

SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

Vol. 9 No. 4

Bradley, Gore records assessed Democratic contenders show similar shades of green

Editor's note: This is the second of two stories covering environmental views and records of presidential hopefuls. See Vol. 9 No. 3 for the article on George W. Bush.

By **MARGIE KRIZ**

Whatever happened to the environment as a core Democratic political issue?

On the campaign trail, neither Vice President Al Gore nor his Democratic rival former Sen. Bill Bradley has talked about environmental issues with the detail or passion they've invested in health care and education. In his rambling victory speech after the New Hampshire primary, Gore only briefly mentioned environmental protection. In fact, the candidates for the Democratic

nomination—much like their Republican counterparts—are treating the environment as an also-ran issue in this year's political race.

Political analysts say that Bradley and Gore have sidestepped environmental issues in part because the two candidates are so similar.

"The campaign is about differences and there is very little difference between Bradley and Gore," Sierra Club political director Dan Weiss said. "They both have generally good environmental records. They're like Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa."

As the March 7 primaries approached, Bradley ramped up his environmental rhetoric, arguing that the Clinton-Gore administration's green

record "has been long on promise and short on action." In a Feb. 14 speech at the Sierra Club's San Francisco headquarters, Bradley said: "To be a custodian of the natural world means more than paddling a kayak for TV cameras."

Bradley's comment took aim at a July 1999 incident in which Gore invited reporters to join him in paddling down the Connecticut River in New Hampshire where he discussed environmental policy. Afterwards local officials admitted that, despite a regional drought, they had released millions of gallons of water into the river from a nearby dam to make sure Gore's entourage didn't run aground.

Environmental advocates predict that the Democratic candidates will
(Continued on page 22)

In this issue

SEJ News

- SEJ's 10th National Conference 4
- Hellos and goodbyes: Noel Grove passes the editor's torch 5

Special Report

- Full disclosure issue arises 9

Feature

- Barry Lopez speaks to journalists about community 12

Bits and Bytes

- What's coming out of your tap? Here's how one reporter wrote the story 14

Science Survey

- EPA's new data for cancer risk 15

Reporter's Toolbox

- Resources in Academia? You bet! 16

The Beat

- State-by-state roundup 26

Dam removal's two sides

By **ROCKY BARKER**

Since 1980, Ralph Broetje has transformed the rolling sagebrush hills overlooking the Snake River into verdant orchards of apples and cherries. He has turned the water he pumps out of the reservoir behind Ice Harbor Dam into a farm workers' paradise, called Vista Hermosa, complete with clean, modern homes, a mission-style church, a Christian school and a youth ranch for troubled teens.

Broetje lives at ground zero of the debate about saving endangered salmon in the Snake River Basin. If Ice Harbor and three other dams in Washington are breached to save endangered salmon, Broetje could lose access to the water that turns apples into dreams.

His story went untold for three years

as federal dam operators were studying the idea of breaching the four Snake Dams—removing their earthen sections. He was identified only as one of 13 farmers benefiting from highly subsidized water pumped out the river.

My newspaper, the *Idaho Statesman*, editorialized in 1997 that it would be better for the economy, taxpayers and salmon to simply buy out these farmers.

However, the added depth of reporting by Mike Lee in the *Tri-Cities Herald*, Lynda Mapes in the *Seattle Times* and my own work in the *Statesman* brought a new dimension to the story. It wasn't just about economics and the environment. It was also about culture.

Last year I told the story of Elaine
(Continued on page 24)

Board sets millennium goals

In my first column of 2000, I thought it might be best to discuss SEJ's future. The SEJ board has been discussing it at length of late.

Our goal is to have SEJ poised for the next millennium, no matter whether it begins in 2000 or 2001. Here a number of recent activities aimed at updating, redesigning and generally improving SEJ.

First, the Web site is undergoing a major renovation. At SEJ's Leadership Summit in Montana in 1999, numerous members pointed out that it should be rejuvenated, since it serves as a first contact point for many journalists and others. The SEJ board recently reviewed a Web designer's initial efforts at a redesign. SEJ vice president Russ Clemings, who already deserves to be congratulated as father of the SEJ Web site, is overseeing the redesign.

The board hopes to make the new site more attractive and more timely, with frequent updates on stories, tips and other information that will be useful to members or visitors. The site also will feature a members-only section with contacts, member lists and other information, making membership even more valuable.

The board has also begun a discussion about the SEJ logo. Some board members argue that the pen in the logo is out of date. A pen also may mean little for those members who are covering the environment on the Web. Of course, the pen is a symbol—it is, after all a fountain pen—and was out of date when the logo was created.

Other questions about the logo relate to SEJ's misperceptions among some editors and reporters. Those are the journalists who believe the organization is too pro-environment and too little about journalism. They might point to the mountain and the river in the logo as "pro-green."

But other board members believe this logo has served SEJ well for our first decade and monkeying with it may create more problems than benefits.

Although I acknowledge that a priority for SEJ is to deal with any misperceptions about us as environmentalists-not-journalists, I have little problem with the mountains and the stream in the logo. We do, after all, write about natural resources. Many of our stories literally

involve mountains and streams or rivers. I see little wrong with those symbols. As for the pen, I'm less certain. Certainly it symbolizes our roots but I'm torn about whether it should be kept to symbolize our future.

I'm interested in what members think and encourage you to e-mail me at mmansur@kstar.com. You also may write, if you're more inclined to use paper and pen.

Other activities include a redesign of the *SEJournal*, which will begin once our new editor, Rob Taylor, takes the reins with the next issue. Rob will work with the editorial board on the redesign. See

Report from the society's president

By
**Mike
Mansur**



page 5 for a story in this issue about passing of the baton from Noel Grove to Rob.

I wanted to thank Noel for all he did as *SEJournal* editor. Most of you probably know that Noel was a founding board member and the founding board's treasurer until Oct. 1993. He cared for the *Journal* like a parent nurturing a child, and we owe him our gratitude.

I also can't say enough about how fortunate we are to have someone of Rob's talent and experience taking over the *Journal*. Please support him with your ideas, time and submissions.

The SEJ board in its January meeting in Washington welcomed four new members. Two—Mark Schleifstein of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* and Deborah Schoch of the *LA Times*—were elected for the first time to the board at our national conference in LA.

Late in 1999, the board appointed two new members to replace Marla Cone and David Ropeik. David resigned

because he stepped out of the world of journalism to take a new job as director of risk communications for the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis.

Marla Cone resigned from her post last year to pursue a Pew fellowship in marine reporting.

David and Marla—both with tenures unmatched by nearly anyone other than Jim Detjen and Kevin Carmody—deserve many thanks. David led what was arguably our most successful conference at MIT and Marla had major roles in two national conferences.

On Jan. 8 the board awarded David an honorary membership. He is only the fifth member awarded such a distinction.

The other two new members of the board, replacing Marla and David, are Perry Beeman of the *Des Moines Register* and Natalie Pawelski of CNN. Perry will work to update the board's newsroom training efforts, as will Natalie. The board faced a difficult choice in naming Perry and Natalie to the board. Two other very fine candidates vied for the slots.

As I scroll through this report on my computer screen, looking for a way to tie it all up, what first strikes me is how thankful I sound, mentioning this person and that, thanking them, praising their work or their gifts of time. None of it is calculated. It just is the way it is. SEJ has grown into a proud, accomplished organization. And it's done so through the hard work and good deeds of its many members. What a future.

An SEJ Valentine

On Feb. 14, 1990, the Society of Environmental Journalists was born in filing its articles of incorporation. There were earlier meetings, but the birth date should properly be considered Valentine's Day. Isn't that sweet?

Ten years later, at SEJ's national conference Oct. 19-22 in Michigan, conference planners hope to have a major celebration of SEJ's 10th anniversary.

Please send pictures, videos or other documents that show the organization and its beginnings. Humorous photos are especially welcome.

If you do have such material, please contact the SEJ office. ♦

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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*.

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

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Letter

Board appoints two

On Dec. 16, the SEJ board of directors appointed two new board members to fill the voting positions previously held by Marla Cone, of the *Los Angeles Times*, and David Ropeik, formerly of WCVB-TV in Boston.

The new SEJ board members are Perry Beeman of the *Des Moines Register* and Natalie Pawelski of CNN.

They will serve until the next SEJ election, to be held during the annual meeting, Oct. 20, 2000, at SEJ's 10th national conference in East Lansing, Michigan.

Beeman has been a reporter with the *Register* for 18 years. He joined SEJ in 1992, and served as Iowa Beat correspondent for the last 24 issues of the *SEJournal*. Beeman is currently serving on the board's programs committee, and hopes to bring the newsroom outreach program into a new level of excellence.

Natalie Pawelski is a correspondent, producer, writer and host for CNN's "Earth Matters." Pawelski's work also appears on other programs on CNN, Headline News, CNN's affiliate stations and CNN's Web sites. She covers many beats for CNN's Environment unit, including urban sprawl, wildlife, and pollution, as well as historic preservation, religion, politics, business and the arts as they relate to the environment. She has been with the Environment Unit since 1994.

Marla Cone served on the SEJ board from 1992-1999, and as vice president from Oct. 1997 through Oct. 1998. She stepped down to pursue a Pew fellowship in marine reporting.

David Ropeik was voted into board service in 1991, and served as vice president from Oct. 1998 through Oct. 1999. He left his TV reporting job to become director of risk communications at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, a part of the Harvard School of Public Health. ♦



Perry Beeman



Natalie Pawelski

SEJournal submission deadlines

Spring '00April 15, 2000
 Summer '00July 15, 2000
 Fall '00October 15, 2000
 Winter '01January 15, 2001

Send submissions to *SEJournal's* new editor, Rob Taylor, realtaylor@aol.com, 7204 45th Street, Chevy Chase, MD, 20815.

National conference 2000

Michigan site provides fodder for reporters

Test-drive one of Detroit's new eco-cars. Ride a sailboat on the Great Lakes. Debate the environmental records of the presidential candidates.

These are some of the activities being planned for the Society of Environmental Journalist's 10th national conference that will be held Oct. 19 to 22 at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

"Cars, fresh water and presidential politics will all take center stage at this year's conference," said Jim Detjen, one of the conference planners, "but like all SEJ conferences there will be scores of panels on many other newsworthy topics, specialized training sessions for both beginners and veterans and numerous chances to meet environmental experts and other journalists."

Because the Great Lakes contain one-fifth of the world's fresh water, tours and sessions at this year's conference will focus on water issues.

Among the tours being planned are trips to both Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The Lake Michigan tour will give journalists the chance to ride on the research vessel Shenehon and to learn about the lake's majestic and environmentally sensitive sand dunes, the largest freshwater dunes in the world.

The trip to Lake Huron will include a ride on the Appledore, an 85-foot-long schooner. While on board, people will learn about the natural history and ecology of the Great Lakes.

Thursday tours will also take attendees to Ford's River Rouge Complex, reputed to be the world's largest manufacturing facility, which is being redesigned by environmental architect Will McDonough to be more environmentally friendly. The tour also includes a trip to EPA's Air Emissions Lab in Ann Arbor.

A birding and wildlife management tour will take attendees to The Kellogg Biological Station, Baker Sanctuary and other birding hot spots across Michigan near the height of the fall migration of sandhill crane and many other species. Wildlife biologists will talk about past successes and failures and current management challenges.

Dow chemical plant, one of the largest chemical complexes in the world, is another tour site. Attendees will tour the plant where Saran Wrap and other products are made, visit the Dow Historical Museum and the 100-acre Dow Gardens, and will hear how Dow is viewed in the local community.

A tour to the National Food Safety and Toxicology Laboratory will focus on threats to the nation's food supply and an update on the Food Quality Protection Act, after which attendees will visit a community-supported organic garden to see how the food supply is doing locally.

SEJ conference plans again include theme rooms this year so that people interested in a particular track may find it with less than the usual confusion of navigating a conference. The Great Lakes area struggles with issues ranging from unsafe levels of contaminants in fish to the selling of water to other countries. It's no surprise that The Water is one of the conference themes. Sessions are being planned on the coming international water wars of the 21st Century's new exotic invaders into the nation's water systems, the growing threat of massive water diversion

projects and health issues swirling around the eating of Great Lakes' fish.

Other tracks include The Land, which will look at media coverage of radiation issues, sprawl, genetically modified foods, hunter vs. animal rights; The Car, including panels on hybrids and fuel cells, air pollution and the smart growth debate; The Nation, with sessions on labor and the environment, E-commerce and the environment, covering state environmental agencies and philanthropy.

The Globe theme will track waste shipments, airborne pollutants and other border environment issues; global warming's regional impacts; and a look ahead to 2100.

The Craft theme will examine spinners, fibbers and pseudo-journalists in public relations' dark side; creating your own E Media; plagiarism and other environmental reporting ethics issues; award winners; and online multimedia reporting.

The Computer theme will offer hands on skills-building sessions on topics including GIS, getting information from the internet and creating stories on the web.

The opening plenary session will try to answer the question: Is the greening of the auto industry real or hype? Industry heads and leading critics will engage in the debate about people, cars and the environment.

One of the speakers already confirmed is David Suzuki, the Canadian scientist and television host of many environmental programs. A special effort is being made to organize sessions that will deal with Canadian-American environmental issues such as international trade, immigration, fishing and globalization.

Back by popular demand will be the International Wildlife Film Festival, which drew many favorable reviews at the Los Angeles conference last fall. On Saturday night SEJ's 10th birthday will be celebrated at a reception in the Michigan Historical Museum, one of the finest history museums in the Midwest.

Network lunches receive such accolades each year that planners have added a network breakfast. About a dozen topic tables will be set up to discuss issues ranging from sneaking environmental journalism into the media to academia's lament: That's not what I said!

On Sunday morning, sessions on the craft of writing will be held at the new Bengel Wildlife Center, a large rustic facility overlooking wetlands where sandhill cranes, coyotes and numerous other animals live. Workshops on nature writing and nature photography are being planned along with talks by noted environmental writers. Attendees will also have the opportunity to hike the area and maybe spot some of the wildlife.

As SEJ's National Conference 2000 plans take form, updates will be posted on our website at <http://www.sej.org>. Keep an eye, too, on your mail; sometime during April your registration form and conference materials will arrive. Register early to receive the discount. ♦





New SEJournal editor selected



New SEJournal editor Rob Taylor

Veteran newspaper reporter Rob Taylor will assume the post of editor-in-chief for the *SEJournal*, effective next issue.

Taylor succeeds Noel Grove, who guided the publication for over three years and resigned to pursue additional book projects.

Taylor was selected by the publication's editorial board after a two-month search and confirmed Jan. 8 by the SEJ board's executive committee.

In 1999, after a decade covering environmental issues for the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, Taylor moved to the Washington, D.C., area with his wife and is pursuing a book project.

From 1980-88, as a reporter in the *Wall Street Journal's* Washington Bureau, his beat included the environment, along with the Justice Department and banking policy.

He wrote for the *Philadelphia Bulletin* from 1971-1980, covering issues ranging from state government to the Nixon impeachment hearings to the Three Mile Island nuclear accident. During that time, he spent a year reporting from Eastern and Southern Africa for the *Bulletin* and several other newspapers.

He was a Knight Fellow at Stanford University in 1996-97, and earned a BA in history, cum laude, from Princeton in 1969.

Taylor's journalism awards include the 1994 Haig-Brown Award for coverage of fisheries and a 1992 Thomas Stokes Award honorable mention.

Grove leaves the editing post after standardizing the *SEJournal's* design and establishing a team of volunteer section editors. A former senior writer at *National Geographic* magazine and a founding SEJ officer, Grove was honored by the board Jan. 8 in Washington for his decade of service to the organization.

Chris Rigel, who has been the publication's assistant editor and designer, served as interim editor for the current issue.

The *SEJournal's* debut was in the summer of 1990, six months after SEJ was incorporated. Its mission is to report on how the media covers environmental issues and to help journalists do their jobs better. Past editors include Kevin Carmody, Bowman Cox, Adam Glenn and Amy Gahrn. ♦



Grove and his wife Barbara join SEJ board for D.C. dinner.

Bumper crop of co-sponsored events planned

SEJ will hold or co-sponsor a record number of regional events during 2000. Five events are already in planning stages; about eight more members have volunteered to arrange events in areas ranging from Alaska to Nepal.

A tour of oil refineries followed by sessions on environmental justice will be held March 11. A joint project of SEJ and UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, the event is co-sponsored by the *Contra Costa Times*, the Northern California chapter of Society of Professional Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Scheduled for April 20-21, an SEJ science writers workshop at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, will take a close look at the issues surrounding the science of Snake River salmon recovery, biotechnology and nuclear issues.

SEJ's first event outside the U.S. is slated for this spring in Toronto, under member Saul Chernos' guidance, co-sponsored by Canadian Association of Journalists Toronto chapter.

