a new set of data sometime in January using 1996 numbers. This will provide the first opportunity to see how much the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990 have reduced hazardous air pollutants. I assume we still have a long way to go.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at (609) 292-5159 or by e-mail at tedeschi@bergen.com.

Bruno Tedeschi writes about the environment from the statehouse bureau of The Record of Hackensack, N.J.

Making the radio airwaves bloom *Brown-thumbed George Homsy opens new gardening show*

By JACKLEEN DE LA HARPE

George Homsy is not a gardener. He doesn't own a house or a plot of land. He doesn't even have a garden. Why then is one of the founding producers of *National Public Radio's* "Living On Earth" now the executive producer of a new *NPR* gardening program called "The Cultivated Gardener"?

Homsy, who also compiles *Media on the Move* (page 10) for the *SEJournal*, says approaching his new program with a blank slate gives him a fresh perspective on making "The Cultivated Gardener" interesting to everyone.

"We will cover all aspects of growing, from the practical to the poetic," he says of his new show. "In addition to plenty of hands giving advice, we want to tell the stories behind gardens, gardening, and gardeners."

The idea for the nationally syndicated garden show grew out of *NPR's* "Living on Earth," says Homsy. Once a month Homsy produced within that long-standing environmental program a five-minute gardening segment hosted by Michael Weishan. Those few minutes generated more consistent listener response than anything else. So the pair decided to produce an entire program devoted to gardening. Based on the data, it looks as if they are on to a good thing.

Gardening is the number one hobby in the country. It is estimated that more than 100 million people in the United States are gardeners, including over 60 percent of public radio listeners. More than \$10 billion is spent annually on gardening products, which may explain why the show had three sponsors before it even aired.

The program is hosted by Weishan who leads the listener through interviews, commentaries, feature stories, and a call-in segment. You won't hear Homsy's distinctive voice; he devotes his time to editing.

People garden for many reasons, Homsy says..."to grow

food or landscape their yards or just to get out into nature. Our job is to bring those varied interests together into a program that will interest and inform all gardeners, as well as non-gardeners."

With that in mind, "The Cultivated Gardener" presents an interview about the restorative powers of gardens in hospitals, gives tips on using worms to compost in the kitchen, and offers plain talk about dirt. Listeners from all over the country, from avid gardeners to weekend weed-whackers, call in with horticultural questions.

Information aimed at drawing in a broader audience includes a tomato lesson by host Michael Weishan with advice on making the fruit thrive. Or talking with the gardener at Graceland (who is also Elvis's second cousin) about caring for the King's yard. Or a report about the effort to breed scent back into highly cultivated flowers.

The show also has a website (under construction) that will build on the information presented on the radio. It will act as a follow-up, giving more details and sources discussed on the air.

By the end of November "The Cultivated Gardener" had aired nine one-hour programs on 10 stations across the country. Homsy expects to double or triple the number of stations carrying the program in the next six months.

So if the smell of roasting asparagus practically floats out of your radio or you hear a radio host and cook clink glasses of dandelion wine, toasting "to your pancreas," or you're compelled to listen to a fascinating story about apple tree grafts, you'll know you're listening to "The Cultivated Gardener."

Jackleen de La Harpe is executive director of the Metcalf Institute at Narragansett, R.I., which offers fellowships for journalists who want to learn more about science. She is also editor of the research journal Maritime.

Bashing biotech

Farmageddon: Food and the Culture of Biotechnology

By Brewster Kneen

New Society Publishers. Gabriola Island, British Columbia, 231 pp.

\$16.95 (U.S.) \$19.95 (Canada).

In July, *U.S. News & World Report* did a lengthy piece on genetically engineered foods, entitled "The Curse of Frankenfood." In September, *Newsweek* published its update on the growing controversy. That article was headlined "Frankenstein Foods?" And now a new book by Brewster Kneen, a writer and farmer in British Columbia, arrives with a similarly apocalyptic title: *Farmageddon*.

You see what's happening here: emotion rules. The opportunity to have a calm, reasoned discussion about genetically engineered foods has probably passed.

Critics of genetically engineered foods have raised important questions. At an October conference at New York University on genetically engineered foods, I picked up a brochure from the Campaign for Food Safety. It asked whether bioengineered foods increase cancer risks, trigger allergies, are harmful to soils and beneficial insects, and whether they can lead to the creation of superweeds or superpests.

We could use a book that examines those questions, one that assesses the scientific evidence on safety and tells us what we know and what we don't, and what we should worry about.

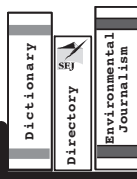
Sadly, this is not that book. Kneen just plain doesn't like this newfangled fiddling with plants and animals, whether it's risky or not. Yes, farmers have been selecting and crossbreeding plants for millennia, he says, but "we were not violently forcing plants or microorganisms to conform to our model of what they should be in order to maximize our profits." [p. 5]

Excuse me? The Midwest was paved with genetically near-identical crops decades before biotechnology was invented. The violent transformation of the prairie to industrial farming had everything to do with profits and nothing to do with genetic engineering.

Kneen sets up his story by noting that

we are unwitting subjects in a grand experiment. It's an important point: most of the questions about whether genetically engineered foods are safe cannot be answered with any certainty. But Kneen doesn't seem to be much interested in resolving the uncertainties. He is against biotechnology not because it might be harmful, but because it "is a bad attitude—a bad attitude towards life, towards Creation, towards other cultures and other ways of knowing and experiencing the world." [p.29]

I don't like bad attitudes



Book Shelf

either, but if I were entirely against them, I would have thrown my teenage children out of the house years ago.

While Kneen is emoting about bad attitudes, millions of people in developing countries are facing starvation. Gordon Conway, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, thinks biotechnology can rescue many of them—and he isn't motivated by profit. What of those who will die while we resolve questions about allergies and cancer risk?

The issues surrounding " Frankenfoods " are complicated. They deserve thoughtful consideration, not emotional outbursts.

—Paul Raeburn

Faulting irrigation

Pillar of Sand: Can the Irrigation Miracle Last?

By Sandra Postel

Norton, 1999. 313 pp., \$13.95 paperback

Feeding the world's population increasingly depends on irrigation, a technology whose abuses led to the collapse of earlier civilizations and could do us in as well if we're not careful. That's the argument of this earnest but flawed book.

Flaws first: *Pillar of Sand* closely follows Postel's 1992 book on global water scarcity, *The Last Oasis*, which was reissued with an updated introduction in 1997. The new book is only marginally different from the old.

In addition, it is marred by clichés, neologisms and monotonous prose. Threats are "insidious" and "rear their

ugly heads." Institutions working together are "partnering." Low-cost drip irrigation may "set the stage for a quiet revolution." Postel often starts at a middle level of abstraction and hangs there forever. No good stories are told here.

Most seriously, the book's occasional apocalyptic tone weakens rather than strengthens its case. By now there have been so many claims of threats to civilization that new ones get lost in the crowd. Indeed, this book demonstrates the necessity for environmental journalists. Despite flaws in the telling, Postel's message is important. It deserves to be thoroughly reported and compellingly written.

Pillar of Sand does put irrigation issues in historical context, describing how irrigation fostered ancient civilizations, but also contributed to their decline because ecological principles were ignored. In the 19th and 20th centuries, as global population rose by billions, large-scale irrigation systems again became the technology of choice to bring more land under cultivation. Postel describes projects in China, India, Pakistan, Egypt, the former Soviet Union, and the United States. By 1995, 37 percent of Asian crop land was irrigated, 11 percent in North and South America.

Meanwhile, little attention was paid to irrigation's inherent limitations. Dams block spawning runs, displace people, and silt up. Over-watered land becomes salty. When aquifers are over-pumped, water tables fall. Ecosystems suffer, like that of the Aral Sea, which lost two-thirds of its volume to a Soviet decision to grow irrigated cotton in the Central Asian desert.

After 1980, Postel argues, large-scale irrigation reached a point of diminishing returns. If irrigation is to continue to help feed people, she says, it must be done with more care. She suggests drip systems and other technologies to increase efficiency, and small-scale techniques to reduce environmental damage, particularly if controlled locally by water users. Realistic pricing would also help, as would scaling back consumption by the affluent.

