

# SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

Vol. 7 No. 4

## Interview with Ben Bradlee

# Get it, get it right



**Ben Bradlee**

*Ben Bradlee, Vice-President-at-Large for The Washington Post, spent an hour with members of the SEJ board and staff on January 9. SEJ's goal in requesting the meeting was to introduce Bradlee to the organization, and to draw out the well-known editor's advice on furthering SEJ's mission.*

**Bradlee:** You should know that I am quite lately come to involvement in the environment area. I've had two or three gurus. The first is Tom Winship (former

editor of the *Boston Globe*). We were reporters together on this paper so long ago that it's embarrassing. He started on me years ago that we, the industry, but also the *Post*, ought to be doing more on the environment, which was certainly true.

Tim Wirth, who was the Senator from Colorado, has been in the State Department, and is about to become the director of Ted Turner's one billion dollar gift to the United Nations, got me involved in environmental issues. And finally there was Tom Lovejoy of the Smithsonian who is a leader in this area. It crystallized for me when they dared me to go on a trip to the rain forest of Brazil. It was one of the best times I've ever had *in my life*.

(Continued on page 19)

# Grazing: it's a jungle in the arid West

By SUSAN ZAKIN

"Be careful," said the tall man in the cowboy hat.

I did a double-take. Was this a fatherly benediction? Seemed a little strange, since I had just been asking the same man, a member of a so-called "progressive" ranching group, rather tough questions in a panel discussion on cattle grazing in the West.

Then it dawned on me.

I had spent my first decade in journalism as a daily reporter, interviewing pimps, prostitutes, murderers and rapists. But this rancher was the first person to threaten me.

Welcome to the West.

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# Kyoto a serious circus

## Global warming politics make strange bedfellows

By DALE CURTIS

When people learned I had just returned from covering the UN climate change negotiations in Kyoto, Japan, the universal reaction seemed to be: "That circus? What was it like? "Did it really accomplish anything?" Assuming SEJ members might pose the same questions, I will try to answer them.

My missions in Kyoto were to provide breaking news and "color" commentary for inclusion with *Greenwire's* daily "cover-the-coverage" news summary; to do some serious networking and promotion for *Greenwire*; and to satisfy my own intellectual curiosity and love of adventure. I'm pleased to report that the trip was a success on all counts.

The conference scene reminded me of an American political party convention. Participants wearing color-coded credentials swarmed like ants throughout a modern conference facility filled to the rafters with banners, exhibits and rows of impromptu working spaces.

The media mob was one of the largest I'd ever seen. Indeed, nearly 3,500 credentialed journalists covered the event, outnumbering the 2,200 official delegates and nearly matching the number of representatives of various advocacy groups, estimated at 3,600. In a sign of shrewd planning, the activists and reporters were located side-by-side in the cavernous "event hall," just a two-

(Continued on page 23)

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# Good news sure beats bad

Despite some adolescent growing pains, this organization—your organization—is in pretty good shape for 1998.

Within the past month we have received confirmation of \$80,000 in new or renewed foundation grants. That news enabled the board to adopt a \$369,000 budget that—provided members continue to tirelessly volunteer their time—should avert any reduction in the member services you have come to expect.

More important, a revitalized and energetic board is laying plans for some exciting new initiatives and the first major membership drive in five years. We also have obtained supportive letters from a number of the nation's premiere news executives, including former *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee (see page 1), with whom the board met on Jan. 9 thanks to the efforts of board member Gary Lee. We all will reap the benefits, because such letters open doors to collaborations with other journalism institutions and funding from foundations that share SEJ commitment to help journalists better cover the environment.

Great ideas and a volunteer spirit have distinguished SEJ and its members since the organization was founded in 1990. Reassessment and setbacks are part of the growing process, and we've had some during the past six months. But I am now as excited about this organization's long-term prospects as I was when all the early success far eclipsed the founding board's wildest dreams.

Any reader of this column should be aware of the short and long-range financial challenges that SEJ faced in late 1997. The board, I think wisely, had gambled SEJ's cash reserves to hire a fourth staff person to allow executive director Beth Parke the time to prepare major program and grant proposals. SEJ has always taken prudent gambles, such as hiring Amy Gahrn and Beth Parke early on. And so, due to Beth Parke's careful stewardship of SEJ's remaining funds, and her diligent grant writing skills, the latest gamble is now beginning to pay off.

The new grants include \$40,000 from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, \$20,000 each of the next two years from the Turner Foundation, \$10,000 from the

Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, and \$10,000 from the Lyndhurst Foundation.

The budget approved in Washington provides \$325,000 in operating funds and a \$44,000 reserve at the end of the year (compared to a \$345,000 operating budget and \$30,000 reserve in the year just ended. We will lose the one temporary staff position, now held by Jim Quigley, who served SEJ well. Some of his duties, such as overseeing the *TipSheet*, will be handled by contract workers.

To address the long-term uncertainties about foundation funding, treasurer Sara Thurin Rollin has launched several initia-

## Report from the society's president

By  
**Kevin  
Carmody**



tives. At her request, the board contributed over 20 written ideas for fundraising and alternative ways to pay for current services. Most are being reviewed by board committees.

One of the ideas—a modest dues increase—was unanimously adopted by the board. Non-student annual dues will increase by \$5, to \$40 per year. It is the first change in three years, and adheres to the board's prior policy to keep dues equal to those charged by Investigative Reporters & Editors, Inc., the journalism organization on which SEJ was most closely modeled. Student dues will remain the same, at \$30 per year.

To bolster our fundraising and program initiatives, board members are also trying to expand the National Advisory Board that already includes *New York Times* managing editor Gene Roberts and former *Boston Globe* editor Tom Winship. We are also aggressively pursuing more letters from senior editors and publishers

who are supportive of SEJ's efforts on behalf of the profession. (If you know of a prospect, please let me know).

We may pursue an idea offered by *Washington Post* managing editor Robert Kaiser: publishing a catalogue of the best environmental journalism of the past decade, as a reminder to editors and publishers about the enormous payoff when solid environmental reporters are given the time and tools to commit serious journalism. There are many impressive examples, and perhaps we'll be contacting you for permission to excerpt your masterpiece.

On the national conference front, Peter Dykstra and David Sachsman have devised an innovative program for the 1998 conference in Chattanooga that should make this event fresh, while retaining the best aspects of past conferences. Watch for more details by mail in a couple months. (The board agreed to keep member registration at \$125 for early sign-up.)