The first of two events in Florida is scheduled for June. The

Poynter Institute, working with the University of Southern Florida, is holding its first environmental workshop, and asked SEJ to bring its experience to the planning table. The five-day conference will take a close look at national water issues.

A joint effort by the *Pensacola News Journal*, Southern Newspaper Association and SEJ will result in another water quality conference in Pensacola, Fla., Nov. 11-14, 2000. Both Florida events will attempt to draw attendance from across the country.

The Native American Journalists Association, IRE and the Society for Conservation Biology have each asked SEJ to organize panels for their conferences scheduled for June.

Regional events arranged by SEJ may range in structure from two-day conferences with numerous speakers to the simple beer-and-pizza gathering at a local pub. Staff support is generally available to help with planning if scheduling doesn't overlap other regionals or the national conference. Members interested in organizing a regional event may contact programs manager Chris Rigel at (215) 836-9970 or crigel@sej.org. ♦



For the fifth time in two and a half years, **Carol Hartman** is on the move again. This time Hartman landed at the *Davis Enterprise* near Sacramento, Calif., where she is the associate editor for news. Her responsibilities include designing the weekly business and automotive sections, writing editorials, editing copy and making assignments. She also hopes to beef up science coverage.

A long line of distinguished environmental journalists have covered the green beat for the *Courier-Journal* in Louisville, Kentucky—Jim Detjen, Scott Thurm, Howard Fineman and Andrew Melnykovich. Now you can add **Jim Bruggers** to the list. The SEJ board member left the *Contra Costa Times* in the Bay area of California to travel to coal country. Bruggers is looking forward to less traffic, four seasons and a lower cost of living, but expects he will miss covering the California coastal and desert environments. Now it's mining and heavy industry in Kentucky.

Michael Gerrard has edited a book for the American Bar Association called *The Law of Environmental Justice: Theories and Procedures to Address Disproportionate Risks*. The book examines the legal doctrines arising from civil rights law that allow communities to address environmental impacts in their midst. Gerrard, an environmental lawyer in New York, says changes are happen-

ing so rapidly in the environmental justice field that he has to put up a Web site to continually update the book.

After five years with *Chemical Week*, most recently as managing senior editor, **Peter Fairley** is a freelancer. Fairley says his goals are to broaden the audience for his environmental writing and spend more time with his 2-year-old daughter. He landed in Toronto, where his wife is doing postdoctoral work in History.

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Last fall, **David Canny** put down his freelancing pen to take up the schoolbooks. Canny is now a student at Duke University's School of the Environment. He writes that he's "excited about learning amazing amounts of material in a short amount of time." Canny also teaches Scuba diving. Talk about exciting.

Back behind the microphone is **Diane Toomey**. After a stint researching and producing segments on alternative health for the Discovery Channel, Toomey is back in radio as science editor for National Public Radio's "Living on Earth." She will spend most of her time editing the show's reporters and producers, but she has already started reporting

her own stories. No sooner had she touched down in Boston than she was back on the plane on her way to Canada to report on genetically modified salmon. Since her last job was in Los Angeles, Toomey says the snow is something that takes getting used to, "but I heard the spring is spectacular." So's the snow, Diane, once you get those shoveling muscles tuned up.

Los Angeles Times reporter **T. Christian Miller** won the John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism for his report on overbuilding in the Santa Monica mountains. In awarding Miller the honor, the judges called his story "a powerful accounting of the overbuilding spree... the politics of it all." For an honorable mention, judges took note of *Fresno Bee* reporter **Mark Grossi** for his reporting on the restoration of the San Joaquin River. Also accorded honorable mention was **John Krist** of the *Ventura County Star*. He spent a year researching the balance between economic need and environmental protection.

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

Ninth national conference generates stories

By JAY LETTO

More than 550 attendees, nearly 250 of them SEJ members, braved the notorious Los Angeles smog and traffic to take part in SEJ's ninth national conference, hosted by the University of California, Los Angeles, Sept. 16—19. Amazingly, due to good weather and past clean-up efforts, the smog was not a problem. The traffic was, well... as far as we know, everybody made it back from various excursions beyond UCLA.

The conference generated considerable media coverage of the myriad sessions, with 16 of the 33 who completed evaluation forms reporting that they filed stories from the conference.

Coverage included stories on the Hollywood and the Environment plenary session, Catalina Island tour, population issues, wild/urban interfaces, the Mars Polar Lander, astrobiology, overconsumption, Los Angeles smog, endangered species, pesticides, environmental education, space junk, bioremediation, air pollution, UCLA's Environmental Report Card and Earth Day 2000.

SEJ's national conference received high praise from attendees again this year. "It was great," wrote one satisfied customer. "I was busy from early morning until late night, and I made all sorts of contacts, gathered lots of new material, and got rejuvenated about my beat." Twenty-nine of the 33 attendees who turned in evaluation forms expressed similar praise for the conference under the basic evaluation section.

Probably the biggest challenge organizing the SEJ conference each year is walking the fine line between incorporating members' suggestions into the agenda and paring down the agenda to accommodate attendees' wishes for fewer panels. SEJ members' most consistent complaint, year after year, is that we try to do too much—too many panels, too tight a schedule, not enough time for networking, breaks were too short, panels were too big.

At the same time, every SEJ member wants his or her issue, workshop, favorite speaker, etc., on the agenda. Conference planners receive literally hundreds of panel proposals, speaker



suggestions and workshop ideas every year. Obviously we can accommodate only a fraction of them. By utilizing some innovative and popular session-styles—i.e., networking lunch, minitours, small-group sessions, etc.—we are able to include a wide variety of members' ideas in the agenda without having to sacrifice the time, space and organizing effort for a full panel. Still, we are averaging more than 50 panels and other sessions and around 200 speakers each year.

Two new reactions really stood out from the 1999 UCLA conference evaluation forms:

1. Attendees thoroughly enjoyed the new visuals, especially the Friday evening International Wildlife Film Festival (organized by Jim Bruggers, now with the *Louisville Courier-Journal*). Also quite popular were the plenary introductory videos for the Hollywood lunch (edited by Colony Brown of the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation) and the Megalopolis plenary (edited by David Ropeik, formerly with WCVB-TV in Boston). This much use of film and video was unprecedented for an SEJ conference.

2. Attendees also expressed high praise for all the various craft and reporting workshop-type sessions. We've had these sessions at each SEJ conference, but they've never before been so well-attended and well-received. Online Reporting (organized by Adam Glenn of ABC Online) had the highest attendance of the concurrent sessions and received the most praise. Other craft sessions, including: One Thousand Words: Storytelling with Graphics and Pictures, Boss Talk: Editors on the Environment, Hands-on Web Resources for Environmental Reporting, Getting Primary Source Information, and Telling Environmental Stories Better were very successful as well.

From evaluations and informal discussions at earlier conferences, we thought that we had run out of interest in computer-assisted reporting sessions. Attendance had been tailing off in these sessions in recent years. That has clearly changed. Even the most popular Network Lunch tables this year were web reporting and craft-related.

Other 1999 conference highlights (and lowlights):

1. Tours continue to be very popular, though this year's post-conference tour was canceled due to low sign-up. The all-day, half-day and minitours were generally well-attended and well-received. The only common complaint—and we get this every year—is for more time outside. Attendees also don't like long driving times, but at the same time want to see the coolest stuff.

2. Similarly, the Long Beach Aquarium and Streisand Center (like similar locales in past years) were both very popular, but attendees complained about the long driving times.

3. Twenty-two of the 33 attendees who sent in their evaluations did not attend another journalism conference last year.

4. Nineteen of the 30 SEJ attendees who sent in their evaluation forms had to pay their own way to attend.

5. The two plenaries, the Hollywood lunch and the Megalopolis panel, received mixed response (like most plenaries of past years). Evaluations for both sessions ran about 50 percent liking them, 50 percent not liking them.

6. The Network Lunch's discussion tables continue to be

very popular since introduced at St. Louis in '96. At the 2000 conference, following others' suggestions, we are including a second networking event, our first Networking Breakfast, scheduled for Saturday morning.

7. Environmental "legends" continue to be very popular. We've never had, in my recollection, a negative response to any of the big-name environmental leaders we've invited to speak over the years. This year, David Brower's evening keynote was very well-received, and Paul Ehrlich's breakfast session was also quite popular—though with the latter, some attendees complained about attendance being limited to 25 SEJ members. Several members praised conference chair Gary Polakovic's humorous and moving introduction of Brower.

8. Well-known authors also continue to be very popular. Barry Lopez's Sunday morning keynote outside at the Streisand Center received among the most glowing praise of any session at any SEJ conference. (See excerpts from his talk, page 12.) It is also by far the best-selling audiotope this year, and among the best-selling audiotapes of any SEJ session ever.

9. The Sunday morning sessions were all well-received, and this was our most ambitious Sunday morning agenda in the past few years. The only common complaint, again, was too many panels and too many speakers.

10. Like past years, we had a considerable drop-off in attendance during the Saturday afternoon concurrent sessions. Friday morning attendance for concurrent sessions was more than 250. Saturday afternoon it dropped to about 135. The minitours, however, continue in popularity. For the 10th National Conference, we will put all the minitours during the same late Saturday afternoon time slot, concurrent with just two or three panel sessions.

11. Food was a huge hit in Los Angeles, and received consistent praise from attendees. Everything from Dove Bars at one break to the dinner at the Aquarium and brunch at the Streisand Center to both lunches at UCLA and the snacks and bar for the Membership Meeting all received accolades.

Finally, of course, don't forget SEJ's 10th National Conference, hosted by Michigan State University in East Lansing, Oct. 19-22 (see story, page 4). Remember, too, that SEJ's conference tapes can be ordered at (800) 476-4785.

Jay Letto is SEJ's National Conference Manager.

Please visit

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SEJ's 10th National Conference



Grove roasts as members sit idly by

By CHRIS RIGEL

It falls under the “does this make me look fat?” category of questions—trying to analyze why the current GABI editor’s pleas for material fell on a mirthless membership. You are not the sour bunch you pretend to be—I’ve seen how you behave at conferences.

Be that as it may, requests for reporting trip-ups yielded this single gem: Dave Newport reports that the weather man for the Syracuse NBC affiliate consistently states that “there’s a fifty percent chance of an unexpected rainstorm.” Never passed statistics, Dave guesses.

My radio station of choice gets its science from a parallel universe, where natural laws are as different from ours as day is from night. On the day of the winter solstice, the weather guy (really, that’s what they call him) said that the night sky would be clear enough for everyone to enjoy the solar eclipse.

Next time the GABI editor asks for material, turn on a country station.

With no material forthcoming from the otherwise talented and brilliant SEJ membership, I have no choice but to engage in a roasting of *SEJournal*’s former editor, Noel Grove.

This is the first issue of the *SEJournal* to be published in three and a half years without Noel at the helm. Many fine things are being said about him in other, more staid, sections of this publication, and grand words were spoken in the several toasts at a board dinner on Jan. 8 in D.C.

I don’t plan to say anything grand.

Noel and I had a remarkable working relationship. Our e-mail correspondence went something like this:

Assistant editor: “Dear Loveable, tremendously attractive, wildly intelligent editor and king of the *SEJournal*: I’ve taken some liberties with your conference story...”

Editor: “I’m sure what you added is as studied and accurate as your opening descriptions of your editor.”

We could carry this to sickening heights, and in the process violate most of the laws of decent conversation that

brought the last century to its great bland pudding of politically correct, terrified language—which I hasten to add is utterly essential so that equality (or at least sameness) may be had by all.

So in our wickedest moments, political incorrectness became a preferred medium of exchange. How could it not? SEJ constantly supplied us with material like, well, the poster at the ‘96 national conference advertising a Turner Broadcasting salon on Climax Change.

GABI didn’t exist until the Fall 1996 issue when Noel decided to introduce some levity into the otherwise serious newsletter. To say he enjoyed the column is to say that snow is cold or that David Helvarg likes discussing accommodations at the Ninth National Conference in Los Angeles. Noel’s e-mail messages about the section bubbled with enthusiasm:

Grin & Bare It

“He-e-e-r-r-e’s GABI!

“I introduced your acronym for *Grin and Bare It* in my quarterly appeal, and it caught on. Got lots of e-mail slugged subj: GABI. Next thing you know we’ll be in Websters:

GABI—(gaa-bee) orig. Chris Rigel, designer for *SEJournal*, enormously popular periodical of late 20th century, edited by hack writer N. Grove; 1. Any of several intensely funny columns about humorous incidents that happened to journalists covering the environment; 2. Tending to be talkative.

“And guess what! We got so many offerings that we have a GABI for another issue. Since the Fall issue will probably have funnies that happened at conference, that means we have a column for Winter. Backlog, it’s wunnerful.”

I can just imagine.

Often Noel’s calls for GABI stories yielded up unprintable stuff which rendered the editorial staff doubled over from yucks—the requests for SEJ limer-

icks, for example, inspired by an Internet contest for verses requiring the words Kazinsky and Lewinsky. Here’s one that, for reasons that escape me, didn’t make it into print. Environmental reporters seem to be a vanishing species at some newspapers and television stations. Maybe the reasons are less complex than we think:

*There once was a newspaper editor
who at full moon turned into a predator
took someone to eat
from the enviro beat
and he never regretted he etted ‘er*

Working with Noel over the years, I picked up some terrific tips about everything from editing to, well...there was the time I voiced concern about going off into wild places alone with a bunch of camera equipment.

“Bear spray,” he offered helpfully, referring to a huge can of aerosol gunk you wear on your hip, sort of like a gun, that repels grizzlies and other beasts who don’t have your personal well-being in mind. His last comment on the subject: “Spray downwind, for God’s sake.”

We had a great many grins and little to bear: a few missed deadlines, some late print runs, an occasional painful typo—the usual headaches any editorial staff faces. Phone meetings were predictable, beginning with a lot of hard work and ending when one or both of us spewed coffee over half-edited pages in a fit of laughter. How we managed to turn out so serious a newsletter is beyond me.

Sometime during the process I made dear friends of Noel and his wife, Barbara. Now Noel is working on his own project, and I, an acting editor without a henchman to plot pages and text with, realize that the fun wasn’t mere fun. It was inspiration—the kind that people find in camaraderie and laughter and freedom.

Never let it be said that environmental journalists have no sense of humor! Send stories to Chris Rigel at rigel@voicenet.com or fax to (215) 836-9970.

Reporting or rhetoric?

Journalistic disclosure at issue in Chicago

Editor's note: After the Chicago Sun-Times business section started using the Cato Institute's Steven Milloy to write news stories on environment-related issues, the media critic for the Chicago Reader zinged the metro for failing to fully tell its readers about Milloy's other activities. Michael Miner's column, reprinted with permission of The Chicago Reader, lists those activities. The SEJournal also invited Sun-Times business editor Dan Miller to respond to the issues Miner raised, particularly to describe what he sees as wrong with environment coverage in the mainstream media and why using Milloy as a news reporter, rather than as an op-ed columnist, is the appropriate antidote.

Read with caution

By MICHAEL MINER

Little by little the *Sun-Times* business section is telling its readers about reporter Steven Milloy. Eventually they'll find out what an interesting guy he is.

Milloy made his debut on Sept. 17. His "special to the *Sun-Times*" (which identifies him as a freelancer to readers who know the code) announced that fresh research (industry funded) had cleared the name of 2,4-D, a popular weed killer linked to cancer by a federal study. He was back Oct. 6 with a piece on the burgeoning market for genetically modified grain seeds. The byline to this story said simply "by Steven Milloy." As far as anyone could tell he was now on staff as a business writer.

But the byline was a mistake, and financial editor Dan Miller corrected it. When Milloy returned to the *Sun-Times* [Nov. 4], an editor's note at the end of the article told us that he's "a Washington-based business writer specializing in science. He holds advanced degrees in health sciences from Johns Hopkins University and a law degree from Georgetown University."

In the article, Milloy covered a Rosemont seminar devoted to new research into the danger genetically modified corn might pose to monarch butterflies. Milloy reported that the threat is overblown.

Here's what the *Sun-Times* is still keeping under its hat. Trumpeting evidence that threats to the environment are overblown is a way of life for Milloy, who maintains a highly entertaining and frequently edifying Web site called junkscience.com. The site, which he presides over as "the junkman," is a clearinghouse of information on environmental and health issues where, in Milloy's view, serious research is pitted against posturing and hysteria. To him, genetically modified grain seeds are one example. Global warming is the supreme example.

The junkman doesn't preside passively. This week junkscience.com found him inviting experts in risk assessment



to sign an amicus brief "I'm putting together." He refused to tell me what this brief was about, e-mailing me back, "I'm looking for qualified signatories, not media." But it's unusual to see a journalist intervening in litigation he comes across on his beat.

Something else *Sun-Times* readers might like to know about Milloy is that he's an adjunct scholar at the libertarian Cato Institute. As it happens, the other day he deeply embarrassed the institute.