Postel directs the Global Water Policy Project in Amherst, Mass. Her new book isn't a great read, but it calls attention to genuine problems and has plenty of facts, charts, references, leads, and context for journalists looking for story ideas.

—John Palen

New Members

New members from 8/9/99—11/9/99

ALABAMA

- **Patrick Hickerson**, (Active), *The Birmingham News*, Birmingham

CALIFORNIA

- **Peter Asmus**, (Associate), Pathfinder Communications, Sacramento
- **David Ciaffardini**, (Active), *Times-Press-Recorder*, Oceano
- **Michael V. Copeland**, (Associate), American Communications Foundation, Berkeley
- **Ken Ellis**, (Active), KQEP-TV (PBS), Oakland
- **Rasa Gustaitis**, (Associate), *California Coast & Ocean Magazine*, San Francisco
- **David Minkow**, (Active), KQED FM, Forum, San Francisco
- **Noreen Parks**, (Associate), Aptos
- **Susan Richter**, (Active), CNN, San Francisco Bureau, San Francisco
- **Mayrav Saar**, (Active), *Orange County Register*, Lake Forest
- **Ilsa Setziol**, (Active), KPCC-FM, Air Talk, Pasadena
- **Shaelyn Raab Strattan**, (Associate), California Air Resources Board, Research Division, Acampo
- **Ellen Van Curen**, (Active), Brehm Communications, *Lucerne Valley Leader*, Lucerne Valley
- **Katie Winchell**, (Associate), *U.S. Water News*, Huntington Beach

CONNECTICUT

- **Barbara Link**, (Associate), Farmworks, Inc., Easton

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- **Howard J. Fienberg**, (Associate), Statistical Assessment Service, Vitalstats Newsletter
- **Michelle T. Loesch**, (Associate), RTNDF, Environmental Journalism Center

FLORIDA

- **Gloria G. Horning**, (Academic), Florida A&M University, School of Journalism, Tallahassee
- **Trish Riley**, (Active), Sunrise
- **Cyril Zaneski**, (Active), *The Miami Herald*, Hollywood

HAWAII

- **Steve C. Lai**, (Associate), Hawaii Army National Guard, Environment Office, Honolulu
- **Jan Tenbruggencate**, (Active),

Honolulu Advertiser, Lihue

MASSACHUSETTS

- **Paula Abend**, (Associate), *Animals Magazine*, Boston

MARYLAND

- **I-Chin Cheng**, (Academic), John Hopkins University, Department of Environmental Engineering, Lutherville
- **Kirsten Rosenberg**, (Associate), *The Animals' Agenda*, Baltimore

MICHIGAN

- **Andrew Domino**, (Active), Hometown Communications, *Brighton Argus*, Livonia
- **Bob Jones**, (Academic), Glen Arbor
- **Ivona Lerman**, (Academic), Michigan State University, Environmental Journalism, East Lansing

MINNESOTA

- **Teresa LaDuke**, (Associate), Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Cass Lake

NEVADA

- **Michael Thomas**, (Active), KTVN-TV, Reno
- **Michael Weissenstein**, (Active), *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Las Vegas

NEW YORK

- **Josey Ballenger**, (Active), Binghamton
- **Carol Goodstein**, (Associate), Nyack

OHIO

- **Jeffrey Frischkorn**, (Active), *The News Herald*, Willoughby
- **Melissa Goodrich**, (Active), GIE Publishing, *Recycling Today Magazine*, Lakewood

OREGON

- **Gary Chittum**, (Active), KGW-TV, Portland
- **Michelle Cole**, (Active), *The Oregonian*, Portland
- **James R. Holman**, (Active), *The Oregonian*, Portland
- **Brent Hunsburger**, (Active), *The Oregonian*, Portland
- **Matt Rasmussen**, (Associate), *Forest Magazine*, Eugene

PENNSYLVANIA

- **Tom DiStefano**, (Active), Western Pennsylvania Newspapers, *Clarion News*, Clarion
- **Crystal Nesbitt**, (Academic), Penn State University, College of Communications, University Park

- **Peter Lane Taylor**, (Active), Maximum Exposure, Philadelphia

RHODE ISLAND

- **Will Barbeau**, (Associate), East Bay Newspapers, Barrington

SOUTH CAROLINA

- **Bob Montgomery**, (Active), *Greenville News*, Greenville

TEXAS

- **Amber Novak**, (Academic), University of Texas-Austin, Department of Journalism, Austin
- **Robert G. Waggoner**, (Academic), Texas A&M, Department of Journalism, Bryan

VERMONT

- **Madelyn Mooney Williams**, (Academic), Green Mountain College, Department of Communications, Poultney

WASHINGTON

- **Florangela Davila**, (Active), *The Seattle Times*, Seattle

UNITED KINGDOM

- **Fiona C. B. Campbell**, (Academic), The Robert Gordon University, School of Information & Media, Aberdeen

Metcalf workshop fellowships offered

Twelve fellowships will be offered by the Metcalf Institute for Marine and Environmental Reporting to journalists for the second five-day workshop on the basics of science underlying marine and environmental topics.

During the workshop, reporters will live and work at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography. The workshop includes lab and field work with scientists and public policy experts. and emphasizes electronic data analysis and integration of science into regulatory policy.

A fellowship provides room, board, and tuition to attend the workshop. Preference will be given to reporters specializing in marine and environmental news. Application deadline is Feb. 1, 2000. For more information, visit URI's website at <http://www.gso.uri.edu/metcalf>, or e-mail inquiries to jack@gso.uri.edu.

DECEMBER

5-8. Ecohazard '99: Hazard Assessment and Control of Environmental Contaminants. Otsu City, Japan. Contact: Yoshihisa Shimizu, Research Center for Environmental Quality Control, Kyoto University, 1-2 Yumihama, Otsu City, Shiga 520-0811, Japan. Fax: (81) 77-524-9869. E-mail: Eco99@biwa.eqc.kyoto-u.ac.jp

5-7. National Conference for Ozone Action Programs. Phoenix, Ariz. Scheduled sessions include case histories on the perils and successes of developing industrial and public programs aimed at cutting local and regional smog-ozone levels. Contact: Kevin Wander, Air & Waste Management Association, One Gateway Center, 3rd Fl., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222. Phone: (412) 232-3444, ext. 3137. Fax: (412) 232-3450. E-mail: kwander@awma.org. URL: <http://www.awma.org>

5-9. Watershed Management to Protect Declining Species. Seattle, Wash. This conference, sponsored by the American Water Resources Association, will feature presentations on a range of issues, including protecting endangered species in human-managed natural environments, resolving fishery and water supply conflicts, the role of climate in complicating species protection, effects of water runoff of animal wastes and other pollutants, lessons learned in managing salmon recovery, and the introduction of fecal pathogens by urban stormwater operations. Contact: Rodney Sakrison, Washington Department of Ecology, Bellevue, Wash. Phone: (425) 649-4447. Fax: (425) 649-7098. E-mail: rsak461@ecy.wa.gov. URL: <http://www.awra.org/meetings/Seattle99/index.htm>

6-8. Brownfields '99: Alliances for 21st Century Livability. Dallas, Texas. Phone: (877) 373-5374. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

6-10. Environmental Biotechnologies and Site Remediation Technologies. Orlando, Fla. This Institute of Gas Technology conference will focus on new approaches to cleaning up soils and other media that have been contaminated with hydrocarbons—from gas treatment wastes to coal tars. Many of the technologies will rely on the use of microbes to help break down recalcitrant pollutants. Contact: Susan Robertson, Institute of Gas Technology, 1700 S. Mount Prospect Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018-1804. Phone: (847) 768-0783. Fax: (847) 768-0842. E-mail: robertsr@igt.org URL: <http://www.igt.org>

JANUARY

12-13. Environmental Health in the 21st Century. Piscataway, N.J. This conference, sponsored by the Environmental and Occupational Sciences Institute at Rutgers University has, perhaps not surprisingly, decided to look at coming environmental problems as they will affect a sample state: New Jersey. Panel discussions after each session, however, promise to consider these issues as they will affect the entire planet. Contact: Candace Botnick, Environmental and

Occupational Sciences Institute, 170 Frelinghuysen Rd., Piscataway, N.J. 08854. Phone: (732) 445-0206. E-mail: botnick@eoysi.rutgers.edu