The board's conference site committee is continuing its search for a suitable location for the 2000 conference, (1999 is at UCLA and 2001 will be in Portland, Ore.) We are looking to the East Coast, perhaps the Washington area, due to the presidential election year. If you have contacts at universities that might be interested in hosting us, or a related idea, please contact David Ropeik at (617) 433-4575 (Ropeik@MIT.EDU)

When it comes to safeguarding the vitality of this organization, both financially and journalistically, the watchword has to be eternal vigilance. We practice it in journalism as we engage in fact-finding and truth-seeking. We must, as SEJ members, remember that this organization's greatest strength is its members who are willing to volunteer to chair conferences or contribute articles to the *SEJournal*, or ask an editor to write a letter of support for SEJ or simply recruit a new member.

Please help us continue to make great things happen. Volunteer for something, no matter how small. Come to a board meeting if we're meeting close to you (Ann Arbor, Mich., on March 14 and Stanford, Calif., on July 18). Or offer a suggestion by e-mail or phone. I will always welcome a call from a fellow SEJ member, as will the rest of the board. ♦

## SEJournal

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| Media on the Move    | George Homsy       |
| Book Shelf           | Nancy Shute        |
| New Members List     | Chris Rigel        |
| Calendar             | Janet Raloff       |
| Green beat           | 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](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), P.O. Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 22118. Send calendar items to Janet Raloff, [jar@scisvc.org](mailto:jar@scisvc.org), 1719 N Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For Green beat, contact Kevin Carmody, [kpcarmody@aol.com](mailto:kpcarmody@aol.com), 1447 1/2 W. Fletcher Street, Chicago, IL 60657; (708) 633-5970. For book reviews, contact Nancy Shute, [nshute@usnews.com](mailto:nshute@usnews.com), US News and World Report, 2400 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 955-2341.

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

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## Letters

To the Editor:

Jon Entine's reporting on Anita Roddick's association with *Mother Jones* ("Beware of 'Green' Firms") is in error on a number of counts. At the time she was invited to join the board of *Mother Jones*' parent nonprofit, Anita had never made a financial contribution to *Mother Jones*. She had, after a visit to our offices, offered to run a *Mother Jones* circulation insert in the Body Shop's mail order catalog, a program that brought over 2,000 new subscribers to the magazine. Because of her marketing savvy as well as her enthusiasm for our investigative work, we were happy to invite her to join us.

Subsequent to Anita's joining the board, *Mother Jones* was approached by Jon Entine about doing an investigation into alleged unethical practices of the Body Shop. We declined to pursue the story because of an obvious conflict of interest: Had we been unable to confirm the allegations during a fact-checking process, we would have been in the situation of either running an unsubstantiated story or risk being accused by the writer of suppressing assertions due to pressure from a board member.

—Jay Harris, Publisher



Mr. Entine responds:

According to a recorded interview with former editor Jeff Klein, Roddick was invited to join the board after she visited *Mother Jones*' offices, agreed to plug the magazine in her cosmetic brochures, and pledged to donate money to the magazine. If, as Harris now claims, the monies came subsequent to the pledge, that is irrelevant to the quid pro quo.

Harris also seems to have a lapse of memory as regards a proposed story on Body Shop. Well before I approached *Mother Jones*, former publisher and editor Mark Dowie recommended that the magazine do an exposé on the UK retailer. "I wrote a note to Jeff that this is a story you should really take a look at," Dowie told me in a taped conversation on January 8, 1995. "I never heard a word back." Why did he think he never heard back? "Because they just won't report stories that might reflect back on them, their friends, or this 'socially responsible' gang," said Dowie.

—Jon Entine



To the editor:

When it comes to reporting on The Body Shop as Jon Entine did in the Fall '97 SEJournal cover story "Beware of green firms," a number of factors make it impossible for Mr. Entine to take the impartial approach so crucial to good journalism.

According to a paper released at the Media and Democracy Congress earlier this year, "Unwise Use: How the media are being used to discredit the progressive movement for environmental and social justice," by Lorna Salzman, "Entine's wife Ellen Turner was hired to be a marketing executive for The Limited, the parent company of The Body Shop's largest US competitor, Bath and Body Works."

In his article Mr. Entine alleges that "in exchange for a donation Roddick was placed on a panel" at the Institute for

(Continued on page 16)



# Outreach effort off and running

## SEJ runs workshops in California, Carolina newsrooms

The SEJ newsroom outreach program kicked off to an enthusiastic start in late 1997 when board members Russ Clemings of the *Fresno Bee* and Gary Palokovic of *The (Riverside, CA) Press-Enterprise* visited *The Ventura County Star*, a 95,000 circulation daily in Southern California.

Clemings and Palokovic spent two days with editors and reporters at the newspaper to suggest ways to expand and improve environmental reporting. Acting as consultants, the pair toured the area with reporters, held workshops and provided one-on-one guidance. The result was a very positive reception from staff and management at *The Star* as well as numerous story leads for the newspaper.

A second visitation took place at the *Sun-News* of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in late January. Serving as consultants were SEJ board members Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star* and Stuart Leavenworth of the *Raleigh News & Observer*. More on this in the next issue.

For the past few years, the Society of Environmental Journalists has wanted to launch a newsroom outreach program to help establish or improve environmental reporting. The intention was to send veteran environmental journalists from SEJ to interested newspapers, TV and radio stations, offering practical tips on how to cover environmental stories with a limited

staff. Structure and focus of training sessions would be tailored to needs of the participating newsroom. With project funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the W. Alton Jones Foundation, SEJ could offer the service free of charge.

The *Ventura County Star* was one of several news organizations to express interest in the offer. *The Star's* principal circulation area of Ventura County, population 700,000, includes sprawling suburbs in the northern San Fernando Valley, scenic beaches north of Los Angeles, farms along the length of the Santa Clara River, and coastal plains in Oxnard and Ventura.

In the tour of the county by the consultants and the newspaper's staff, reporters explained the controversies surrounding various sites, giving Polakovic and Clemings a chance to see issues with fresh eyes and suggest new story angles.

"Though in the shadow of the rapidly growing Los Angeles region, the community appears resistant to growth and is intent on preserving its rather substantial agricultural lands as open space," observed Polakovic. "Nonetheless, urban

impacts on the environment are substantial." Potential reporting topics under discussion included coastal development, wetlands, harbors, urban runoff, air pollution, surface mines, sand dunes and crops with pesticide drift concerns.