Some readers might care that as recently as 1997 Milloy was a Washington lobbyist. His clients—according to the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks such things—included the American Petroleum Institute, the FMC Corporation, the Fort Howard Corporation, the International Food Additives Council and Monsanto.

He also was executive director of the Advancement of Sound Science Coalition (TASSC), now defunct. Milloy's critics in the environmental lobby dismiss TASSC as a front organization. *Sierra* magazine reported in 1997 that it was run out of the offices of a Washington PR firm that specialized in bogus "grassroots" campaigns—campaigns fabricated to give corporate agendas a populist cover.

In 1990 the Society of Environmental Journalists was formed to raise the "quality, accuracy and visibility of environmental reporting." Some 1,100 American journalists now belong, and Milloy isn't one of them. But then he's no simple journalist. He's a player. So far, he's brought *Sun-Times* readers good news about a weed killer and genetically modified agricultural products—stories he proposed to Dan Miller. If the news hadn't been good, would Milloy—unlike the hypothetically disinterested beat reporter—have brought those same readers any news at all?

Miller thinks Milloy's terrific. "He's a complete journalist" (Continued on next page.)

using all ways to communicate,” Miller says. “I wanted to get somebody with particular expertise in science and law. And if there’s anybody who’s got a greater breadth of sources I don’t know who that is.”

To object to Milloy as probusiness is ludicrous, Miller maintains. He sees Milloy as an antidote to most environmental reporting, which, with due respect to the Society of Environmental Journalists, is riddled with ignorance, gullibility and bias. “Look what Carol Browner came out with last week!” he says. Browner, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, announced that the EPA was suing seven large utilities in the South and Midwest. She stated, “The air we breathe in Washington is affected by these pollutants hundreds of miles away.”

Miller doesn’t buy that, and he’s glad Milloy doesn’t either. “These utilities are sending acid rain over the Northeast,” says Miller, aping the EPA line. “It’s picked up and reported as the most objective kind of truth, and you’ll find it in 99 of 100 newspapers. To say that that is objective in some sense is an absolutely and utterly hypocritical statement. People who print that are reporting it because they’re biased toward the point of view that EPA can do no wrong. EPA’s own research shows there’s no way of knowing if what’s happening on the East Coast has its origins in the Midwest.”

Milloy brashly invited visitors to junkscience.com to compare his *Sun-Times* coverage of the Rosemont seminar with the *New York Times* coverage of the same event. The two stories are very different. Milloy wouldn’t answer my questions, but I presume he considers the *New York Times* story irresolute. The *Times* reported that the butterfly debate goes on; Milloy announced that it’s over.

Here’s Milloy’s lead: “After six months of studying monarch butterflies and their exposure to genetically modified corn, scientists say the colorful insect and other butterfly species are not at grave risk from genetically modified corn pollen, as some had feared after a much publicized report earlier this year.”

Some readers
might care
that Milloy
was a
Washington
lobbyist whose
clients
included the
American
Petroleum
Institute,
the FMC
Corporation,
International
Food Additives
Council,
and Monsanto.

Here’s the *New York Times* lead: “An unusual scientific symposium organized and financed by a biotech trade group ended today with conflicting assertions about the risks that genetically engineered corn might pose to the monarch butterfly.”

The *Times* dutifully noted at the get-go that a trade group sponsored the seminar. Miller didn’t see why that detail was so important. Halfway through his account he got around to mentioning that the conference had been organized “by the Agricultural Biotechnology Stewardship Working Group, whose members include various university researchers and biotechnology companies.”

Either the *New York Times* is a fussbudget about trivial details, or Milloy has a shaky grip on the principle of full disclosure. Reporting on 2,4-D, for example, he quoted Michael Gough, whom he identified as “a former government researcher.” Gough also happens to be Milloy’s colleague at the Cato Institute and his frequent writing partner. They’ve collaborated on articles, papers, and the recent book *Silencing Science*.

But if there’s one thing *Sun-Times* readers ought to complain about, it’s that Milloy’s occasional newspapering has denied them the full flavor of his rhetorical gifts. Milloy doesn’t mix it up in the *Sun-Times* the way he does on his Web site. One hot spot there is the junkman’s occasional “Obituary of the day.”

When John Chafee, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, died [Oct. 24, 1999], Milloy recalled that the Rhode Island Republican “too often acted like a Democrat” and announced the “good news” that the next chairman should be better. And when David Rall of the National Institutes of Health was killed in a car crash [September 28, 1999], the junkman responded: “Scratch one junk scientist who promoted the bankrupt idea that poisoning rats with a chemical can predict cancer in humans exposed to much lower levels of the chemical—a notion that, at the very least, has wasted billions and billions of public and private dollars.”

The Environmental Working Group, a research organization that issues the kinds of warnings Milloy sneers at, wrote the Cato Institute protesting the “depraved insult” to Rall. The institute’s president wrote back: “You are quite right to be incensed over Steve Milloy’s inexcusable lapse in judgment and civility. Certainly the Cato Institute disassociates itself from his appallingly offensive comments.”

“If they’re looking for me to apologize,” Milloy said in the *Washington Post*, “I’m not going to.”

“This guy’s no journalist,” says Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group. “He’s a paid professional debunker.”

Many a gallant journalist would settle for “paid professional debunker” on his tombstone. But Milloy’s a journalist of a very particular type, and his new audience deserves an appropriate introduction.

Michael Miner is the media critic for the Chicago Reader, writing the weekly “Hot Type” column. He is a former reporter for the Sun-Times and UPI.

Death of Urgency

By DAN MILLER

Last December, when Chris Rigel asked me to write an article defending Steve Milloy against the screed that's reprinted nearby, I eagerly agreed. Now I wish I hadn't.

Steve is a colleague and a valued contributor to my newspaper, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and the attack on him challenged my credibility and good faith. Besides, Chris argued, if environmental reporters really were as biased or scientifically challenged as I believe they are, then my response in the *SEJournal* might provoke a change in attitude or at least convince some journalists to develop a respect for the scientific method.

My strategy was to cite several old environmental disputes that centered on assertions by alarmists whose fears ultimately proved unfounded and to prop up Milloy as one who didn't fall for such nonsense.

I had no trouble stuffing a file folder full of stuff.

There was the 1972 Club of Rome's best seller, *The Limits to Growth*, which confidently predicted death, disaster and destruction, as well as a shortage of zinc, if present trends continued.

I revisited Global 2000, a Carter administration-produced vision of a crowded, polluted, environmentally unstable and politically dangerous world that was scheduled to emerge earlier this month if present trends continued.

And I pulled down Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968) and its equally prescient *The Population Explosion* (1990), which predicted "massive famines" and a shortage of chromium if present trends continued.

(Ehrlich was so confident in his Malthusian model that he accepted a bet from free-market economist Julian Simon about the price 10 years hence of any extractive mineral Ehrlich cited. If Ehrlich's pessimism proved correct, then prices for his favored minerals (chromium, copper, nickel, tin and tungsten) should be high enough that Ehrlich could retire and buy his own chromium mine. In 1990, Ehrlich sent Simon a check for \$576.07, thereby acknowledging he lost his bet, but including not a word of apology or gracious congratulations to the man who continued to be his nemesis until Simon died in 1998.)

I had plenty of other phony crises to cite, involving intergenerational deformity of frogs; birds' egg shells that were allegedly thinned by the presence of DDT; McDonald's benign clamshell food holders that were driven out of restaurants to be replaced by less environmentally friendly and less consumer-friendly coated-paper wrappers; rain forests the size of whole countries disappearing overnight, and assertions based on nothing but guesswork that up to 600,000 species are dying right under our noses. Humbug to the whole bunch.

Then I wondered what any of this had to do with Steve Milloy, and I realized this dispute had absolutely nothing to do with him. Steve doesn't need defending, and he doesn't need me as an apologist. The guy holds a B.A. in natural sciences from Johns Hopkins University, a master's in health sciences in biostatistics from Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, a J.D. degree from the University of Baltimore, and a master of laws from Georgetown. He has published three books and scores of scholarly reports and articles.

He's an excellent writer, a wonderful conversationalist, and

he makes his deadlines.

What he isn't, however, is an environmental crisis monger, and among environmental reporters today, that's a fatal flaw. Because if you're an environmental writer who's not predicting doom and emergencies, then you're either failing in your job, or worse, you're a toady of big business.

Stephen H. Schneider, professor of environmental biology and global change at Stanford University and a certified global-warming alarmist, drew a bright line between the good guys and the bad guys in *Discover* magazine in 1989: "...we'd like to see the world a better place... To do that, we need to get some broad based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So, we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of the doubts we might have."

In the 11 years since Schneider articulated that strategy, the public—our readers—has become blasé about the never-ending parade of media-induced crises. As a result, our readers aren't worried about AIDS or prescription drug prices, about war in the Balkans or on the Golan Heights. They certainly don't care

about Social Security solvency, and they were right to pooh-pooh Y2K.

We in the media have fed our readers such a steady diet of crisis and dire warnings that we've made them immune to emergencies, legitimate or phony. So we try to break through by ratcheting up the crisisometer, and spreading still more anxiety—about the death of monarch butterflies, the horrors of genetically modified crops, cloning and...good grief, is that global warming that President Clinton is trying to resurrect to help his friend Al Gore?

The death of urgency is virtually complete among our readers, and if we journalists hope to fulfill our obligation as communicators, we've got to find a better way to communicate.

Virginia Postrel, editor of *Reason* magazine, got it right when she wrote in another context,

"Political action in a post-crisis age demands not only that we address chronic problems, but that we explore and analyze, champion and explain a broader world view."

That's why I hired Steve Milloy. And why *Sun-Times* readers are the better for it.

We've fed
our readers
such a
steady diet
of crisis
and
dire warnings
that we've
made them
immune to
emergencies,
legitimate
or phony.

Dan Miller is business editor of the Chicago Sun-Times and former publisher at the Heartland Institute.

Hope amid battle stories

Lopez urges journalists to support each other in undeclared war

Excerpted from Barry Lopez's address to SEJ's national conference, Sept. 19, 1999 at the Streisand Center for Conservancy Studies.

By **BARRY LOPEZ**

So often when you write a story about one or another environmental disaster, you're searching unconsciously for hope. What is the sentence at the end that will allow the reader to hope, or to believe that it's not all catastrophe and going to collapse like a house of cards on us?

The thing that we hold out too often is technology. There is no hope in technology. None. And if you don't believe that, read in the history of science; read in the history of the development of machinery: a new machine brings with it the same old problems. We can manipulate genes and splice things together and create something that will eat oil, so oil spills are okay. Well, what is it that's going to eat up despair? The only way that we are going to get out from underneath this cloak of blight that surrounds us is by changing our behavior, which means fundamentally changing the organization of American culture.

Why is it that we know this and we're not allowed to say it? Because in the reporting of war—which this is—there is always someone in control of the information and someone else who has no say-so or influence or authority. We're stuck in the position of reporting on people—and sometimes working for people—who don't want the war declared, who believe landscapes and people without representation are fodder for an economic system that is destroying civilization. This, of course, is not news. The rapaciousness and the savageness of capitalism is not news.

The question is, what are we going to do in the middle of it as writers, so we don't go crazy? We can bail out and say I've had it with the hypocrisy and the power structure that does not want me to report the story that I found.

I remember—a great piece of education—Harrison Salisbury. Many of you might even have known him and certainly read him when he was writing for *The New York Times*. Harrison was just too conscientious as a *Times* reporter. They wanted to restrain him, keep him from turning “minor” stories into major stories, like the politics of communism in China. So they asked him to report on the sanitation industry in New York City.

Harrison put on a pair of coveralls, started riding around on the back of Department of Sanitation trucks, and wrote this multi-part series about Mafia influence and corruption in the Department of Sanitation, and the editor said, “What is it with this guy? He can't just go write a simple story; he's got to really write a story.”

Ten years ago, floating down the Yangtze River, standing in the bow of the ship with Harrison, I said: “What did you think of the press corps in Beijing?” And he said, “No out of town experience.”

As many of you know, so often that's the way things work on a foreign desk: here's John in Beijing, and he comes back to the foreign desk and a new guy goes in and has John's Rolodex, and starts calling John's contacts, and then starts making contacts of his own. What he finds out—not news—is that the story John was reporting was a story, but not the story.

Because John is on the foreign desk editing the new guy's copy, if he reports the story John reported it goes right into the paper. But if he writes a story based on his own interpretation or his own investigative reporting, because he's gotten away from the hotel where all the reporters stay, from Reuters and the rest of it, if he got out of town and learned something else, and turned that in, it sat at the edge of the desk for three or four days and then died because that's not the story that we report.

Wait a minute! Why the hell do we have somebody in Beijing to begin with if we already know what the story is?

The darkest element in this—Harrison's great line—is during the height of the Viet Nam war, a couple of writers in New York realized that to go to Viet Nam and write about the war, all you had to do was go to the movies or watch television, because that's what the editors were looking for. So the deal was to stiff a maga-

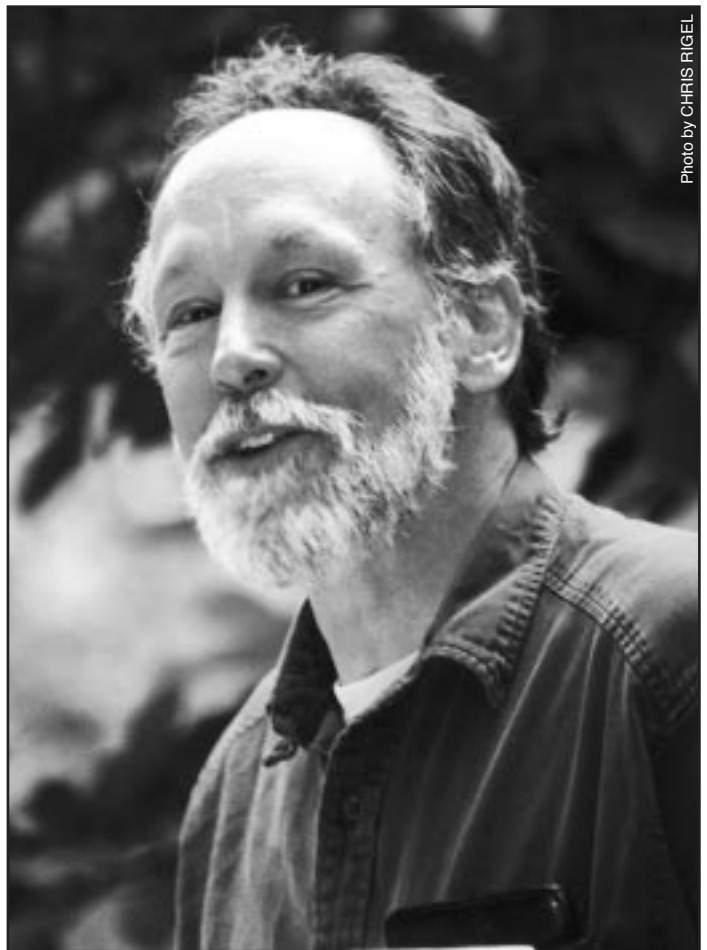


Photo by CHRIS RIGEL

Barry Lopez

zine for expenses to go to Viet Nam, and never go, but write a story about which the editor would say, "Holy Christmas, did you get this right!"

You know how difficult this territory is. I am not an optimistic person, given what I have seen. But I will tell you I have every cause to feel hopeful. And the reason for it is that in every dark corner of the world there are men and women who will not go down. They are highly imaginative people, re-imagining the circumstances we find ourselves in.

So, at the end here, I want to say that there is hope. And the hope is this: find a way through your profession to aid and abet every human effort to re-establish the authority of community over the notion of the power or rights of the individual. I do not think that there is an individual genius, but I will guarantee you that what passes for genius in human culture is resident in human communities. It may be made manifest in a Beethoven or in a Bach, or in a Melville. But it is not singular; it's not there only in those people. It's our genius that forms the fourth movement of the Beethoven Ninth. So everything that you can do in your own home, and in your professional relationships, and in your work on the street as a reporter, look for, aid and abet community that defies the notion that we're all here in the end just to consume.

Look to stories that show you the power of the human imagination so you know that this isn't something somebody

Look for, aid
and abet
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made up, but that in all of these countries, ours included, there are men and women leading extraordinary, un-reported lives, and they are hopeful about our condition because they stayed in touch with all of human history, from the Magdalenian phase of Cro-Magnon culture to today, and they see the testament of what we know, and they aren't giving up.

The last thing I would say about this is take care of each other. Take care of each other. Everybody here has been alone in a news room wondering if it was worth it, or sitting in front of a computer with a deadline at a magazine wondering, "Why am I doing this?" Call each other. Get on the phone with each other. When you see somebody else's story, send them a post card. Let each other know that you're not alone in this. There is a name for what you do, you know, it's part of the title of your professional organization, but that's not who you are. That is not who you are. You're a group of men and women with a skill with language and a desire, in some way, to see the human condition bettered. That's what you are first. You need to call each other and say, "How are you? I missed you. Wasn't it great that we got together in California? You know who we should call? Have you ever thought about... What happened to so-and-so? Is he lost to us?" That's a community. That's where I want to end: Take care of each other.