25-28. PM 2000: Particulate Matter and Health—the scientific basis for regulatory decisionmaking. Charleston, S.C. Sponsored by a number of industry and health groups, this meeting is expected to precede by about 18 months the scheduled new draft report from EPA on “Air Quality Criteria for Particulate Matter.” Sessions are expected to cover not only the toxicology of respirable pollutants, but also the epidemiology from exposed populations, and new data on transport and atmospheric-chemistry issues. Contact: Kevin Wander, Air & Waste Management Association, One Gateway Center, 3rd Fl., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222. Phone: (412) 232-3444, ext.3137. Fax: (412) 232-3450. E-mail: kwander@awma.org. URL: <http://www.awma.org/awma/confs/descriptions/pm2000.htm>

FEBRUARY

1. Deadline for application to Metcalf Institute Fellowship: Narragansett, R.I. (see story, page 17). E-mail: jack@gso.uri.edu/metcalf URL: <http://www.gso.uri.edu/metcalf>

17-22. American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting. Washington, D.C. With sessions on environmental themes, including: alien species in coastal waters—what are the ecological and societal costs; art and science of wetlands restoration; how will China cope with environmental health challenges; food production in an era of climate change; organic agriculture; human effects of climate change; studying effects of urban sprawl from space; restoring ecosystems impacted by fishing; economic impacts of the green revolution; and ecological forecasting. Contact: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 326-6440. Fax: (202) 789-0455. URL: <http://www.aaas.org/meetings/2000/accepted.htm>

24. Ethics, Justice, Democracy and the Environment: What do we owe future generations? Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Part of Bard College's Open Forum on Critical Environmental Issues, this evening program plans to discuss such fundamental questions as: who should select environmental decisionmakers, and how might they be held accountable; how can current decisionmakers offer justice to all—even those as yet unborn. Speakers include Brian Barry of Columbia University, Ian Shapiro of Yale (founder of that university's ethics, politics and economics program), and Bard philosopher Daniel Berthold-Bond. Contact: Bard Center for Environmental Policy, Bard College, P.O. Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 12504-5000. Phone: (914) 758-7071. Fax: (914) 758-7636. E-mail: cep@bard.edu

For later calendar items, visit <http://www.sej.org>.

Bush...(from page 1)

Texas's oldest industrial plants to meet the tougher air pollution standards. Bush pushed for and won passage of a voluntary pollution control program for plants grandfathered under a 1971 state environmental law.

That position is likely to come back to haunt Bush. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's 1999 toxic release inventory report, Texas industries hold the dubious distinction of emitting more toxic pollutants than companies in any other state. In fact Houston has surpassed Los Angeles as the smog capital of the nation, and both Houston and the Dallas-Fort Worth regions regularly fail to meet federal air quality requirements.

During the legislative session, Bush did achieve some approval from environmentalists. He went along with a provision in the state's electricity deregulation bill that requires Texas grandfathered power plants to cut their pollution. And he got high marks from the environmental community this spring when he announced that he believes "there is global warming." But Bush has strongly criticized the Clinton Administration's support for the United Nation's Kyoto treaty, which seeks to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases.

For his presidential campaign, Bush is relying on a crew of conservative environmental policy experts, who met with him for three and a half hours in May. One adviser recalled that Bush began the meeting with a challenge. "Gov. Bush told us, 'I will be the next President of the United States, and when I leave office, the air will be cleaner, the water will be cleaner and the

When I leave office, the air will be cleaner, the water will be cleaner, and the environment will be better.

Tell me how I'm going to make that happen.

—Presidential hopeful George W. Bush

environment will be better. Tell me how I'm going to make that happen,'" said Terry L. Anderson, executive director at PERC, a free market environmental think tank in Bozeman, Montana.

The meeting was evidence that in his campaign for the White House, Bush has no intention of ceding the environmental issue to Vice President Al Gore, the potential Democratic candidate and a long-time environmental advocate. Nor will the Bush campaign simply slam Gore's liberal environmental record and his controversial 1992 book *Earth in the Balance*.

"We're not thinking of simply attacking the ideas or proposals that the vice president has been associated with," said Christopher DeMuth, president of the American Enterprise Institute, who is helping to coordinate Bush's environmental policy team. Instead, the Bush campaign is attempting to outline a new approach to protecting the environment, one based on conservative, market-based environmental proposals such as distributing water in the West through marketable permits.

Despite those high-sounding promises, the sniping has already begun between the Bush and Gore camps. In early October, Gore criticized Bush's environmental record in Texas,

arguing that Americans "deserve better than to have their environment and their health given to a person who carries water—dirty water—for special interests," according to an *Associated Press* article. A Bush campaign aide responded by calling Gore's environmental ideas "weird and extreme."

To develop his environmental positions, Bush has turned to a diverse group of conservative policy analysts and former environmental aides to his father, former President George Bush. Along with DeMuth, the environmental team is headed by Mary Gade, a highly respected moderate Republican. Many see Gade's arrival as evidence that the campaign is attempting to appeal to centrist voters.

Bush's advisers on the environment include:

- Christopher C. DeMuth: The president of the conservative American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, DeMuth headed the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Reagan Administration. That office was accused of blocking regulations developed by the EPA. DeMuth also served as executive director of the President's Task Force on Regulatory Relief, which was headed by then-Vice President George Bush. He has taught at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and served as managing director for Lexecon Inc., an economic consulting firm.

- Mary A. Gade served eight years as director of the Illinois EPA and co-founded the Environmental Council of the States, which represents state regulators. She also chaired EPA's 37-state panel studying the transport of ozone from the Midwest to eastern states. During her tenure in Illinois, Gade developed several market-based pollution control programs. She also spent 13 years with the EPA, first in the agency's Chicago office and later in Washington where she was deputy assistant administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. She is currently a partner with the Chicago law firm of Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal.

- Terry L. Anderson is the executive director of the Political Economy Research Center, a free-market environmental think tank based in Bozeman, Mont. He is also an economics professor at Montana State University and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Anderson has produced numerous publications outlining conservative approaches to preserving open lands and endangered species.

- Steve Hayward: A senior policy fellow at the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, a libertarian think tank in San Francisco, Hayward champions market-based environmental policies. Before joining the institute, he served as director of the Golden State Center for Policy Studies, a Sacramento-based division of the Claremont Institute.

- Robert H. Nelson: An expert on management of federal lands and natural resources, Nelson is an environmental policy professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Affairs. He was a policy analyst at the Interior Department during the Carter, Reagan, and Bush Administrations.

- Gale A. Norton: A conservative environmental expert, Norton served two terms as Colorado's attorney general and was appointed by former President Bush to the Western Water Policy Commission. Before her Colorado election, Norton spent

(Continued on next page)

four years at the conservative Mountain States Legal Foundation, and was associate solicitor for the Interior Department in Washington.

- William D. Ruckelshaus, a well-respected moderate Republican, headed EPA when it was created in 1970 and returned in 1983 at the request of President Reagan after Reagan's earlier conservative appointees resigned amidst scandal. He also served as deputy attorney general in the Justice Department and as acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Before coming to Washington, Ruckelshaus was in state government in Indiana. He's also held top posts with Weyerhaeuser Co. and Browning-Ferris Industries Inc.

- Lynn Scarlett is the executive director of the Reason Public Policy Institute, a Los Angeles-based think tank, where she has worked since 1986. Scarlett favors market-oriented solutions to environmental problems and has spent the past five years examining state innovations in pollution policy.

- Richard L. Schmalensee: Dean of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management, Schmalensee has written about international efforts to combat acid rain and supports trading of emissions permits. Schmalensee, who served on President Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, also favors market-based approaches to climate change.

- James M. Seif: Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Seif believes the EPA should shift its focus from regulatory oversight to compliance assistance. Seif was a regional administrator for the EPA in Philadelphia during the Reagan Administration.

- John F. Turner: President of the Conservation Fund, a nonprofit environmental group, Turner believes in public-private partnerships to protect natural habitats. Turner served as director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from 1989-94. He advocates the land trust concept, which involves granting tax breaks to landowners and buyers who promise not to develop their property.