At a lunch following the three-hour tour Clemings and Palokovic met with a half-dozen writers and editors to focus on ways to broaden the environment beat and identify potential stories. They also met with executive editor Mike Gallagher to discuss environmental reporting at the newspaper. SEJ's visit concluded Friday with a two-hour workshop on computer-assisted environmental reporting led by Clemings.

In a followup letter to SEJ officers, Gallagher commented: "I just wanted to let you know that you have at least 40 votes in Ventura County in favor of continuing the advisers on-call program. Gary Polakovic and Russ Clemings...infected this place like someone's worst virus. About 40 reporters spent time with Gary and Russ, either individually or in conference sessions. The newsroom is filled with good story ideas. We now have many more sources to consider. I think it is one of the best programs to come along." ♦

**"The newsroom is filled with good story ideas. We now have many more sources to consider."**

## Awards list available at SEJ office

The SEJ office has compiled a list of awards, fellowships and scholarships available to reporters covering environment, natural resources and outdoor writing. The list was derived principally from the "Environment" category of the "1998 Journalism Awards and Fellowships Directory" printed in the December 27, 1997 issue of *Editor & Publisher*. Other categories in *E&P* but not on the SEJ list include "Health/Medical," "Investigative Reporting," and "Science."

The list is available via e-mail or postal service and is posted at SEJ's web

site: <[www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)>. Demand for the list has been considerable. More than 75 persons requested it within the first several hours after its announcement was posted to SEJ's listservs.

SEJ headquarters seeks news about members who have received or will receive journalism awards, as word of such honors can be helpful in achieving funding. Members are urged to inform headquarters about past, present, or future awards, fellowships, or scholarships by sending an e-mail to [SEJoffice@aol.com](mailto:SEJoffice@aol.com) or calling (215) 836-9970. ♦

## SEJournal deadlines

Spring 1998 .....April 15, 1998  
 Summer 1998 .....July 15, 1998  
 Fall 1998 .....October 15, 1998  
 Winter 1999 .....January 15, 1999

Submissions should be sent to Noel Grove, editor, [ngrove1253@aol.com](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), P.O. Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 20118

Positions for Green Beat correspondent are open to any SEJ members, though preference will be given to journalists or educators. Anyone interested, call Kevin Carmody at (708) 633-5970, or Chris Rigel, [rigel@voicenet.com](mailto:rigel@voicenet.com) or at SEJ headquarters at (215) 836-9970.



"I'm trading in my skis for a surfboard," reports **Eric Niiler**. The former environmental reporter for the *Quincy (MA) Patriot Ledger* is going to have to learn new fish names as he heads west to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. There he will be a science writer working for the paper's weekly science section.

**Jennifer Langston** is just starting to find her way around Greenville County in South Carolina. That's where she has set up shop as the environmental reporter for the *Greenville News*. Langston recently earned her master degree in journalism from the University of Maryland and covered statewide politics from the school's capitol newsbureau.

"I came back to Oregon," sighs *Environment and Natural Resources* reporter **Michele LaBounty**. She is working that beat for *The Bulletin* in Bend, Oregon. She enjoyed her time at the *Duluth (MN) News-Tribune*, but, she says, "it was extremely cold and no mountains." More importantly, she says, this move west gave her a chance to get back to the

environmental beat.

World traveller, **A. Adam Glenn**, finally settled down last year. After spending months kicking around India, he landed a job as a producer at *ABC News Online* in New York City. He says it is an exciting position since the organization makes an effort to incorporate original reporting into its website. Glenn splits his time between reporting and editing and has general, as well as environmental, assignments.

## Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Staying in the Pacific Northwest, but with a new job, is **Terry FitzPatrick**. He has joined the staff of *National Public Radio's* "Living on Earth." Over the last few years, FitzPatrick the Freelancer has worked for a number of clients including "Living on Earth" and the *History Channel*. "Now I'm in a sensible place," he reports.

In the words of one judge, **Duff**

**Wilson** displayed the "best qualities of investigative journalism" with his series, "Fear in the Fields," about the practice of turning contaminated industrial waste into fertilizer. The *Seattle Times* reporter won the fourth annual John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism, which is administered by the Natural Resources Defense Council. Also recognized were *Sacramento Bee* writers **Tom Knudson** and **Nancy Vogel** for a five-part series on the health of California's coastal waters. Another honorable mention was awarded to "Shear Madness" by **Penny Loeb**. The *U.S. News and World Report* feature examined the environmental and social impacts of strip mining in West Virginia.

Write a book? Start a fellowship? Switch jobs? Please submit all professional news to George Homsy, Living on Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Tel: 617-520-6857. Fax: 617-868-8659. E-mail: ghomsy@world.std.com

## Tucson meeting sparks coverage

### Evaluations positive, but new format planned for UTC

By JAY LETTO

A finally tally of forms evaluating SEJ's annual conference last October and an informal survey of stories published about the gathering indicate a high degree of success in the desert heat of Tucson.

A total of 28 conference evaluation forms were returned this year, or 5.9 percent of the 477 attendees. However, 23 of the forms were returned by SEJ members, or 9.1 percent of the 254 members who attended. (Five percent return is generally considered statistically valid.) The forms can be returned anonymously (most are), offering ample opportunity for respondents to pass along complaints.

Eight respondents said that they had filed or would file stories from the conference on topics such as the San Pedro River, cooperation in the environmental movement, garbology, Biosphere 2, Grand Canyon, NAFTA, nuclear regulation, and the border environment. In addition, SEJ staffers also came across stories that included information from the con-

ference in the *Los Angeles Times* (environment and religion), the *Arizona Republic* (ranching and NPS director Robert Stanton on Grand Canyon issues), CNN (Biosphere 2), KVOA-TV in Tucson (the Nogales border tour), NPR's *Living on Earth* (NAFTA's "Fast Track"), *Sierra Vista Herald* (San Pedro River area), and Minnesota Public Radio (CO2 and plant growth). Chuck Quirnbach with Wisconsin Public Radio gleaned five stories from the conference.

In the "basic evaluation" section, 18 of 25 respondents gave glowing praise ("Excellent conference and great way to compare notes and network," and "Very informative and enlightening... I look forward to future conferences").

