

SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

Vol. 6 No. 4

New world for utilities Electricity deregulation could cause environmental shocks

By MARGIE KRIZ

I never knew how popular I was until I began looking seriously into government efforts to deregulate the electric utility industry. Suddenly energy industry bigwigs were trying to take me to lunch, to breakfast, to fly me to other parts of the country and be my best friend, all in the name of "explaining" the issue to me.

It wasn't as if I was new to the energy beat. I'd covered passage of the 1992 Energy Policy Act, which required all utility companies to share their electrical transmission lines with other utilities. Under that law, for example, a New York utility can buy low-cost electricity from North Carolina by shipping it—for a cost—over the electrical lines owned by the utilities in between.

That law created a chain reaction.

Soon large manufacturers were clamoring for cheaper electricity. Eager to keep their biggest customers, the utility officials often cut the businesses' rates. But the small business and residential customers were being left behind with the existing, higher rates. To level the playing field, California and Rhode Island

jolted their electricity systems by opting to allow all customers to shop for power.

Dozens of states are following suit. Congress, too, is keenly interested in deregulating the electricity industry. In July, Rep. Daniel Schaefer, R-Colo., who chairs the House energy and power

(Continued on page 8)

Looking for a local angle on utility deregulation?

Start by contacting your state public utility commission, which regulates electricity monopolies, for information on whether they plan to allow new companies to sell electricity. Many state environmental protection agencies also are monitoring the potential that utility deregulation will exacerbate local pollution problems. In some states, the state legislatures are spearheading deregulation efforts. Look for

local electric utility companies to play an active role in the debate, although they may disagree on whether competition should be permitted. Local environmental groups are also beginning to get plugged into the electricity deregulation debate. For information on neighboring states, contact the Edison Electric Institute (DC) which puts out a monthly newsletter tracking state deregulation efforts.

In this issue

SEJ News

- Board election resultspage 3

Reporters Toolbox

- Ozone news hole?.....page 12

Features

- Big news chains in Canadapage 14
- Harold Scarlett remembered.....page 15

Science Survey

- EPA on PCBspage 16

Online Bits & Bytes

- SEJ web site joins NICAR.....page 14

Viewpoints

- Advocacy issues.....page 18

Greenbeat

- Correspondents contact listpage 25
- State by state roundup.....page 26

SEJ Conference

Too much of a good thing?

By JAY LETTO

Over and over in evaluation forms and other feedback, attendees at SEJ's sixth national conference, hosted by Washington University in St. Louis, said that there was just too much to do.

"Excellent programs, exhausting schedule," was one response that might have summed up the general feeling. Too many panels and workshops at one time; too much crammed into one day; too many panelists on individual panels; too many choices; too tight a schedule; too many this; too much that. At least no one complained about too much fun.

At the same time, attendees liked all

the different choices available to them at this year's conference. Virtually all of the sessions and events were well-received individually by attendees. Many received rave reviews, several were given a "do this again," others were termed "worthwhile."

What's a conference organizer to do? I keep threatening that we'll just cancel the whole thing and have one big open-bar, networking party. But then where would people get their story ideas, their new sources, their reporting tips and computer hints?

SEJ members certainly want to have

(Continued on page 9)

New captain to stay the course

As I was growing up in a small western New York community, it seemed to me that parents and grandparents spent a disproportionate amount of time reminiscing about the past.

I've certainly been guilty of some serious reminiscing myself lately. Guess it has something to do with being elected president of SEJ. Maybe it's a sign I'm getting old. (I like to call it "experienced.")

Most of you realize that SEJ is just six years old, a relative youngster among journalism organizations. The initial planning meeting, according to a memo I unearthed the other day, was held in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 6, 1989. The tentative working title: "National Association of Environmental Journalists."

The meeting was called by David Stolberg of Scripps-Howard. I'd even forgotten who besides myself was invited, but here's a list: Dennis Anderson, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; Kate Long and Paul Nyden, *Charleston Gazette*; Jim Detjen, *Philadelphia Inquirer*; Michael Weiskopf, *Washington Post*; Phil Shabecoff, *New York Times*; Noel Grove, *National Geographic*; Joseph Hebert, Associated Press; Bob Engelman, Scripps-Howard News Service; Howard Chapnick, Black Star Publishing, and Roberta Baskin of ABC.

A number of so-called "friendly" organizations also were invited. They included Paul Nowak and Jonathan Friendly, University of Michigan; Bud Ward, Environmental Health Center; Jay Letto, Scientists' Institute for Public Information (SIPI); Don Campbell and Julius Duscha, Washington Journalism Center, and Thomas Lovejoy, Smithsonian Institution.

Many of the organizational meeting attendees stayed involved in SEJ. Detjen, of course, was the first president. Shabecoff, Grove, Engelman, and I have served on the board. Letto later became our convention coordinator. And both Stolberg and Ward became honorary members because of their contributions to the founding of SEJ.

Dipping deeply into the grab bag of cheap journalism tricks, I am using this history lesson as a crude transition into the future, and my plans for SEJ during the

next year. There really is a connection. Let me try and work myself out of this.

Jim Detjen, SEJ's first leader, presided over the birth of this organization. Under Detjen there were plenty of firsts: first bank account, first grant, first staff, first crisis, first office, first fax machine, first conference, and first *SEJournal*.

Taking over from Detjen, Emilia Askari certainly helped SEJ hone its identity. Under Askari we hired more staff, wrote a strategic plan, developed our

Report from the society's president

By
Rae
Tyson



regional activities, and generally increased SEJ's visibility worldwide.

So, the question is: can I top that?

Nope. And I don't intend to try.

We're entering our eighth year with healthy finances. Executive director Beth Parke projects an operating budget of \$376,500 for 1997, fifteen percent of which will be drawn from registration fees for national and regional conferences, another fifteen percent from dues, mail list rentals, and subscription income, and the remainder being grants from charitable foundations, media company sponsors, and host universities. SEJ enters 1997 with continuing grant support from the W. A. Jones Foundation, C.S. Mott Foundation, Turner Family Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Scripps Howard Foundation, Udall Foundation and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

I hope to concentrate on existing programs, along with some stuff in the pipeline, like our editor/producer outreach programs. I'm hoping we can expand

regional activities, particularly with help from our new programs coordinator Jim Quigley. Under editor Noel Grove, I'm confident we will make the *SEJournal* even better.

And I'm going to focus a fair amount of attention on the long-simmering membership debate. In reality, I don't really believe that you and I feel all that much differently about who should and shouldn't be a member of SEJ.

But I do know that we as a board have not done a good job of communicating with you as we've tried to better define current membership parameters.

Here's my philosophy. This is a journalists' organization. We should be above reproach when it comes to communication and openness. I intend to make sure that we are.

A summary of the board minutes will be available on the SEJ home page ([Http://www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)) and in the *SEJournal*. The time and location of all board meetings will be posted as well. You are invited to attend.

January's meeting is being held during production of this newsletter on the 18th, at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, FL. The spring meeting will be April 5, 1997, in Ann Arbor, MI.

You also are encouraged to talk to the board (and not just at conference cocktail parties). Unlike most elected bodies, the SEJ board (except for the academic and associate representatives), does not represent specific constituencies.

In a way, that's too bad because we aren't accountable to a defined group of people. But you can help by calling or e-mailing members of the board. Offer suggestions, volunteer, yell at them, or me. My e-mail address: rjtyson@aol.com.

I will in turn encourage board members to talk to you. Regularly.

Finally, a note of thanks for work well done to those board members whose terms expired and who chose not to seek re-election: Randy Loftis, Amy Gahrn, and Steve Curwood. And congratulations to the new members of the SEJ board: Sara Thurin Rollin, Gary Polakovic, and Gary Lee.

And a special thanks to all of you for giving me an opportunity to lead this organization to the next plateau.

SEJournal (ISSN: 1053-7082) is published quarterly by the **Society of Environmental Journalists**, P.O. Box 27280, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Membership \$35 per year (student rate \$30). Subscription fee \$50; \$30 library rate. © 1997 by the Society of Environmental Journalists.

Editor

Noel Grove

Editorial Board Chair

Kevin Carmody

Design Editor

Chris Rigel

Section Editors

Viewpoints	Peter Fairley
On-line Bits & Bytes	Russ Clemings
Science Survey	Sara Thurin Rollin
Book Shelf	Nancy Shute
New Members List	Chris Rigel
Calendar	Janet Raloff
Greenbeat	Kevin Carmody

SEJournal will accept unsolicited manuscripts. Send story ideas, articles, news briefs, tips and letters-to-the-editor to Noel Grove, ngrove1253@aol.com, P.O. Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 22117. Send calendar items to Janet Raloff, *Science News*, 1719 N Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For Greenbeat, contact Kevin Carmody, kpcarmody@aol.com, 1447 1/2 W. Fletcher Street, Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 229-2814. For book reviews, contact Nancy Shute, nshute@igc.apc.org, (202) 378-9110, 2730 Wisconsin N.W., Washington, DC, 20007.

For inquiries regarding the SEJ, please contact executive director Beth Parke at the SEJ office, P.O. Box 27280, Philadelphia, PA 19118; Ph:(215) 836-9970; Fax: (215) 836-9972. Via Internet: sejoffice@aol.com

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

SEJournal is published electronically on Compuserve's Journalism Forum and on the World Wide Web: <http://www.sej.org>

SEJ Board of Directors: President, Rae Tyson, *USA Today*, (703) 276-3424; vice president, Marla Cone, *The Los Angeles Times*, (800) 528-4637, ext. 73497; vice president Kevin Carmody, *Chicago Daily Southtown*, (773) 229-2814; secretary, Gary Lee, *The Washington Post*, treasurer, Sara Thurin Rollin, Bureau of National Affairs, ((202) 452-4584; Emilia Askari, (810) 546-5783; Russell Clemings, *Fresno Bee*, (209) 441-6371; Erin Hayes, ABC News, (312) 899-4015; Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, (816) 234-4433; Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-4414; Gary Polakovic, *The Press Enterprise*, (909) 782-7564; David Ropeik, WCVB-TV, Boston, (617) 449-0400; Angela Swafford, (305) 376-2168. Representative for academic members: JoAnn Valenti, Brigham Young University, (801) 378-7020; Representative for associate members: Adlai Amor, International Center for Journalists, (202) 737-3700; Jim Detjen, ex officio board member: (517) 353-9479, Michigan State University.

SEJournal is printed on recycled paper



Board members, officers elected USA Today's Rae Tyson is new SEJ president

Active members of the Society of Environmental Journalists elected three new members of its board of directors in October 1996, and returned two incumbents to the board for three-year terms. New members of the SEJ board are Gary Lee, *Washington Post*; Gary Polakovic, *Riverside (CA.) Press-Enterprise*; and Sara Thurin Rollin, Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. Rae Tyson, *USA Today*, and Mike Mansur, *Kansas City Star*, were re-elected to the SEJ board for three year terms.

In a vote taken by the SEJ board immediately following the membership vote, new officers were installed for 1996-97:

President, Rae Tyson; first vice pres., Marla Cone, *Los Angeles Times*; second vice pres., Kevin Carmody, *Chicago Daily Southtown*; treasurer, Sara Thurin Rollin; secretary, Gary Lee.

With this election Tyson becomes SEJ's third board president, succeeding Emilia Askari, president for 1995 and 1996. Jim Detjen was SEJ's founding president and led the organization from 1991-1994. Tyson was a founding vice president.

SEJ director and officer elections were part of the proceedings of the Society's Sixth National Conference, October 17-20, 1996, hosted by Washington University in St. Louis. Other continuing members of the SEJ board include freelance journalist Emilia Askari; Russell Clemings, *Fresno Bee*; Erin Hayes, *ABC News*; Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*; David Ropeik, WCVB-TV, Boston; Angela Swafford, Telenoticias; academic board representative JoAnn Valenti, Brigham Young University; associate board representative Adlai Amor, International Center for Journalists; and Jim Detjen, Michigan State University ex officio member of the board.



Gary Lee



Gary Polakovic



Sara Thurin Rollin



Rae Tyson receives the mantle from Emilia Askari

Bye-bye bylaws amendments

Membership controversy delays SEJ vote on changes

By AMY GAHRAN

After attempting to clarify SEJ's membership policies in the last annual election, the organization's membership committee is going back to the drawing board for another year.

SEJ membership eligibility and categories have always been touchy issues for many members and would-be members. Throughout the group's history, people have argued that these policies are too permissive, too restrictive, or too vague.

Sensitive to these concerns, the membership committee proposed amendments to SEJ's bylaws that would address this topic. Active members were asked to vote on these amendments for the annual election, using a proxy ballot that was mailed in September. However, the proposed amendments only intensified the controversy and confusion.

The proposed amendments to Article II, Section 1 of the SEJ bylaws would have:

- Prohibited all members from engaging in "lobbying relating to environmental issues," rather than the currently specified "lobbying or public relations work relating to environmental issues."
- Stated specifically that the associate membership category may include "writers, editors, or publication staff members of media outlets of trade associations, special interest organizations, and university information services, and part-time freelancers, as long as they meet other membership criteria."
- Limited academic membership (other than for journalism students) to full-time faculty only.

The heightened debate over the proposals led the board to withdraw the amendments before the vote at the annual SEJ meeting October 19 in St. Louis. In November, SEJ's membership committee issued a memo to all members announcing and explaining the withdrawal.

"When the bylaws were written, none of us (founding members) ever dreamed there would be so many people out there who consider themselves professional journalists who are, in reality, anything but," commented then-membership committee chairman Rae Tyson on SEJ's members-only listserv in early October. "(Members) should appreciate how hard some ineligible people work to try to become SEJ members."

From the moment members started receiving the proxy ballots in the mail, the SEJ listserv was abuzz. Some pointed out that the wording of the amendment that addresses lobbying was too broad. Merritt Clifton, Editor of *Animal People*, wrote, "Engaging in paid political lobbying would of course be a violation of basic journalistic ethics—but no definitions are given here. How do we distinguish between lobbying and expressing an informed view as an editorialist or columnist? What if an editorialist or columnist sends copies of his/her work to politicians involved in an issue? What if an advocacy organization wants to reprint an article? What if a member wants to address his/her town council as a citizen on an environmental issue?"