- Bruce Yandle: A professor of economics and legal studies at Clemson University, Yandle supports free-market environmental approaches to reducing pollution. A senior associate at PERC, Yandle wants EPA to enhance its system of monitoring companies and to abolish its technology-specific requirements for industry.

Margie Kriz writes about energy and environmental policy for the National Journal in Washington, D.C. and is a regular co-host for "Environmental Forum," the Outdoor Channel's weekly news magazine program on environmental issues.

Paradise...(from page 1)

In fact, we who took the course learned so much more. There were simple lessons in the proper use of Latin when referring to plants, on the difference between a monocot and dicot (the shape of the leaves and their veins), and on how to take and preserve a plant sample in the field. We were led through a garden of "working plants," and shown those from which chocolate, vanilla, and allspice, among others, are derived. Beans from the cacao tree don't taste anything like a Hershey bar.

Cox and others lectured on biodiversity and species loss. Hawaii has 263 federally threatened or endangered plant species, far and away more than any other state (California has 85). We talked about why these remote islands have so many endemic species. Cox taught us the mantra "Time plus isolation equals divergence." The longer evolution has to work, and the more isolated a place is as things evolve, the more unique species will develop there. We talked about the diverse causes of species loss on Hawaii: habitat alteration, invasive exotics, loss of pollinators. Many were similar to threats to biodiversity elsewhere.

We spent time with Steve Perlman and Ken Wood, explorers who climb the steep volcanic slopes of Hawaii identifying endangered plants, often discovering new species. They spoke modestly of risking their lives to rescue plants from extinction. They spoke softly, and movingly, of returning to a site where they knew the last of a species to be clinging to life, only to find it gone—witnesses to extinction.

And they spoke with excitement about discovering a new genus, a little shrub called *Kanaloa kahoolawensis*, and bringing one of three remaining specimens back to a Noah's Ark nursery at the NTBG's Lawaii site on Kauai. We saw dozens of plants

there that are being cared for, and in some cases propagated, that have gone extinct in the wild.

We visited the NTBG's magnificent Limahuli Garden on the north shore of Kauai, where Chipper Wichman, whose family donated the spectacular 1,000 acres to the NTBG, told how his Hawaiian ancestors farmed taro here, and how *Schefflera* plants, common houseplants on the mainland, are spreading up the volcanic hills, destroying indigenous plant populations.

At Limahuli we learned from Alan Holt of The Nature Conservancy how the plague of invasive exotics is taking a ter-
(Continued on next page)



Class members nestle in the roots of a ficus tree

JOANN VALENTI©

rible toll on the endemic species of Hawaii, species that evolved over millennia in this unique and isolated ecosystem. They hang on in a fragile balance easily disrupted as plants, insects, animals, or diseases flood into modern Hawaii.

In fact, in a stop at a local Post Office to send some postcards, a few of the fellows discovered clerks handing out packets of wildflower seeds to anyone who purchased wildflower stamps, part of a national program. The seeds were of non-native species. Invasive exotics, brought to you by the U.S. Postal Service. We brought this to the attention of our NTBG hosts, and Jan TenBruggencate, environmental reporter of the *Honolulu Advertiser* and a member of the class, did a story about it for his paper, prompting the Post Office to end the practice in Hawaii.

Some of our learning was hands on. We hoisted ourselves into the treetops using an ingenious knotted rope. (Right.) Several of us took a crack at opening coconuts. Sabra Kauka, a native Hawaiian-turned journalist (in Alaska!) -turned cultural educator, led us in the manufacture of clothes, bracelets, and other products from wauke *Broussenepia papyrisere* and hau *Hibiscus fileaeus*, two of the 30 or so plants brought over in canoe gardens by the exploring Polynesians centuries ago when they discovered the Hawaiian Islands and became their first human inhabitants. Sabra showed us just three of those plants, and the 50 or so common functions they provided those original Hawaiians, everything from tooth brushes (sugar cane) to clothing, torches, roofing, placemats, and of course, food. As one fellow said "It's like a couple of plants can substitute for a Walmart store."

We also spent an hour assisting in a volunteer program in Waimea State Park, finding and ripping out ginger plants, another invasive exotic crowding out indigenous species.

The lessons weren't all botanical; we toured the island and learned about its volcanic origins, waded through tidal pools looking at sea life and heard from marine biologists about the effects of agricultural runoff and other non-point source pollution on Hawaiian marine life.

And we had lessons about ancient Hawaiian culture. One evening in the gold of a sunset under windswept palms, we attended a sacred Hula ceremony at the Ke Ahu A Laka heiau, a ceremonial altar carved into a seaside cliff.

This was no tourist show with women shaking their grass skirts. We entered the spiritual circle inside which the ceremony was performed barefoot, and a priest consecrated our presence by sprinkling each of us with water from a palm frond. The dances, chanting and music were like prayers, telling part of the legend of the god Pele. All this was performed at the base of a cliff from which ancient Hawaiians threw burning logs centuries ago. And below us, the wide blue Pacific churned against the volcanic coast, white wave foam glowing in the evening sun.

We took part in the kava ceremony, a Samoan ritual intended to create a separate space and time for its participants, disconnected from the "real" world. At its heart is the preparation of kava broth, made from pounding kava root in water. Kava was among the plants brought by the Polynesian explorers, apparently for its narcotic properties.

Seated around a large floor, guests one at a time are poured

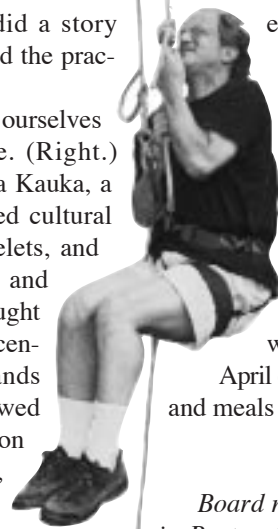
a portion of kava broth. Each guest then first pours a few drops on the floor, sharing with the gods. The others toast you with "Manuia!" (to your health, in Samoan). You answer "Soifua" (to your health too) and drink up. Some of us reported mild tingling in the mouth, but our hosts apparently mixed up a mild batch.

The course is intense, and tourists need not apply. Organizers firmly discouraged participants from bringing spouses. The hours were long, the days so full that at times we suffered from information overload. Recreational time was minimal. There was ongoing tension between course organizers and the fellows over the rigorous schedule.

So if you want to see Hawaii like a tourist, go before or after the course. But if you want to learn the lessons this intriguing place has to teach, the NTBG Environmental Journalism Fellowship is a terrific opportunity.

For information, contact Gauguau Tavana, Director of Education, NTBG, P.O. Box 340, Lawaii, HI 96765, tavana@ntbg.org or (808) 332-7324. Details for the second year are still being worked out, but the course will probably be held in April or May. Fellows pay their own airfare. Accommodations and meals while with the NTBG are provided.

Board member David Ropeik has been a reporter at WCVB in Boston for 21 years, specializing in environment issues for most of that time. He is also a science columnist for The Boston Globe, syndicated by the New York Times.



JOANN VALENTI

Honoring Outstanding News Coverage of Civil Engineering

The American Society of Civil Engineers' Excellence in Journalism Award program seeks to honor journalists for superior reporting that enhances public understanding of the role and the impact of civil engineers and civil engineering in designing solutions for clean water, transportation, the environment, and other public works projects.

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For more information on guidelines & entry forms, call or write:

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of Civil Engineers

1015 15th Street, N.W., Suite 600

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Tel. (202) 789-2200 Fax. (202) 289-6797

E-mail ntorriente@asce.org

Deadline for entries: June 1, 2000

A state-by-state round-up of environmental news stories

To submit stories, contact your state's correspondent or Beat editor Chris Rigel at rigel@voicenet.com (215) 836-9970.