Each year we get negative reviews of certain events and sessions, and this year garnered about the same number. One respondent gave a bad overall review ("Great location, weak program"), and six others gave mixed reviews ("Excellent

(Continued on page 7)

## Scholarship offered to high school students

High school students in the United States interested in studying environmental and science journalism are eligible for a new annual \$500 scholarship given by the Environmental Journalism Program at Michigan State University.

The scholarship will go toward studying environmental and science journalism at the university. The winner will also participate in the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association dinner and spring conference at MSU's Breslin Center on April 21 and 22, and attend the Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute June 2—6 at the university.

"It is my hope that this new scholarship will encourage some of the most talented high school journalism students to attend MSU to study environmental and science journalism," said Jim Detjen, MSU's director of Environmental Journalism and holder of the Knight Chair in Journalism. Detjen said he hopes to raise funds to increase the size of the scholarship.



# Members respond to survey on top stories

By JIM QUIGLEY

Global climate change, El Niño and the Kyoto talks topped the list of stories selected by 20 SEJ members responding to an informal survey conducted before year's end on the listserv. Subscribers were asked the following questions: (1) What in your view was the most important environmental story of 1997, (2) the most under-reported story of the year, (3) the worst-reported, and (4) what will be the top three stories of 1998?

While ranking the top three stories, several respondents also felt those same stories were among the "worst-reported" of the year.

"I am convinced that climate change is an exceedingly important issue," observed Canadian member Colin Issacs, but he lamented that "the quality of the coverage was abominable—the reporters who covered Kyoto for *CBC* and for the major Canadian dailies had no idea what they were talking about."

Member Christine Cordner, associate editor for *Electric Power Alert* in DC, felt that the (Kyoto) treaty will have an impact on the cost of electricity. "As the talks progressed," she stated, "the underlying issue hit at the home of most environmental debates: are environmental initiatives based on public health or on economics?"

Taking second place as most frequently cited story in 1997 was Indonesian forest fires. Two people regarded the fires as the worst-reported story and another as the most under-reported story. Among the other issues which members regarded as important in 1997 were alternative fuel vehicles, the Earth Summit, new EPA air quality regulations, the Chesapeake pfiesteria outbreak, the good and bad of biotechnology, and degradation of coral reefs.

The survey did not make clear the distinction between "the most under-reported" and "the worst reported" stories of the year. Offered SEJ board member JoAnn Valenti from BYU in Utah, "this year I've decided anything is better than nothing." Chuck Quirnbach, reporter and producer for Wisconsin Public Radio, nominated as his worst-reported story an NBC-TV report "that implied congressional pork barreling to build things like

water treatment plants is a 'fleecing of America.' Ron Mader, a freelancer who covers Latin America, questioned whether there was much interest among US media beyond the prominent political meetings on the world stage. "The question of environmental conservation and sustainable development in the developing world seems to be off the map for most reporters," he contended.

The role of the Clinton administration in affecting "endangered species protection covenants" such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the International Whaling Convention concerned Merritt Clifton, editor of *Animal People*. Merritt thought that if the 11-year-old international moratorium on whaling were to collapse, it might make one of the top stories of 1998. Alternative transportation, superfund, Glen Canyon Dam, flooding, endocrine disrupters, NAFTA, land use, sustainability, erosion of environmental protection legislation, and electric utility deregulation were also gauged as worst or under-reported stories.

Global climate change and related issues are forecast as perhaps the most important stories for 1998. Other issues which may take prominence, according to the survey, include natural disasters, food safety, endangered species, air quality, drinking water, roads/sprawl/mass transit, genetically-engineered crops, property rights versus public land, superfund, endocrine disrupters, green marketing, and the impact of environmental policy on

congressional elections.

Member Jim Schwab, senior research associate at the American Planning Association in Chicago tossed humor into the discussion on the most under-reported story. "The discovery of the continued existence of Neanderthals," Jim offered, "who made so little impact on their environment we didn't know they were still around," (referring to John Darnton's best-seller, *Neanderthal*).

Debbie Schwartz, another Chicagoan, covering education at *Pioneer Press*, unintentionally fooled everyone. She claimed that the (non-existent) Hazardous Waste Disposal Act of 1997, permitting disposal of radioactive trash, was the most under-reported story. Michael Gerrard, editor of *Environmental Law in New York*, caught her faulty information. More accurately, Debbie pointed to the brown-fields issue: "redeveloping the urban core makes more sense; destroying natural habitat doesn't."

Will Nixon created his own category. "My favorite environmental story of the year," wrote Will, "took place down the road from me in the Catskills where a mama bear and her three cubs were found in someone's kitchen very early one morning licking a bottle of champagne off the floor and enjoying a can of cake frosting. It made the front page of all the local papers. I should eat so well myself!"

*Jim Quigley is SEJ programs manager*

## Tyson honored by SEJ board



Rae Tyson

Honorary membership was conferred upon charter board member and former SEJ president Rae Tyson by the SEJ board at its meeting in Washington, DC, January 10.

Tyson was halfway through his term as president in 1997 before relinquishing the office when he left journalism to take a job with the

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

A proclamation acclaiming Tyson's service to SEJ, reflecting on his personality, and bestowing the honorary membership was also approved by the board. SEJ now counts four honorary memberships among its 1100 members. Besides Tyson they include former founding board member Robert Engelman, now with Population Action International; SEJ founder and former Scripps Howard editor David Stolberg; and Bud Ward of the National Safety Council, who was instrumental in organizing SEJ.



## Tucson...(from page 5)

tours again, networking opportunities were great, but few meaty sessions"; "Enjoyable, but... too many activities, conflicting tours and workshops").

Especially popular sessions included the Network Lunch, as responses were 18-0 that we do it every year. Stuart Udall's presentation was lauded for its impressive display of satellite technology and Udall was described by one respondent as "the Mick Jagger of aging enviros." The Desert Museum visit received rave reviews, "good food, beautiful spot," "Awesome in every way." The one complaint: "Nice meal, but too hot to tour or do much else."

Members also liked the Thursday tours (especially the Border Environment tour), the minitours (especially Garbology), the Biosphere 2 tour, and any opportunities to get outside the lecture room. The concurrent panels were well-received, and many noted the wide diversity of topics. High praise was directed to "Is Deregulation the Death of Nukes?," "From Clearcut to Zero Cut: The Debate Over Logging on National Forests," and "Whistleblowers on the Environment."

Members didn't like the panel "Collaborations Between Environmental Scientists and Journalists: Protocols and Possibilities," with five of seven respondents virtually attacking it ("Not well-conceived—misunderstood nature of independent journalism").