And thank you for this invitation to come and join you as a colleague.

*Barry Lopez has written seven books of fiction and six books of nonfiction, including **Arctic Dreams**, winner of the National Book Award; **Of Wolves and Men**, winner of the John Burroughs Medal; and **About This Life: Journeys on the Threshold of Memory**, a collection of essays that range from the Galápagos to Antarctica. He also writes regularly for magazines including Harper's, where he is a contributing editor.*

Fellowships offered to environmental journalists

The Marine Biological Laboratory's (MBL) Science Writing Fellowships Program is offering summer residencies at the MBL of up to eight weeks for professional science writers—print and broadcast journalists and other science reporters and authors whose audience is the general public.

Most fellows concentrate attention on the concepts and methodologies of a single biological discipline, usually through an affiliation with one of the MBL's graduate-level summer courses.

Fellows are also placed in laboratories at the MBL or other Woods Hole institutions, observing the investigator's progress over the summer and, when possible, participating in experiments. A limited number of fellows participate in off-site environmental research programs of the MBL's Ecosystems Center.

The program is designed for professional science writers with at least two years experience. Preference is given to print and broadcast journalists with staff positions and to journalists at the editorial or news director level, but freelancers are considered.

Advanced degrees in biology are not required, but a basic knowledge of biological principles and methods is advantageous. Tuition, travel and MBL room and board are covered for all fellows. Women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply.

The Science Writing Fellowships Program is introduced by either of two one-week laboratory courses (both demonstration and hands-on). Fellows may elect to take one of these two courses, which will be held concurrently at the MBL from June 2—11, 2000. One course is designed to acquaint fellows with molecular and cellular biological techniques currently used in biomedical research. The other course is designed to acquaint fellows with techniques used in environmental and ecosystems research.

The deadline for applications is March 15, 2000.

For more information and application forms contact Pamela Clapp Hinkle, administrative director, at (508) 289-7276 or pclapp@mbledu, or write her at Science Writing Fellowships Program, 7MBL Street, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Mass. 02543. ♦

Web site's exhaustive space allows more detail to reach public

By RON SYLVESTER

Water is big business in Missouri, with seven area lakes contributing \$185 million to the local economy through fishing alone. That doesn't count the 6 million tourists drawn to the Branson area, where a neon strip of country music shows is framed by three recreational lakes.

But what about the water we drink?

My discovery (as a reporter new to the environment beat) that environmental watchdogs cited water quality as the top priority in the Missouri Ozarks spurred a package on drinking water. The Sunday package became one of our most popular non-breaking news features we'd put online. The local DNR office received phone calls from residents with questions about water quality and from violators wanting to square their records.

I started with a 1996 Freedom of Information amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act that required community suppliers to file Consumer Confidence Reports, or CCRs. The first reports, due this past fall, would provide easy grist for a computer study of the 382 community drinking water suppliers in southwest Missouri.

Deciphering the CCRs, however, proved difficult. Previously, I had seen reports required by the Environment Protection Agency as they were published in rural weeklies or shipped out in brochures with monthly bills. They ranged from fairly informative to merely a list of chemical compounds and numbers extending four decimal places.

My editor, Linda Leicht, remembered barely glancing at hers before tossing it in the trash.

Our goal became to explain the CCRs in simple language and also to make the information available to those who may

have missed the report or thrown it away.

Space limitations threaten a story like this if it's slated for print. Two years ago, I prepared a computer database project for the *Springfield News-Leader* on food safety, using local restaurant inspections. Being at that time without a news Web site, we had to use five full pages over three days just for the agate inspections of 900 food services.

That all changed this fall, when we launched our Web site. Now we could post reports for all area suppliers without chewing up reams of paper.

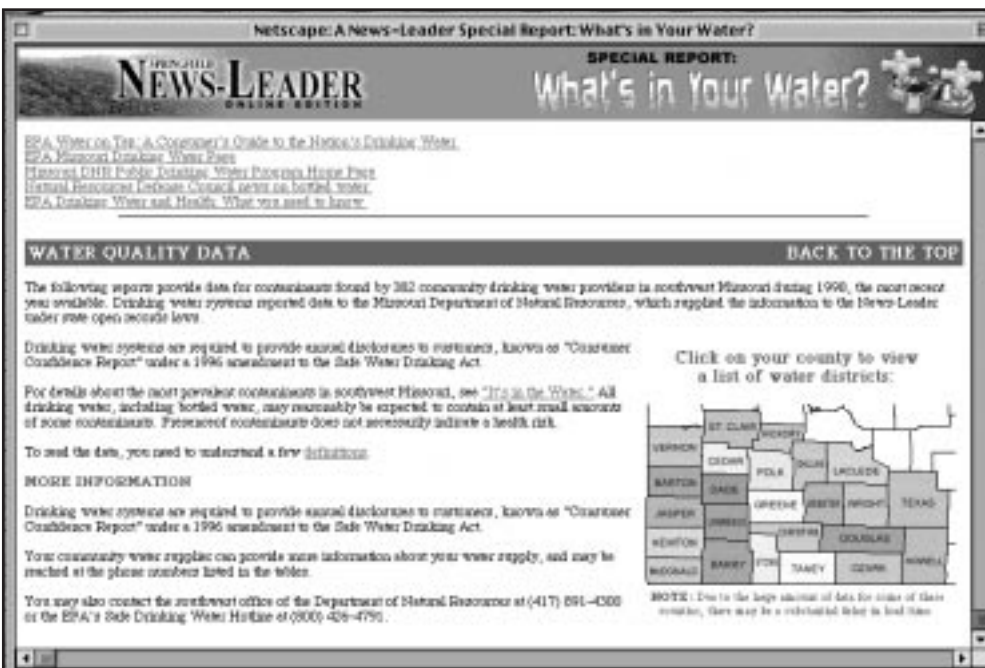
The Missouri Department of Natural Resources was more than happy to provide us a data dump of all the information that went into a CCR. The DNR was anxious for people to find out about the reports.

 Using Microsoft Access, I began looking for trends in our area, running queries on what contaminants and violations turned up most often.

It turned out that about a dozen water suppliers had dozens of violations for the year. Cross-checking those statewide, I found that our region had the most prevalent violators in the state. Many looked as if they were coming from one area—the Branson tourist hot spot.

Since I am the only reporter in our newsroom doing database reporting, I was running short on tools. I searched our building to find a mapping program, which turned up in market development. There, Kristin Persson helped load the violations into Maptitude and confirmed that many of the top violators were in the Branson area.

Using a combination of Access and Microsoft Excel, we ran 382 queries to create the online reports.



Because database reporting is only as good as the stories you can tell with it, we searched for the people it affected. We found some who were getting sick from the water. Residents and county officials alike were familiar with problems, although many weren't sure what caused it. We were able to tell them.

Most of all, we were able to show our readers that through the Web we could inform them far beyond what lands on their doorstep.

The News-Leader's water quality report can be accessed at <http://www.springfieldnewsleader.com>.

Ron Sylvester is covering the environment beat at the Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader.

DATA VS. DEFAULTS: Will EPA change how it looks at cancer risks?

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

New data about the cancer-causing potential of some pesticides and pollutants may lead EPA to change its cancer conclusion for those substances.

The new data explains cancer causes and may be used in EPA analyses to circulate potential health risks when results from laboratory animal studies include cancer.

The explanatory data is expected to be used by EPA in the coming months to update risk assessments for the herbicide atrazine and a disinfection by-product, chloroform, as well as ethylene oxide, styrene and other commercial substances.

A common decision facing EPA in each risk update is whether to employ or reject new explanations of how the pollutant, chemical or pesticide may (or may not) be expected to cause cancer in humans, even though cancer has been seen in laboratory animals exposed to the same substance.

The instructions for interpreting all the different types of data used to generate these assessments are found in EPA's *Guidelines for Carcinogen Risk Assessment* (1986, draft revision 1996, 1999).

Cancer risk assessments are important because EPA sets the majority of its pollution limits and pesticide residue levels with an eye toward protecting people from cancer, even if other illnesses have been linked to exposure to the chemical. EPA's logic is that protecting people against cancer would protect against other ailments too.

The cancer guidelines, which have been undergoing revision for several years, set the framework for reviewing and interpreting information about cancer such as toxicology, epidemiology and exposure data. The new guidelines are expected to chart the course for EPA's use of molecular biology and other types of data that explain how substances interact with the body.

When data is lacking or confusing, which is common, EPA completes the risk assessment by using various public health-protective "defaults." Both the 1986 and recent revisions to the guidelines endorse using defaults in this situation.

Now that the data needed to replace the defaults used in old risk assessment has arrived at the agency, EPA must decide whether to use this information in risk assessment updates and

to support regulation.

In the case of the chloroform cancer risk assessment, the new data showed that exposure causes cancer indirectly, without damaging DNA. Under EPA's 1986 cancer guidelines, if a chemical or pollutant caused cancer in laboratory animals, then by "default" EPA concluded the substance was a "probable or possible carcinogen" and this could trigger regulation.

However, the 1996 guidelines allow EPA to use data that explains how a substance causes cancer without damaging DNA. If EPA had relied on the data and explanation about how chloroform causes cancer, the agency could have begun the process of revising its cancer-based regulations of drinking water, possibly relaxing them. EPA chose to ignore the data, leading to a lawsuit. (See sidebar.)

Meanwhile, EPA decisions about what data it will use in its cancer assessment of atrazine are just beginning to be revealed. The debate is just beginning, too.

In late 1999, EPA released part of its revised cancer assessment for atrazine. In an unusual move, the agency asked a scientific panel to critique its work. The issue is whether mammary tumors in laboratory rats predict similar effects in humans. The manufacturer says it has data that suggests people would not react the same way. The outcome for atrazine is not at all clear.

Many stories should unfold as EPA's initial decisions about what data to use in its cancer risk assessments are made. Meanwhile, advocacy groups—environmentalists and chemical makers respectively—have begun to stake out their positions on atrazine and chloroform cancer assessments.

Industry groups argue that their explanations are backed by "sound science." Generally, it is the chemical makers or users that invest resources to generate the data supporting the new interpretations. For the commercially important chemicals, there is a lot of toxicological data available to inform this debate.

So the question of whether EPA will look at cancer risks differently should be answered sometime during this millennium.

Sara Thurin Rollin is a reporter for BNA's Bureau of Environmental News.

Chloroform (CAS No. 67-66-3)

Cancer Classification: Group B2, probable human carcinogen (1991)

Uses: A disinfection by product, used to make fluorocarbon-222, and a solvent.

Issue: Whether cancer in laboratory animal tests was caused through indirect ways not involving DNA, therefore at some low exposure not linked with cancer threat.

Status: Revised cancer assessment completed in 1998. EPA ignored the new data when it revised regulation. Industry has sued (*Chlorine Chemistry Council v. EPA*, D.C. Cir. No. 98-1627, 12/30/98).

Advocates: Chlorine Chemistry Council, American Water Works Association, Environmental Working Group, Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense.

Atrazine (CAS No. 1912-24-9)

Cancer Classification: Group C, possible human carcinogen (1993)

Uses: The most widely used herbicide pre-emergence in U.S. corn and sorghum production. In 1991, 51 million pounds of atrazine active ingredient were applied 62 percent of corn crop.

Issue: Whether mammary tumors seen in laboratory rat studies are predictive of similar effects in humans.

Status: Part of EPA's initial revised risk assessment to be critiqued by a scientific advisory panel in early 2000.

Advocates: Novartis Corp., Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, Environmental Working Group, Children's Environmental Health Network and National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides.

Back to school: Reporter finds hidden treasure in academia

By TODD HARTMAN

There are running jokes in journalism when it comes to academia. We urge colleagues moving to a university career to enjoy retirement. I've had coworkers rest their chins on their fists in mock reflection whenever talk of academics arises. We yuck it up over absurdly obscure research. It's funny, sure, but I've come to believe our disdain of the ivory tower is off the mark.

Typically, our complaints spring from a mix of experience and perception: interviews with professors unable to translate their ideas into everyday speech, impenetrable research papers, abstract specialties or the notion that university folks are too detached to make useful sources.

Grains of truth? Maybe, but these grains get in our eyes, making it hard to see. Last spring, I completed the Ted Scripps Fellowship in Environmental Journalism, a nine-month venture back into college at the University of Colorado. The experience reawakened my appreciation for the work that goes on within the confines of higher education, and for the people who do it. Furthermore, it convinced me that we environmental reporters—indeed, reporters of any stripe—are too often missing a magnificent journalistic resource.

Sure, we give academics a passing nod once in a while. High-profile research or an exciting archaeological discovery occasionally attracts attention from local press, as can a professor who becomes an activist in his field. Certainly not all papers shun academia equally. The *New York Times*, to cite the best example, embraces it, consistently bringing the research within the academic world prominently into the fold of mainstream journalism. The paper's method is a model for what more of us should consider: It reports on the research, as well as using it to strengthen its work.

In this space I'm interested in the latter. I believe we're missing a big opportunity in failing to consult academic research when researching stories. Here I mean adding academic papers and journals to the more common repertoire of government documents, interest group-funded studies, interviews and previous journalism to build the backbone for our work. Such research helps the journalist in two distinct ways.

One is through the sheer factual data it includes. After all, we reporters love facts. In a few days of snooping around the university law library, for instance, I discovered several relevant journal articles that provided a wealth of useful data on two topics I was examining—the Superfund law and mine cleanups.

Regarding Superfund, one law journal quoted a study by the insurance industry that found in an average Superfund cleanup—lasting seven to nine years—the government spends two to three years just seeking parties that can be sued for cleanup cost recovery. The same study found that 60 percent of Superfund monies are spent on administrative and legal fees.

Another article focusing specifically on mine cleanups included oodles of useful facts. A couple of examples: Of the 1,300 sites on the Superfund National Priorities List, only 66 are mining sites. Why? Mining sites are typically located far from heavily populated areas and while they may cause significant

harm to the environment, they do not always pose an immediate threat to the public. The article also included estimates of cleanup costs of the country's inactive and abandoned mine sites at between \$32 billion and \$71 billion.

These may seem simple examples, but that's just the point. The journals contained clear, concrete, useful information—all of it footnoted. It counters the notion that academic journals are filled with nothing but abstract wanderings of a professor with too much time to think.

It's true that some of this data can be found in other places, government agencies, for example. Not all of it, however. The facts they present—if critical of a public program, for example—aren't always the facts you'd readily get from an agency or interest group. Take one of the previous examples, for instance. How often do you hear the EPA bragging that it spends 60 percent of Superfund money on administrative and legal costs?

The data in journal articles is also a great starting point for investigative work as well. Imagine how helpful it would be, before delving into a big project, to see what ground had already been plowed. The research in 15,000-word law journal articles was as exhaustive, if not as artfully presented, as your typical three-month reporting project.

University research provides another assist: It can help us in our search for background and context. Reading, after all, is the best way for us to learn our subject matter. Some of the best material to read—that which gives journalists a foundation in their topics—sits largely ignored on university shelves (or within on-line academic databases).

Throughout my time at the university, my colleagues and I were presented—through coursework and seminars—with wholly digestible papers and research summaries from dozens of university scientists on topics like global warming, energy supplies, paleoclimatology and ozone depletion, to name a few. On that same note, I rediscovered the value of science textbooks. Chock full of diagrams and definitions, my chemistry and geology texts have become desk-side standards.

I realize I may, in part, be preaching to the converted. Certainly, many of my environmental reporting colleagues have long shared what for me is a newfound enthusiasm for academia as a resource. After 14 years in this business, however, I've seen very few folks who, at the mention of academia, do more than laugh about the cupcake life of a professor (another media myth, I discovered, after realizing bleary-eyed professors stayed up late grading lousy papers, prepping for class, writing papers of their own or—worst of all—spending far too many hours in faculty meetings).

So consider this a call to go back to college—if only to the library, and if only from time to time, to get acquainted with a source many of us left behind the day after graduation.

Todd Hartman is environmental reporter at The Gazette in Colorado Springs, Colo. He can be reached at (719) 636-0285 or toddh@gazette.com.



Go to the head of the class

Teaching brings new enthusiasm to long-time beat reporter

By DAN FAGIN

When Bill Burrows, director of the Science and Environmental Reporting Program at New York University, asked if I was interested in teaching environment reporting part time, I was more surprised than nervous. When he told me that what I chose to teach—and how I taught it—would be entirely up to me, I was surprised *and* nervous.

Then he informed me that many of my students would be accomplished master's- and Ph.D.-level scientists enrolled in journalism school to change careers, and I stopped being surprised and was just plain nervous.

By the time he told me not to rely on any information from the person who last taught the class, let's just say I was relieved to hang up.