Alabama—Vacant

Alaska—Elizabeth Manning, *Anchorage Daily News*, emanning@adn.com, (907) 257-4323, fax: (907) 258-2157

Arizona—Patti Epler, *Phoenix New Times*, pepler@newtimes.com, (602) 229-8451

Arkansas—Robert McAfee, Thinking Like A Mountain Institute, arkenved@aol.com, (501) 638-7151

California:

Northern California—Mark Grossi, *Fresno Bee*, mgrossi@pacbell.net, (209) 441-6316

San Francisco Bay Area—Jane Kay, *San Francisco Examiner*, janekay@examiner.com, (415) 777-8704

Southern California—Marni McEntee, *Los Angeles Daily News*, (805) 641-0542

Colorado—Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, toddh@gazette.com, (719) 636-0285

Connecticut—Peter Lord, *Providence Journal*, plord@projo.com, (401) 277-8036

Delaware—Tim Wheeler, *The (Baltimore)Sun*, tbwheeler@aol.com, (301) 332-6564

District of Columbia—Cheryl Hogue, *Chemical & Engineering News*, (202) 872-4551, fax (202) 872-8727, c_hogue@acs.org

Florida—Deborah Hoag, hoagd@aol.com, (904) 721-3497

Georgia—Christopher Schwarzen, *The Macon Telegraph*, (912) 744-4213, fax (912) 744-4385, cschwarzen@macontel.com

Hawaii—Pat Tummons, *Environment Hawaii*, (808) 934-0115, fax: (808) 934-8321 pattum@aloha.net

Idaho—Rocky Barker, *Idaho Statesman*, (208) 377-6484, rbarker@micron.net

Illinois—Jonathon Ahl, *WCBU 89.9*, ahl@bradley.edu, (309) 677-2761

Indiana—See Ohio correspondent

Iowa—Perry Beeman, *Des Moines Register*, pbeeman@news.dmreg.com, (515) 284-8538

Kansas—Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, mmansur@kcstar.com, (816) 234-4433

Kentucky—vacant

Louisiana—Mike Dunne, *Baton Rouge Advocate*, mdunne@theadvocate.com (504) 383-0301

Maine—Robert Braile, *Boston Globe*, braile@nws.globe.com, (603) 772-6380

Maryland—See Delaware correspondent.

Massachusetts—David Liscio, *Daily Evening Item*, dliscio@aol.com, (781) 593-7700

Michigan—Jeremy Pearce, *Detroit News*, (313) 223-4825

Minnesota—Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, meersman@startribune.com, (612) 673-4414

Mississippi—Debbie Gilbert, *The (Gainesville) Times*, (770) 532-1234 ext. 254, dgilbert@gainesvi.gannett.com,

Missouri—Bill Allen, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 72263.3236@compuserve.com, (314) 340-8127

Montana—Todd Wilkinson, freelance, (406) 587-4876 or tawilk@aol.com

Nebraska—Julie Anderson, *Omaha World-Herald*, julieand@radiks.net, (402) 444-1000 ext. 1223

New Hampshire—See Maine correspondent.

New Jersey—Vacant

New Mexico—See Arizona correspondent

New York—Erik Nelson, *Long Island Voice*, envirovox@aol.com, (516) 744-5161

Nevada—Mary Manning, *Las Vegas Sun*, manning@lasvegassun.com, (702) 259-4065

North Carolina—vacant

North Dakota—See Minnesota correspondent

Ohio—Andrew Conte, *Cincinnati Post*, (513) 352-2714, aconti@cincypost.com

Oklahoma—vacant

Oregon—Orna Izakson, (541) 726-1578, oiz@aol.com

Pennsylvania—John Bartlett, *Erie Daily Times*, (814) 437-6397

Puerto Rico/Caribbean Islands—Vacant

Rhode Island—See Connecticut correspondent

South Carolina—Vacant

South Dakota—See Minnesota correspondent

Tennessee—See Mississippi correspondent

Texas :

North Texas—Randy Loftis, *The Dallas Morning News*, (800) 431-0010

Central and West Texas—Robert Bryce, *The Austin Chronicle*, rbryce@compuserve.com, (512) 454-5766

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

Utah—Brent Israelsen, *Salt Lake Tribune*, israel@sltrib.com, (801) 237-2045

Vermont—Contact Maine correspondent

Virginia—Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth University, jcsouth@vcu.edu, (804) 827-0253, fax: (804) 827-0256

Washington—Michelle Nijuis, *High Country News*, michelle@hcn.org, (303) 527-4898, fax: (303) 527-4897

West Virginia—Ken Ward, *Charleston Gazette*, kenward@newwave.net, (304) 348-1702

Wisconsin—Chuck Quirnbach, *Wisconsin Public Radio*, quirnbach@vilas.uwex.edu, (414) 271-8686 or (608) 263-7985

Wyoming—See Washington correspondent

Canada—vacant

ARIZONA

► One down and one to go. Electric company officials recently finished installing scrubbers on the Navajo coal-fired generating plant in northern Arizona that has long been a source of Grand Canyon air pollution. Now, a pollution control plan is reported to be in the works for the Mojave coal-fired plant located in Nevada, at the western end of the Grand Canyon. Plans for the two plants were detailed in an Oct. 6 story in *The Arizona Republic* by environmental reporter Steve Yozwiak. Contact Yozwiak at (602) 444-8810 or steve.yozwiak@pni.com.

► A Tucson-based nonprofit organization devoted to the conservation of desert food resources was profiled in an Aug. 12 *Tucson Weekly* story that also looks at the effect the genetically engineered "Terminator" seeds will have on some native crops. The group, Native Seeds/SEARCH (Southwestern Endangered Arid-Lands Resource Clearing House) holds 1,900 seed collections, including many from southwest native American tribes who developed crops that thrive in desert climates and rocky soils. For more information contact Kay Sather at (520) 792-3630.

► "Arizona's Vanishing Wilderness," a three-part series in the *Arizona Republic* (Aug. 29-31), explored how the state's explosive growth is threatening some unique places, including remote rivers, desert landscapes, and even

volcanic areas. The series was written by Kathleen Ingle. She can be reached at kathleen.ingle@pni.com or (602) 444-8171.

► A controversial plan to build a new tourist “gateway” community at the Grand Canyon moved ahead when the U.S. Forest Service approved a massive land swap. The Aug. 7 story in the *Arizona Republic* by reporter Mark Shaffer details the land trade as well as objections to the proposed development known as Canyon Forest Village. Contact Shaffer at 602-444-8057 or mark.shaffer@pni.com.

CALIFORNIA

► Twenty years after the United States banned a pesticide called DBCP, scientists are discovering reproductive damage in young men who grew up drinking trace amounts of the poison. In a recent study commissioned by lawyers for hundreds of former students at a Bakersfield public grade school, two UCLA scientists report a high rate of infertility and abnormally small testicles among those pupils, the *Fresno Bee* reported. The children drank the pesticide-tainted water from the school’s fountains. State officials are currently reviewing the drinking water standard for DBCP, or dibromochloropropane, which was used to kill nematodes decades ago. Contact Chris Bowman at cbowman@sacbee or (916) 321-1000.

► Under court order and a decade past deadline, Yosemite National Park officials are working on a plan to protect 81 miles of the Merced River. And again, the General Management Plan, nearly 20 years in the making, has been delayed. Even so, an environmental group believes the park is moving too quickly. The Sierra Club worries that park officials will use old data and try to push through a plan without conducting new research on the river, which was protected under the Wild and Scenic River Act in the late 1980s. Yosemite officials, meanwhile, face an impatient Clinton Administration, anxious to move restoration plans ahead before the end of 2000. Contact Mark Grossi, *Fresno Bee*, at (559) 441-6316 or mgrossi@fresnobee.com,

► On the farm and in the city, it was one of the coolest summers in the past several decades in Northern California. La Niña, a cool water phenomenon along the equatorial Pacific Ocean, may have something to do with it, meteorologists say. Another large pool of cool ocean water parked off the West Coast for much of the summer as well, its influences also felt in California. Some farmers, said the *Sacramento Bee*, noticed the fruit on trees matured more slowly this year. Some worried about fungus at harvest time, but others in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta said apples and pears did very well. Contact John D. Cox, *Sacramento Bee*, at jcox@sacbee.com or (916) 321-1000.

► According to an Oct. 4 *Contra Costa Times* story, consumers will soon be paying a recycling deposit on an additional two billion beverage containers under a law signed by Gov. Gray Davis, making California the first state in nearly a decade to expand its beverage recycling program. No longer will just bottles and cans that contain beer and carbonated soda require a deposit of 2 1/2 or 5 cents. When the law takes effect in January, “California Redemption Value” will apply to most kinds of plastic, glass, aluminum, and steel-tin containers that hold beverages such as water, sport drinks, iced tea, fruit juices, coffee and tea. Contact James Bruggers, (925) 943-8246 or ecowriter@aol.com.