Freelance journalist Cathy Dold wrote, "The world of work

is changing, and not everyone fits into a neat little box these days. . . many legitimate journalists do many different kinds of work. Defining who is or is not a journalist is not simple, and saying that anyone who does lobbying work is not eligible for membership could have the effect of excluding many valuable members of SEJ."

Board member Russ Clemings pointed out that the intent of the amendment was "to define more precisely what type of work is considered public relations. . . by removing the 'public relations' language and by substituting a full and complete definition of who may be an associate member. Lobbying was banned before and it would be banned now (under the new language)."

Clemings' interpretation of that proposed amendment's intent was confirmed by Rae Tyson in a subsequent listserv posting, and at SEJ's annual meeting. However, Tyson acknowledged that the reference to "lobbying" was indeed too vague, resulting from a semantic misunderstanding with SEJ's legal advisor. Future proposed amendments addressing this issue should be worded more specifically, he said.

Some members wondered whether deleting the direct reference to public relations would make PR people other than university news service staff eligible for SEJ membership. To this and other similar concerns about the meaning and intent of the proposed amendments, Tyson replied "We have not changed the membership philosophy at all. We have not altered membership criteria either. The SEJ is a professional journalism organization and we intend to keep it that way."

Academic members spoke out on the listserv and at the annual meeting against the proposition that would have excluded part-time faculty from academic membership. "With the downsized state of academia today, journalism departments and schools can't always afford to hire full-time faculty to teach environmental journalism," commented Professor Sharon Friedman of Lehigh University.

Tyson responded that part-time faculty who are teaching and freelancing clearly would be eligible for active or associate membership. But he also noted that "We have had numerous applications from part-time faculty members who actually derive most of their incomes from jobs in industry, government, environmental groups, public relations firms, and others. We don't believe they should be eligible because they teach one night school course at a local community college."

At the annual meeting, some non-voting academic and associate members related their surprise and dismay that the proposed amendments had not been sent to them at all, even though several of these members would have been directly affected. Executive director Beth Parke quickly acknowledged, as she had earlier on the listserv, that this had been an oversight. She assured members that when bylaws amendments are proposed in the future they will be sent to all members, not just active ones.

Board member Mike Mansur, who has taken over as head of the membership committee, thinks it likely that in 1997 the com-





mittee will propose a new set of bylaws amendments to clarify membership policies. "I'm just getting up to speed on the membership committee, but one thing I can see right off the bat is that we need more communication," he said. He urged members who wished to provide input to contact him or other members of the committee: Adlai Amor, Kevin Carmody, Gary Polakovic, and JoAnn Valenti.

Mansur thinks the listserv could serve as the primary vehicle for communication between the board and members, since most SEJ members have access to e-mail. Currently only about one third of all members subscribe to the cost-free listserv, which is made available by contacting Amy Gahran at mtn@indra.com.

The *SEJournal*, Mansur noted, is published quarterly, and mailings to the entire membership are expensive. "If more people joined the listserv and participated in these discussions, that probably would help resolve these membership policy issues," he said. "But we'd love for more members to be involved in this process in whatever way they can."

Former board member Amy Gahran is Managing Editor for E Source in Boulder, CO., a freelance journalist and web publisher. All quotes from the SEJ listserv used in this story were made with permission, in accordance with SEJ listserv policy.

Biweekly TipSheet is gaining subscribers

The *TipSheet*, a story idea service initiated last summer for environmental, science, and health journalists, now has nearly 400 subscribers. The *TipSheet* is available to SEJ members and news organizations via fax or e-mail as a biweekly alert to potential environmental stories and sources. It is jointly produced by SEJ, the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), and the National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center (EHC). The *TipSheet* also carries numbers and names of sources who can serve as good leads on the principal issues involved.

"The ideal story is an advance lead on a newsy thing that hasn't happened yet, or a trend story," said coordinating editor Joe Davis of EHC. "We try to steer away from inside-the-beltway Washington, D.C. stories. We look for stories that many reporters in many regions can localize and make their own. We

try to supply good, balanced sources with phone numbers."

"The most important way you can help is by sharing story ideas with us. Preferably great story ideas. Preferably real early. We are looking for stories in the environmental, conservation, resources, health, science, and energy areas, but all with some environmental connection." A rough story list is usually put together the Wednesday before the sheet comes out, Davis said. The list is scheduled for distribution every other Tuesday, and closes the afternoon of the Monday before it is dated.

Nearly half the *TipSheet's* current subscribers are broadcast newsrooms who have requested it by fax from RTNDF. The rest get it via e-mail on the SEJ listserv. The *TipSheet* is also available to the public on a delayed basis via SEJ's website at: <http://www.sej.org/tipsheet.htm>. Journalists who can contribute are invited to contact sejoffice@aol.com to get involved.

SEJ board discusses membership, officers' terms

In a meeting at the Hyatt Union Station Hotel in St. Louis Oct. 17 the SEJ board debated withdrawal of the proposed SEJ Bylaws amendment regarding membership categories, scheduled for a vote at the 1996 annual membership meeting the next evening.

Board member Rae Tyson noted that the society's attorney had concluded that the language of the proposed bylaws amendment was legally flawed by its failure to define the term "lobbying." It was unanimously agreed the board had an obligation to stop vote on the amendment proposal because to do otherwise might put the society at risk. It was further agreed that during the annual meeting the board's membership committee would participate in a discussion of up to 30 minutes regarding membership eligibility issues, so members might better understand the issue and offer suggestions.

In other business, Russ Clemings suggested the planned board listserv be accessible by all members. He said he believed that some members would object to its existence if they couldn't monitor messages between board members regarding SEJ business. Several board members questioned the usefulness of a separate listserv for the board not significantly dif-

ferent from the existing listserv accessible by all members, so it was agreed that the board listserv would be discontinued.

SEJ Board Business

On a 7-2 vote the board reiterated its support for holding the election of officers immediately following the annual meeting in 1996 but agreed to examine other options for future years. President Emilia Askari and other board members said the election of officers should be delayed until

the January board meeting. It was agreed that the newly elected officers would not take office until January. Later it was determined that the SEJ Bylaws require officers to take office immediately.

In a meeting the evening following board elections Askari noted the board's decision that officers serve in the same position for no more than two years, unless the board waives the policy in a special circumstance. Nominations were submitted by secret ballot for each position. The winners were: Rae Tyson, president; Marla Cone, first vice president; Kevin Carmody, second vice president; Sara Thurin Rollin, treasurer; and Gary Lee, secretary. Gary Polakovic, Lee, and Carmody agreed to serve on the membership committee, and Mike Mansur agreed to chair the committee since Tyson would be relinquishing the membership committee helm to serve as SEJ president.



Journalists surf Internet at Stanford in regional conference

SEJ's second-biggest regional conference drew 80 people to Stanford University on Sept. 7 to learn about computer-assisted reporting and the Internet from some of northern California's best experts in the field. The only larger regional conference drew 120 to a session in Atlanta last year.

The all-day workshop at Stanford, co-sponsored by the Northern California Writers Association, featured hands-on training in database and spreadsheet use, World Wide Web surfing, and web page

authoring. A dozen panels and speakers also addressed topics that included "Who knows what online?", "Writing and editing for the Internet," "Arming yourself: contracts and electronic rights for freelance writers," and "Staying afloat in a sea of information."

Speakers included C/Net's Richard Hart, host of computing shows on the USA and Sci-Fi cable networks; Randy Reddick, editor and publisher of FAC-SNET, an information service for journalists (<http://www.facsnet.org>); and Tom

Johnson, professor of journalism at San Francisco State University and a founding editor of *MacWeek*.

Organizers of the conference were Carol Cruzan Morton of NCSWA, SEJ board member Russell Clemings, and Stanford News Service writer David Salisbury. Major sponsors were Stanford, the *Fresno Bee*, the *Sacramento Bee*, the Foundation for American Communications (FACS) and the Scripps Howard Foundation.

—Russ Clemings

IFEJ's fourth conference held in environmental hotspot

By JIM DETJEN

The contrasts could not have been greater.

Posh hotels decorated with luscious tropical woods and artificial waterfalls are being constructed in Cebu City, adjacent to Manila. They are aimed at attracting rich tourists from Japan and Hong Kong who can afford to pay \$250 a night for a luxury room. Only a short bus ride away is the notorious "Smoky Mountain" landfill, where hundreds of poverty-stricken families sift through stinking mounds of debris each day in hopes of finding a scrap of metal to sell or a morsel of food to feed their malnourished children.

The Philippines is still a relatively poor nation that is desperately seeking to become one of the "Tiger economies" of south-east Asia. Economic growth is exploding at a rapid pace as President Ferdinand Ramos seeks to turn his nation of 67 million people into another Taiwan, Singapore, or Korea.

Unfortunately, this growth is coming at the expense of his island nation's environment where developers have cut down 90 percent of the country's virgin forests and led Conservation International to declare the Philippines as one of the world's five top hotspots in the potential loss of biodiversity.

It was in this nation of contrasts that the fourth conference of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists met from Nov. 11 to 14. Approximately 80 journalists, scientists,

officials and environmental leaders from 15 nations participated. The conference was organized by Manuel Satorre, president of the Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc. and program director of the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists.

Participants heard an array of speakers including Eugene Linden of *Time* magazine and Marites Vitug, a courageous Filipino journalist who has been threatened with imprisonment for writing about illegal logging operations.

IFEJ leaders made a number of important decisions during the conference. First, IFEJ's administrative council voted to let journalists become individual members at a rate of \$25 a year. Individual membership cards were issued for the first time. Until the November meeting, IFEJ was an umbrella organization of national environmental journalists' organizations. Associations can still be members at a sliding scale of \$100 to \$1,500 yearly, but individual memberships are also accepted.

Second, IFEJ leaders formally approved moving the organization's headquarters to a new site in Paris. The new address is 14, Rue de la Pierre Levee, 75011 Paris, France. Phone: 33 1 48 05 46 07; FAX: 33 1 49 23 91 49; E-mail: m.schweres@oln.com-link.apc.org.

Third, Budapest, Hungary was selected as the site of the 1997 IFEJ conference. Marta Sarvari will serve as the organizer of the conference to be held in the last half of October 1997. Address: c/o Magyar Nemzet, P.O. Box 276, H - 1392 Budapest, Hungary; Tel: 36 1 344 2500 ext. 328; Fax: 36 1 344 3651.

Fourth, IFEJ selected Latin America as the site for the 1998 conference. If a site cannot be found, the 1998 conference will be held in Sri Lanka and hosted by Dharman Wickremaratne.

Fifth, IFEJ leaders created a mission statement for the organization and set organizational goals for the next three to five years. One of the most important goals is to raise enough funds to hire a full-time staff.



Officers of the IFEJ meet in the Philippines

Jim Detjen is the president of IFEJ. He is the founding president of the Society of Environmental Journalists and holds the Knight Chair in Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University.



Mirth and meaning at St. Louis

► **Been here, done this?** SEJ conference participant Jim Schwab experienced a crescendo of airport panic as he attempted to catch his flight away from St. Louis. Schwab, of the American Planning Association in Chicago, led a discussion at the networking lunch on race, ethnicity and the environment.

After a pleasant ride on the light rail to the airport after the conference, Schwab and SEJ programs manager Jim Quigley entered the main terminal and checked a map display. Thinking they'd located the appropriate gate, they headed in that direction. After a lengthy and unfruitful period of negotiating crowds and luggage carts they were informed by an airport employee that Schwab needed to ride the shuttle to the East Terminal, although neither had observed signs to that effect. Watching the latest shuttle pull away just as they arrived to board it, Schwab glanced nervously at his watch: "I'm cutting it close."

"Should be another shuttle any minute," offered Quigley. When none appeared soon the now thoroughly nervous traveler declared "Too close for comfort" and hopped in a cab. After a brief ride to the East Terminal he pulled out a \$20 bill and of course, the driver said he had only three dollars in change. The cross-airport ride cost him \$17.

Now doubtful he would catch his flight Schwab sprinted through the terminal, dragging a suitcase with a bad roller that made a noise like a low-flying Spad and caused startled travelers to veer away in alarm. Panting, perspiring, he arrived at ticketing to check his bag, just in time to see the agent vault in the opposite direction and do an O.J. steeplechase down the hall after a passenger who had left her ticket on the counter. The agent finally returned, promising, "We'll do our best."

Reconciled to probable defeat, Schwab made one more breathless sprint to the gate.

See this coming?

His flight was delayed.

► **It's called "office support":** One conference panelist had even less time to make a flight. His office booked his return from conference on a day that preceded his arrival.

► **He's not all serious:** On the day before conference, SEJ office systems manager Chris Rigel was making harried calls to assure that all out-of-town speakers had solid traveling plans. On the tenth try she finally reached Wes Jackson, agricultural guru near Salina, Kansas. "Oh Dr. Jackson," she blurted in relief, "I've been desperate to get hold of you!"

"Well, that's what I like," drawled the venerable director of The Land Institute, "a desperate woman."

As to his being picked up at the St. Louis airport, they discussed the need for a sign so he could connect with his ride into the city.

"Yes, we need a sign," agreed Jackson, now on a roll. "See if you can get hold of a babe in swaddling clothes."

► **Too helpful:** SEJ executive director Beth Parke was being

a helpful "waver" in the hall, directing latecomers to a conference session into the proper room. To a group that began turning in the opposite direction she yelled, "No, no, you're going the wrong way," and got a who-do-you-think-you-are look in return. They were new Washington University students and their parents on a tour of facilities.

► **Too literal:** *SEJournal* editor Noel Grove was asked to submit a "shoot list" of conference situations he would like photographed by a Washington University photographer. For the opening reception at the Missouri Botanical Garden, he proposed, "...we might have director Peter

Raven welcoming the group against a background of Costa Rican hyacinth....," meaning, exotic foliage of some kind.

At the reception, Beth Parke was approached with apologies from a university host and conference expeditor, who said with much hand-wringing, "I'm so sorry, we looked and looked for a Costa Rican hyacinth but couldn't find one anywhere..."

Could be that one doesn't exist.

► **Hitting the wall:** SEJ's conference coordinator Jay Letto and executive director Beth Parke were feeling relaxed early Sunday morning as they walked into the magnificent lobby of the old Union Station at the Hyatt Regency. It was the final day of the conference. They had survived another SEJ extravaganza with minimal casualties. Each conference has its own problems that need attention, often finger-in-dike solutions. The diners should never see how the cooks prepare dinner.