The SEJ membership meeting, as usual, was panned. ("Pathetic turnout, over-tired board," and perhaps the best sum-up "Dull, but necessary.")

The daytime BYOS (bring your own speaker) salons were a total bust. Members had asked for something like this several times in the past, but perhaps because of inadequate promotion, no one attended them. The NAFTA opening plenary received mixed reviews with seven praising it, seven panning, and seven giving mixed reviews. The big opening plenary format will probably get revamped this year in the face of declining support.

The ranching tour and panel, controversial because of complaints about lack of balance, both received mixed reviews. The

small-group sessions with newsmakers attracted very low attendance, the first time this has happened. Some newsmakers canceled at the last minute. Perhaps they were in timeslots with too much competition, or they weren't publicized well enough.

Preparations are underway for the Eighth SEJ Annual Conference, scheduled for October 8-11, and hosted by the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. After four years of basically the same format, this year's conference chair, Peter Dykstra of CNN, plans some innovative changes. The popular parts will still be there (various tours and receptions, networking lunch,



**Amy Gahran, Adam Glenn, Jim Bruggers, and George Homsy (left to right) relax at the Arizona Historical Society.**

variety of panels and formats, etc.), but things will be arranged somewhat differently—into concurrent "Theme" rooms and "Newsmaker" rooms—and the opening plenary may get a new look. Stay tuned.

If you have suggestions for SEJ-Chattanooga or want to volunteer your services to moderate and/or organize sessions, please contact me (jayletto@aol.com or (509) 493-4428) or Peter (peter.dykstra@turner.com or (404) 827-3349) soon.

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

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# Stingrays, snakes, and stolen cars

More stories from the deep, dark wilderness, by SEJers. Be careful out there, folks:

► **Close encounter:** It doesn't get much deeper or darker than the Amazon basin. While researching *The Burning Season*, his book on slain Amazon activist Chico Mendes, *New York Times* reporter Andrew Revkin took a motorized canoe five days up Jurua River in the western corner of Brazil to seek isolated rubber tappers.

"It was dry season," says Andy, "so we kept running aground on sand bars. With my two partners—an Indian guide and my translator—I often hopped out to shove off. We didn't tend to keep our shoes on much, what with the heat and wet.

"Well, one afternoon I hopped out as usual, but this time the bottom suddenly slid out from under me like someone sharply pulled a rug. It was a freshwater stingray, and I'd stepped directly onto its back. I fell flat on my butt in the river, but miraculously avoided being stabbed by its spiny tail.

"Good thing too. Afterward, a rubber tapper said, 'You're very lucky. The pain is so bad that even a strong man cries for his mother.'"

► **Flawed critters:** Too often we assume that wildlife has its life down pat, and that animals are incapable of the miscalculations that we call "being human." In one stroll, Joan Farnam, reporter for the *Budgeteer News* in Duluth, MN, saw two examples of something akin to animal embarrassment:

"I was hiking in the Ozarks in late fall. The leaves were all crunching on the ground and the trees were bare. I hunkered down silently to see what I could see when I heard this loud CRA-AA-CK. I turned my head towards the sound and saw a red-tailed hawk on its way to the ground. It had landed on a rotten limb on a nearby tree which had given way under its weight.

"It happened so quickly that the big raptor didn't have time to fly away. It landed lightly, bounced once, shook itself and then looked around furtively as if to say, 'I hope nobody saw that!'

"Same day, same woods. Hiking further I blithely stepped over a log and as I did, glanced down and saw a rattlesnake. He was just hanging out there, minding his own business. Because it was chilly, he wasn't exactly active, and I almost put my foot right on him as I stepped over the log.

"Neither he nor I realized what had almost happened for an instant. He lifted his head and we stared at each other in alarm. Then we both went into a panic.

" 'Oh my God, a snake!' I yelled.

"And I think he yelled, 'Oh my God, a human!'

"He whipped around to get back into his hole under the log, but was so panic-stricken that he forgot that his tail was still in there. He battled with it for a moment before he disappeared."

► **Living cartoons** In a cross-country trip from Pennsylvania to Colorado, Karen Price and her boyfriend had two experiences that one usually sees in cartoons. Her account:

"We stopped for the evening in the Black Hills Forest of

South Dakota, where we'd just spent the day touring the National Parks and seeing the displays of 'Animals of the Black Hills National Forest' showing bears, cougars, coyotes, etc. Up until this point I had only camped in areas where the wildlife consisted of deer and bunny rabbits, so I was extremely nervous as we set up camp, certain that at any second a mountain lion would bound out of the darkness.

## Grin & Bare It

"My boyfriend tried to calm me down and assure me that there was absolutely nothing to worry about. He decided to show me by shining his flashlight into the woods

around the campground (where we were the only visitors).

"As his light circled the perimeter of the forest, all we could see quite literally were dozens of beady little eyes glowing back at us, proving that we most definitely were not alone! It was not reassuring, but the night passed without incident."

"On our way to Jewel Cave, also in South Dakota, we passed a sign on the side of the road that said 'Caution—Large Wildlife in Road Next 5 Miles'. Hearty har har. We thought that was pretty comical until we took the next corner and were face to face with a huge, furry buffalo just standing there, right in the middle of the road, looking at us like he was supposed to be there and didn't we pay attention to the sign?"

► **Remember the Alamo:** It doesn't get any easier in the urban jungles! From Thom Wilder, BNA reporter, came a frustrating tale of the wild life in Tucson.

While attending the SEJ annual conference last fall Thom walked out to the parking lot of the Doubletree Hotel to get his Alamo rental car when he saw a car identical to his pulling out of the lot. In fact, it was his car, he discovered, when he arrived at the vacuous space where it had been.

Dutifully he reported the theft to Alamo, then—insult added to injury—found they would not rent him another car. He was not a good risk, they figured, since he had "lost" the first one.

► **Walking on the wild side:** While conference attendees clustered on Saturday for various mini-tours, one group was seen gathering in the lobby, then heading en masse for the cafeteria, then scuttling down the hall to another part of the lobby. Orna Izakson, a member of this nomadic troop, summed up the situation. "Lemmings, lemmings, lemmings," she was heard saying as they made their third pass down the hallway.

► **We're talkin' wild!:** Speaking of conference, the most-discussed invitation had to be the one posted for a reception at the Marriott, and worded thusly: "Turner Broadcasting Systems Climax Change Party." Think it merits another Kyoto?