► Severe restrictions on rockfish and ling cod harvests next year could hammer California’s ocean commercial and recreational fishing industries and send consumer prices soaring. Citing overfishing and other problems, a panel of West Coast state and federal officials are recommending deep cuts in ocean fishing of five kinds of groundfish, which get their name from living among the nooks and crannies of underwater rocks along the ocean floor. The panel has suggested cuts of 50 percent to nearly 90 percent over this year’s catch limits for five key species of fish that either have been or are about to be declared depleted by the federal government. They are Pacific Ocean perch, a type of rockfish; ling cod; canary rockfish; bocaccio, rock-

fish and cowcod rockfish. The *Contra Costa Times* story ran Sept. 11. Contact James Bruggers at (925) 943-8246, ecowriter@aol.com.

► Free trade. It’s the place where ultra-conservative presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan meets liberal consumer activist Ralph Nader, labor unions, and some of the nation’s most aggressive environmentalists. This potent political mix where right circles around to meet left could very well produce the nation’s largest-ever demonstrations against economic globalization. Thousands, maybe tens of thousands, were expected to descend upon Seattle in November, reported the Oct. 10 *Contra Costa Times* story, when representatives of more than 130 nations planned to start a new round of talks by the World Trade Organization. Contact James Bruggers at (925) 943-8246 or ecowriter@aol.com.

► For a century, ornithologists using the time-honored tools of leg bands and binoculars have tried and failed to track the migration routes of songbirds. Unable to solve this mystery—where songbirds go to feed during the winter—environmentalists have been stymied in reversing a decline in their numbers. The Oct. 19 *San Francisco Examiner* reported that three years ago, Thomas B. Smith, associate professor at San Francisco State University, was one of the first to use genetic markers to link populations of songbirds as they breed in the north and winter in the south. Today, using a feather or a few drops of blood, he is beginning to trace the seasonal flight paths of the sweet-voiced Wilson’s warblers and other birds from Alaska and Canada south as far as Ecuador. Contact Jane Kay at janekey@examiner.com or (415) 777-8704.

► A young man walked into the Peninsula Humane Society in San Mateo, holding a shoe box. Inside, said this Nov. 5 *San Francisco Examiner* story, was a tiny tree-dwelling monkey no bigger than his hand, a South American pygmy marmoset. Just like buying a pair of shoes, the man’s girlfriend has purchased the baby primate as a novelty on the Internet. Dr. Kari Pettit, the society’s veterinarian, along with other animal protection

experts, say the young marmoset—which is illegal to possess in California—is just one more example of the growing problem of illegal Internet trafficking in live animals and parts of dead endangered species. Contact Jane Kay at (415) 777-8704 or janekey@examiner.com

► Warmer, wetter winters. Hotter, drier summers. Species disappearing and fish stocks in flux. More floods, landslides, wildfires, pests and pestilence. Signs of the apocalypse? Actually, those changes are likely in California's future, according to a two-year study. On Nov. 4, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported on the findings of a panel of the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Ecological Society of America. Their conclusion: shifts in temperature and rainfall over the next century will probably reduce the already scarce supply of fresh water. Contact Jane Kay at (415) 777-8704, janekey@examiner.com.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► GOP presidential contender George W. Bush says Texans breathe cleaner air since he's been the state's governor. *Washington Post* national desk reporter John Mintz examined those claims in an A-1 story Oct. 15 and cited statistical evidence that air quality in Texas cities has either gotten no better or has grown worse during Bush's tenure as governor. (See story, page 1.) Contact Mintz at (202) 334-7410.

FLORIDA

► The Florida *Times-Union* broke a major environmental story on July 27 concerning four northside Jacksonville neighborhoods that may be declared federal Superfund sites. City Hall dumped massive amounts of hazardous waste there 30 years ago; municipal ash that tested positive for arsenic, lead, and cancer-causing dioxins. About 40,000 people live within a mile of the polluted sites, which reach across neighborhoods that were the core of Jacksonville's African-American community for most of the 20th century. Several articles (July 28, Aug. 18, Sept. 5, Sept. 18, and Oct. 2,) covered neighborhood meetings, reac-

tions from City Hall, responses from Duval County Health Department, discussions of environmental racism, and EPA involvement. Contact Marcia Mattson and Steve Patterson, staff writers at (904) 359-4280.

► On Oct. 11 the *Times-Union* reported that red tide is being blamed for a series of fish kills in the Intracoastal Waterway in St. Johns County. In addition to producing fish-paralyzing toxins, the algae blooms have also caused respiratory irritation for people along the beaches and several blocks inland. Contact Steve Patterson, staff writer (904) 359-4280.

► Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney announced a \$16.9 million deal that would preserve 2,128 acres of land long-coveted by environmentalists on the Julington-Durbin Creek peninsula. The July 28 *Times-Union* article reported that city and state agencies will buy the land from developers in order to create a recreation area that will include a 3.5-mile biking and jogging trail and a canoe launch. In a related Aug. 27 *Times-Union* story, The Nature Conservancy is a key player in Mayor John Delaney's ambitious Preservation Project, a five-year, \$312 million plan to control growth and upgrade the Jacksonville park system. Contact Chris Scribner, staff writer (904) 359-4280, for information on both stories.

GEORGIA

► Rural counties are taking legal action against state environmental officials working on an ozone pollution reduction plan for metro Atlanta. To lower ozone in the 13-county region, EPD officials have created a 45-county plan requiring large industries and utilities to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions. The plan also calls for stricter vehicle emission inspection tests and use of low-sulphur gasoline. Legal steps are being taken or considered by several counties to declare the rules invalid before they are sent to the EPA for approval. The stories have appeared during September and October in many newspapers across Georgia. For information, contact Christopher Schwarzen, *Macon Telegraph*, at (912) 744-4213 or

cschwarzen@maconcel.com, or Debbie Gilbert, *The (Gainesville) Times*, at (770) 532-1234, ext. 254 or dgilbert@gainesvi.gannett.com.

MAINE

► The *Portland Press Herald*, *Bangor Daily News*, *Boston Globe*, and other media reported in October on Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's decision to propose that wild Atlantic salmon be protected as an endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Babbitt proposed in 1995 that the salmon be protected as a threatened species under the Act, but withdrew that proposal when the state plan emerged as an alternative. Maine Gov. Angus King, U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and the aquaculture industry immediately criticized Babbitt's decision in October as a "betrayal" of their effort. Some environmentalists, including Trout Unlimited president and CEO Charles Gauvin, also took issue with it, arguing an immediate, "emergency" listing is needed to save the salmon. Contact Dieter Bradbury, *The Portland Press Herald*, (207) 791-6328.

IOWA

► The U.S. EPA has settled on a list of impaired waters in Iowa nearly three times as long as the version state environmental officials proposed, *The Des Moines Register* reported Oct. 6. The final Sect. 303 (D) list, required under the Clean Water Act, comes a year late and after months of controversy. Farm groups claim the EPA has overstepped its authority in listing some waters that are contaminated only by nonpoint sources. Environmental groups say the list is too short. Now the state, like others across the U.S., must come up with special standards, total maximum daily loads, for each pollutant in each lake or stream segment deemed to be impaired. EPA faces two lawsuits in Iowa over its failure to produce the limits in the state. Contact Perry Beeman, at (515) 284-8538 or beemanp@news.dmreg.com.

► *The Des Moines Register's* latest sampling of water at Iowa beach swimming areas found one-sixth of the two dozen spots checked had E. coli or total

fecal coliform readings above swimming standards. The checks, reported Sept. 3, followed a three-month series of samples that found fecal bacteria readings high enough to risk swimmers' health. The University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory analyzed the samples, which were collected in the lab's sterile containers using the lab's protocol. Contact Perry Beeman at beemanp@news.dmreg.com or (515) 284-8538.