Almost two years have passed since that conversation, and I've taught environmental writing at NYU for the last two fall terms. What seemed vaguely terrifying to me then has turned out to be demanding but deeply satisfying. Sometimes it's even fun.

Teaching has helped me rethink my own reporting and shake off the cobwebs that inevitably grow from spending nine years on one beat at the same paper. There's nothing better than hanging around hungry and talented aspiring reporters to give you a new appreciation of how fortunate we all are to be earning a living from this business.

Before that phone call from Bill, I had never thought about how to teach environmental writing. I didn't go to graduate school, and I attended a college that didn't offer a single journalism course, much less a journalism major or degree. Even now, after 15 years as a reporter, I have a hard time explaining how we go about our business. What constitutes news? How do you obtain and evaluate information? How do you organize your stories? When people ask me those kinds of questions, I usually mutter something like "after you do it for a while you figure it out."

I had a feeling that answer would not constitute a sufficient curriculum for my course, so after Bill called I did some hard thinking about how best to communicate the essentials of environment reporting in 14 weekly classes, each two and a half hours long.

A key threshold question is whether the class should emphasize the craft of journalism or should instead be organized around key environmental issues. The joy and terror of the environment beat, however, is its immense breadth, encompassing everything from global climate change to cesspool regulation, and it's changing all the time. How could I do more than a cursory

job of covering so many important topics in 14 classes? If it's merely superficial, is it really useful?

I decided to teach the craft of journalism, then, through the lens of environmental issues, spending some time talking about a few specific environmental subjects that can be broadly applied, such as risk assessment science, the major federal environmental statutes and epidemiology. Mostly, however, we used environmental stories and topics as examples to talk about reporting and writing, and I haven't regretted rejecting the 10-facts-per-minute encyclopedia approach to teaching.

My students have already spent a year learning the basics of news reporting and writing, so I emphasized how to report, organize and write longer and more complicated features on environmental topics. We didn't use a text. Instead we read and critiqued published work—I resisted the traditional approach of making them buy my own book—and the students did a lot of writing, including a 3,500-word feature.

Bill was right: You can't tell someone else, especially a person with experience in the field, how to teach environmental journalism. Everyone should play to his or her own strengths and experiences. However, I'm all for borrowing ideas to incorporate into my own class, and I'd be happy to share details of my syllabus.

In the meantime, here are a few tips, developed through trial and error, that have worked for me:

Make your students read clips and teach them to analyze published articles the way a reporter reads his or her peers. Did the lead work? How is the story organized? What were the sourcing issues? What would you have done differently?

Get them to write, especially outside of class, and try to help get their best work published. The prospect of getting a clip is a great incentive.

Don't try to teach them everything you know. You'll end up boring them and will only be able to cover a fraction of the material. Teach them how to gather information, introduce them to a few important tools, such as the Internet, government documents and FOIA, and set them loose.

Focus on your practical experience as a reporter. Your students would rather get insight into your daily life on the job than hear you pontificate on prior restraint and the people's right to know. Don't be reluctant to answer their questions about salaries and career paths.

Two years after nervously considering the idea for the first time, I've become an enthusiastic booster of teaching. I know several of my colleagues around the country are also teaching environmental reporting and enjoying it. I hope many more working journalists will join us.

Dan Fagin is the environment writer at Newsday and the co-author of Toxic Deception (1999, Common Courage Press). He can be reached at fagin@newsday.com.

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

What
constitutes
news?
How do
you
obtain and
evaluate
information?

Mom's in the tree again!

Life in the Treetops: Adventures of a Woman in Field Biology
By Margaret D. Lowman
Yale University Press, 219 pp., 1999

This book's frontispiece photo shows its smiling author spread-eagled in what looks like mid-air in the treetops of a Cameroon jungle, sun-flash blanking her glasses, sweat-curls on her brow.

The same buoyancy and indefatigable good humor pervade this autobiography, as Margaret Lowman recounts two decades slung between child-rearing, husband-tending and a driving passion for research.

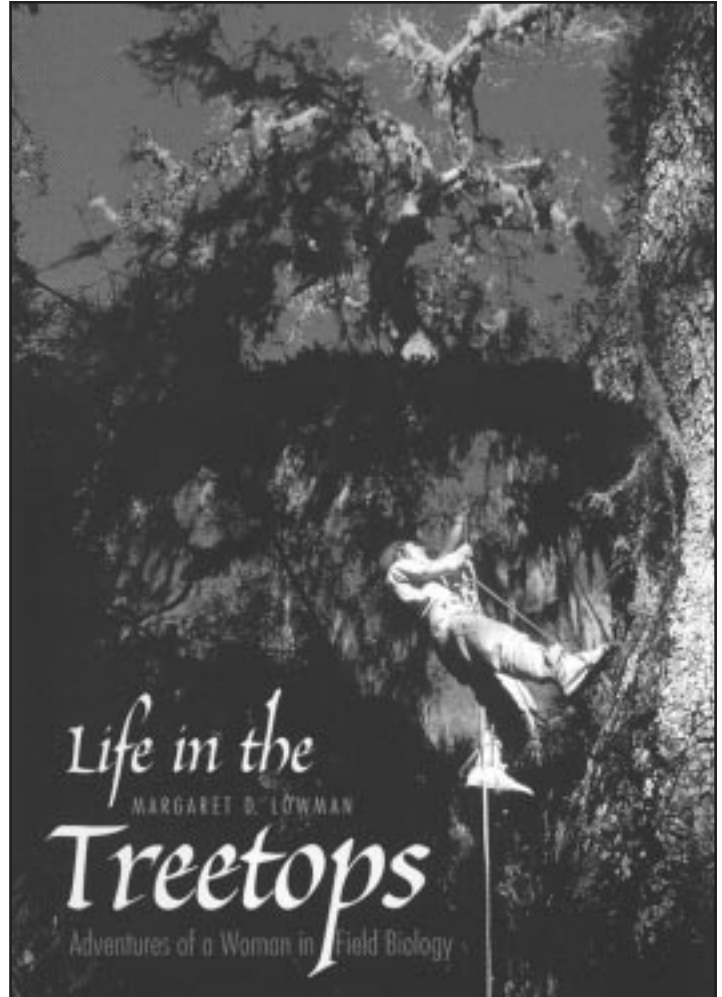
A renowned explorer of the ecology of leaves and leaf-chewing organisms amid the forest canopies of Australia, Belize, Cameroon and Massachusetts in the '90s, Lowman had also been during the '80s the mother of two infant boys, living on a remote Outback sheep station. Her mother-in-law was a near neighbor who counseled—echoing the rest of the community—more attention to cooking and ironing, and ridiculed trips to the library for research.

Lowman's journey back into full-time science and teaching and away from the marriage are the backbone of this rancor-free narrative. Its refrain, juggling motherhood and research, would have been easier with other women scientists as mentors, but there were few—usually none—around. (Male associates were generous, but often clueless.) The book itself serves as inspiration and mentoring for the next generation.

Life in the Treetops is striking for its modesty in several ways. No over-arching theories or claims are advanced about women in science or women in general. For instance, there are appealing descriptions and a couple of photos of the author and her young sons scouting for insects in the rainforest. Lowman has managed to integrate these roles with great success. There is, however, no list of tips for how to accomplish this feat. The story is personal but never confessional—more like an engaging string of vignettes—and Lowman delivers these with a scientist's bemused detachment.



Margaret D. Lowman



Her tales are told against a backdrop of recent developments in canopy research techniques and the rapid destruction of the world's rainforests. New story lines or data for environmental journalists are not much in evidence, with one important exception: *Life in the Treetops* is a vigorous reminder of the factors that determine how and whether women enter science. That story is under-reported and highly significant.

Margaret Lowman is now director of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida.

—Steve Nash

These and other books are available on SEJ's web site. Go to the home page and click on the "SEJ Store" link.

<http://www.sej.org>

If you have written or know of a book you'd like to see reviewed in *SEJournal*, contact Mark Neuzil, book review editor, at University of St. Thomas Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication, Mail #4249, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minn.

Brewing riches and poverty

Coffee adds new twist to world history lessons

Uncommon Grounds:

The History of Coffee and How it Transformed Our World

By Mark Pendergrast

Published by Basic Books

\$30 hardcover, 522 pages, 1999



Mark Pendergrast

Legend has it that coffee was discovered by an Ethiopian goatherd—or rather his goats, who in their caffeinated ecstasy refused to come quietly back to the fold.

During the next several centuries, wherever coffee appeared, people who imbibed the stuff joined the Ethiopian goats in revolt. Kings and despots were overthrown; the working class became politically active; literature proliferated; revolutionaries multiplied. Ultimately, jazz was born.

Sound far-fetched? *Uncommon Grounds* states that the beverage of choice before coffee was alcohol. People ate beer soup for breakfast. When coffee spread over the world, the world's populations opened their eyes.

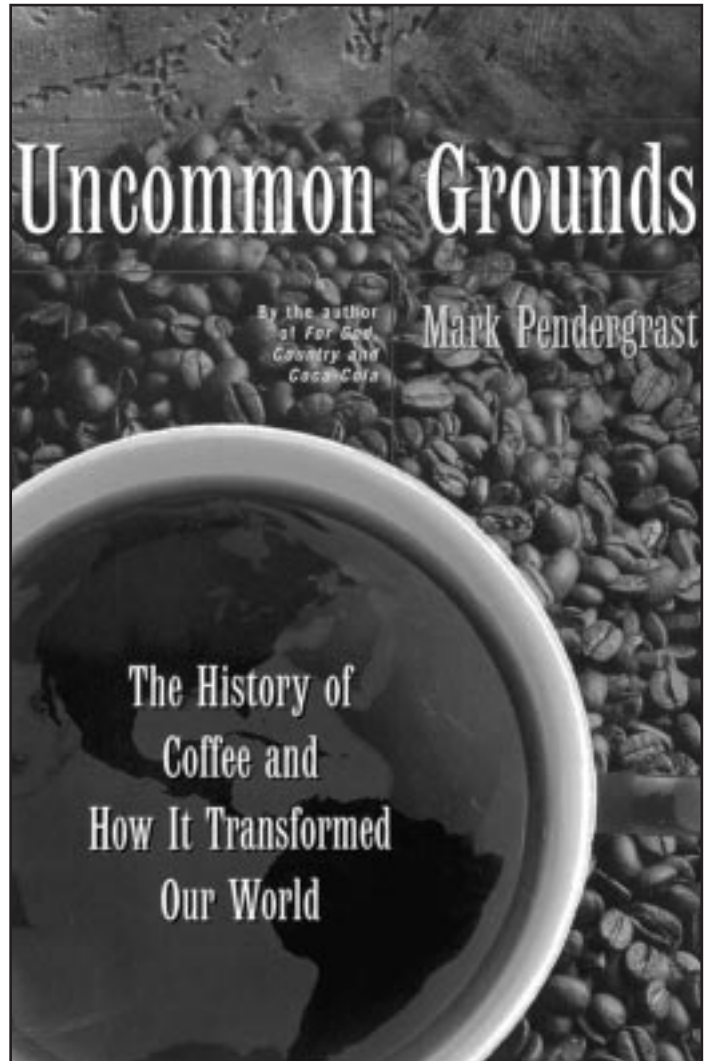
The real story in Pendergrast's compelling history, however, is about money and power. The first coffee trees in Ethiopia soon spread to cover every area where coffee-friendly climate allowed the berries to flourish, and soon indigenous populations were put to work, creating a class of workers who lived in extreme poverty—or, more often, as slaves.

Coffee plantations grew wealthy with increased exports until the market had more beans than the world could roast, grind, brew and swallow. Subsequently, a roller-coaster market ride ensued. Any journalist wanting to understand the forces that act upon the market will find a clear example in the ups and downs of coffee as documented in *Uncommon Grounds*.

The birth of advertising weaves a sub-plot through these pages. Competing roasters and sellers developed techniques consumers now know well: name recognition via slogans and jingles, coupons, glitzy packaging, assertions often having little to do with the truth and all to do with manipulating the consumer.

C.W. Post—a closet coffee drinker himself—engaged in an intense smear campaign against coffee in order to sell his grain-based beverage, Postum. Public relations departments sprang up from the torrents of C.W.'s assertions that coffee caused health problems, and within a few short years the PR industry came into its own.

If there is one weakness in *Uncommon Grounds*, it is that environmental aspects of coffee production surface almost as an afterthought. Socio-political developments, financial considerations, and advertising wars are studied throughout the book chronologically and meticulously, but much of coffee's environmental impact is missing.



While plantations obliterated Brazilian rainforest, for instance, little is mentioned about the effect on the world's climate or on ecosystem disruption. Pendergrast notes that rainforest takes centuries to regenerate, but detailed effects are missing. The inception of chemical farming was noted in passing, but again without description or detail.

A chapter toward the end dedicates a few pages to species extinction problems, but it appears that environmental issues were not part of Pendergrast's initial focus.

Considering that *Uncommon Grounds* is already a near-tome, integrating greater detail of coffee's environmental impacts could have made the book too intimidating to open. Those interested in a comprehensive environmental story should look elsewhere.

The book stands well on its other strengths, however. It's compelling reading, and a good solid education in finance and the world of advertising—and by the time you're done reading it, you should have within your grasp how to brew the perfect cup of coffee.

—Chris Rigel

Books by Members

MARCH

6-7 Winter Conference: Focusing on Critical Issues—Mercury, Toxics Release Inventory, and Air Toxics. St. Petersburg, Fla. This meeting, a specialty conference of the Air & Waste Management Association, will feature panel and roundtable discussions on topics ranging from emissions and controls to health impacts of major topical pollutants. Phone: (412) 232-3444 ext. 3137. Fax: (412) 232-3450. URL: <http://www.awma.org>.

7-9 Farming and Ranching for Profit, Stewardship, and Community. Portland, Ore. This meeting, sponsored by the Agriculture Department's Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, will feature sessions on irrigated and dryland cropping systems, livestock operations, eco-labeling, soil quality, biological pest control and methods to reduce farming's impacts on water quality and wildlife habitat. Phone: (530) 752-5987. Fax: (539) 754-8550. E-mail: kkeller@ucdavis.edu. URL: <http://wsare.usu.edu>.

13-16 Land Stewardship in the 21st Century: The contributions of watershed management. Tucson. This meeting will focus on programs to provide clean water, mitigate disasters and manage water use sustainably. Phone: (520) 621-7276. Fax: (520) 621-8801. E-mail: ffolpete@ag.arizona.edu. URL: <http://www.snr.arizona.edu/>.

15-18 Disinfection 2000: Disinfection of wastes in the new millennium. New Orleans. Sponsored by the Water Environment Federation, this meeting will look at methods for inactivating spores, oocysts, eggs and other microbial forms in wastewater effluent, urban and agricultural run off, aquaculture, sewer overflows, manures, biosolids, compost and air streams from waste-treatment facilities. Phone: (800) 666-0206. Fax: (703) 684-2492. URL: <http://www.wef.org/Weftec/Call For Abstracts/disinfection2000.htm>.

16-19 The Past and Promise of Environmental History. Tacoma, Wash. This annual meeting of the American Society for Environmental History will be reviewing the role of human activity in shaping and changing the natural environment over time. Phone: (360) 650-3455. E-mail: smar4@cc.wvu.edu. URL: <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~aseh/2000aseh.htm>.

20-23 West Coast Conference on Contaminated Soils and Water. San Diego. This meeting will cover such topics as MTBE remediation, problems associated with manufactured gas plants, the fate of hydrocarbons in the environment, the role of growing plants in cleaning up pollutants, forensic techniques to identify polluters and growing concern over perchlorates. Phone: (413) 549-5170. E-mail: heather@aehs.com. URL: <http://www.aehs.com/wcc2000web/wchomepage2000.html>.

25 Fifth International Wildlife Law Conference. Washington, D.C. Phone: (650) 703-3280. Fax: (801) 838-4710. E-mail: asilwildlife@pacbell.net. URL: <http://www.eelink.net/~asilwildlife>.

27-28 Sustainability in the WTO Millennium Round and Beyond. London, England. What are the environmental, consumer and development concerns about different approaches to sustainable development? How will climate-change concerns affect trade? Are there any win-win scenarios in agriculture and fisheries development? What's the reasonable role of science and "precaution" in trade issues, including genetically modified foods? This conference, sponsored by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, pledges to be "the first major opportunity for a comprehensive discussion of these issues after Seattle." Phone: (44)171-957-5700. Fax: (44)171-957-5710. E-mail: gwright@riia.org. URL: <http://www.riia.org>.

APRIL

3-5 Monitoring for Ecosystem Health. Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. This conference plans to feature sessions on the issues, technologies and challenges of monitoring the health of natural ecosystems. Phone: (306) 787-5852. Fax: (306) 787-0024. E-mail: monitoring.erm@govmail.gov.sk.ca. URL: <http://www.serm.gov.sk.ca/ecosystem/monitoringconference/index.php3>.