Anything funny ever happen to you on or off the green beat? If it's connected in some way to reporting on the environment, or even if it isn't, e-mail your tale to Noel Grove at [ngrove1253@aol.com](mailto:ngrove1253@aol.com), or snail mail to same at Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 20118.



The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from Sept. 4, 1997 through Jan. 23, 1998. Memberships recorded after Jan. 23 will appear in *SEJournal* volume 8, Number 1.

#### ALABAMA

- Larry Crenshaw (Active), Birmingham

#### ARIZONA

- Patti Epler (Active), *Phoenix New Times*, Phoenix
- Mari N. Jensen (Academic), University of California internship, Tucson
- James W. Johnson (Academic), Univ. of Arizona Journalism Dept, Tucson
- Michael Kiefer (Active), *Phoenix New Times*, Phoenix

#### CALIFORNIA

- Janet Byron (Active), Berkeley
- Steve LaRue (Active), *San Diego Union-Tribune*, San Diego
- Jane Braxton Little (Active), Greenville
- Julia B. Wright (Academic), San Jose State University, Journalism Department
- Eric Paul Zamora (Active), Fresno

#### COLORADO

- Peter Chilson (Active), *High Country News*, Paonia
- Kathleen E. Conway (Academic), Mesa State College, Grand Junction
- Ginny Figlar (Academic), University of Colorado at Boulder, School of Journalism
- Greg Hanscom (Active), *High Country News*, Paonia
- Katy Human (Active), *Boulder Daily Camera*, Boulder

#### CONNECTICUT

- Marian Chertow (Academic), Yale University, School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, New Haven
- Jane Coppock (Academic), Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, New Haven
- Christine Woodside (Active), *The Day*, New London

#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Seth Hamblin (Active), *The Washington Post*, Washington
- Dennis Troute (Active), Image Television, *Image TV/Environmental Forum*, Washington
- Thomas D. Wilder (Active), Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., Health Care Division, Washington

#### FLORIDA

- Katherine Bouma (Active), *Orlando Sentinel*, Orlando
- James F. Carstens, University of South

Florida-St Petersburg, Dept. of Mass Communication and Journalism, St Petersburg

- Andrew Conte (Active), *Stuart News, Port St. Lucie News*, Port St Lucie
- Bill George, (Associate), Winter Park
- Norman Miller (Academic), Rolling College, Environmental Studies, Orlando

#### GEORGIA

- Steven N. Koppes (Associate), University of Georgia, *Research Reporter Magazine*, Athens

#### HAWAII

- Priscilla Billig (Associate), University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program, Makai, Honolulu

#### ILLINOIS

- Cathryn Hodson (Active), Cahners Publishing, *Manufacturing Marketplace/Pollution Engineering*, Des Plaines
- Ellen Morton (Associate), *Food Protection Report*, Crystal Lake

#### INDIANA

- Harold Henderson (Active), LaPorte

#### KENTUCKY

- Barry Tinning (Associate), CSG Centers for Environment & Safety, *Ecos Magazine*, Lexington

#### MARYLAND

- Janet A. Brindle (Active), *Carroll County Times*, Westminster
- Michael K. Burns (Active), *Baltimore Sun*, Baltimore

#### MASSACHUSETTS

- Jill Delamater (Associate), The Nature Conservancy, *From the Field*, Boston
- Jill Hecht (Academic), Boston University, Science Journalism Program, Medford
- Jonathan D. Lawson (Academic), Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions, Cambridge
- Kimberly W. Moy (Active), *The Patriot Ledger*, Quincy
- Joni Praded (Associate), MSPCA/AHES, *Animals Magazine*, Boston

#### MICHIGAN

- Mary J. Gawenda (Academic), Michigan State University, Journalism, Ag. & Nat. Resources Communications depts., East Lansing

#### MONTANA

- Patricia Borneman (Academic), Carroll College, Helena

#### NEW JERSEY

- George Andreassi (Active), *Queens Times/Ledger*, Cresskill

- Susan Marticek (Academic), Ocean County College, Bayville

#### NEW MEXICO

- Keith Easthouse (Active), *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, Santa Fe

#### NEW YORK

- Michael A. Rivlin (Active), New York
- Stevin M. Westcott (Active), WAMC, *Northeast Public Radio*, "The Environment Show," Albany

#### NEVADA

- Shelly Segale (Active), *KOLO-TV*, News Department, Reno

#### NORTH CAROLINA

- Sara J. McKinstry (Academic), Duke University, Nicholas School of the Environment, Durham

#### OREGON

- Hal Bernton (Active), *Oregonian*, Portland
- Gary Braasch (Active), Nehalem
- Marie Gravelle (Active), *Statesman Journal*, Salem

#### PENNSYLVANIA

- Paul David Plevakas (Academic), Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia

#### RHODE ISLAND

- Malia Schwartz (Associate), University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program, Narragansett

#### TEXAS

- Elaine Robbins (Active), Austin
- Don Wall (Active), WFAA-TV, News Division, Arlington

#### VERMONT

- John A. Dillon, *Times Argus & Rutland (VT) Herald*, Worcester

#### VIRGINIA

- Katherine J. Duffy (Active), National Journal, Inc., *Greenwire*, Alexandria
- Jeff South (Academic), Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Mass Communications, Richmond

#### WASHINGTON

- David J. Fassler, Washington State University, Environmental Science and Communication-Journalism, Pullman
- Duff Wilson (Active), *Seattle Times*, Seattle

#### AUSTRALIA

- Janice Withnall (Academic), University of Western Sydney Nepean, School of Communications and Media, Kingswood

# "Year of the ocean" offers oceans of copy

By KIERAN MULVANEY

The eminent scientist and author Arthur C. Clarke once observed that it was "inappropriate to call this planet Earth, when clearly it is Ocean." The ocean covers approximately 140,000,000 square miles, 71 percent of the planet's surface; the Pacific alone covers 25 percent more surface area than all the planet's land masses combined.

And yet it is questionable whether the ocean is on the radar screen of either public or media to the extent of other environmental issues. Recent polls conducted for SeaWeb, an ocean education project of The Pew Charitable Trusts, have shown that although many express concern for the state of the oceans, most rate it as less important than tropical deforestation or toxic waste. As Drs. Charles Peterson and Jane Lubchenco have noted, "the sea and all it provides to help support human history has over the course of human history, quite frankly, been taken for granted."