Sunday was going to be a breeze, just a few sessions, all in the same place, one short bus ride away to the Saint Louis Zoo, and then it would be over, finito, time to toast the annual miracle and eat a sit-down lunch.

Strolling into the Hyatt lobby they noticed hordes of athletic folks in shorts and T-shirts or jogging outfits, bouncing around, stretching their muscles. "Wow!" voiced Letto, "These St. Louisans are serious fitness people. Must be some health program with the Hyatt."

Downstairs, more joggers stretching. Out the front door. Whoa! People everywhere. Covering the sidewalks, streets, lawns. Like ants at a picnic. No way a bus taking SEJers to final sessions could get through this. "St. Louis Marathon," said the bellperson. "Thousands competing, thousands more watching, they'll close down all these streets real soon."

While somewhat deflated by this news, the two conference-weary staffers swung into action. Letto grabbed a taxi to check on the Zoo end of things. Parke drafted SEJ members to find the conference buses amid the zoo on the streets.

Ultimately our Washington University hosts cleared the way. Ann Nicholson of WU Communications charmed police into blazing a trail through the fit flesh, continuing the efficiency shown by others on the university team—Fred Volkmann, Judy Jasper, Tony Fitzpatrick, and Chancellor Mark Wrighton—all of whom helped the conference to its own finish line.

Grin & Bare It

Deregulation...(from page 1)

subcommittee, introduced a bill that would require all states to introduce electricity competition. The measure died in the 104th Congress, but the issue has become a top priority for next year.

The intense legislative action and the lobbying blitz are proof that it's time for energy and environmental reporters to know more about the electric utility industry. It's a \$200 billion industry that's up for grabs, and hundreds of companies are maneuvering for a piece of the pie. Competition and lower rates could have dramatic impacts on every community, financially and environmentally. At first read, electric utility restructuring is about free market principles. But behind the neon promises of cheaper electricity lies a tangle of complicated technical issues and potential problems that every reporter should understand:

Environmental protection

A contentious regional battle is brewing over the impact that utility deregulation will have on air quality. Government officials from the Northeast argue that tough national controls are needed to curb air pollution from coal-fired power plants in the Midwest. They contend that pollution from those plants, which were exempted under the 1970 Clean Air Act, is killing forests and polluting cities in the Northeast. Midwestern utilities, however, oppose expensive new pollution controls that they fear will make their companies less competitive in the coming electricity revolution.

Deregulating the utility industry could also have a devastating impact on energy efficiency and renewable energy. In the past, state and federal regulators pushed the utilities to underwrite programs promoting efficiency and alternative energy sources. Now utilities complain that they shouldn't have to pay for expensive programs that aren't also imposed on their competitors.

Reliability

In July, when the electricity flickered off in large swatches of the western United States, President Clinton ordered an immediate inquiry, sending a clear message that in this obsessively electronic society, power outages are serious stuff. Labor and consumer advocates warn that the electricity system has been dependable only because state regulators forced the utility monopolies to maintain large reserves of emergency electric capacity and to upgrade their technical systems. Under a deregulated market, however, the state would no longer have that authority.

State vs. federal authority

State utility regulators and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission are engaged in a tug-of-war over who will have jurisdiction over the new electricity framework. Questions are also emerging over whether the state legislatures or the Congress should reshape the industry. So far several states are rushing to deregulate their electricity markets, but Congress could act within the next two-to-four years. Traditionally, the states have had authority over electric monopolies. But Congress has sole jurisdiction over several laws that

govern multi-state companies. Schaefer's bill would let local regulators design a competitive electricity market, but would set a deadline for completing the transformation. The Clinton Administration is leaning toward letting the states choose whether to introduce competition.

Stranded costs

Stranded costs are the unpaid bills that utilities ran up for such things as nuclear power plants. Some companies also have contracts for expensive alternative energy sources that were mandated by federal law. The U.S. electric industry may have as much as \$135 billion in outstanding bills. The focus on these costs could make it less likely that new nuclear plants would be built in the U.S. Stranded costs is the top issue for many utility companies. But consumer groups and potential competitors worry about how the utilities will calculate those costs and who will pay the bill.

Market power

It's an article of faith in the energy industry that every electric utility executive is negotiating a merger or a partnership with another company. Utility companies are already reshuffling the deck. Consumer groups fear that when the dust settles from today's stampede of mergers, a few conglomerates could control a large share of the electricity market, and then raise their rates.

Small business, residential customers

Corporate electricity users are already leveraging their market power to barter for lower electricity rates. But consumer groups worry that the residential and small business customers will have significantly less muscle and wind up paying substantially higher rates than corporate customers. On the flip side, residential customers could start getting calls from electricity salesmen offering bargain rates, much like those delightful long distance phone service hawkers. Schaefer said he anticipates that homeowners will be able to join forces to establish aggregate power markets. But the consumers most certain to bare the brunt of deregulation are the rural homeowners and small businesses that are not economic to serve. Many belong to rural electric cooperatives. Once cheaper electricity is available to the more urban or lucrative consumers in those regions, the cooperatives could lose their financial base.

Public power

The rural electric cooperatives and the government-owned utilities want to be protected from the negative impacts of deregulation. But while the public power companies fight to protect their unique status, they're coming under attack in the increasingly competitive market. Private energy companies insist that the government-owned utilities have an unfair competitive advantage since they can raise money through tax-exempt bonds and pay no state or federal taxes.

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.



Doomsayers debated naysayers at luncheon session on Saturday, October 19. Seated (left to right): Jon Hutton, Patrick Michaels, Ronald Bailey, Erin Hayes, Paul Erlich, Stephen Schneider, and Peter Raven.

Conference...from page 1

fun at the annual conference. But they also want to return to their offices with story ideas, new sources, and expanded knowledge. In short, SEJ members want more of their particular interest represented at the conference, more time to socialize, and they want organizers to schedule it all so as to take up less of their time. Not a problem. We've got it all covered at next year's conference in Tucson.

At least one thing is clear after six annual conferences and scores of evaluations and other feedback: SEJ members are a diverse bunch, with very different needs and desires of their organization and their national conference. Organizers simply can't make everyone happy when one wants fewer panelists and another wants more balanced panels, when one wants more networking opportunities and another wants more time to simply relax.

In general, the vast majority of members seem quite content with our basic conference structure and our veritable smorgasbord of events: day-long tours, half-day tours, mini-tours, plenary sessions, concurrent panels, small-group sessions, computer workshops, writing workshops, keynoter speakers, luncheon debates, networking lunches, evening receptions, slideshow presentations, salons, and now, plays.

Yes, plays. Probably the most raved about session at this year's conference was SEJ's first theatrical event, "A Sense of

Wonder," Kaiulani Lee's moving one-woman play about Rachel Carson. Though only about 150 people attended the play (again, too much stuff, too tight an agenda), those who did attend loved it. Responses included: "Artful and awesome, nice to have ideas presented in a literary format"; "Great breather in between tight schedule"; "This was an appropriate and interesting interlude"; "Thank you for including this powerful, moving experience"; "Excellent play and a nice diversion for the conference"; "Absolutely awesome, I'd do it again"; and "A special treat, an inspired idea somebody should be proud of."

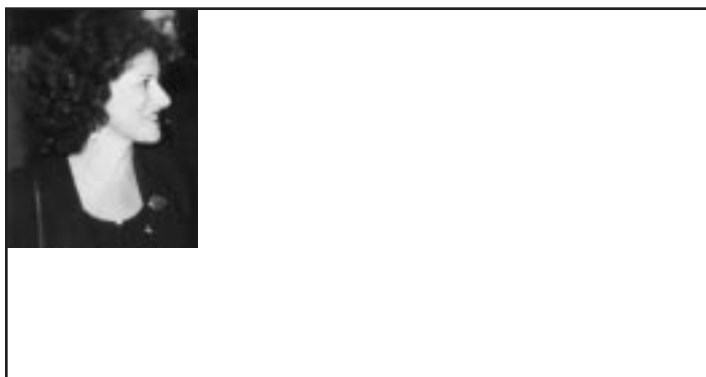
That somebody is conference co-chair Mike Mansur, who scheduled this event, secured funding for it, and then worried for months about the appropriateness of staging this event at our national conference.

Attendance at this year's conference totaled 520, with 234 SEJ members. That's down from last year's Boston high of nearly 700, perhaps due to a number of factors including election year distractions, contracting newsroom travel budgets, and lack of interest in St. Louis as a destination. Also, Boston's numbers were inflated by about 100 members of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ), which co-sponsored that event.

Math whiz readers may have already deduced that nonmembers outnumbered members at this year's conference. That's largely because panelists and speakers accounted for nearly 200 of the non-members. Members' cries of "too much" were perhaps merited. Indeed, the 1996 conference featured the most speakers ever at an SEJ conference, as well as the most panels, the most tours, and the most computer and writing workshops.

SEJ members continue to feel that networking opportunities may be the most important part of our conference. One evaluation respondent said: "I've been covering enviro topics since 1984, so I didn't learn too much, but I made some contacts, and got to socialize, which made it well worth attending."

The networking lunch and three evening receptions (at the Missouri Botanical Garden, Gateway Arch, and St. Louis Science Center) were all very popular. Attendees praised the food, the locales, and, of course, the chance to meet and talk with others. Attendees particularly liked the Arch and the great food there. The networking lunch was so popular ("a highlight, let's do more of these," "worth doing again," "great, very few conferences do this, in fact, this is the only one,") that we will



Board members Marla Cone and Mike Mansur (center) are greeted by Washington University's Chancellor Wrighton at a reception held at St. Louis' Gateway Arch.



Conference attendees explore a reborn native prairie.



Reporters see gourd roots burn as cooking fuel substitute.

likely repeat it in Tucson. The Sunday morning locale at the St. Louis Zoo and Art Museum was similarly praised.

Kevin Carmody, conference co-chair, and Judy Jasper of Washington University were responsible for securing the great destinations and generally organizing the receptions. A number of attendees praised the Washington University staff for their constant presence and careful attention to detail.

The six Thursday tours attracted about 200 attendees and were all well received. Attendance went from a high of about 50 on the Prairie/Native American tour to a low of 14 on the Weldon Springs tour. Response included: "Great out-of-doors experience, active not passive"; "both prairie and mounds were fascinating"; "Monsanto very informative"; and "an amazing place, wish I'd had more time to tour the garden, loved seeing the rare books."

The opening plenary, "The 104th Congress and Environmental Protection," and the luncheon debate, "Doomsayers v. Naysayers," both received mixed reviews. While most attendees liked them (calling them good overviews, entertaining, fair and balanced, and extremely well moderated), others felt there were too many panelists, too much political posturing, and too many topics for one panel.



Jay Letto, SEJ conference coordinator (left); Dr. Paul Erlich, Bing Professor of Population Studies at Stanford (center); and Dr. Peter Raven, Director, Missouri Botanical Garden, Engelmann Professor of Botany at Washington University.

The 39—yes 39—concurrent panels and workshops also received generally good reviews. Attendance was spread out fairly well, with a high near 70 in Saturday morning's endocrine disruptors panel, most panels attracting between 25 to 50, computer workshops attracting 10 to 15, and writing workshops 35 to 50.

The Sunday morning sessions featured well-known panelists (Amory Lovins, Wes Jackson, David Quammen, Richard Manning, and Stephanie Mills), popular topics (Writers on Writing, Writing About Place, environmental history, and a walking zoo panel), and fun locales (St. Louis Zoo and Art Museum), but still only about 100 attendees stuck around for these sessions. The Writers on Writing panel, with about 45 in the audience, remained popular. One panel, Remaking Forest Park, was unfortunately not attended by anyone.

For the third year in a row, the small-group sessions were very popular with attendees. We will repeat this format in '97. Likewise the computer and writing workshops are quite popular.

Finally, while an overwhelming majority of feedback was very positive, a couple of respondents said they were not happy with the conference. One was "disappointed in how white the panels were," noting that there were only a few people of color in the entire program. Another was disappointed by the lack of



Panelists (left to right) Rep. George Miller (D-CA), Linda Fisher of Monsanto; and Deb Callahan of the League of Conservation Voters are among leading policymakers discussing the 104th Congress' ongoing environmental debate.

broadcast journalists on the program.

But most feedback was like the following: "I got 3-4 story ideas out of it, learned a lot and enjoyed myself"; "Attended mainly for opportunity to network with colleagues, and St. Louis was best so far for this, i.e., network lunch"; "great programs, great sites, especially the evening events"; "well organized, obviously lots of effort went into it"; "good job with arrangements and panels, I find practically nothing to bitch about"; "I learned a lot, no doubt will use the information in the future";

"I've been to several conferences this year, and this is one of the best"; "good mix of work time and socializing"; "lots of story ideas here, very good receptions"; "Looking forward to Tucson, this was my first SEJ conference, I don't plan to miss another one, it really recharged my batteries."

Conference planners are already putting together the 1997 conference, hosted by the University of Arizona in Tucson, and scheduled for October 2-5. If you have ideas or suggestions or want to volunteer to moderate a panel or fill some

other duty in Tucson, please contact conference co-chairs Russ Clemings (209-441-6371 or clemings@cris.com) or Randy Loftis (214-977-8483 or loftis@ix.netcom.com) or conference coordinator Jay Letto (509-493-4428 or jayletto@aol.com).

See you next year in warm and sunny Tucson, October 2-5.

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

The International Desk of *CNN News* has a new environment position of its very own. **Gary Strieker**, the network's former Nairobi bureau chief, will travel the world with his producer/wife and report on ecological issues. Strieker says that he has been angling to create such a position for a while and, lucky for him, the network still recognizes the importance of the beat.

Aloha from new student **Mark Barron**. The former copy editor for the *St. Petersburg Times* is in Hawaii studying on a Freedom Forum Foundation fellowship. This semester, Barron is focusing on ocean resources, the geography of Japan, and Japanese history.

"My next exam is my next deadline," laments **Christine Cordner** who has just left behind the life of a student. She has joined the staff of *Electric Power Alert* newsletter in Arlington, Virginia. The University of Vermont graduate says her networking while a student member of SEJ was invaluable in landing her interviews at a number of publications.