4-6 HAZMAT 2000 Spills Prevention Conference. St. Louis, Mo. The HAZMAT 2000 Spills Prevention Conference provides an opportunity for communities, industry, states and nations to discuss policies and tools that foster hazardous material accident prevention, preparedness, and response activities. Phone: (703) 934-3760. Fax: (703) 934-3740. E-mail: hazmat2000@nrt.org. URL: <http://www.nrt.org/hazmat2000>.

6-8 Bison: The Past, Present, and Future of the Great Plains. Lincoln, Neb. The Center for Great Plains Studies will host a conference on the role of bison as good, a commercial product, a spiritual force, and an active part of the ecology of the Great Plains. Phone: (402) 472-3082. Fax: (402) 472-0463. E-mail: cgps@unlinfo.unl.edu. URL: <http://www.unl.edu/plains/2000symp.htm>.

9-12 International Symposium on Integrated Water Resources Management. Davis, Calif. Sponsored by the University of California and International Association of Hydrological Sciences, this conference will address techniques for sustainably managing water supplies, preparing for droughts, floods and other extreme conditions, and the protection of aquatic ecosystems. Phone: (530) 752-0684. Fax: (520) 752-5262. E-mail: mamarino@ucdavis.edu. URL: http://www.cevs.ucdavis.edu/ces_pages/Conf.cfm?EventID.

JOURNALISM AWARDS

Deadline to submit: March 15. **Marine Biological Institute.** A handful of working journalists will be selected to participate in one of two intensive week-long, hands-on courses at the Marine Biological Institute in Woods Hole from June 2-11. Some fellows may remain for another 3 to 7 weeks of field research with ecologists or go to lectures and take course work in biological areas. It's a chance to step into a scientists' shoes and under-

stand their nitty gritty world. At least one additional fellowship will be awarded to a reporter wishing to participate in Arctic ecosystems research on the North Slope of Alaska. Other opportunities may become available at fields sites in Brazil or Sweden. E-mail: pclapp@mbi.edu.

For a more extended calendar of events, please visit

<http://www.sej.org>

Deadline to submit: April 15: **Collier Forest History Journalism Award**, presented by the Forest History Society annually for the best newspaper or general circulation magazine article about forest and conservation history. Limited-edition woodcut by California artist Vincent Perez and travel expenses to the annual awards ceremony. Submissions may be made by journalists or their editors. Articles must have been published during 1999. Forest History Society, 701 Vickers Avenue, Durham, N.C. 27701. (919) 682-9319 Fax:(919) 682-2349; URL: <http://www.libduke.edu/forest>.

Deadline to submit: April 20. **Robert L. Kozik Award for Environmental Reporting**. For excellence in environmental reporting on a local, national or international level. All magazine, newspaper, radio and television entries compete for a single \$1,000 prize. Enter work broadcast or published in 1999. National Press Club, 529 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20045; (202) 662-8744; Fax: 662-7512; URL: <http://npc.press.org>.

Deadline to submit: May 1. **Radio and Television News Directors Foundation** will give cash awards to beginning journalists who are employed in radio or television journalism and have 10 years or less experience in the field. The Michelle Clark Fellowship is given to a promising minority applicants. Environment and Science Reporting Fellowship is awarded to a reporter or producer to help him or her cover stories on environment or science issues. Jaque I. Minnotte Health Reporting Fellowship is awarded to applicants for excellent health or medical coverage. Dani Browne, RTNDF, 1000 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 615, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 659-6510; fax:(202)223-4007; E-mail:danib@rtnf.org. URL: <http://www.rtnf.org>.

Deadline to submit: July 15. **Rita M. Ritzke Memorial Fellowship for Broadcast Journalists Covering the Environment and Health**, for a broadcast journalist with a demonstrated interest in coverage of environmental or environmental health issues to be awarded a \$1,000 fellowship to be used for attending training seminars, university courses, or for defraying expenses on special reporting projects. Ritzke Fellowships, SEJ, P.O. Box 27280, Philadelphia, PA 19118; E-mail: sej@sej.org; URL: <http://www.sej.org>.

Deadline to submit: August 2000. **The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)** invites journalists to participate in one of more than 25 fellowships hosted by colleges and universities around the world. Categories of study include environment, science and technology. Fellowships are available to journalists at newspapers and magazines with circulations of more than 200,000 and radio and TV stations in major media markets. Contact: Steven Weiss, National Media Fellowship Program, CASE, 1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC, 20005; (202) 328-5980; Fax: (202) 387-4973. Email: weiss@case.org; URL: <http://www.case.org>.

Deadline to submit: October 5. **Natural Resources Defense Council** annual award to the author of a single newspaper or magazine article, or series of articles, that make an exceptional contribution to public understanding of contemporary environmental issues. Entries must be initially published in the U.S. between Oct. 1, 1999 and Sept. 30, 2000. Award and \$5,000 prize will be presented at NRDC's Annual Meeting, New York City, Dec. 2000. Peggy Alevrontas, *Amicus Journal*, 40 W. 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011; (212) 727-4504 Fax: (212) 727-1773.

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Democrats...(from page 1)

increasingly tout their environmental credentials as they campaign in such environmental strongholds as California and New York. For example, Gore recently endorsed two California ballot initiatives that would provide \$4 billion for open space and coastal protection and river restoration in the state.

"In a place like California, there's a real litmus test on the environment that the candidates have to pass," said Deb Callahan, president of the League of Conservation Voters.

According to public opinion polls, voters perceive Gore to be the stronger environmental advocate. But the League of Conservation Voters, the political arm of the national environmental community, indicates that Bradley has a slightly greener record. Bradley voted with the environmental community 84 percent of the time during his 18 years in Congress; Gore sided with the greens for 64 percent of the votes during his 16-year tenure, according to candidate profiles released in January by the League.

And Bradley—not Gore—won the endorsement of Friends of the Earth, a small environmental political action committee based in Washington. The group's president, Brent Blackwelder, explained the thinking behind the September endorsement: "One of the things that bothered us about Gore's record is that although his rhetoric is really good and the knowledge is there, the follow-through is missing," he said. "Bradley had a superior record of introducing and passing environmental legislation. Gore passed practically nothing."

When the environment has emerged in the Democratic contest, Bradley and Gore have taken almost identical positions. In October, Gore said that, if elected president, he would ban all new offshore oil and gas drilling along the California and Florida coasts. Bradley went further, criticizing Gore for not preventing the Clinton Administration from allowing drilling along the coasts of California and Florida.

The environment is a tricky political issue for Gore. The Al Gore who authored *Earth in the Balance* waxes poetically about his green vision of the future and embraces his past environmental advocacy. But Gore the cautious politician has gone to Wall Street to assure business leaders that he won't jeopardize the nation's economic well-being. Balancing the two political philosophies has been a challenge for Gore throughout the Clinton-Gore administration.

Since the presidential campaign began, Gore-the-politico has been in the driver's seat, navigating a middle-of-the-road approach to green issues. He was the lead spokesman when the administration proposed a new \$30 million program to restore wetlands and a \$50 million initiative to improve water quality in the Great Lakes. However, Gore has distanced himself from several more controversial issues. He's refused to take a stand on whether the federal government should breach four dams on Washington state's Snake River to prevent local salmon populations from going extinct. Environmental activists want the Feds to tear down the dams; the businesses that have grown up around the dams oppose breaching. (See story, page 1.) In November, Gore said that, if elected, he'd hold a salmon summit to settle the matter, but environmental advocates are pushing for more immediate action.

Gore's attempts to balance business and environmental interests have left him vulnerable to attack from both sides. Some environmental activists have become disillusioned by Gore. They note, for example, that during the 1992 campaign, Clinton and Gore vowed to force car manufacturers to produce dramatically more efficient vehicles. During their eight years in office, however, national fuel efficiency has stagnated. One disgruntled member of the Sierra Club board of directors went

so far as to describe Gore's environmental record as "tawdry" in an internal memo.

Gore has come under increased criticism because of his family's relationship to Occidental Petroleum. When Gore's father died in 1998, he owned \$500,000 worth of stock in the company. As of May 1999, the stock was still owned by the estate, for which the vice president is the executor. According to Charles Lewis, executive director of the Center for Public Integrity, a nonpartisan watchdog group, Gore's father owned the stock in 1997 when the Clinton Administration sold Occidental the Elk Hills petroleum reserve in California, which consists of 47,000 oil-rich acres. By buying that land, Occidental tripled its domestic oil reserves and enriched company stockholders—including Gore's father. Lewis's book, *The Buying of the President 2000*, reports that Occidental contributed more than \$470,000 in soft money to various Democratic committees and causes since the summer of 1992 when Gore became part of the Democratic ticket. Gore directly

According to Charles Lewis, executive director of the Center for Public Integrity, a nonpartisan watchdog group, Occidental contributed more than \$470,000 in soft money to Democratic committees and causes since the summer of 1992 when Gore became part of the Democratic ticket. Gore directly received \$35,550 in Occidental campaign contributions during that period, according to Lewis.

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Days before the New Hampshire primary, Gore's waffling came back to haunt him when a group of Ohio environmental

activists threatened to stage a sit-in at his Manchester headquarters. The incident stemmed from a 1992 campaign promise Gore made to block operation of a hazardous waste incinerator built next to an elementary school in East Liverpool, Ohio. Before Gore was sworn in as vice president, however, the outgoing Bush Administration approved the incinerator's operating permit. Now the permit is up for renewal, and the Ohio activists want Gore to shut the place down.

The Ohio protesters scrapped their plans for civil disobedience on the eve of the New Hampshire primary when White House officials intervened, promising an independent investigation into the incinerator's potential pollution problems. Nonetheless, the protesters have continued to dog Gore at his campaign stops, demanding that he meet with them before the March 7 primaries.

At the other extreme of the political spectrum, some business leaders and Republicans have disparaged Gore as a left-wing radical. During a Jan. 25 appearance on CNN's Talk Back, Republican National Committee chairman Jim Nicholson argued that Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, espouses "an extreme, no-growth" philosophy of government. In speeches in Michigan and other industrial areas, Nicholson charged that the 1997 United Nations treaty to curb global warming, which Gore supports, would cause energy prices to skyrocket and put 2 million American out of work.

In contrast, Bradley doesn't carry the same baggage as Gore and has been able to lay out some of his environmental priorities without frightening corporate America. In January, Bradley unveiled a \$125 billion tax reform plan that, among other things, would reduce subsidies that he said encourage environmentally harmful business practices. Specifically, Bradley said the country could save \$2 billion over 10 years by cutting federal subsidies that now go to mining companies and ranchers who use public lands and by eliminating the tax deductions enjoyed by oil and gas producers.

Bradley has also played to the environmental community by throwing a few well-aimed elbows at Gore's environmental record. At an October League of Conservation Voters dinner in Manhattan, Bradley promised to clean up air pollution from cars and electric power plants.

"I'm betting that the American public is prepared for some straight talk about the challenges that we face," he said. "I think it's time to be prudent and stop talking about taking tons [of pollution] out of the atmosphere, and start actually taking tons out of the atmosphere."

As the March 7 primary approaches, Bradley intends to publicize his environmental credentials, his staff said. "As people get to know Bill Bradley, they will see that he's the candidate who stands for the environment," said Kristen Ludecke, deputy press secretary for the Bradley campaign. "It will be clear by the end of this four-week period that Gore's administration has been big on promises and short on delivering." The environmental activists are also stepping up their efforts to focus attention on local environmental problems in the primary states. Callahan said the league is moving activists to South Carolina and hopes to get the Republican candidates to address regional water pollution problems caused by the massive hog farm operations in that state.

Green politics could take center stage once the Democratic and Republican candidates are chosen, argued political consultant Mark Melman, an informal adviser to the Gore campaign. "I think it's much more a general election issue than a primary issue," he said. If the November election is a contest between Texas Republican Gov. George W. Bush and Gore, "you're going to see Al Gore put environment at the center of his campaign," Melman predicted. "It's going to be part of his overall positive message defining who he is and what he's about."

The Democrats have already begun to take potshots at Bush's environmental legacy in Texas. In November, Gore charged that 85 percent of Bush's campaign funds have come from corporate polluters. In addition, the Sierra Club is running ads in the primary states reminding voters that, under Bush's leadership, Houston has replaced Los Angeles as the nation's smoggiest city. "It's interesting that Bush did poorly among independent voters against [Republican Sen. John] McCain in New Hampshire, because those are exactly

the kind of voters for whom the environment matters," said Weiss of the Sierra Club.

If the November presidential race isn't between Bush and Gore, however, the environment may play a less dramatic role in the campaign. Bradley's team said he would stress his environmental credentials in a general election race. But the environment hasn't been a signature issue for Bradley throughout his political career. He's also less likely than Gore to be attacked by the Republicans as an environmental extremist.

If McCain gets the Republican nomination, the environmentalists are certain to attack his congressional record. McCain voted with the greens only 20 percent of the time during his 16 years in Congress, according to the League of Conservation Voters. On the other hand, McCain has been able to find common ground with the environmental community, most notably campaign finance reform. "At one of our Earth Day events last year, McCain said that he believes there is no issue that's more influenced by the corrupting effects of money and politics than the environment," League of Conservation Voters' Callahan said.

So far, however, the environmental community and the Democrats have been content to portray the environment as a black and white, Republican vs. Democrat issue. "There's not a lot of difference between Bush and McCain—they're both bad," Melman said. "And Bradley-Gore are both good."

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.

Dams...(from page 1)

Hoptowit, a Pocatello, Idaho, grandmother, and member of the Umatilla tribe of Oregon. When I caught up with her near Arlington, Ore., in September, she was wearing yellow rubber overalls, lifting a 17-pound chinook salmon she had pulled out of a gill net on the Columbia River only minutes before.

"It's \$2 a pound but I'll give it to you for \$30," she told Curtis Floyd of Molalla, Ore. "If you'll clean it for me," he said. Using a borrowed knife she cleaned the fish and completed the transaction, continuing a tradition Indians have carried out for thousands of years, catching and trading salmon from the Columbia River.

Hoptowit, a member of the Yakima Nation, returns every year in late August through mid-September to the desolate landing at Blalock Canyon, 30 miles east of The Dalles, Ore., for the annual fall chinook run. It's the only time of the year when members of four Columbia River tribes, the Yakima, the Nez Perce, the Umatilla and Warms Springs, are allowed to place gill nets into the river to catch salmon and steelhead as the fish make their way upriver to spawn. Today, the fishing is a tradition as important to them as the annual fall cattle roundup is to western ranchers.

"It's just like Christmas; it comes every year," she said. When white people settled the Pacific Northwest, eight million to 16 million salmon left the Pacific to swim up the Columbia to spawn. More than 100 years of over-fishing, dam building, habitat destruction and pollution have greatly reduced the runs. Several types of salmon, such as the Snake River coho, are extinct.

The clash of cultures—and the values of each—is as important to the story of salmon as science and economics. This came home to me July 2, when I covered the breaching of the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Maine. On one side of the river were political leaders from both Republican and Democratic parties along with local and national environmental groups celebrating what they considered an historic event.

The destruction of the Edwards Dam was the first time the federal government had ordered a dam removed against the will of its owner. The removal of the 160-year-old dam marks the reversal of national policies to harness rivers for human use and the beginning of a new era of river restoration.

On the other side of the river were the men and women of Augusta, Maine, who grew up working in the textile mill the dam once powered. They weren't celebrating. Many were in tears watching the river wash away the last vestiges of the way of life they thought would last forever.

Environmental reporters will find a wealth of human-interest stories by examining the cultures that both promote environmental action or are affected by it. Since the salmon issue in the Pacific Northwest affects every one of the more than nine million people who live in the 260,000 square mile Columbia River watershed, I still have many stories to tell.

These stories are important first and foremost because they are interesting news, important elements of the overall story. But they also tell important factors in the policy debates. Federal officials are to decide this year whether to recommend to Congress breaching of the four Snake dams or trying a suite of other measures to save steelhead and salmon. Breaching so far

has captured no political support in the Pacific Northwest, in part because of its threat to communities like Vista Hermosa and Lewiston, Idaho, linked to the Pacific by a 500-mile waterway.

The alternatives to breaching dams are equally distasteful to other communities in parts of the Northwest.

A recently released federal science paper suggests salmon can be saved without breaching dams. But it could require drying

up hundreds of thousands of acres in southern Idaho, threatening an irrigation farming culture that sustains rural Idaho. It also could mean ending sport fishing for steelhead that sustains little fishing villages along the Columbia and across central Idaho. Furthermore, the plan could require sharply cutting tribal fishing so important to Hoptowit and Indians across the Northwest, and could stop the dredging of the Columbia River's estuary that makes shipping into Portland, Ore., possible.