In a move intended in part to redress this slight, the United Nations has declared 1998 the International Year of the Ocean. The idea was developed by the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1993, and approved by the UN General Assembly in 1994. According to the IOC, one reason for launching the Year of the Ocean "is that so far neither governments nor the public pay adequate attention to the need to protect the marine environment and to ensure a healthy ocean."

For journalists, environmental organizations, and government agencies, the Year of the Ocean should offer a great many hooks on which to hang news reports and in-depth analyses of ocean issues. Perhaps the biggest such hook will be Expo 98, to be held in Lisbon, Portugal from May 22 to September 30, and which has as its theme, "The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future." The centerpiece of the Exposition will be the Oceans Pavilion, including an oceanarium that will be the largest in Europe and the second-largest in the world.

The final weeks of the Expo will see the release of a report by the Independent World Commission on the Oceans

(IWCO), a blue-ribbon panel established by former Portuguese President Mario Soares. The IWCO has been formed for the purpose of "calling attention to the role of the oceans in planetary survival; promoting sustainable uses of the oceans; alerting world leaders and the public to the threats facing the oceans; and proposing a better framework for ocean management." Its final report—which will be presented also to the UN General Assembly in November—is expected to make a



number of recommendations concerning international stewardship and management of the oceans. (Full disclosure: I have been hired to help turn the report into material suitable for publishing in book form, but am not involved in the substance of the report itself.)

Closer to home, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seems to be acting as the de facto coordinator and clearinghouse of information and activities governing the Year of the Ocean in this country. At the center of its plans is a White House Summit on the Oceans, tentatively penciled in for June or July. NOAA has established a special website ([www.yoto98.noaa.gov](http://www.yoto98.noaa.gov)) as a guide to some of the publicity, campaign and legislative activities that will be developing over the course of the year.

Aside from staged events, the Year of the Ocean provides the perfect excuse to



**Plankton: cornerstone of the food chain**

report on a number of marine environment issues. Among those widely identified as being the most significant are:

- Debris and chemical contamination, which can result in poisoning, suffocating or entanglement of marine life, and can cause or exacerbate chronic disease and reproductive maladies and deformities;
- Destructive fisheries policies that can lead to the depletion of fish populations, as well as adverse impacts on non-target species and marine habitats;
- The discharge of nutrients, from human and agricultural sewage to emissions from automobiles and power plants, which can give rise to harmful algal blooms and lead to oxygen depletion in bottom waters;
- Coastal construction, urbanization and the damming of rivers, resulting in the loss or disturbance of coastal habitats, and loss or reduction of wildlife populations;
- Exotic species introduced into environments where they did not previously exist, displacing native species and affecting local environments.

In addition, there is growing interest in the possible impacts on the ocean by ozone depletion and global climate change. All of the above can provide a variety of stories. In the past couple of months, for example, I have written stories on the risk posed to albatross populations as a result of incidental entanglement in longline fisheries; an Environmental Defense Fund report on the environmental impacts of aquaculture; a National Marine Fisheries Service review that claimed nearly one-third of US fish species are overfished; how some depleted right whale populations may be doomed because of inbreeding; and how declines in seals and seabirds in New Zealand may be affecting coastal plant populations.

Like the ocean itself, the possibilities for coverage seem almost endless.

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*Kieran Mulvaney, Washington, DC, has been writing about ocean issues for more than 10 years. He edits a monthly newsletter, Ocean Update, which is published by SeaWeb and is available by mail or at <[www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org)>. His book, Whale Warriors, will be published by Rufus Publications in the Fall.*

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# If you write it, they will read?

## Less is not more in reporting on the environment

By BRIAN BISHOP

Most journalists are concerned with examining the relevance of their own prose, especially those who want to stay employed. "Environmental" journalism, whose incredible Baby Boom wax has made its practitioners somewhat insular to the need for such introspection, may not be confronting a Gen X wane of equal proportion. Even as the genre codifies its professional ascendancy, it faces the larger issue of whether the beat was pop-journalism all along.

This lunar cycle in environmental writing has certainly captured the attention of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ), at least according to Paul Roberts special to MSNBC which titled coverage of SEJ's annual convention: "Environment Vanishing From News." I agree with the message he took from the conference—"that Journalists could tell the story better." Yet, in the self-criticism reportedly engendered there in Tucson, I see not the salvation of environmental writing, but its return to mediocrity punctuated only with sensationalism.

Roberts finds "experts" warning writers that, "in bending over backwards to tell an unbiased story, many journalists end up producing nothing more than a series of statements and rebuttals—a boring, tedious read." Oddly, these experts were criticizing the very emergence of professionalism in their ranks. Journalism professor and conference panelist Karl Grossman chided his Tucson audience suggesting: "The fear (of being labeled biased or liberal) has reached such absurdity...that the SEJ worried that having its newsletter on recycled paper would be advocacy!"

It is not a giant step, but a natural progression, from Grossman's belittling of SEJ's recycling ruminations to the notion that one shouldn't question recycling, period. For journalists to research and explain the complex market forces, life cycle analyses, and cost-benefit discussions underlying the debate which rages around recycling contributes

too much to misunderstanding and tedium, we are lead to believe. This idea mirrors the underlying message of Robert's report on SEJ Tucson: that environmental writing is too complex.

To assess the accuracy of this contention, journalists must consult their audience. If the maturing of the Baby Boomers and their counterculture revolution spawned the environmental beat, one must look to Generation X to understand its future. I have a window on today's cutting edge through my wife's teaching of science in an alternative private high school.

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### Viewpoints

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

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For a variety of reasons these adolescents have rejected or been rejected by the traditional educational establishment. They epitomize the vanguard of today's youth attitudes which take on the adult system regardless of the once "enlightened" status of its proprietors—who are, after all, graduates of the anti-war and civil rights movements.

The milieu of the school is a stirring reminder of our own youthful mantras of "question authority." Yet, my expectations were to find amongst today's rebels far more consonance with the likes of Kaczynski than with someone like myself whose ode to a 70's upbringing is to question the authority of environmental regulators.

My wife's anecdotes from an elective this semester examining "Science in the News" thus surprised me; and suggest a strikingly different mandate than that presented to journalists at their Tucson confab. Readings from *Greenpeace Magazine* excoriating oil companies for drilling near wilderness in Alaska were criticized by the students for name calling (oil companies were referred to most charitably as gluttonous hyenas), and for

failing to acknowledge any benefits of oil production.