Susan Zakin is back in Tucson, AZ after a six month stint covering environmental politics for *Sports Afield* in the nation's capitol. Zakin says: "every environmental reporter should live [in Washington, DC] for awhile, but it's a hell of a place for an environmental writer who wants to keep a grip on what he or she is writing about." It sounds like she's glad to be out. Zakin will continue her regular gig for *Sports Afield* from Tucson where she also freelances for other publications.

Trying to figure out the green beat? Early in 1997 there should be some answers in a new (as yet untitled) hand-

book published jointly by SEJ and IRE. **Mary Landers** wrote it while finishing a masters at the University of Missouri. In her book, Landers, now a freelancer in Savannah, Georgia, covers issues such as understanding science journals, risk assessment and following the money.

Julie Hauserman has joined the *St. Petersburg (FL) Times* state house bureau. Previously, Hauserman was a freelancer and an environmental columnist for the *Tallahassee Democrat*.

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

"It's like learning a whole new kind of calculus." That's how **Neil Strassman** describes his jump from covering environmental and military issues at the *Long Beach (CA) Press-Telegram* to focusing on health care for the *Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram*. Strassman expects there will be plenty of familiar environmental territory to cover, still he feels like he's entering a whole new world.

Rod Jackson, creator of "Earthwatch" on *KTVX* in Salt Lake City has been promoted from environmental producer to managing editor. Jackson began the program for the *ABC* affiliate in 1989. Filling his shoes as producer of "Earthwatch" is John Daly. Daly moves from his general assignment position in Burlington, Vermont.

Check your bookstores for the latest in human origins research. *From Lucy to Language* is the name of a collection of short essays written by **Blake Edgar** of *Pacific Discover* magazine in collabora-

tion with paleoanthropologist **Donald Johanson**. This, their second book together, profiles fifty of science's most significant fossil discoveries. Edgar says the fossils are reproduced actual size in order to provide a face-to-face encounter with the evidence of human evolution.

"The best investigation into the effects of privatization and deregulation." That's how one judge described this year's John B. Oakes Award winner. Reporters **Dunstan McNichol** and **Kelly Richmond** of *The Record* in Hackensack, New Jersey won the award for their thirteen-part series titled 'Open For Business.' It puts the environment into the center of political reporting without relying on furry animals or majestic forests. Instead they exposed such facts as the state government's boasting of pollution credits that never materialized and of saving jobs that were not at risk.

The judges also singled out two entries for honorable mention. 'Defenses Down,' a two-part article by **Marla Cone** of the *Los Angeles Times* explored the destructive effects of chemical pollution on the immune systems of animals and people. **Tom Knudson** of *The Sacramento Bee* was also honored for his four part special report on the decline of fish and other marine life in the Sea of Cortez.

Write a book? Start a fellowship? Switch jobs? Know someone who has? Send all professional information to George Homsy: <ghomsy@world.std.com>; phone: (617) 520-6857; Fax: (617) 868-8659; Mailing address: Living On Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Too early to write off ozone story

By MARK DOWIE

"The Montreal Protocol is working," brags the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). "Peak ozone depletion is now expected to occur during the next several years and the ozone layer is expected to recover in about fifty years" when the Antarctic hole closes up again.

That assumption is shared by the Clinton administration. "I'm not declaring victory," says White House Climate

Specialist Steve Seidel of the ozone situation, "but assumptions are all overwhelmingly on the right track."

Even greens have joined in. "I don't think a catastrophe is in the offing," says Michael Oppenheimer, an atmospheric scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund. He believes "if it is implemented right, the Montreal Protocol will eventually lead to the healing of the ozone layer."

Those are very persuasive quotes, from generally reliable sources, and the media has bought into the euphoria. "After 2000, Outlook for

Ozone Layer Looks Good" read the front page banner headline of the *Washington Post*. "Depleted Ozone May Begin Recovery Within Ten Years," the *Post* added recently when a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report was issued announcing that some, though not all, atmospheric ozone depleting chemicals were in decline.

"Good news about the environment..." chirped Dan Rather in June before reading portions of NOAA's press release to CBS viewers, skirting the fact that CFC-12, methyl bromide, and halons removed from production in 1994 are all still rising toward the ozone layer because of previous releases into the atmosphere.

Like so many environmental problems before it, ozone depletion has slipped off the front page, replaced by destructive weather, fish shortages, and other global disturbances; and enviros have moved on to ancient forests, climate chaos, and endocrine disrupters. But has the ozone crisis really passed? Can we afford not to cover it?

Recent images from ozone monitoring satellites and ground based UVB measurements suggest otherwise, and a few scientists who as recently as a year ago believed we would be spared an ozone layer catastrophe, are now not so certain. And there are worrisome signs that global efforts, as impressive as they are, may not be working well enough. The evidence has come in the form of some nasty surprises.

For example, NASA's Jay Herman reported this year that there has been a substantial increase in UV-B radiation

over populated areas in the last 15 years. Over England, Scandinavia, Germany, Russia and Canada, average exposure has increased 6.8 percent per decade and over Argentina and Chile the increase has been 9.9 percent per decade. Herman estimated that UV-B radiation increased by about two percent for every one percent decrease in the ozone layer.

In 1995, NOAA reported ozone depletion of 20-50 percent over Antarctica. This year the ozone hole opened earlier, was near record in size, and continues to per-

sist into December (when the sun is getting high enough to damage ecosystems in the Antarctic). At its peak this fall, the hole over the South Pole was "twice the size of Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains" according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In other words, the hole was roughly the size of the North American continent.

This spring, ozone values over the northern hemisphere were the lowest on record. At times the ozone layer was depleted by a record 45 percent over an area stretching from Greenland to Scandinavia and western Siberia. (Prior to 1990, springtime ozone depletion over the northern hemisphere rarely reached three percent.)

This March an unexpected rise in solar radiation—to twice its normal level—was recorded in Glasgow, Scotland and Cornwall, England. Similar increases likely occurred elsewhere on the planet at the same mid-latitudes, but were undetected for lack of sensing equipment.

Two separate investigations of CFC smuggling reveal that the practice is more pervasive than eco-diplomats and trade officials ever expected.

True, the scientific community said that ozone depletion would get worse before becoming better. And it has. But "worse" keeps getting worse than most atmospheric scientists or WMO expected. Their models have failed. Now all projections are subject to challenge, and two disconcerting questions emerge: Are we now moving too slowly? And are editors and reporters paying enough attention?

Reporter's Toolbox
is a regular feature of SEJournal, in which reporters and others offer tips on gathering news about environmental issues.

Contacts:

• **Guy Beaver**

NASA
(804) 864-5763

• **Eileen Claussen**

U.S. State Dept.
Washington, D.C.
(202) 647-1554
(Or Rafe Pomerance 647-4000)

• **Dr. Edward DeFabo**

George Washington Medical Center
2300 Eye St NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 994-3975
FAX: (202) 223-3691

Expert on ozone depletion and attendant health effects

• **Jerry Mahlman**

Director NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics lab Princeton, NJ
(609) 452-6502

• **Arjun Makhijani**

Institute for Energy and Environmental Research 6935 Laurel Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912
(301) 270-5500
FAX: (301) 270-3029

• **Dr Arthur Neuendorffer**

NOAA Science Center
Camp Springs, MD
(301) 763-8136
For stats on depletion.

• **John Passacatando**

Ozone Action
1621 Connecticut NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 265-6738

• **Dr. Alan Teramura**

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
University of Hawaii
Honolulu
(808) 956-6451

Reporters Toolbox

Had Dan Rather or his staff taken the time in June to call non-PR staffers at NOAA they would have learned that its own scientists were not of one mind on the interpretation of the agency's own ozone findings. "We drastically understated the case," says Jerry Mahlman, Director of NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab in Princeton, "by a factor of three or four."

Even Dr. Stephen Montzka, author of the NOAA report that generated all those upbeat stories about the future of ozone depletion cautioned: "Without widespread adherence to restrictions outlined in the revised Montreal Protocol, additional emissions of chlorinated and brominated compounds could slow or reverse the trends we have observed, and delay recovery of atmospheric ozone."

That quote was not given to me by

Montzka, it was in his report. But not a story that I saw, print or broadcast, repeated it. The coverage was largely sanguine.

Why are so many reporters in mainstream media taking a Panglossian view of ozone depletion? Do they truly believe that the problem is solved, or are they still reeling from the contrarian critiques of Greg Easterbrook and Julian Simon? Are we so desperate for good environmental news to balance the bad, that we overlook serious setbacks in ongoing stories?

There is no shortage of reliable public interest organizations that follow the ozone situation, even one that focuses almost exclusively on the subject, Ozone Action in Washington. It is an advocacy group, but their information and data is very easy to check, as it is well referenced and their staff is available for sourcing.

This is no time for attention deficit

disorder. Humanity may yet lick the ozone problem, and a magnificent global triumph that will be. But it's too early to abandon this story. Without close, critical media attention and some solid investigative reporting, the smugglers, scofflaws, and CFC cheaters will get away with their crimes and misdemeanors and ozone depletion will move suddenly into non-linearity. That means each new molecule of chlorine or bromine emitted into the stratosphere depletes ozone to a greater extent than the previous molecule. At that point no coverage will help.

Author Mark Dowie's last book *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (MIT Press) was nominated for a 1995 Pulitzer Prize.

The following list represents new members recorded from August 16 through November 4, 1996. Memberships recorded after November 4 will appear in volume 7, Number 1.

CALIFORNIA

- Dianne Kochenburg (associate), Anthropology/Sociology Dept., Santa Clara University, San Jose
- Anne M. Rosenthal (associate), Palo Alto

COLORADO

- Kelly Griffin (active), *Colorado Public Radio*, Denver

FLORIDA

- Mark E. Abraham (academic), Environmental Studies, University of West Florida, Pensacola
- Albia Dugger (active), *Sport Fishing Magazine*, World Publications, Miami

GEORGIA

- Babs Brockway (active), *The Times*, Gainesville

ILLINOIS

- Aliess M. Brady (active), *Conscious Choice: The Journal of Ecology & Natural Living*, Chicago
- Matt Hammill (active), *WQAD-TV*, Moline
- Judith Joy (active), *Centralia Sentinel*, Centralia

INDIANA

- Brooke Barnett (active), *WTIU*, Bloomington

- Tim Zorn (active), *Post Tribune*, Valparaiso

LOUISIANA

- Robert A. Thomas (academic), Loyola University, Department of Communications, New Orleans

MASSACHUSETTS

- Tracey I. Crago (associate), Sea Grant Program, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Woods Hole
- John B. Davis (active), Environment & Business Newsletter Group, Cutter Information Corp., Arlington
- Liz Lempert (active), "Living on Earth," *National Public Radio*, Cambridge
- Robert Stone (active), *WATD-FM*, Marshfield Broadcasting Company, Marshfield

MARYLAND

- Jack L. Cooper (associate), FIEN's Environmental Weekly, Silver Spring
- Jenny Weil (active), *Radioactive Exchange*, Bethesda

MICHIGAN

- Karlyn H. Duncan (academic), Environmental Journalism, Michigan State University, Haslett
- Joseph Harry (academic), School of Journalism, Michigan State University, East Lansing
- Kate McKee (active), *Detroit Free Press*, Detroit

MISSOURI

- Lorna Domke (associate), Public Affairs Division, Missouri Dept. of

Conservation, New Bloomfield

- William Greenblatt (active), United Press International, St. Louis
- Natalya Shulyakovskaya (active), *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, St. Louis

NEW YORK

- Robert Calo (active), Dateline, New York
- Kenneth Levy (active), "Environmental Minute," Kenetics Radio Entertainment, Brooklyn
- Bruce E. Matthews (academic), Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, Ithaca

TENNESSEE

- Anne Paine (active), *The Tennessean*, Nashville
- Emily Robinson (academic), *Econews*, Middle Tennessee State University, Nashville
- Dennis Lee Shaffer (academic), Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro

TEXAS

- Trinh T. Le (active), Sun Newspapers, Houston

VIRGINIA

- Jack Randolph (active), Colonial Height

WASHINGTON

- Orlando de Guzman (active), *KUOW Public Radio*, University of Washington, Seattle

WEST VIRGINIA

- Diana Knott (academic), West Virginia University, Morgantown

WISCONSIN

- Brian Lavendel (associate), Madison

Mega-media

Canada's big chains gobbling up the beat

By CRAIG SAUNDERS

Editor's Note: In the Summer 1996 SEJournal Amy Gahrn wrote about the possible effects of huge conglomerates buying up the U.S. news media. Craig Saunders answers with the Canadian experience.

The *Regina Leader-Post* in Saskatchewan, Canada, has a history of being dedicated to its employees. The paper was never part of a large chain. Not even during the depression did the *Leader-Post* lay off its staff.

In 1995 the huge Hollinger Corporation bought the prairie daily and roughly a quarter of the staff were laid off in the takeover. What happened at the *Leader-Post* was dramatic, but not entirely an isolated incident. The print media in Canada is being bought up en masse and cut to bare bones.

Sadly, the environment beat always seems to be one of the first to go. At some papers, the beat disappears, and the reporters are moved to other duties. At others, like the *Leader-Post*, the beat is eliminated. The newsroom at the paper no longer has enough staff to cover the environment regularly. Environment stories are taken if they're important enough and related to another beat, such as city hall, education, or business.

The print media in Canada has struggled for years against tight budgets, and has been increasingly owned by fewer and fewer people. While this is viewed as a problem by many Canadians, it is usually countered with the argument that the press has been owned by a handful of corporations for a long time, which is not particularly accurate.

True, a handful of large companies such as Hollinger, Thomson, Armadale, PowerCorp have owned the majority of the papers in Canada. The difference now is that Conrad Black's Hollinger single-handedly owns about half the circulation in the country, having just bought control of Canada's largest chain, Southam.

"It wasn't so long ago we didn't have

any environment reporters," said Malcolm Curtis, who covers the environment for the *Victoria Times-Colonist*. Although the Canadian Association of Journalists currently lists over 100 reporters as covering the environment beat, it quickly becomes apparent that few of them cover it full-time. Curtis says the *TC* maintains an environment beat while similar-sized papers like the *Leader-Post* cut the beat

Although newsrooms are increasingly having to prioritize beats and stories with less staff, there is no clear evidence that owners have a singularly anti-environment bias; but it does appear that they or their editors look upon the environment beat as a luxury item.

entirely because of public interest in the issues. In the Victoria area, high-profile environmental battles on Vancouver Island such as massive anti-logging protests at Clayoquot Sound in 1993 provided fuel for local public interest in environment stories.