Salmon are themselves a cultural and a natural icon of the wild character of the Pacific Northwest—an icon that still generates 126 tens of millions of dollars from sport and commercial fishing. The four Snake River dams in Washington produce 5 percent of the region's electric power and allow shippers to barge wheat and other goods from Lewiston to the Pacific Ocean.

Obscured by the debates over economics, culture and politics is the central truth about salmon restoration in the Pacific Northwest: The Endangered Species Act requires that they be saved. Some day the issue will wind up in the hands of a federal judge, who will have no choice but to order federal agencies to take whatever means are within his power to restore the salmon to self-sustaining numbers.

Only Congress or the rarely convened Endangered Species Committee can choose to allow a species to become extinct. Even the Republican-controlled 1995 Congress couldn't change the law's absolute mandate. Experts disagree about how much



Photo courtesy of AMERICAN RIVERS

Edwards Dam was first to be removed against the owner's will

Cover Story

needs to be done to restore 12 endangered stocks of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin. However, few doubt the mandate of the Endangered Species Act will continue to force a difficult transition in the lives of the people of the Pacific Northwest.

George W. Bush has already said he won't breach dams on the Snake River to save salmon and steelhead. Other presidential hopefuls have been less specific.

However, as Bush's father and powerful Northwest leaders like former Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon learned a decade ago with the spotted owl, they may not have the power to make the choice. A federal judge in 1995 ordered the Clinton administration to come up with a long-term plan to save salmon by 1999. Federal officials have missed that deadline and now say their decision will come in 2000, at which point they also will face legal hurdles beyond the Endangered Species Act.

There are a myriad of other federal environmental laws, from the Clean Water Act, which requires clean cool rivers, to the Northwest Power Act of 1980, which promised that fish and wildlife would get "equitable" treatment with the power needs of the Pacific Northwest.

There is also the 1855 treaty between Northwest Indian tribes and the United States, which reserved the right of the tribes to fish in the Columbia and its tributaries and made the federal government the trustee of these rights. Tribal leaders and

many legal experts say that requires the federal government to go further than the Endangered Species Act and ensure harvestable numbers of salmon.

The only way the federal government or the Northwest states are going to avoid letting the courts lead on this issue is to put together a plan that will stand up to scientific scrutiny and pass legal muster.

In other words, they have to make the tough calls.

That said, honoring the hopes and aspirations of people like Broetje and Hoptowit is just as important to saving salmon as the science and the law.

I've covered this issued for more than a decade, following political debates, salmon summits and countless hearings and environmental reviews. Only now are the first serious discussions beginning on both sides of the debates based on the idea of mutual respect for science, law and culture.

I'm looking forward to covering solutions—not just conflicts.

Rocky Barker is environment reporter at the Idaho Statesman and author of Saving All the Parts: Reconciling Economics and the Endangered Species Act. You can contact him at (208) 377-6484 or rbarker@boise.gannett.com. His Web site is <http://www.webpak.net/~rbarker>

New Members

New members from 11/10/99—2/11/00

CALIFORNIA

- Seema Mehta (Active), *Los Angeles Times*, Orange County Edition, Costa Mesa
- Lizette Wilson (Active), *Marin Independent Journal*, Orinda

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- David Case (Active), *Tompaine.Com*,
- Lucinda Fleeson (Associate), International Center For Journalists,
- Samantha Levine (Active), *Kiplinger Washington Editors*, *Kiplinger Letter*
- Curtis Runyan (Associate), *Worldwatch Institute*, *Worldwatch Magazine*

FLORIDA

- Tom Bayles (Active), *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, Sarasota

GEORGIA

- Stephanie Siegel (Active), CNN Interactive, Decatur
- Paul Thacker (Associate), freelancer, Atlanta

MASSACHUSETTS

- Rob Jagodzinski (Academic), University of Massachusetts, Amherst,
- David Talbot (Active), *Boston Herald*, Reading
- Dexter Zile (Active), freelancer, Dedham

MARYLAND

- Zachary Hoskins (Associate), Izaak Walton League Of America, *Outdoor America*, Gaithersburg

MAINE

- Claude V. Z. Morgan (Associate), freelancer, Portland

MICHIGAN

- Sally Farhat (Active), *Detroit Free Press*, Oakland County Bureau, Royal Oak

MISSOURI

- Nathan Byrne (Academic), University of Missouri-Columbia, St. Joseph

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- Glenn Scherer (Associate), Word & Image, Highland Lakes

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- Shelley Smithson (Active), *Farmington Daily Times*, Farmington

NEW YORK

- Rachel Clark (Active), freelancer, Ithaca

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- Cristen Herbold (Active), WDTN-Ch 2, Weather Department, Dayton

OKLAHOMA

- Elizabeth Hassrick (Academic), University of Oklahoma Department of Journalism, Norman

PENNSYLVANIA

- Cheryl Long (Active), Rodale Press, *Organic Gardening*, Emmaus
- Erik Schwartz (Active), *The Mercury*, Pottstown

TEXAS

- Josh Harkinson (Academic), *E Magazine*, Dallas
- Yolanda Lukaszewski (Academic), Texas A&M University Department of Journalism, College Station

UTAH

- Tiffany Zachry (Academic), Utah State University Communications Dept. and Environmental Technologies Dept., Millville

VIRGINIA

- Phil Bailey (Associate), Earth System Organization, Charlottesville
- Michael Knapik (Active), The McGraw Hill Companies, *Inside NRC* and *Nuclear Fuel*, Arlington

VERMONT

- Mark Pendergrast (Active), author, Essex Junction

UKRAINE

- Dn Valeriy Kozak (Active), *Ueja Kryvbas-Inform*, Kryvyi Rik

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 or (215) 836-9970.

Alabama—Des Keller, *Progressive Farmer*, dkeller@progressivefarmer.com, (205) 877-6406

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

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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, c_hogue@acs.org

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

Indiana—See Ohio

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

Kentucky—Jim Bruggers, *Louisville Courier Journal*, ecowriter@aol.com

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

Maine—vacant

Maryland—See Delaware

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Mississippi—Patrick Peterson, *WXXV-TV Fox 25*, (228) 832-2525, ppetefox@aol.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—vacant

New Jersey—Bruno Tedeschi, *The Record*, clespy@intac.com, (609) 292-5159

New Mexico—See Arizona

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

North Carolina—James Eli Shiffer, *The News & Observer*, jshiffer@nando.com, (919) 836-5701

North Dakota—See Minnesota

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East—Chris Rigel, SEJ, (215) 836-9970, rigel@voicenet.com

Puerto Rico/Caribbean Islands—Vacant

Rhode Island—See Connecticut

South Carolina—Bob Montgomery, *The Greenville News*, (864) 298-4295, bmontgom@greenvillenews.com

South Dakota—See Minnesota

Tennessee—See North Georgia

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

Wyoming—See Washington

Canada—Shawn Thompson, University College of the Cariboo, sthompson@cariboo.bc.ca, (250) 371-5516

ARIZONA

► President Clinton created two new national monuments in Arizona in January, a move that brought the usual applause from environmentalists and jibes from ranchers, developers and Arizona Gov. Jane Hull. Hull, who opposed what she called “unilateral federal action” by Clinton, refused to attend the signing ceremony at the Grand Canyon, according to a Jan. 12 story in *The Arizona Republic* by reporter Jerry Kammer. In a companion story, reporter Kathleen Inglely accompanied Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on a hike through part of the new 71,000-acre Agua Fria National Monument. For details, contact Kammer at jerry.kammer@arizonarepublic.com and Inglely at kathleen.inglely@arizonarepublic.com or (602) 441-8171.

► Arizona Governor Jane Hull's environmental policies and practices were examined in an in-depth article by *Phoenix New Times*' political writer Amy Silverman. The Nov. 11 story quoted environmental lobbyists who have not been able to get Hull to meet with them over significant issues. The article also looked at the state environmental protection agency's performance under Hull, who bills herself as a champion of the environment. For more information, contact Silverman at (602) 229-8443 or amy.silverman@newtimes.com.

► U.S. Representative John Kolbe (R-Tucson) wants to protect more than 200,000 acres in southwest Arizona in a conservation area, but the Las Cienegas proposal has put him at odds with the Clinton administration which is considering a more restrictive designation as a national monument. The Nov. 26 story in the *Arizona Daily Star* by reporter Tony Davis discusses the political backdrop; the dispute is part of a broader conflict between Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Western Republicans over management of public lands. Contact Davis at (520) 573-4220.

► Residents of Oracle, a small town near Tucson that is home to Biosphere II, are concerned over possible toxic fallout from a decades-old landfill that contains low-level radioactive waste, among other things. *Arizona Republic* reporter Kathleen Ingleby visited the town for a Oct. 18 piece on the uproar over the dump site, once owned and operated by the University of Arizona. For information, contact Ingleby at (602) 444-8171 or kathleen.ingleby@arizonarepublic.com.

CALIFORNIA

► A San Luis Obispo *New Times* story about electric deregulation in California says that the state's nuclear plants will soon lose their subsidies and have to compete with cheaper, natural gas-fired generation. Windmills are even cheaper than nukes these days. The \$5.5 billion Diablo Canyon nuclear plant owned by Pacific Gas & Electric could be facing the loss of subsidies as early as this summer. At that point, either management would have to shut down the

plant or start pumping in about \$160 million per year of shareholder money just to keep it on line. It now costs one-third more to operate than competing generation. The story may be picked up at www.alternet.org. For details, contact J.A. Savage at honest@compuserve.com or (510) 534-9109.

COLORADO

► An unprecedented analysis of a century's worth of rain and snowfall records suggests Colorado may be in for a long drought—perhaps one reminiscent of the Dust Bowl years. Climate researchers at Colorado State University say a dry period may be in the offing because the state is experiencing a nearly 20-year wet period, the second-longest wet stretch in recorded state history. Colorado's only comparable wet period, a 25-year stretch at the beginning of the 20th century, was followed by the decade-long Dust Bowl years during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the longest drought in state history. Contact Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, at toddh@gazette.com or (719) 636-0285.

► The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Service has agreed with environmental groups that the black-tailed prairie dog—visible in pockets throughout much of Colorado's eastern plains—needs protection, but recently stopped short of listing it as a threatened species, saying the agency has too many other plants and animals that are of higher priority. Even so, the decision is a victory for environmentalists, who say urban sprawl, eradication campaigns and disease threaten the critter that makes up a key part of prairie grassland ecosystems. Though several Western states have agreed to study ways to better protect the prairie dog, Colorado has been reluctant. Recently, Colorado officials even threatened the federal government with legal action if it listed the animal, though the state appears to have cooled off since. Contact Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, at toddh@gazette.com or (719) 636-0285.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► The Army Corps of Engineers has spent billions over decades to reshape

rivers such as the Missouri to attract barges, but the agency is now starting to undo its work in many areas where commercial boat traffic is extremely light. *Washington Post* staff writer Michael Grunwald examined the corps effort to recast itself as an eco-friendly agency in a two-part series Jan. 9-10. The economic benefits of dechannelized rivers, which include recreational uses and ecological protection, far outweigh those of navigation, Grunwald found. The series is available through <http://search.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/searches/mainsrch.htm>.

► Scientific work in Antarctica could be hampered in 2000 by a lawsuit over the award of a \$1.2 billion 10-year contract to operate the U.S. research stations there, according to a Jan. 10 report in *Chemical & Engineering News*. William Schulz reports that the company that held the National Science Foundation contract for the past decade, but lost out to another firm in Nov. 1999, is protesting the award in federal court. The company also is refusing to turn over information about operation of the stations to the new contractor. Schulz may be reached at (202) 872-4474.

► A story highlighting presidential candidates' murkier connections was posted Jan. 21 at salon.com's "Politics 2000" Web site. Written by Mark Hertsgaard (*Earth Odyssey: Around the World in Search of Our Environmental Future*), the story spotlights *The Buying of the President 2000*, a new book by Charles Lewis, of the Center for Public Integrity. The book includes descriptions about Vice President Al Gore's family affair with Occidental Petroleum, Bush's profitable Harvard connections, and, according to the Web site sub-head, "other stories you're not likely to read about." The story can be accessed at <http://www.salon.com/politics2000>. Contact Hertsgaard at (415) 561-6226.

FLORIDA

► On Nov. 9, *Folio Weekly* reported on a landmark settlement that B.E.A.K.S. (Bird Emergency Aid and Care Sanctuary) concluded with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in late October. The settlement requires

the agency to study the effects of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF), a commonly-used fire-fighting foam that B.E.A.K.S.'s founder, Cindy Mosling, believes caused the deaths of hundreds of brown pelicans beginning in 1993. The agreement comes after years of resistance from DEP officials, who claimed the foam did not need to be tested for toxicity. Contact Anne Schindler, themail@folioweekly.com or Deborah Hoag, hoagd@aol.com.

► The *Florida Times-Union* reported on Jan. 8 that a state administrative judge has ruled that a developer must build special tunnels so bears and other wildlife can cross roads at a 1,346-acre golf course community project planned on the Intracoastal Waterway. This is the first time that type of crossing has been required in Northeast Florida, where a declining number of Florida black bears live in swamps and thick forests. Contact Steve Patterson at (904) 359-4280.

► The *Times-Union* reported on Dec. 9 that the St. Johns River Water Management District will pay \$20.1 million to buy 21,931 acres of environmentally significant swamp and wetlands in the fastest growing area of St. Johns County. The proposal hinges on St. Johns County commissioners agreeing to transfer the development rights from parts of Twelve Mile Swamp in the deal to the land still retained by the owner, the W.W. Cummer Trust. Contact Charles Cribner, staff writer at (904) 359-4280.

GEORGIA

► On Dec. 1, the state's Department of Natural Resources Board approved a state improvement plan for lowering ground-level ozone in the metro Atlanta region. Board members removed wording that would have required strict standards for new industry in a 45-county region following contention from outlying rural counties that were included. The state's Environmental Protection Division responsible for the plan is now considering a summer burn ban to make up for the industry removal and hopes to submit a plan by July. The story was reported in numerous papers across the state. For more information, contact Christopher Schwarzen, *Macon*

Telegraph, at (912) 744-4213 or cschwarzen@macontel.com.

► Atlanta Gas Light Co. continues cleanup of former manufactured gas plants throughout Georgia. Work is to have begun at the end of January in Macon to remove benzo(a)pyrene and lead remnants from soil in a small section of Macon's Central City Park. AGLC is also completing sampling of its old site near the park and taking water samples at the bed of the Ocmulgee River in Macon. AGLC, along with Georgia Power which co-owned some of the former MGPs, has been working since 1991 to remediate hazardous waste found at these sites in Georgia. This story has been ongoing in the *Macon Telegraph*. For more information, contact Christopher Schwarzen at cschwarzen@macontel.com or (912) 744-4213.

► Thirteen years after a University of Georgia study urged that 20 percent of the state's undeveloped land be protected from bulldozers, a panel appointed by Gov. Roy Barnes is trying to make that goal a reality. The panel recommended that one out of every five acres of Georgia's land be set aside as green space. Barnes will introduce his green-space policy to the state legislature in early 2000. It's a crucial issue in Georgia, where development is eating up 500 acres per day across the state. Charles Seabrook reported this story in the Jan. 3 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. His number is (404) 526-5375.

► The *Times* of Gainesville produced a comprehensive Sunday package Jan. 16 on the changing biodiversity of northeast Georgia. It included a main bar on endangered species; sidebars on invasive/exotic species and the status of the federal Endangered Species Act; a chart listing all of the region's protected plant and animal species; and a full-page color poster designed for educational use. Debbie Gilbert was the reporter and coordinator of the project. She can be reached at (770) 532-1234, ext. 254.

LOUISIANA

► The *Baton Rouge* (La.) *Advocate*

ran a five-part series looking at coastal restoration efforts. The state loses about 25 percent of its coastal wetlands each year, which support a \$1 billion fishery and protect the infrastructure for delivery of 17 percent of the nation's oil and 25 percent its natural gas production. The series looked at how the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (a joint federal-state program) spent more than \$300 million for restoration projects. It also looked at issues that stand in the way of restoration. The series ran Nov. 7-11, each day as a stand-alone special section. The task force changed how it selects its projects in January. Contact Mike Dunne at (225) 388-0301 or mdunne@theadvocate.com or see: <http://theadvocate.com/specials/coast/default.asp>.

MAINE

► Maine Public Radio reported in December on the mounting concern among nearby residents in Poland, Maine, over the surging expansion of Poland Spring, the 150-year old company that produces America's top-selling bottled water. The story by reporter Susan Chisholm took up the larger issue of regulating water quantity in the East, where little regulation exists. The residents say the company's increasing withdrawals from underground aquifers—pumping that has tripled since 1993—may be causing problems with silt, taste, and odor in their well water. Contact Susan Chisholm, Maine Public Radio, (207) 874-6570.