► A second straight year of record nitrate levels in Des Moines' water supply led Des Moines Water Works to run its largest-in-the-nation nitrate-removal system 106 days last summer. The Des Moines Register reported Aug. 25. That's a record, too. The system was designed to run two weeks a year. L.D. McMullen, who runs the water utility, blames farm chemicals from drainage tiles for the high levels of nitrates, which follow two years of heavy fall fertilizer applications in the watershed. Call Perry Beeman, The Des Moines Register, 515-284-8538, beemanp@news.dmreg.com

► A White House report on the Gulf of Mexico's seasonal hypoxia area, known as the Dead Zone, blamed Iowa farmers for a large part of the problem. *The Des Moines Register* reported Aug. 16. Iowa and Illinois, both of which have heavy crop fertilizer applications, were the largest contributors to the nitrogen loading in the Gulf, where low oxygen conditions in spring through fall leave an area large enough to stretch from Chicago to Des Moines largely devoid of sea life. Farm groups contend there is no evidence that cutting fertilizer use in the Midwest would improve conditions in the Gulf. Contact Perry Beeman at (515) 284-8538, beemanp@news.dmreg.com.

► Iowa State University investigators have found new evidence that chemicals are oozing from some of Iowa's older earthen hog-manure lagoons. *The Des Moines Register* reported Aug. 24. The research, ordered by the Iowa Legislature in 1997, found that the lagoons generally held as much manure as they were designed to when they were built five to 12 years ago. But more than a third leaked too much to meet tough state standards that took effect this year.

To the Farm Bureau, the message is that the lagoons did the job they were designed to do and the environment is being protected by new standards. To the Iowa Environmental Council, the study is evidence that waterways are threatened by hog-manure pollution and regular tests are needed at each lagoon site. Contact Perry Beeman at (515) 284-8538, beemanp@news.dmreg.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

► Aerovox Inc., a New Bedford electrical equipment manufacturer whose factory has been blamed for massive PCB pollution in the Acushnet River, will agree to shut down and relocate its operations within 16 months under a proposed cleanup plan announced by the U.S. EPA. According to the Oct. 5 *Boston Globe* story, the deal, subject to a 30-day comment period, calls for Aerovox to put \$4.8 million into a trust fund to clean up and cap its nine-acre site by November 2011. Previous owners are blamed for contaminating the plant and the adjacent river with high levels of PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls, which have been banned since 1977 as a probable human carcinogen. For more information, contact Peter J. Howe at (781) 929-3000.

► Fifteen months after New England governors and eastern Canadian premiers vowed to crack down on acid rain and mercury pollution, environmentalists charge they are already falling behind on their self-imposed deadlines. If anything, pollution from the region's power plants is increasing, they said. The complaint, contained in a letter signed by representatives of 45 environmental groups, went to the state and provincial leaders as they prepared for a meeting in Rockland, Maine, where air pollution was on the agenda. The *Boston Globe* story ran on Oct. 2. Contact Scott Allen at (781) 929-3000.

► Hoping to end a barrage of criticism over their expansion plans, the owners of the Canal power plant in Sandwich announced in September the biggest voluntary reduction in air pollution in Massachusetts' history as part of a pro-

ject that also would increase electricity output by more than 50 percent. According to the Sept. 28 story, Southern Energy's revised expansion plan will cut roughly in half the emissions that cause smog, acid rain, and other problems even after the expansion is completed. Environmentalists previously placed the plant on their "filthy five" list of most-polluting power plants in the state. Contact Scott Allen at the *Boston Globe*, at (781) 929-3000.

► The big Hemlock trees at Burnham Brook once grew so thick and close that other plants could not survive in their shade. They were masters of this 450-acre wood, creating a cool, open world beneath their boughs where visitors had escaped the summer sun for generations. Today, the wood looks like it was ravaged by a forest fire—the unfortunate handiwork of the woolly adelgid, a bug no bigger than the period at the end of a sentence, which is decimating some of the Northeast's oldest and most valuable forests. The *Boston Globe* story ran on Aug. 9. For more information contact Scott Allen at (781) 929-3000.

► For years, the manure from Jose Pimental's cows in Westport flowed into a nearby creek and river whenever it rained, driving bacteria levels up to 8,000 times the safe level and rendering oysters and other shellfish unfit to eat. Regulators pressed him to clean up, with limited success. In August, the US EPA made Pimental's dairy farm the first in New England to be regulated as though it were a factory or a sewage treatment plant, subject to massive fines or closure if he does not follow 17 pages of instructions on how to stop the pollution. Pimental complained that he was being singled out unfairly when the pollution is coming from a variety of sources, including residential septic tanks and other farms. The *Boston Globe* story ran Aug. 1. Contact Scott Allen, at (781) 929-3000.

NEVADA

► On Oct. 4 the *Las Vegas Sun* ran a story on a five-year study of former Nevada Test Site workers who crawled

inside the tunnels where nuclear weapons experiments were conducted. The study has raised new concerns about silica in the dust, diesel fumes and beryllium, besides radiation exposure. There are two more years in the \$3.2 million study. Physicians have screened 800 workers and have seen spots on some workers' lungs. Contact Mary Manning at (702) 259-4065 or manning@lasvegassun.com.

► Spirit Mountain near Laughlin, Nev., a sacred site to 10 Native American tribes, has been placed on the National Historical Register, the first Native American site in Nevada to reach the list. After five years of negotiations between the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the tribes, the site was listed Sept. 8, but not announced until Oct. 4, after all the tribes had approved the statement. The *Las Vegas Sun* story ran on Oct. 5. Contact Mary Manning (702) 259-4065 or manning@lasvegassun.com.

► If a high-level nuclear waste dump is built 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas, trucks and trains carrying the nation's radioactive trash could rumble within a half-mile of 37 schools, 23 hotels, a major health facility and a special events center, according to an Oct. 14 story in the *Las Vegas Sun*. Clark County officials presented that estimate to a Nuclear Regulatory Commission Advisory Committee taking public comment on the safety of the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain. For more information contact Mary Manning at manning@lasvegassun.com or (702) 259-4065.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

► The *Boston Globe* reported in October on the collapse of the Gulf of Maine's northern shrimp population off Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts that would likely result in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission setting the shortest season dates in nearly two decades. Officials say there appear to be several factors affecting the shrimp, including shifting temperature and salinity levels in the water, and over-fishing of female shrimp before they have a chance to spawn. Fishermen

already burdened by severe restrictions on other stocks, and who rely on northern shrimp for their winter livelihoods, decried the commission's likely crack-down. But commission members said the declining population has left them with little choice. Contact Robert Braile, *The Boston Globe*, 603-772-6380.

PENNSYLVANIA

► The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported on a food fight of international proportions, first in October in an A1 story about labeling genetically modified foods, then in a November story in the business section chronicling Japan's shunning of the modified stuff. In the labeling fracas, FDA says genetically modified foods are so safe they don't require labeling, but critics say consumers have a right to know, and possible allergic reaction and environmental consequences have not been thoroughly studied. Contact Andrea Knox about the labeling story at the *Inquirer*, (215) 854-2464; Michael Zielenziger, *Knight Ridder News Service*, wrote about Japan's reluctant consumers. Contact his editor at (202) 383-6030.

► A dumping site for coal waste is to be transformed into a wetlands preserve, according to a Nov. 5 story in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. The reclaimed area will provide seasonal habitat for neotropical migrants such as the blue-winged warbler and the Louisiana waterthrush. The site is currently undergoing soil tests to determine what impact—if any—coal dust will have on wildlife and plant life. Christopher Merrill wrote the story. Contact the *Philadelphia Inquirer* at (215) 854-2000.

TENNESSEE

► Reelfoot Lake, formed in northwest Tennessee by the 1811 New Madrid earthquake, is filling up with silt. The 15,500-acre lake includes a national wildlife refuge and is a very popular fishing area, so residents, businesses, and government agencies are trying to figure out how to prolong its life. The Corps of Engineers has released a study recommending a controversial draw-down of

water levels. *The Commercial Appeal* did a big Sunday package on this issue Sept. 26, with text by Tom Charlier along with photos, maps, and graphs. Contact Charlier at (901) 529-2572.

► Developers are trying to build fancy homes on a Tennessee River island formerly owned by Al Gore's uncle. They started construction without obtaining permits for stormwater or erosion control, and have run afoul of several state and federal regulatory agencies. The island is also believed to be a significant archaeological site containing Indian burial mounds. For information on the Oct. 11 story, contact Tom Charlier at (901) 529-2572.