The excuse for dropping the beat at other papers might be a result of lessened public interest in recent years, but Curtis sees it as a result of an era of neo-conservative management approaches: maximize profits while cutting expenses.

"When governments and companies are cutting back...the environment drops a notch or two (on the priority list)," he said. "I don't know if there's any big plot. It's more a matter of getting rid of bodies. If anyone goes, they're not replaced. I lobbied (to keep it)."

Newsrooms are increasingly having to prioritize beats and stories with less staff. While it's tempting to blame everything on Conrad Black, there is no clear evidence that he or any of the other owners have a singularly anti-environment bias, but it does appear that they or their editors look upon the environment beat as a luxury item.

David Radler, Hollinger president, confirmed that bottom line considerations are driving cutbacks, in quotes he made to *McLean Magazine* last November:

"Here's a guy (Bill Peterson, former Kingston Whig-Standard publisher) who in the third quarter made 1.7 percent (profit margin). Does that say it all?"

Other media have also cut back on environmental reporters. The *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)*, which runs English and French radio and television across the country, is losing more than half the staff it had in 1985.

Eve Savory used to cover the environment beat for CBC's national news program, "The National". Now no one focuses on the environment. The Canadian government recently announced that *Radio Canada International*, the corporation's short-

wave world service, will cease operations in March, ending environmental coverage there. The same message seems to be coming from newsrooms everywhere.

Many reporters still want to cover the environment, but with insufficient staff, how well is the job done? Coverage often amounts to little more than happy photo-ops by politicians. The largest newspapers, such as the *Vancouver Sun* or *Toronto Globe and Mail* still have environment reporters, but there is evidence that editors are downplaying environment stories.

When Hollinger took over the *Leader-Post*, an officer in the corporation said the previous operation "made money...(but) not enough money."

How much money is enough, and is it worth sacrificing important beats? As news becomes more centralized in Canada, who will cover the local issues? Who will dig up the truth about climate change issues, about logging in the Northern Gulf Islands, who will look at the problems with uranium mining in Saskatchewan?

Enough is enough.

Craig Saunders is a freelance environment reporter in Victoria, British Columbia.

Quiet pioneer reporter dies

Harold Scarlett set standard for environmental journalism

By BILL DAWSON

Anyone who might decide to write a history of environmental journalism should set aside plenty of time to study the files of the *Houston Post*, which closed in 1995. Stuffed into the *Post* library's old clipping envelopes are hundreds of articles by a man named Harold Scarlett, who died in October at the age of 70.

Put simply, Harold was one of the inventors of the environment beat in American newspapers. He was also one of the finest journalists I have known.

Harold retired at the end of 1990, around the time the Society of Environmental Journalists was just getting started. I believe his groundbreaking work was an early model for the principles and practices that inspired SEJ's founding.

He excelled at many things, including crisply written breaking news, investigative exposes, compelling features and thoughtful Sunday columns. He searched out news relentlessly and was uncommonly prolific. In one two-month period in early 1988 near the end of his career when his health was failing he still produced 34 articles on a wide range of topics. His work is widely credited with helping create an emerging environmental consciousness in Houston, a petrochemical boomtown where high-level pollution and helter-skelter development had not been examined as rigorously before.

Harold's first major foray into environmental reporting came in 1966, when he was a special assignment reporter for the *Post* and produced an award-winning series on Houston's air and water pollution. It was an era when air pollutants rained down like volcanic ash on some neighborhoods, and the Houston Ship Channel's industry-lined waters were essentially devoid of life.

In 1970, Harold was assigned to cover such problems as the *Post's* full-

time environment writer, becoming one of the first reporters with that position at any daily newspaper. Many more honors followed. On three occasions his work was recognized by Meeman Awards judges.

As Harold's *Houston Chronicle* competitor for six years, I fondly remember his public persona. At a typical press conference, the tall man would slump in a chair, inscribing voluminous notes. Often,

workers recall one of his methods: Lips moving silently, he would read his typed words back to himself before he sent an article to his editor.

In January, 1988, for example, Harold started a page-one news story about a long-overdue sewer improvement in an elite neighborhood this way: "River Oaks, that enclave of wealth and exclusivity, finally has shed its outhouse aroma."

The same month, one of his weekly columns lured readers into an account of how tires could be recycled into asphalt: "Old, discarded auto tires have long posed one of the unsolved environmental problems of this high-tech age: What in tarnation can you do with them?"

Brilliant writing was also wedded to an old-style reporter's sense of duty and mission, perhaps to be expected of a man who was wounded liberating Europe from the Nazis.

"He wanted the environment to be cleaned up, but even though that was his passion, he was a true reporter who gave you balanced, factual information," said Myron Knudson, a high-ranking regional official of the Environmental Protection Agency who knew Harold for many years. "He would not slant the truth and he would just tell it like it was," Knudson said. "He was one of those people you'll

remember all your lifetime who made a significant difference, but was not an elected leader."

A *Post* article marking Harold's retirement contained his advice to those concerned about the future of earth's air, land, and water. I like to think it's also a valuable reminder for environmental journalists who follow him: "Keep informed, keep alert, don't get hysterical and don't ever feel one person can't make a difference."

Bill Dawson is a reporter for the Houston Chronicle.



Harold Scarlett early in his career, hard at work

he let other reporters ask questions first. Then, in a deep, growling voice, he would cut to the heart of the issue at hand with a single, insightful query.

Many who knew him over the years describe him with the same word—"laconic." One longtime colleague at the *Post*, Bill Coulter, said Harold seemed like a character from a Dashiell Hammett novel. "He was silent and didn't say very much, but when he said something, it was right to the point."

Even if he was not a famous conversationalist, Harold's writing style was conversational, rendering complex issues interesting and immediate. Former co-

EPA softens PCB potency warnings

Millions of dollars may be saved on cleanup while health concerns still linger

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

Twenty years after Congress banned manufacture of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), in part due to their cancer threat, new test data and modern risk assessment techniques have triggered the Environmental Protection Agency to reduce its cancer risk estimates for these chemicals.

Downgrading was done not because PCBs were proven to be less hazardous than previously thought. In fact, data from new studies confirmed PCBs' cancer threat, and documented a new area where they might cause problems—the thyroid.

The new test data confirms and strengthens the agency's previous finding that all PCBs pose some cancer threat, including those with low chlorine content, according to Jim Coglianò, the lead EPA scientist for the PCB reassessment project. Nonetheless, the reassessment is expected to lead to a relaxation of PCB cleanup and water pollution standards.

The reduced cancer numbers are the result of modern assessment techniques applied to a large set of data, making it possible to distinguish between types of PCBs, some of which are more dangerous than others. Using three new risk assessment techniques to generate cancer potency estimates, Coglianò said, enabled EPA to generate cancer potency estimates on four PCBs that were sold widely in the United States until their manufacture was banned in 1977.

A cancer potency estimate is a mathematical expression of the cancer-causing potential of a substance. The four new PCB potency estimates adopted by EPA on Oct. 1 were about one-third that of the values set in 1988. Both state and federal agencies consult EPA's cancer assessments when setting standards.

The anticipated regulatory changes, such as a relaxed cleanup standard, may save companies and governments millions of dollars in hazardous waste cleanup costs because 25 percent of all federal superfund sites have PCB contamination, most notably PCBs in soil, according to EPA. Demand for the PCB reassessment came from Congress and the courts.

Several companies, including GE, challenged EPA's 1992 so-called national toxics rule, which set water pollution standards for PCBs among other chemicals (American Forest and Paper Association v. EPA, DC, No. 93-0694, partial settlement 11/15/95).

The three risk assessment techniques responsible for the reduction in potency estimates are the use of:

- a modern tumor classification scheme;



- a revised cross-species scaling factor, which is used to estimate a dose in humans based on doses given to rodents;
- a new approach for estimating exposure in the underlying studies.

The new thyroid cancer finding, seen only in male rats, was not unexpected, Coglianò said, explaining that structurally similar dioxins and furans cause this effect. The chemical testing, completed during the summer of 1996, was sponsored by the General Electric Co.

PCBs exist as mixtures of combinations of the 209 different congeners. The

water. EPA will also be able to back up those statements with data.

Because PCBs are widespread in the environment, people are exposed through contamination of air, water, sediment, soil, and certain foods, according to the agency. Due to a lack of data, EPA said it previously treated all PCBs in all environmental settings alike.

The new data will allow government risk assessors to adjust the risk estimates to account for environmental processes that could act to either increase or decrease the chemicals' toxicity, Coglianò said. This is important because the composition of PCB mixtures in the environment changes over time, such as preferential bioaccumulation, where certain PCBs accumulate selectively in living organisms, according to the report.

Cancer risk rises as chlorine content of the PCB increases, according to EPA. Because bioaccumulation through the food chain tends to concentrate PCBs with higher chlorine content, people exposed through the food chain would face the highest cancer risk. Populations of potentially highly exposed people include nursing infants and people whose diet is high in game fish, game animals, or highly contaminated animal products.

At the same time as EPA was relaxing its cancer potency estimates, new data suggesting that PCBs pose a developmental threat to children were being published and concern about their potential to disrupt the hormone systems in humans and wildlife are unresolved. A Sept. 12 *New England Journal of Medicine* article described developmental deficiencies observed in

children who had been exposed to PCBs through their mothers' diets and breast feeding.

Among the policy questions EPA must resolve is whether protecting people from PCB's cancer threat also will protect them from possible non-cancer problems, according to Dr. Lynn Goldman, a pediatrician and head of EPA's pesticides and toxic substances office.

EPA scientists said there probably are

The anticipated regulatory changes, such as a relaxed cleanup standard, may save companies and governments millions of dollars in hazardous waste cleanup costs because 25 percent of all federal superfund sites have PCB contamination.

commercial mixtures made in the United States are called Aroclors. The Aroclors in the GE studies represent about 90 percent of all U.S. production between 1957-1977, according to the company.

The new laboratory data and resulting potency estimates allow EPA to make some distinctions about PCBs in the environment, Coglianò said, such as the fact that those in fish cause much more concern than PCBs dissolved in drinking

not enough data yet to do a quantitative risk assessment for non-cancer effects of PCBs to resolve that question or resolve the endocrine disruption concerns. PCBs, however, seem to make every list of "potential endocrine disruptors" and are the focus of much research. An inventory of ongoing federal endocrine disruption

research shows of the 333 substances being studied, 109 are PCBs.

Cogliano suggested that resolution of these non-cancer questions is still a long way off. Copies of the EPA report, "PCBs: Cancer Dose-Response Assessment and Application to Environmental Mixtures," are available on

the internet [<http://www.epa.gov/ORD/WebPubs/pcb>] and for a fee from the National Technical Information Services (703) 487-4460.

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

SEJ web site finds a new home

By RUSSELL CLEMINGS

SEJ's home page on the World Wide Web has a new home itself. It's given up its old digs at the Tacoma (Wash.) News Tribune for new quarters in Columbia, Mo., at the National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting (NICAR).

Thanks to the way the Internet is structured, the change probably went unnoticed by most of the SEJ site's users. The address is still the same — <http://www.sej.org>. But since late October, when you type that address into your web browser, you've been connected to a computer in Missouri rather than Washington.

So why move?

One big reason: Our new host, NICAR, a joint venture of the University of Missouri and Investigative Reporters and Editors (which, like SEJ, is a 501(c)3 non-profit) is making it possible to add many services that members have requested.

The first new wrinkle resulting from the move is the addition of a search engine to the SEJ web site. Now, you can type in a few keywords and, in seconds, get a linkable list of places where those words appear within the web site—whether in the subject pages or in archived copies of the *TipSheet*, *SEJournal*, and other publications.

Visitors to the web page can search by keyword for, say, an unfamiliar chemical that they have to write about on deadline, or a new subject—electromagnetic fields, for example—that they need to learn about in a big hurry. (Soon, we hope to add Bud Ward's popular *Environmental Writer* newsletter to our search engine's master index, which is updated nightly.)

Some other new features made their first appearances on the web site just before October's SEJ national conference. One is the Environmental Journalism Gallery, a collection of links to outstanding environmental journalism on the web. Here, for example, you can read the *Raleigh News & Observer* series "Boss Hog," or Tom Knudson's fine writing on the Sea of Cortes for the *Sacramento Bee*.

Also, the SEJ web site now has a collection of links to job listings for journalists, including the *Editor & Publisher* classifieds, *American Journalism Review's* Joblink, and the *Ultimate Television Network*, for jobs in broadcasting. And there's another page with links to the National Library for the Environment's fine collection of Congressional Research Service reports on environmental topics, with a direct link to that site's search engine.

In the next few months, we plan to take advantage of

NICAR's capabilities to add some new areas to the SEJ web site that will be for members only. Some of the things that we're considering for that space include board meeting minutes, conference handouts, and fresh copies of the *TipSheet* and *SEJournal* (which are available now only on a time-delay basis).

But the web site isn't the only thing we're doing in the [sej.org](http://www.sej.org) domain. We're also creating several new listservs to supplement our existing, members-only list. At least one of these will be a general discussion list for environmental journalism, open to members and non-members alike.

And already, we've created a new listserv for people who want to help plan SEJ's 1997 national conference in Tucson, Ariz. (Send me e-mail at clemings@cris.com if you want to join this list.)

We're hungry for new ideas on other features to add to the SEJ web site. How about our own Usenet newsgroups—which function like bulletin board—for people who want to find roommates at regional and national conferences?

How about a place where, for a fee, public relations agents can post press releases, thus generating needed income for SEJ while giving web site users some additional sources of information? Or what about an idea I call EnviroFAQs—documents containing "Frequently Asked Questions" on environmental topics?

All of these ideas are under active consideration, but we welcome others. We also welcome help. Would you like to learn HTML, the simple programming language used to create web pages? Or would you just like to scour the Internet for useful sites to add to our pages of subject-oriented links? If you'd like to do either of these, drop me a line and I'll get you started.

Our near-term plans include several new projects, such as "Frequently Asked Questions" files on environmental topics.