MARYLAND

► A dispute among states over regulating development in the Chesapeake Bay basin threatens to split apart the regional compact that has guided efforts to restore the troubled estuary for the past 16 years. A proposed new cleanup agreement, endorsed by Maryland, Pennsylvania and the federal government calls for a 30 percent reduction in the rate at which forests and farms are developed by 2010. Virginia has balked, saying that land-use controls are up to local governments to decide. (See related story, Virginia, page 31.) The pro-

posed pact cites the need to protect forests because of their vital role as water-quality filters. Contact Joel McCord at *The Baltimore Sun*, (410) 332-6465 or jmccord@baltsun.com. The proposed Chesapeake restoration agreement can be found on the Web at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net>.

► Maryland's groundbreaking \$200 million project to help restore Chesapeake Bay by planting trees on farmland along streams is falling far short of its goal. In a plan that served as a model for other parts of the country, state and federal agencies set out in 1997 to pay Maryland farmers to replace 100,000 acres of cropland along streams with buffer zones of forests, grasses or wetlands. Farmers so far have put only 13,000 acres in the program, an offshoot of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program; officials now project that only about 43,000 acres may be included by their announced 2002 deadline. For details, contact Joel McCord at *The Baltimore Sun*, (410) 332-6465 or jmccord@baltsun.com.

► Plans to dump mud dredged from the port of Baltimore's shipping channels into Chesapeake Bay have been delayed at least six more months while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reviews whether newly raised environmental concerns should block the controversial project. Concerns about dumping 18 million cubic yards of mud in a four-mile trough in the bay have focused on whether the area is a "thermal refuge" for fish, or whether the currents there are so strong the mud will foul a larger area of the bay. Environmentalists have campaigned against the open-bay dumping while state officials and shipping lines say it is necessary to keep Baltimore's docks open. For more information, call Robert Little at *The Baltimore Sun*, (410) 332-6100.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

► *The Boston Globe* reported in November that the University of New Hampshire may sell off hundreds of acres of high quality forests it owns around the

state, a story that touched upon the larger issue of "donor intent" and land conservation. The issue is whether donors can be assured that their gifts of undeveloped land will remain protected in perpetuity. In this case, the school says it would profit more by investing the money it makes from the sales in capital improvements, and would be relieved of the burden of managing the lands, a burden it says is detracting from its educational mission. However, some educators who have done research and taught students in the forests for decades say it is the sale that would detract from the educational mission. Conservation groups are racing to come up with ways the school could convey the lands to trusts, nonprofit groups or government agencies, but none of the recommendations would maximize the cash value of the lands to the school. For more information, contact Robert Braile, *The Boston Globe*, (603) 772-6380 or rbraile@nh.ultranet.com.

NEW JERSEY

► *The Asbury Park Press* published a three-day series Dec. 19-21 on noncommunity, or nonresidential, water systems in New Jersey. The computer-assisted investigation found widespread lapses in water testing, a law enforcement system, and instances of contamination from bacteria and toxic metals such as lead and copper. State government was the largest single violator of the federal and state Safe Drinking Water Acts among noncommunity water system operators in New Jersey from 1993 to July 1999, according to a *Press* review of state records. State Department of Environmental Protection figures show the state committing a total of 574 violations—387 of them at well-water systems at 22 state parks, forests and recreation areas within the DEP's Division of Parks and Forestry. For more information, call Todd Bates at (732) 922-6000, ext. 4361, or e-mail him at tbates@app.com.

NEW MEXICO

► The controversy over reintroducing wolves to the wild continues in the Southwest. Mike Taugher, environmental reporter for the *Albuquerque Tribune* has

written extensively on the issue and in a Dec. 29 piece revisits ranchers' concerns following the killing of a pregnant cow. It was the first livestock killing by endangered Mexican gray wolves since they were reintroduced in 1998. For details, contact Taugher at (505) 823-3833 or mtaugher@abqjournal.com.

► A Los Alamos scientist and a homeowner are battling it out in court over whether the scientist contaminated the home with depleted uranium and other chemicals when he conducted experiments at the house five years ago. A Nov. 21 story by Barbara Ferry in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* details the unusual litigation, in which the homeowner is asking the Department of Energy to buy her house for more than \$500,000. Contact Ferry at (505) 986-3030.

► Management of Rio Grande water is at the heart of problems facing government water managers as they try to deal with the decline of the river's ecosystem. *Albuquerque Journal* environmental reporter Mike Taugher has been following the issue in several stories, including a Nov. 21 report that details an impasse between city officials, federal managers and conservationists. For details, contact Taugher at mtaugher@abqjournal.com or (505) 823-3833.

PENNSYLVANIA

► A page one story by *Philadelphia Inquirer's* Mark Jaffe projects a drop in motor-vehicle contribution to urban smog from about 30 percent to just 5 percent by 2030. Projections are based on EPA's new regulations that will result in cleaner-burning light trucks and cars, scheduled to be on the market by 2004. EPA estimates a reduction in the number of bronchitis cases by more than 10,000 a year nationally, a reduction in respiratory ailments by 173,000, and a reduction in childhood asthma attacks by 260,000. Contact Jaffe at (215) 854-2430 or jaffe.pia@phillynews.com.

SOUTH CAROLINA

► A Nov. 13 *Greenville News* story tells of conservation groups in the

Upstate and across South Carolina that have joined forces, forming land trusts that will work to combat sprawl and preserve pristine rural fields and forests by negotiating easements with property owners. Brad Wyche, founder of Upstate Forever, said his group has teamed up with the Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council, a quasi-governmental organization whose members include directors of soil and water conservation districts in Greenville, Spartanburg, Pickens, Anderson and Oconee counties. Meanwhile, leaders of 14 conservation groups statewide have teamed up with Ducks Unlimited, South Carolina Nature Conservancy and the state Department of Natural Resources to form the South Carolina Land Trust Network, which will broker land conservation deals and protect environmentally significant property. For details, contact Bob Montgomery at (864) 298-4295 or bmontgom@greenvillenews.com.

► According to a Nov. 15 *Greenville News* story, Myrtle Beach has spent more than \$2 million in an effort to keep 10 miles of coastline free of bacteria since last summer's embarrassing series of health advisories warned swimmers out of the water during the height of tourist season. Beach officials said they plan to pursue state and federal loans to pay as much as \$240 million to extend the city's drainage pipes far into the ocean where polluted storm water won't sicken vacationers. In the meantime, Myrtle Beach is spending thousands of dollars to post signs warning swimmers that they could get sick if they ingest any bacteria-laden ocean water. For details, contact Bob Montgomery at (864) 298-4295 or bmontgom@greenvillenews.com.

► As South Carolina grapples with its reputation as a national dumping ground and how to reduce the amount of radioactive waste that is dumped at the Barnwell site, a different type of radioactive waste appears headed to the state. According to the *Greenville News*, the first shipment of 50 tons of bomb-grade radioactive plutonium to the Savannah River site through the Upstate could come as early as next year, and some environmentalists are concerned that

security is inadequate to prevent a catastrophic accident or theft of the weapons-grade material by terrorists. Energy officials say the trucks that will haul the plutonium to South Carolina from federal facilities in Texas and Colorado will be heavily guarded and monitored, and the 30-year-old record of transporting weapons-grade fuel with 100 million miles of no traffic fatalities or radiation releases should continue. Dell Isham, director of the Sierra Club's South Carolina chapter, said the plutonium project will only add to the state's environmental headaches. For details on the Oct. 27 story, contact Bob Montgomery at (864) 298-4295 or bmontgom@greenvillenews.com.

► Greenville County planners, after meeting with thousands of residents in a series of meetings over a year, proposed a bold growth plan that would encourage extension of sewer and water lines and road upgrades within a boundary zone around Greenville, and protect northern and southern Greenville County from too much development. According to the planning commission, Greenville is expected to grow from 390,042 in 2000 to 441,393, with the Eastside and the Golden Strip areas of Simpsonville, Mauldin and Fountain Inn showing the biggest population gains. For details on the Nov. 21 story, contact Montgomery at the *Greenville News*, (864) 298-4295.

TENNESSEE

► The Tennessee Valley Authority, the utility giant long criticized by environmentalists for its coal-fired and nuclear power plants and huge hydroelectric dams, has begun a pilot project using "green power." In 10 of TVA's 159 distribution areas, consumers will be able to choose solar or wind power or landfill gas as part of the grid serving them. TVA's largest distributor, Memphis Light, Gas and Water, is not participating in the test program. Tom Charlier reported this story in *The Commercial Appeal* on Dec. 6. He can be reached at (901) 529-2572.

► Conservation biologists are trying to preserve dozens of small islands in Old Hickory Lake, an Army Corps of

Engineers Lake 26 miles up the Cumberland River from downtown Nashville. As development devours much of the metro area, these islands have become critical habitat for migratory birds. The banks, however, are eroding away, partly from waves generated by recreational boats. Similar erosion-control efforts are under way at Hiwassee Island in the TVA's Chickamauga Lake near Chattanooga. Anne Paine reported this story in *The Tennessean* on Dec. 31. Her number is (615) 259-8071.

VIRGINIA

► Many waste lagoons built more than 20 years ago in Virginia are operating without state oversight, Ron Nixon of *The Roanoke Times* reported Jan. 23-24 in a package of stories about small private treatment facilities. A review of records from the state Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Health found six such lagoons in Henry County alone. Although the lagoons could contaminate ground water or streams, they are rarely inspected. Exposure to improperly treated waste can cause cholera, meningitis and hepatitis. For more information, contact Nixon at (540) 981-3347 or ronn@roanoke.com.

► Environmentalists fear that state officials have significantly weakened a law intended to regulate poultry farming and the manure it produces, Scott Harper of *The Virginian-Pilot* reported Nov. 11. The General Assembly passed the law in 1999 to prevent chicken and turkey wastes from polluting water. In its regulations to enforce the law, however, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has undercut legislators' intentions, according to environmental groups and key lawmakers. One scientist estimated that more than half of the 469,000 tons of poultry manure generated each year would go unchecked under the department's preliminary regulations. For more information, contact Harper at (800) 446-2004, extension 2340, or sharper@pilotonline.com.

► Scientists have discovered an unusual microscopic parasite killing fish in the James River, and they say the creature

may be responsible for some of the fish attacks attributed to the toxic microbe *Pfiesteria*, Rex Springston of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported Nov. 9. *Pfiesteria*, the so-called “cell from hell,” had been blamed for massive fish kills on the eastern shore of Virginia and Maryland and in North Carolina. However, researchers have found “strong evidence” that at least some of the fish were killed by the parasite *Kudoa*. In a follow-up Dec. 16, Springston reported that scientists agree that the *Pfiesteria* risk in the Chesapeake Bay region appears to be small. Some experts doubt that *Pfiesteria* poses a threat to humans. For more information, contact Springston at (804) 649-6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

► Virginia has refused to join nearby states in pushing to control growth as part of a Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan, Scott Harper of *The Virginian-Pilot* reported Dec. 9. Virginia balked at the plan’s centerpiece to reduce by 30 percent the acreage of farms, woodlands and open space that would be converted into homes, roads and shopping centers by 2010. Officials from Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Commission agree that aggressive, specific measures must be taken to control development. Virginia officials disagree, saying it would be wrong to set such goals because local governments handle land management. (See related story, Maryland, page 29.) For details, contact Harper at sharper@pilotonline.com or (800) 446-2004, extension 2340.

► The State Water Control Board fined two southside Virginia farms for allowing liquid hog waste to pollute streams, Rex Springston of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported Dec. 8. The board fined Carroll’s Foods of Virginia Inc., a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, \$20,000 for problems at its 13,000-hog farm in Sussex County. The board also fined J.R. Newsome Jr. Farms in Southampton County \$6,000 for such violations as spreading more than 100,000 gallons of liquid manure on one acre during a heavy rain. For more information, contact Springston at (804) 649-

6453 or rspringston@timesdispatch.com.

WASHINGTON

► Washington state voters recently passed a ballot initiative that cut license plate fees from an annual percentage based on car value to \$30 and dictates that any increase in taxes for state government and schools must be voted on by the people. The initiative leaves lawmakers \$750 million short. A laundry list of state services, including the clean-air program, will fall by the wayside. Rebecca Clarren reported on this story in the Dec. 20 edition of *High Country News*. Contact HCN at rebecca@hcn.org or (970) 527-4898, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► On Nov. 5, Clinton announced the addition of the 57,000-acre Wahluke Slope, officially known as the Wahluke State Wildlife Recreation Area, to the 30,000-acre Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, a decision that will keep plows and irrigation pipes off the land for at least the duration of the Clinton Administration. Ken Olsen reported on this story in the Dec. 20 edition of *High Country News*. Contact HCN at editor@hcn.org or (970) 527-4898, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

► After five days of negotiations, Plum Creek Timber Co., the U.S. Forest Service and eight Washington environmental groups agreed on Nov. 4 to a scaled-down swap that keeps old-growth in public hands. The agreement, which has been in the works for over three years, swaps 11,500 acres of public forest for 31,900 Plum Creek acres. It does not include Watch Mountain and Fossil Creek, two stands of old-growth in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest that were part of an earlier version of the deal. Ali Macalady reported on this story in the Dec. 20 edition of *High Country News*. Contact HCN at ali@hcn.org or (970) 527-4898, or find the story at <http://www.hcn.org>.

WISCONSIN

► “Our Vanishing Landscape” is a

three-part series the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* produced on urban sprawl issues. Several reporters contributed to the series, which began on Jan. 30. As part of the effort, the newspaper also conducted a poll on land use issues. For more information, contact managing editor George Stanley at (414) 224-2000.

► The *Wisconsin State Journal* gave front page play to a controversy over the possible removal of a nonpower-producing dam. Regional reporter Richard W. Jaeger authored the mid-January look at a plan to remove the Indianford Dam. Behind the dam is Lake Koshkonong, the state’s eighth-largest lake. Recent reports from environmental groups indicate Wisconsin is a leader in small dam removals over the last 25 years. Contact Jaeger at (608) 252-6100.

CANADA

► Canada’s first legislation to protect endangered species includes controversial criminal sanctions affecting the owners of private property. *National Post* Ottawa bureau chief Robert Fife broke the story on the proposed Species at Risk Act Nov. 8 using secret cabinet documents. As Environment Minister David Anderson confirmed in December, the new legislation would protect the 339 endangered species in Canada by protecting their habitat. The legislation permits fines, expropriation, or imprisonment as a last resort in the prosecution of landholders who destroy crucial lakes, woods or swamps. *National Post* reporter Sheldon Alberts followed Fife’s scoop with a Dec. 15 story that support for the legislation dwindles when Canadians dwell on the effect on their property rights. Eighty-eight percent of Canadians support legislation to protect animals at risk, but only 60 percent agree that the government should have the right to interfere with their property rights under the new legislation, according to a poll commissioned by Environment Canada and acquired by the *National Post* through the Access to Information Act. Contact Robert Fife at (613) 751-3320 or bfife@sns.southam.ca

► “It will be impossible (for

Canada) to meet the Kyoto target” for reducing greenhouse gases without immediate action, according to federal cabinet documents leaked to *Southam News* reporter Andrew Duffy. The latest projections of economic growth indicate that, if nothing changes, Canada would have to cut emissions by 26 percent between 2008 and 2012 to meet the reductions Canada agreed to in Kyoto. Canada said it would cut emissions by six percent from 1990 levels. Duffy’s Dec. 14 story revealed that the cabinet documents said meeting the reduction target will be “the most profound economic challenge since WWII.” Duffy also noted that Canada needs to improve energy efficiency on the unprecedented scale of four percent in each of the next 10 years to meet the terms of the Kyoto agreement. Contact Andrew Duffy (613) 751-3313 or aduffy@sns.southam.ca.

➤ For the first time in Canada, a provincial government was taken to court by private citizens on charges of pollution. A group called the Environmental Bureau of Investigation took the Ontario government to court in Ottawa at the end of November alleging that, since 1995, the province broke provincial and federal legislation by allowing arsenic and other toxic chemicals to seep from an abandoned smelting and refining mine site in Deloro, Ont., into two waterways. Between three and five tonnes of arsenic escapes into the Moira River each year. Reporter Annette Phillips, a stringer for *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, wrote the largest series of articles on the case. The initial charges and the first day of the case were covered by the media in Canada, but day-to-day progress of the trial is not. Contact Annette Phillips at

(613) 389-0512 or phillips@kos.net.

➤ People in the Nicola Valley of British Columbia are digging holes in the ground to help save the burrowing owl, one of the province’s most endangered species, according to a Nov. 13 story by *Vancouver Sun* reporter Larry Pynn. Forty volunteers have dug 500 burrows for the owls since 1992, to encourage them to return to B.C. and breed there. Less than 20 a year are believed to return to B.C. from their migration to the southern U.S. and Mexico, although two captive breeding programs in the province have released 160 burrowing owls since 1992. Alberta and Saskatchewan have an estimated 1,000 breeding pairs of the burrowing owl, with the population declining at 16 per cent a year. Contact Larry Pynn, 604-605-2362, lpynn@direct.ca.

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