► The 1,265-acre Nashville Superspeedway U.S.A. racing complex, along with a proposed state connector road, would go through one of the world's largest limestone cedar glades. The area, in Wilson and Rutherford counties in middle Tennessee, contains species found nowhere else, including the endangered Tennessee coneflower. But because no federal funds will be used in the project, there's nothing to prevent destruction of the glades. State transportation officials are trying to reach an agreement with the developer that would protect at least some of the habitat. Anne Paine reported this story in *The Tennessean* Aug. 30. Contact her at abpaine@aol.com or (615) 259-8071.

VERMONT

► The *Burlington Free Press* reported in September on a Lake Champlain algae outbreak that was so severe, officials advised that small children not swim in areas where the toxin-producing algae is thick. They also advised people not to drink from affected areas and to keep their dogs from doing the same. State officials theorized that the warm, dry summer might be a factor in promoting the algae growth. The outbreak comes despite tens of millions of dollars spent in the last 20 years cleaning up phosphorous-laden pollution pouring into the lake from antiquated sewage treatment facilities, storm-water overflows, soil erosion, urban and agricultural runoff, and other sources. Contact Nancy

Bazilchuk at (800) 427-3124, ex. 1873.

VIRGINIA

► Gov. Jim Gilmore ousted David Gehr as head of the Virginia Department of Transportation because of “environmental mishaps” on highway projects, the state’s newspapers reported Aug. 20. State Attorney General Mark Earley launched a criminal investigation into the incidents, which included a sewage sludge spill and the unauthorized destruction of wetlands. Democrats questioned the Republican governor’s sincerity, Ledyard King and Scott Harper of *The Virginian-Pilot* reported Aug. 21. They noted that in February, the Gilmore administration helped kill an audit of the Transportation Department’s environmental record. For more information, contact Harper at (800) 446-2004, extension 2340, or sharper@pilotonline.com.

► In an Aug. 29 follow-up, Rex Springston of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported that many state agencies, including the Department of Corrections, the University of Virginia, and Virginia Tech, have violated air and water rules. A state audit said, “Some state facilities have long records of non-compliance” with environmental laws. For more information, contact Springston at (804) 649-6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

► Virginia has recorded 3,903 cases of lead poisoning since 1993, when state officials began keeping track, Ron Nixon of the *Roanoke Times* reported Oct. 3. Most of the cases involve children who live in older homes with lead-based paint or lead pipes, health officials said. Nixon confirmed the statistics with a computer analysis of census data and the Roanoke Health Department’s lead screening database. For more information, contact Nixon at (540) 981-3347 or ronn@roanoke.com.

► Virginia’s environment has improved since the 1980s, according to research by Virginia Commonwealth University’s Center for Environmental Studies, as reported Aug. 4 by Rex Springston of the *Richmond Times-*

Dispatch. “We have cleaner air overall, cleaner water overall,” said biologist Greg Garman, the center’s director. On the other hand, he said, “We have less open space. We have fewer wetlands. We might have higher levels of toxic compounds in some areas.” For more information, contact Springston at (804) 649-6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

► Scientists from Virginia and Maryland have agreed to a broad strategy for restoring oysters in the Chesapeake Bay, including mass construction of artificial reefs and tighter controls on the spread of oyster diseases, Scott Harper of *The Virginian-Pilot* reported July 21. Proponents are urging the seafood industry and politicians to support the plan, which would cost millions of dollars. Virginia already has implemented small-scale efforts to revive oyster stocks, decimated by decades of pollution, overfishing, and disease. Those efforts appear to be paying off, Harper reported on Aug. 25. The state’s oyster harvest significantly increased during the past year. About 19,000 bushels of market-sized oysters were collected from Virginia’s public grounds in 1998-99—the biggest haul in five years. For more information, contact Harper at (800) 446-2004, extension 2340, or sharper@pilotonline.com.

► Despite urging from scientists, environmentalists, and several advisers, Gov. Jim Gilmore will not act this year to stop the ditching and draining of thousands of acres of Virginia’s wetlands, Scott Harper of *The Virginian-Pilot* reported Aug. 13. After months of internal review, the Gilmore administration does not believe it has the legal authority to override a federal court ruling that allowed unregulated draining of nontidal wetlands. For more information, contact Harper at (800) 446-2004, extension 2340, or sharper@pilotonline.com.

► Legislative auditors said the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality failed to warn the public that some rivers contained harmful levels of PCBs, according to reports July 13 by Ron Nixon of the *Roanoke Times* and Rex Springston of the *Richmond Times-*

Dispatch. “We have cleaner air overall, cleaner water overall,” said biologist Greg Garman, the center’s director. On the other hand, he said, “We have less open space. We have fewer wetlands. We might have higher levels of toxic compounds in some areas.” For more information, contact Springston at (804) 649-6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

WASHINGTON

► The operator of the Condit Dam in southeastern Washington recently concluded that what’s good for the salmon is also good for the company’s bottom line. On Sept. 22, it decided to demolish the dam by 2006. The federal government told dam operator PacifiCorp in 1996 that a new license for the dam would require more than \$30 million worth of fish ladders and other protections for the river’s salmon. The dam will cost about \$17 million to take down. Rebecca Clarren reported on this story in the Oct. 11 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► Ashford, Wash., a rural town of about 1,500 people only a stone’s toss from the western gate of Mount Rainier National Park, may soon have a big, new neighbor. In early October, Pierce County endorsed plans for a \$70 million, 400-acre resort that would more than double the number of housing units in the valley and increase retail space by almost tenfold. The size and design of the facility have some locals and environmental activists worried about damage to both the park and the character of the valley. Ali Macalady reported on this story in the Oct. 11 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or ali@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► When a pipeline carrying gasoline exploded near a city park in Bellingham, Wash., earlier this summer, it fanned the flames of a battle over a

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new pipeline proposed for the state. Two 10-year-old boys and an 18-year-old fisherman died when the explosion ripped along Whatcom Creek, scorching 1.5 miles of riverbank and setting one home afire. Dustin Solberg reported on this story in the August 2 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

WISCONSIN

► An official of the Sierra Club e-mailed several Wisconsin reporters a copy of a Club report on air pollution problems in Texas. Much of the report blames the pollution woes on policies undertaken by Texas Governor George W. Bush. Several top Republicans in Wisconsin, including Governor Thompson, have endorsed Bush's presidential campaign. For more on the e-mail, contact Sierra Club member Brett Hulsey at (608)-257-4994.

► The International Joint Commission, a U.S.-Canadian panel that oversees the Great Lakes, drew hit and miss coverage during the commission's four-day meeting in Milwaukee in late September. Reporters from a Green Bay newspaper, the *Associated Press*, and various radio

outlets covered most of the conference. The Milwaukee *Journal-Sentinel* did a story on a speech by EPA Administrator Carol Browner and covered an IJC hearing on Great Lakes water diversion. For more, contact *Journal-Sentinel* editor, George Stanley at (414) 224-2000.

WYOMING

► There are now about 900 methane wells in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. In June, the Bureau of Land Management announced that it may allow up to 5,000 more wells on federal land, and the agency is struggling to keep up with the rush of permit applications. The gas industry says there could be as many as 15,000 wells on federal, state, and private land in the next 20 years. Tim Westby reported the story in the Sept. 27 edition of *High Country News*. Contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► More than 500 residents of Jackson Hole, Wyo., packed a meeting hall in late August to fight a nuclear waste incinerator planned for eastern Idaho. By the end of the evening, everyone from movie actors to massage therapists had pledged a total of \$496,000 to fight the incinerator, planned for the

Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory near Idaho Falls. It would burn mixed hazardous and low-level radioactive waste left over from the Cold War bomb-making era. Rachel Odell reported on this story in the Sept. 27 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► The Crow tribe has launched a plan to capture 550 wild elk on its reservation in the Bighorn Mountains of Montana, and may capture at least 330 elk per year for the next 10 years. It's the beginning of the tribe's foray into game farming, but it is also sure to mark the beginning of a bitter battle over publicly owned wildlife. The elk that winter on the Crow Reservation in south-central Montana spend the summer months in Wyoming, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department estimates that the herd contains about 1,500 elk. The tribe puts that number at 5,000. Hal Herring reported on this story in the Sept. 27 edition of *High Country News*. For more information, contact HCN at (970) 527-4898 or editor@hcn.org, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

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