The web page also contains information about how to join SEJ and regular updates on our national and regional conferences, many of which attract non-members as well. For example, on Sept. 7 we pulled in 80 people to the Stanford University campus for an all-day conference on computer-assisted reporting and the Internet, an event co-organized by the Northern California Science Writers Association and sponsored in part by NICAR.

Board member Russell Clemings, of the Fresno Bee is editor of the Online Bits and Bytes section of the *SEJournal* and co-chair of SEJ's online committee.



Advocacy

Saving the baby in the bathwater

By PETER FAIRLEY

SEJ's leaders have sought to distance the group from advocates on every side of the environmental debate since the organization was founded in 1990. Recently the board of directors decided not to co-sponsor an awards program for environmental reporters with the Bacardi Foundation on the basis of such reasoning. SEJ's good name could be tainted, the board reasoned, by the participation of a PR firm in the program's development or by some future environmental disaster linked to the Bacardi distillers.

The logic is sound, but I have begun to wonder if we are not taking it too far and, in the process, sending our members the wrong message. Clearly, advocacy on the part of journalists can lead the public to doubt our independence. But unchecked neutrality and a fear of risk-taking can also compromise our profession.

Journalists seeking truth will always suffer from the appearance of advocacy, because they are advocating for what they see as the values of their readers. We ask the questions we think they want and need to be answered, and when the answers are not forthcoming we are empowered to seek them out.

If journalists are to be advocates of the public, they need to know what their public wants and needs to know. November's elections left no doubt that the public cares about the environment. As Newt Gingrich has learned, U.S. citizens want environmental protection to be balanced against needs such as economic growth, but they do not want to see it trampled upon. Journalists also have a mandate from the voters for vigorous reporting on both the means and costs of environmental protection.

SEJ member and *Boston Globe* correspondent Dianne Dumanoski demonstrated a thorough grasp of this mandate by helping elucidate the risks which may be associated with chemicals which mimic hormones in *Our Stolen Future*. Weathering attacks from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, Dumanoski and her co-authors brought an important issue to the public's attention.

As a result of the public awareness the book helped foster, industry and governments around the world are allocating research dollars to address the problem. In the United States, representatives of industry, government and the environmental community are working together to define a strategy to screen for endocrine disruptors. In short, institutions are grappling with the issue thanks in no small part to the willingness of journalists to help define the terms of the nation's debate.

Viewpoints

is a regular feature offering a forum to journalists and non-journalists who deal with environmental issues in the media

What happens when journalists choose not to rock the boat? When the story finally breaks, the public feels cheated and under-served. Take the savings and loan crisis for example. Journalists who sensed early on that something was amiss at hundreds of the nation's financial institutions accepted reassurances from the experts in government and finance and held their tongues. As the *Post's* Howard Kurtz writes in his book *Media Circus*: "We were trapped by the conventions of objective journalism, the insistence on quoting experts, when what was needed was some old-fashioned crusading."

I think passive reporting is visible today in the under-reporting of declining regulatory enforcement at EPA. Regulatory penalty actions—the deterrent driving industry's compliance with expensive regulations—dropped 35% drop in fiscal 1995 in comparison to 1994. A shift in priority at EPA towards criminal enforcement and "compliance assistance," appears to be responsible.

Why have these shifts in enforcement received so little attention from the press since the end of June when they were announced? Because none of the experts in Washington were talking. Not EPA. Not the GOP, who had much to lose by calling hearings on the enforcement effort

they themselves tried to slash in fiscal 1996. And not the Congressional Democrats or the environmental groups gunning for them. Anybody writing about EPA's choice to cut spending on regulatory enforcement would risk undercutting the Democrats' election-year environmental advantage over the Republicans.

Investigative journalism requires a willingness to get involved in the debate by bringing new facts and new interpretations to bear on arguments. It requires a willingness to "appear" to be an advocate for one side when the facts point in their direction.

Of course, lines have to be drawn around advocacy in journalism. Membership in environmental organizations or active investment in corporations which we cover, for example, clearly crosses this line. And biased reporting which is clearly unsupported by fact is unlikely to earn readership for any journal.

Nevertheless, the best journalism (as in award-winning journalism) requires more than objectivity; it requires guts. Seeking neutrality, I fear, means risking irrelevance. In essence, there is much to be lost in an effort to purge advocacy from our ranks.

There is no question that SEJ is capable of taking risks and getting its hands dirty; it demonstrated that this summer by co-sponsoring a two-day symposium in Washington on international housing issues with the World Resources Institute. And I am not convinced that the board erred in rejecting the Bacardi Foundation's offer. I simply think we should bear in mind that protecting our good name from potential criticism came with a price: the awards will go on without SEJ, depriving the organization of an opportunity to help define in an ongoing manner just what excellence in environmental reporting entails.

Peter Fairley, new "Viewpoints" editor, covers environmental politics and regulation as the Washington Bureau chief for Chemical Week, an independent newsmagazine.

From one who's been there

CHRONICLING THE WEST: THIRTY YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL WRITING

by Michael Frome

The Mountaineers, 1996, \$16.95 (paper)

Someone aiming to make environmental journalism their life's work would have a hard time finding a better object of study than Michael Frome. His life is laid out, in word and deed, in this anthology charting 30 years of Frome's nearly half-century as an environmental writer.

Frome, a native of New York City, decided to become a journalist after reading the autobiography of the pioneering muckraker Lincoln Steffens. A copyboy stint at the *Washington Post* prior to World War II grew into a reporting job. Flacking 10 years for the American Automobile Association got him interested in outdoor recreation and sparked a lifelong love affair with the American West.

In the 1950s, Frome took to freelancing, writing travel pieces and guidebooks. He became a conservation columnist for *American Forests* and *Field and Stream*, and was writing about wilderness, range and forest politics when most SEJ members were reading Little Golden Books. Back then, editors considered him to be "safe—independent but not extreme," Frome writes. But the more Frome knew, the less safe he became.

Alarmed by shoddy management and undue industry influence in his beloved Forest Service, Frome began to write about the problems, not sparing the malefactors. His editors were not amused. *American Forests* canned him in 1971. Then *Field & Stream* gave him the axe; "the new editor directed that I write in generalities without naming names." Frome moved on to Defenders of Wildlife, where he continued his column for 18 years—until he was fired in 1992. According to Frome, Defenders' staff and board members complained that his columns might upset Republican contributors or Capitol Hill aides.

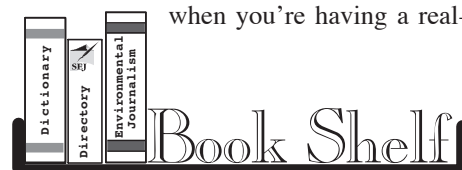
From 1982 to 1995, Frome taught environmental journalism, first at the University of Idaho, then at Western Washington University. His *National Parks Guide* is in its umpteenth edition. And throughout his career, he hasn't hesitated to walk when pressured to back off.

"Truth-telling ultimately will prevail,"

Frome writes. "Too many writers self-censor their own work, anticipate trouble and sanitize their writing to the point of banality. That is their choice. I learned when one door closes, another opens."

This collection has more currency than most journalistic anthologies, perhaps because the controversies examined have changed little over the last three decades. It's particularly useful for reporters new to the environmental beat; how often do you get the history of wilderness preservation explained by a guy who remembers Hubert Humphrey proposing a Wilderness Act—back in 1956?

Perhaps more important, *Chronicling the West* is the book to pull off the shelf when you're having a real-



ly bad day on the beat. Several years ago I had breakfast with Frome at the tony Cosmos Club, where he delights in being a member. Over the fruit cup, I unloaded my frustrations about environmental reporting: no money, no space, editors going for celebrity profiles over substance. Michael smiled his courtly smile. "You've got to fight," he said. "Fight for what you know to be true. Keep writing. You'll find a way." I did.

—Nancy Shute

Anatomy of a toxic waste dump

UPROAR AT DANCING RABBIT CREEK

by Colin Crawford, \$24.00

Addison-Wesley, 410 pp.

One might assume that a tale about a turf war over rival toxic waste dump proposals might delve into environmental detail. Colin Crawford's superb book does not, and therein lies a central lesson: Environmental stories are often best told through the lives of people, not through bio-assays and parts per billion.

Noxubee County, Mississippi, cotton-covered and dirt-poor, integrated belatedly and temporarily. Today, the public high school is all black, the private academy all white. Mistrust between the races is constant; interaction takes place only when necessary. The county's poverty and ossified divisions ideally fit the siting profile

of a major toxic waste dump. Noxubee chased away dump proposals in the 1980s, but the simultaneous arrival of two 1990's offers, each laden with gifts and promises, sets the sleepy county on its ear.

Crawford, a New York environmental lawyer, juxtaposes the literary Mississippi of William Faulkner with that of Richard Wright. One waste company curries favor with the "power structure" (read white minority), while the other reaches out to the "community." Two grassroots opposition groups, separate but presumably equal, refuse to work together on their shared cause. Some African-Americans see the proposals as environmental racism, but when a Daughter of the Confederacy emerges as the county's leading activist opponent, most of Noxubee's black community equates repression of the waste dumps with plain old repression. Church congregations divide, with waste site opponents and supporters taking different sides of the aisle.

The book's title alludes to the site of an 1830 treaty signing in which the Choctaw Nation ceded much of Mississippi to whites. From this historic launchpoint, Crawford deftly maintains another Southern literary theme throughout: Land is the only thing that matters, even as plantations replaced Choctaw villages, sharecroppers replaced slaves, and Chemical maneuvered to replace Cotton as king. No one in Noxubee dodged these changes: In the 1980s, even the county's remnant Choctaw population briefly entertained a waste dump offer.

Corruption is a recurring theme, but Crawford occasionally translates hearsay into apparent fact. An assertion of political payoffs followed by a parenthetical disclaimer "(this was never proven)" wouldn't fly by most editors or attorneys, but surprisingly does here. Crawford reserves his strongest contempt for non-native combatants: Waste dumpers and activist opponents, each carpetbagging into Noxubee to back their respective proxies in the national waste war.

In language even Northerners can understand, the author patiently recounts the cycle of mistakes, setbacks and eternal mistrust that mark Noxubee's history. His truth is stranger than most fiction, and is valuable reading for anyone seeking the root causes of environmental conflict.

—Peter Dykstra

**Books by
Members**

**Books by
Members**

Lashing the brownlashers

BETRAYAL OF SCIENCE AND REASON: HOW ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC THREATENS OUR FUTURE

By Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich
A Shearwater Book Published by Island Press 1996 \$24.95 (hardcover)

In four decades of writing about the environment, Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich, sometimes with his wife, Anne Ehrlich, has authored a spate of influential books, including *The Population Bomb*, *The Machinery of Nature*, *Extinction*, *Science of Ecology*, *Healing the Planet* and *The Stork and the Plow*. In *Betrayal of Science and Reason*, the Ehrlichs have authored a reasonable response to the special-interest scientists riding the wave of "brownlash," those who argue that the seriousness of environmental problems has been exaggerated by politically motivated environmental groups. "We classify them as brownlashers by what they say, not by who they are," the Ehrlichs write. Brownlashers distort and deny mainstream scientific thinking, the Ehrlichs claim. This new breed aims its efforts at rolling back environmental policies in favor of immediate economic interests.

The Ehrlichs also charge that some of these scientists receive funding from business and industry groups, the very ones with the most at stake if major changes in policy or practice are necessary. In seeking opposing points of view, journalists inadvertently promote brownlashers aligned with right-wing causes and private interests, lending them undeserved credibility, the Ehrlichs note.

In addition to attacking brownlashers' pseudo science, the Ehrlichs also look at global climate change, its effect on water resources and food production, and the implications for human survival. Environmental journalists have a solid reference book here, with each topic thoroughly footnoted and backed by studies and references to other works. After years of sometimes harsh and startling points of view in their work, the latest volume appears less shrill and more grounded in scientific evidence. The endnotes are worth the price of the book alone.

As scientists, the Ehrlichs explain what they mean, and what science knows so far, in clear, understandable language. And, refreshingly, they don't deliver a

steady stream of bad news. This is one of their more balanced works on some confusing and weighty subjects. As counterbalance to the hundreds of press releases and new books crossing the desks of environmental journalists every week, this one deserves a place within arm's reach for a dose of common sense.

—Mary Manning

The big picture on birds

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

by Noel Grove

Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., \$60

Stunning, spectacular, magnificent. Those are a few of the superlatives that spring to mind to describe *Birds of North America* by Noel Grove, former *National Geographic* staff writer.

Neither a field guide nor scientific treatise, this is an unabashed coffee-table volume on a topic which has no shortage of competition. But Grove's collection of the avian art of seven photographers with his short essays stands well above the many others I have come across.

Why is the term "coffee-table book" frequently heard as a term of derision, as though a volume whose intent is to showcase the aesthetic elements is somehow not quite as valued as some weightier text-laden tome? Instead, it is books like this that often spark the engine in the environmental vehicle. How do you take steps to curb the alarming drop in songbirds, for example, if nobody cares about the birds?

My lifelong involvement in the activity leaves me no doubt that the people who take pleasure in the sight or song of birds make up a hefty chunk of America. Call them bird watchers or enthusiasts, their numbers and political influence are formidable. It is these people—bird lovers of all stripes and levels of participation—at whom Grove's book squarely aims.

By way of introduction, Grove describes the book as "a compendium of simple wonder, a collection of intimate portraits and details about a group of marvelous animals whose world we can never truly share." Gorgeously illustrated, thoughtfully written and arranged, "Birds" is one of the most eloquent statements in recent print as to what our efforts as environmental journalists should be.

—Paul Sullivan

Rocky road of global analysis

DIVIDED PLANET: THE ECOLOGY OF RICH AND POOR

by Tom Athanasiou

Little, Brown & Company

\$24.95 307 pages

This update on the international environmentalist perspective does not answer the questions it poses. Although the author successfully demonstrates that the world has increasingly been divided between very rich and very poor, he is less successful at defining the relationship between these economic disparities and environmental degradation. Instead, Athanasiou demonstrates that "environmentalism is only now reaching its political maturity."

The first half of the book takes the reader on an almost reckless but informative tour of the past 25 years of environmental activism. Athanasiou, himself an activist in environmental and technology politics who has written for *The Nation*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and many environmental publications, delves into the ban on CFCs, the Earth Summit and McDonalds in Moscow. He draws a distinct line between northern and southern hemispheres, and broadly outlines the dilemmas of each.

Single paragraphs about the impacts on the poor of the decline of world fisheries, the reduction of crop diversity, and global trade dot the first few chapters. These environmental impacts are some of the consequences of economic disparities, and focusing on them would have generated a more groundbreaking book.

In the book's second half, Athanasiou discusses some of the causes of economic disparities between North and South. For example, he says that most aid given by developed countries is spent on their own goods, therefore never leaving the country of origin as capital while still increasing the South's debt. He considers the impacts of free trade—NAFTA and GATT—on the South. Both trade and aid, Athanasiou says, have increased the flow of money from the South to the North.

SEJ members may find "The Age of Greenwashing" the most interesting chapter. Aside from providing some entertaining examples of extreme greenwashing, Athanasiou provides a good discussion of the psychological and political impacts of this phenomenon.

—Sarah Gilbert

Books by
Members

JANUARY

22-25. Ecological Farming Conference (sponsored by the Committee for Sustainable Agriculture), Asilomar, CA. Contact: CSA, 406 Mail St., Watsonville, CA. 95076. Ph: (408) 763-2111; FAX: (408) 763-2112.

29-30. California Biosolids Conference (billed as a forum for researchers and others to share practical information on the use of treated sewage sludge as a fertilizer and soil amendment in agriculture. Sessions will include crop responses, legal issues, and economics), Sacramento. Contact: Brett Maroz, Ph: (209) 333-7649, or Woodie Woodruff, Ph. (209) 847-4322.

FEBRUARY

4-5. Corporate Environmental Health and Safety Excellence Conference (with sessions on such topics as practical tools for implementing "green" technologies, making environmental investments pay off economically, and managing site remediation like a business). New York City. Contact: Diane Millikan, Arthur D. Little, Acorn Park, Cambridge, MA . 02140-2390. Ph: (617) 498-5896; FAX: (617) 498-7200; E-mail: millikan.d@adlittle.com.

5-8. Monitoring our Wildlife Heritage: What do we have? How do we know? (convened by the western section of the Wildlife Society). San Diego. Contact: R.H. Barrett, 145 Mulford Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA. 94720-3114, Ph. (510) 642-7261. E-mail: rbarrett@nature.berkeley.edu.

13-18. American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting (with sessions on such topics as managing marine fisheries, the science of marine protected areas, environmental security for regional stability, linking agriculture to human needs, epidemiology of low-dose environmental exposures, sustainable forestry, contaminants in surface soils, restoring Columbia River salmon, restoration of Pacific wetlands, biodiversity, and climate change). Seattle. Contact: Ellen Cooper, AAAS (202) 326-6431; FAX: 789-0455; E-mail: ecooper@aaas.org; Web: www.aaas.org.

21-23. First National Research Conference on Children's Environmental Health (with sessions on asthma and respiratory diseases, environmental justice, endocrine disrupters and children, neurodevelopmental toxicants, and genetic susceptibility factors) . Washington, D.C. Contact: Carol Harris, Children's Environmental Health Network, 5900 Hollis St., Ste. E-Annex 10, Emeryville, CA. 94608. Ph: (510) 450-3818; FAX: (510) 450-3773; E-mail: charris2@hw1.cahwnet.gov.

22-26. Environmental Concerns in Rights-Of-Way Management (sponsored by Electric Power Research Institute, with sessions on maintaining biodiversity, pesticides, erosion control, and wildlife issues). New Orleans. Contact: James R. (Randy) Williams, Environmental Management, Energy Services, Inc. L-ENT-5D, P.O. Box 61000, New Orleans, LA. 70161. Ph: (504) 576-6274; FAX: (504) 576-4536.

MARCH

2-5. International Symposium on Waterborne Cryptosporidium (sponsored by American Water Works Association., with sessions on epidemiology of the disease, effectiveness of disinfectants, sources, and research needs). Newport Beach, CA. Contact: Brian Murphy, AWWA, 6666 W. Quincy Ave., Denver, CO. 80235. Ph: (303) 347-6194; FAX: (303) 794-8915.

2-7. High-Level (radioactive) Wastes, Low-Level Wastes, Mixed Wastes and Environmental Restoration (sponsored by the University of Arizona, American Nuclear Society, Energy Department, and others). Tucson. Contact: WM Symposium, Inc., 245 S. Plumer, Ste. 19, Tucson, AZ. 85719. Ph: (520) 624-8573; FAX: (520) 792-3993; E-mail: abstracts@wmsym.org; Web: http://wmsym.org/.

9-13. Society of Toxicology annual meeting (with sessions on toxicants that affect cognition, PCB toxicity, role of beta-carotene in protection or toxicity, genetic susceptibility to some inhaled agents, reproductive risks, and an update on benzene). Cincinnati. Contact: Executive Director, Society of Toxicology, 1767 Business Center Dr., Ste. 302, Reston, VA. 20190.

10-13. Wetlands '97—the Future of Wetland Assessment (with sessions on such topics as lessons learned, assessing ownership and public trust issues, ways to assess impacts to wetlands). Annapolis, MD. Contact: Association of Wetlands Managers, P.O. Box 269, 1434 Helderberg Trail, Berne, NY. 12023-9746. Ph: (518) 872-1804; FAX: (518) 872-2171; E-mail: aswmi@aol.com. Web: http://members.aol.com/ASWMI/homepage.html.

17-19. Remote Sensing for Marine and Coastal Environments (with sessions on using aerial photogrammetry for managing wetlands, coral reefs, fisheries and water quality; and charting beach erosion, oil and chemical spills, or harmful algal blooms). Orlando. Contact: Wendy Raeder, ERIM, P.O. Box 134001, Ann Arbor, MI. 48113-4001. Ph: (313) 994-1200, ext. 3234; FAX : (313) 994-5123; E-mail: raeder@erim.org; Web: http://www.erim.org/CONF/conf.html.

27-29. International Clean Water Conference (sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute, includes sessions on metal pollution, reauthorization of the Clean Water Act, how long pollutants remain in the water, sediment quality issues, and bioaccumulation of pollutants from exposure to tainted waters). Baltimore. Contact: Christine Lillie, EPRI, P.O. Box 10412, Palo Alto, CA. 94303-9743. Ph: (415) 855-2010; FAX: (415) 855-2041; E-mail: clillie@epri.net.epri.com.

APRIL

6-11. International Ocean Pollution Symposium. Fort Pierce, FL. Contact: Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL. 32901. FAX: (407) 984-8461; E-mail: iops@fit.edu. Web: http://www.fit.edu/~duedall/iops.

7-11. International Symposium on Radionuclides in the Oceans (with session focusing on impacts on humans and the environment). Norwich, England. Contact: RADOC 96-97, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), Fisheries Laboratory, Lowestoft NR33, OHT, United Kingdom.

19-20. Spatial Data and Remote Sensing in Invertebrate Fisheries Habitat, Research and Management (with sessions on algal blooms, protecting reefs, tracking commercial fishing vessels, and quantifying stocks). Fort Walton Beach, FL. Contact: Gary Smith, Cooperative Oxford Laboratory, 904 S. Morris St., Oxford, MS. 21654.

19-24. Environmental Mutagen Society annual meeting. Minneapolis. Contact: Sid Aaron, Pharmacia and Upjohn Inc., 301 Henrietta St., Kalamazoo, MI. 49007. Ph: (616) 833-1399; FAX: 616-833-9722; E-mail: saaron@am.pnu.com.

24-26. Cover Crops, Soil Quality, and Ecosystems (sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society). Sacramento. Contact: SWCS, 7515 NE Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA. 50021-9764. Ph. (515) 289-1227.

MAY

4-7. International Symposium on Electricity Production and Greenhouse Gases: Facts and Perspectives. Montreal. Contact: GEOTOPUQAM, C.P. 8888, succursale Centre-Ville, Montréal (Quebec), Canada.

11-12. International Conference on Health Effects of Low Dose Radiation. Stratford-Upon-Avon. Contact: ESTRO Secretariat, UH Gasthuisberg, Herestraat 49, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium.

11-14. Conference on Incineration and Thermal Treatment Technologies. Oakland CA. Contact: Lori B. Cohen, University of California, Environmental Health and Safety Program, Irvine, CA. 92697-2725.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Feb.28. Individuals wishing to conduct research on the history of chemistry at the Othmer Library of Chemical History and other Philadelphia institutions may apply for a \$2,000 stipend for up to four weeks of study during the summer of 1997. The **Glenn E. and Barbara Hodsdon Ulliot Scholarship** is offered through the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia to advance public understanding of how important the chemical sciences are to public welfare. Contact: Laurel Adelman, CHF, 315 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA. 19106. Ph: (215) 925-2222; FAX: (215) 925-1954; Net: <http://chemheritage.org>.

Feb. 28. Nominations or submissions for the new **American Society for Microbiology (ASM) public communications award.** To be eligible, writers or broadcasters must have pub-

lished a story in 1996 that contributes to the public understanding of microbes. Stories on anything from germs in the kitchen and/or gut, to bioremediation of toxic waste sites are fair game. Contact: ASM Public Communications Award, American Society of Microbiology, 1325 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-4171. Ph: (202) 942-9297.

Mar. 1. The University of Colorado at Boulder is again offering nine-month-long **Ted Scripps Fellowships** in Environmental Journalism. Open to full-time journalists, it offers a \$26,000 stipend for the mid-August to mid-May academic year. Fellows receive an opportunity to study environmental science, policy, and law. Contact: Center for Environmental Journalism, University of Colorado, Boulder, Campus Box 287, Boulder, CO. 80309-0287. Ph: (303) 492-4114. Web: <http://campuspress.colorado.edu/cej.html>.

Mar. 1. The **Knight Fellowships** for mid-career science journalists—full-time or freelance—is again offering a nine-month program of classes and seminars at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Its \$26,000 stipend is in addition to moving expenses to the Boston area. Many past fellows have been environmental reporters. Contact: Martha Henry, Knight Science Journalism Fellowships, MIT E 32-300, Cambridge, MA. 02139. Ph: (617) 253-2336; FAX: (617) 258-8100; E-mail: ksjf-www@mit.edu. Web: <http://web.mit.edu/ksjf/www/>.

Mar. 3. The Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, MA., is again offering **journalism fellowships on biomedical and environmental research.** The core program is an intensive week of study and hands-on training. Several attendees will be allowed to stay an additional three to seven weeks to participate in field research with ecologists or to study with lab scientists conducting actual research. The program picks up the cost of tuition, housing, and transportation. Families are welcome. At least one reporter will also be selected to study ecosystems research on Alaska's North Slope. Other venues (depending on funding) include Brazil and Sweden. Contact: MBL Science Writing Fellowships Program, Marine Biological Laboratory, 7 MBL St., Woods Hole, MA. 02543-1015. E-mail: pclapp@mbi.edu.

Mar. 14-16. The Foundations for American Communications (FACS) is planning a workshop for journalists on this date, titled **"Reporting on Risk and the Changing Environment."** At press time, the venue was still undecided but the fee was anticipated to be \$100, which would cover all materials and meals. Up to 40 reporters will be accepted. Contact: Chris Gardner, FACS, 3800 Barham Blvd., Ste. 409, Los Angeles, CA. 90068. Ph: (213) 851-7372; FAX: (213) 851-9186; E-mail: facs@facenet.org.

May 1. Reporters and editors interested in another FACS program—**Institute on Economics for journalists**—are encouraged to register early as only 25 reporters will be admitted. The actual workshop will take place in Marshall, CA., from Aug. 16-22. Contact FACS at the address above.



Society of Environmental Journalists Application for Membership

Instructions:

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

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

(Please print legibly. Include e-business card if possible.)

Name _____ Employer or University _____

Publication or Department _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Title _____ Date of Application _____

Home Phone * _____

Primary Area of Employment (Check one only):

Work Phone _____

☐ Author

☐ Educator

☐ Freelancer

☐ Government

☐ Magazine

Fax _____

☐ News service

☐ Newsletter

☐ Newspaper

☐ Nonprofit

☐ Photographer

E-mail address _____

☐ Publisher

☐ Radio

☐ Student

☐ Television

☐ University

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

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

☐ Active

Persons primarily engaged in the gathering, reporting, editing, photographing, producing or cartooning of news for dissemination by regularly published, general circulation newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, as well as radio and television stations and networks, news services, and other media available to the general public.

☐ Academic

Persons on the faculty or enrolled as students of an accredited college, university, or other school who have an interest in environmental issues.

☐ Associate

Those individuals, such as part-time freelancers, who do not qualify for Active or Academic membership but who, in the majority opinion of the SEJ board, will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the SEJ. Applicants must be substantially engaged in journalistic pursuits.

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

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

Payment Information:

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

Check Enclosed ☐



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

Account Number: _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Date _____

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

Briefly describe duties _____

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

If yes, provide details and dates: _____

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

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

If yes, for whom? _____

To Be Completed by Applicants for Active or Associate Membership.

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what organization or movement? _____

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

☐ advertising ☐ paid subscriptions ☐ membership dues ☐ other

If "other", please specify: _____

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

Please complete the following with as much detail as possible:

☐ Full Time Freelancer: How long? (Starting date) _____

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

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

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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

Signature

Date

Office Use Only

Status Assignment: _____

Date of Acceptance: _____

Notes

Vol. 6 No. 4

Green Beat Correspondents

Contribute to Green Beat

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

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

Alabama — Sean Reilly, *Anniston Star* Montgomery Bureau, 1621 Deatsville Hwy., Millbrook, AL 36054, (334) 262-5489.

Alaska — Vacant.

Arizona and New Mexico — Vacant

Arkansas — Vacant

California:

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

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

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

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

Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts — Bob Wyss at the *Providence Journal*, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902, (401) 277-7364.

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

Florida:

North Florida — Bruce Ritchie at the *Gainesville Sun*, P.O. Box 147147, Gainesville, FL 32614, (352) 374-5087

South Florida — Vacant.

Georgia and South Carolina — Vacant

Hawaii — Joan Conrow at the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Kawai Bureau, PO. Box 3404, Lihue, HI, 96776, (808) 828-0620.

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

Illinois — John Wasik at *Consumers Digest*, P.O. Box 51, Wauconda, IL, 60684, (773) 275-3590, ext. 7111.

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

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

Kentucky — Vacant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Jersey — Peter Page at the *Trenton Times*, 513 Berwyn Road, Morrisville, PA, 19067, (609) 989-5701.

New York — Carol Kaplan at WGRZ-TV, 259 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY, 14202, (716) 849-5756, Fax: (716) 849-5706.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Texas and Oklahoma:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wisconsin — Chuck Quirnbach of Wisconsin Public Radio, 111 E. Kilbourn Ave., #1060, Milwaukee, WI 53202, (414) 227-2040

Greenbeat correspondents needed

Please note openings for correspondents in several states. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Kevin Carmody at (773) 229-2814. Positions are open to any SEJ member, though preference will be given to working journalists or educators.

CALIFORNIA

► The Sierra Business Council is a group of 450 businesses that is trying to move the environmental debate beyond “jobs versus the environment,” Jon Christensen wrote in *The New York Times*, Business Day, November 30, 1996. The council has produced a Sierra Nevada Wealth Index that tracks 42 indicators of the region’s well-being from water quality to school test scores and employment. “Each form or capital—our human, natural and financial resources—is critical to having a prosperous, stable and sustainable economy,” the council concluded. The wealth index is available for \$11 from the Sierra Business Council, P.O. Box 2428, Truckee, CA 96160, e-mail: SBC@sierra.net, (916) 582-4800, or for more information contact Jon Christensen at (702) 885-2023.

► Environmentalists are still battling with a Texas tycoon over the fate of California’s prized 2,000-year-old redwoods, the last privately owned ancient stands in the world. California environmental reporters converged on Humboldt County, 280 miles north of San Francisco, to write dozens of stories about the ecological and economic value of the pristine 3,000-acre Headwaters Grove and surrounding forests, protests and arrests and logger towns and Earth First encampments. The tale includes S&L debt entanglements of redwoods owner Houston financier Charles Hurwitz, Woody Harrelson’s swinging in protest from the Golden Gate Bridge, and the progress of a proposed deal to trade federal and state land for the redwoods. Check libraries from December 1995 to the present for the *San Francisco Examiner*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, *Sacramento Bee*, *KGO* radio in San Francisco, *KMUD* in Garberville and all Northern California newspapers and broadcast outlets.

► Day and night in Silicon Valley, chugging pumps at dozens of electronic companies suck up billions of gallons of groundwater, searching for solvents spilled decades ago. In the past dozen years, seven major firms, including giants IBM Corp. and Intel Corp., pumped up,

filtered and dumped 40 to 80 billion gallons, enough to supply 600,000 to 1.2 million people for a year. It’s San Francisco Bay area’s worst groundwater pollution problem, and a debate still rages over how best to contain it. (Dec. 1.) Call Jane Kay at *San Francisco Examiner* at (415) 777-8704.

► Five miles of Big Sur’s scenic oceanfront land—once proposed for a 100-room hotel and 98 houses—was forever placed off limits to development in November. In the largest land deal of its kind ever completed in California, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors agreed to pay landowner Jim Hill \$11.5 million for the development rights to 3,550 acres of his El Sur Ranch. Buying the land’s views, but not the land, highlights a growing trend in land conservation. (Nov. 29.) Call Paul Rogers at (408) 920-5045.

► A 8,400-gallon fuel oil spill hit San Francisco Bay, spreading the goo along piers, parks and beaches. The *Chronicle’s* Alex Barnum immediately chronicled the spill with graphics and photos (Oct. 30). Jim Bruggers of the *Contra Costa* brought home to the Bay the importance of quick response. He quoted the U.S. Coast Guard as saying a bigger spill would be “an absolute mess. It’s going to get all over everywhere” (Nov. 2). *San Francisco Examiner’s* Jane Kay wrote that the relatively insignificant spill that overwhelmed cleanup crews exposed flaws in emergency-response and cleanup plans instituted after the 1989 Exxon Valdez accident (Nov. 10). She wrote that a new University of California at Davis study published three days before the spill claimed that cleaning birds doesn’t really save their lives (Nov. 4). Call Alex Barnum at (415) 777-7184, Jim Bruggers at (510) 943-8246 or Jane Kay at (415) 777-8704.

► Kaiser Cement insists the air pollution caused by burning old tires instead of coal is minute, but can Santa Clara Valley’s air take the toxic hit? For 45 days last winter, Kaiser’s plant in the hills above Cupertino burned 100,000 Michelins, Goodyears, and Pirellis. Residents say any increase in pollutants is too much, including traces of dioxin.

They hope to force Kaiser to conduct a full environmental review before one more retread is tossed into the kiln. (Oct. 17.) Call Michael Learmonth at *San Jose Metro* at (408) 298-8000 Ext. 214.

► An island off Redwood City has become the focus of an international campaign aimed at persuading its Japanese owners to sell it to a wildlife refuge. In a full-page ad published in Tuesday’s *New York Times*, a coalition of environmental organizations implored Kumagai-Gumi, a Japanese construction colossus, to give up an idea of developing Bair Island and allow it to revert to salt marsh. The 1,673-acre island is contiguous to the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, one of the most important stopovers on the Pacific Flyway. (Oct. 9.) Contact Eric Brazil at the *San Francisco Examiner* at (415) 777 7876.

► A controversial proposal for a 1,000-acre low-level nuclear waste dump in Ward Valley, 20 miles east of Needles, pits big city interests that want to send their radioactive garbage far away against a relatively few desert denizens who don’t want anything that might glow in the dark in their backyards. Jim Bruggers of the *Contra Costa Times* wrote about the pros and cons of burying the waste near the Colorado River, a drinking water source to millions. The federal government has put the brakes on the dump for the time being, but state officials continue to promote it. (July 14.) For more information, call (510) 943-8246.

► Chevron Inc. is tearing down offshore oil platforms as familiar as palm trees along the Santa Barbara coast, saying its profitable wells are tapped out. When the \$40 million job ends, there will be no visible evidence of the rigs that stood closest to the shore. Founders of GOO (Get Oil Out), spawned by California’s notorious Unocal spill in 1969, say good riddance to eyesores. Twenty-eight rigs remain, a reminder of the once booming oil extraction that is moving elsewhere. (July 8.) Call Paul Rogers of the *San Jose Mercury News* at (408) 920-5045.

► There is good news in Yosemite. No, park officials haven’t trained mosqui-

toes to avoid hikers. They've finally trained the park's concession operator not to bite taxpayers. Yosemite's 4 million visitors will soon see long-overdue repairs and other improvements as the new concessionaire, Delaware North Co., a Buffalo-based firm, pays the highest rate at any major national park. (May 26.) Call Paul Rogers at the *San Jose Mercury News* at 408-920-5045.

► In "Rescuing the Delta," a 20-page special section on the *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, Jim Bruggers, Denis Cuff, Joan Morris and Lisa Hayden of the *Contra Costa Times* described how development, dredging, and water projects have damaged fisheries, levees, and water quality. The series helped chart a course for the future by analyzing various federal and state proposals for restoring wetlands and streams for humans, fish, and wildlife. (May 19.) Call (510) 943-8246.

► Cash-strapped Congress is siphoning money from a little known fund meant to buy scenic lands for public ownership with almost no public awareness. Since the early 1980s, Congress is spending only a part of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for its intended purpose. (May 10.) For information, contact Paul Rogers of the *San Jose Mercury News* at (408) 920-5045.

► The *Contra Costa Times* looked at the backlash following the passage of the California Desert Protection Act. Private property rights proponents and off-road vehicle fans tried to get Congress to take back the law, and get rid of some wilderness designations. From the Mohave Desert, Jim Bruggers explained what was there that made it worth protecting as a new national park. (May 5.) For more information, call (510) 935-2525.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► More than two years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency began overhauling its Office of Research and Development. Jeff Johnson of *Environmental Science and Technology News* explored whether this change to EPA's science program will succeed. Contact Jeff Johnson at jwj96@acs.org or (202) 872-6072.

IDAHO

► Water reporter Susan Drumheller is writing stories about a multitude of drinking water problems in North Idaho. In September alone, 14 different water systems had contaminated water. The rash of problems is related primarily to systems with no regular disinfectant. State regulators say there are 26 that are inadequate. More than 140 drinking water systems don't even test their water. For more information contact Susan Drumheller at the *Spokesman Review*, (208) 765-7129.

ILLINOIS

► The Illinois publication of The Sierra Club—*Lake and Prairie*—has initiated aggressive coverage of the introduction of large-scale hog farming in Illinois. The mega-farms, which are huge factories processing tens of thousands of swine, were featured in Pulitzer-prize winning stories in the *Raleigh News and Observer*. The companies running the farms typically create multi-football-field sized lagoons of swine waste, which often finds its way into local water supplies. The waste goes untreated due to lack of regulation. Although the major papers in Northern Illinois have largely ignored the development, Nancy Bostic's coverage in the November-January issue has tied the expansion of factory agriculture to drinking-water contamination (Milwaukee) and fish kills. The Sierra Club can be reached at (312) 251-1680 or e-mail illinois.chapter@sierraclub.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

► The *Boston Globe's* Scott Allen produced a major series on Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 1 reporting that nuclear power is in trouble in New England because it has so many aging plants and the economics of restructuring could cause new economic headaches. Already two nuclear plants have been closed, Yankee in Rowe, Mass, and Connecticut Yankee in Haddam Neck, Ct. Further, safety concerns have shut two other facilities, Millstones 1, 2, and 3 in Waterford, Ct. New England is a leader in the effort to move electric utilities from regulation and towards competition, and that is cre-

ating new economic complications for plant owners. Plus, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is under attack for how it has policed many of these plants. Allen can be reached at (617) 929-3000.

MINNESOTA

► Future changes in how to manage the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota have been the subject of ongoing discussions since early September. Minnesota Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone asked federal mediators to convene the talks after proposals surfaced in Congress to allow more local control over Voyageurs, and to change wilderness restrictions in the BWCAW. A 20-member committee has been negotiating changes in the BWCAW, and a 13-member committee has been talking about Voyageurs' issues. The committees include representatives from snowmobile associations, resort owners, environmentalists, and state agencies, among others. If the committees are able to agree on recommended changes, they will be forwarded to Minnesota's Congressional delegation for possible action. Contact Dean Rebuffoni, *Star Tribune* newspaper, (612) 673-4432.

► The two largest private utilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin have proposed a \$6 billion merger, but environmental and energy conservation leaders in both states have objected to the idea. Northern States Power Company and Wisconsin Electric Corp. want to form a single utility holding company called Primergy, and say the combination will benefit consumers through lower electric rates. But critics say that lower rates will occur with or without the merger, and that Primergy will stifle other independent energy producers. Environmentalists are also worried that the merger and future utility deregulation will enable Primergy to run older, dirtier, coal-fired plants in Minnesota and Wisconsin at full capacity to provide "cheap" power to large industrial customers in Chicago and other markets. Contact Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune* newspaper, (612) 673-7388.

NEVADA

► An innovative restoration project is bringing a cottonwood forest back to the banks of the lower Truckee River near Reno, Nev. The Nature Conservancy worked with federal agencies and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to carefully control spring floods and summer flows in the river to mimic natural flows and regenerate a riparian forest on the devastated desert river, Jon Christensen wrote in *The New York Times*, *Science Times*, September 24, 1996. Spring floods carried cottonwood seeds to bare banks. Then the river level was dropped less than an inch a day so that growing tree roots could stay moist. Scientists said the project sets new precedents for the science and management of rivers internationally. For information about the project, contact Graham Chisholm, 440 Hill St., Ste. D, Reno, NV 89501, 702/348-2644, or Jon Christensen at 702/885-2023.

RHODE ISLAND

► A 102 inch water main burst on Nov. 17 in Cranston, R.I., jeopardizing water supplies during the next three days to up to 135,000 people. At one point residents in Warwick, R.I. had less than one hour of water remaining before water service was restored. Both the cause of the break and the reason it took the local agency, the Providence Water Supply

Board, so long to provide water service have not yet been determined. But the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* did report during the crisis that water supplies to Warwick were further jeopardized when officials broke a valve on a 42 inch line that feeds the city. And work to fix the 102 inch main was complicated because water officials could not close two critical water gates which are designed to control the flow within the 102 inch main. Water experts report that such gates and valves must be routinely maintained, or problems can occur. State officials are still investigating how much maintenance occurred to those gates and valves. For more information, contact Bob Wyss, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, (401) 277-7364 or e-mail at bwyss@projo.com.

► The Rhode Island owner of a successful chain of discount stores became so upset with the delays and redundancies in obtaining environmental permits for his private horse farm that he planned an expensive advertising campaign accusing the state's Department of Environmental Management of acting like the Gestapo. But after a few face-to-face meetings, he decided to do something positive - to fund a survey of past permit applicants so the DEM could learn first hand what its clients think. Roy Dubs spent nearly \$10,000 surveying 5,000 applicants. The survey, the first ever, found DEM did a good job with septic system permits, but

was hated and feared for the way it administered its wetlands programs. DEM officials have pledged to change. And Dubs says he'll continue working for more improvements. Call Peter Lord at the *Providence Journal* at 4(01) 277-8036, or e-mail at plord@projo.com.

WISCONSIN

► Several Wisconsin media outlets didn't wait for the official EPA announcement to do stories on the agency's new plans for cleaning up particulates and ground level ozone. Wisconsin stories began appearing shortly after the SEJ conference in St. Louis, which featured a workshop on the issue. Print and broadcast stories also appeared the day of the announcement. The EPA's air pollution plan would affect more than state counties and could be a major story over at least the next year. For more info, contact Chuck Quirnbach at Wisconsin Public Radio, (414) 227-2040.

► Journalists in the Northern part of the state are trying to cull the truth from competing public relations campaigns about the proposed Exxon mine near Crandon. Mining supporters launched counterattack. Meanwhile, a nearby township got ready to vote on a proposed local mining agreement. Contact Gil Halstead at Wisconsin Public Radio, (715) 848-3036

SEJ Journal

**Society of Environmental
Journalists**

P.O. Box 27280

Philadelphia, PA 19118

**Address Correction and
Forwarding Requested**

FIRST CLASS

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 4347

PHILADELPHIA, PA