The shrinkage of consumer interest in the environmental/science beat and corresponding downsizing in associated column inches was discussed in the context of readings such as *SEJournal's* "Bridging the gap to science." Students blamed constant doom and gloom; and the-green-who-cried-wolf reversals resulting from failure to cover both sides of a story from the outset, i.e. Alar, salt, etc, for their own disillusionment with environmental writing.

Had I attempted to write a script designed to awaken environmental journalists to the shortfalls in their work, I could not have done a better job. To judge from this sampling, this generation is not simply a bunch of youthful sycophants intoning green mantras to save the rainforest, or the rest of the planet. They don't want condescending and didactic messages from the media; they want to know what is really happening. There is a great deal of disagreement and intricacy involved in telling that tale; yet, to remain relevant, environmental journalism must delve further into this labyrinth, not retreat.

Roberts concludes his byline from Tucson on this note: "What are needed are stories that help readers link specific events to larger issues. Reporters could, for example, use a story about severe storms to talk about the theorized effects of climate change..."

Great, every time some rain and wind blow through imply that it's probably global warming with no foundation for that claim whatsoever. Perhaps good for readership, but lousy for journalism.

Despite his own bias, I am quicker to echo Grossman's methodology: "don't confuse advocacy with 'deep journalism'—stories that ask probing questions, challenge fundamental assumptions."

So, when Al Gore said on July 28th, "More than 2,600 scientists have signed a letter about global climatic disruption," did you ask who those scientists were

(Continued on page 13)

# Trashed by the company doctor

## Author reveals the anatomy of an unfavorable book review

BY SANDRA STEINGRABER, Ph.D.

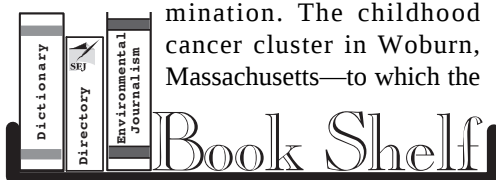
In late November while traveling on a book tour I received a reluctant phone message from a friend in Boston. The *New England Journal of Medicine* had just given my book a “well, it’s a really bad” review.

Up to that point, *Living Downstream: an Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment* (reviewed in the Fall 1997 issue of *SEJournal*) had gathered nothing but praise, and it had just gone into a second printing. Figuring there was nothing to do but recover quietly, I spent an afternoon on the porch of a Texas ranch house wondering about the reviewer: Jerry H. Berke, MD, MPH. He had signed the review (*NEJM* vol. 337, pp. 1562-63) with his home address: 49 Windsor Ave., Acton, MA. I imagined a retired physician or a practitioner in private practice.

Two weeks later, I was lecturing at the University of Vermont Hospital when I received another message. A couple of medical doctors, fond of *Living Downstream* and angered by Berke’s dismissive critique, had apparently done more than ponder his identity: they conducted a computer search. This revealed that Jerry H. Berke was far from an unaffiliated physician. He was, in fact, a senior

official at W.R. Grace & Company, a chemical manufacturer whose environmental misbehavior is the subject of a best-selling book, *A Civil Action*, and a forthcoming Hollywood movie.

I was stunned. W.R. Grace was certainly known to me. *Living Downstream* explores various lines of evidence linking cancer to environmental contamination. The childhood cancer cluster in Woburn, Massachusetts—to which the



actions of W.R. Grace have been accused of contributing—was one of the case studies in my book.

By the time I returned to Boston on December 12, outrage over the review had mushroomed. Paul Brodeur, former staff writer at the *New Yorker*, and public health researcher Bill Ravanese authored an essay criticizing the *Journal* for conflict of interest and for failure to disclose the nature of Berke’s employment. Titled “Old Tricks,” the essay was posted on electronic listservs. By the end of the first day, Bill told me, he had over 200 e-mail responses.

In the meantime, I phoned the *Journal*’s book review editor, Dr. Robert Schwartz. In a phone conversation on December 16, Schwartz told me the review was the result of a terrible oversight. “If I had any idea he (Berke) worked for Grace, I wouldn’t have sent him the book.” I pointed out that Jerry H. Berke had two years ago reviewed another book for the *Journal* and had not concealed his employment at Grace. Schwartz replied he was now aware of this fact, but that Berke had signed the conflict of interest statement and “we trust people.”

Schwartz went on to explain that he has a “master list” of people who have expressed interest in reviewing books in certain fields and that Berke’s name was on that list. He asked for a few days to complete his investigation. I called back the following Friday and was told to give him still more time. At this point, I sub-

mitted a letter to the *Journal*, asking for two things: that it send out *Living Downstream* for re-review and that it develop a policy that guarantees the impartiality of its reviewers.

I also raised questions about the qualifications required of book reviewers. My own Medline search turned up only one research paper authored by Jerry H. Berke. It was published a decade ago. If indeed his position at Grace was unknown to the *Journal*, then on what basis did the editor decide Berke was expert enough to review my book?

Two days later, *Toronto Star* columnist Michele Landsberg, published the results of her own investigation. Her interview with Berke yielded a completely different story. Berke told Landsberg that the *Journal* was well aware of his position with Grace and corresponded with him at his Grace offices. He explicitly requested that the *Journal* not reveal his connection with Grace because, “this is my personal opinion and not the company’s.”

At this writing—two days before Christmas 1997—I have heard nothing further from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, a periodical I had gone through graduate school believing was the Tiffany’s of medical science.

As an author and Ph.D. biologist, I am angry, disillusioned, and fearful that revelations about these kinds of conflicts of interest will further alienate an already cynical, science-phobic, conspiracy-happy public. I am more fearful, however, that

### NEJM Apologizes

According to a story released by the Associated Press on December 28, 1997, The *New England Journal of Medicine* editor-in-chief Jerome P. Kassirer, offered an apology on publishing a book review “for not informing readers that the author is medical director of W.R. Grace & Co.”

The next issue of NEJM was expected to print an apology for failing to abide by its own disclosure guidelines.



Sandra Steingraber

the actions of the *Journal* are symptomatic of an insidious development: paid industry officials appropriating the media and speaking for the medical research community.

When science speaks, whose voice are we hearing these days?

*Sandra Steingraber has a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Michigan. Her other writings include Post-Diagnosis, a volume of poetry, and The Spoils of Famine, a report on ecology and human rights in Africa.*

## Becoming a legend

***Nafanua: Saving the Samoan Rain Forest***

by Paul Alan Cox

W.H. Freeman and Company, New York

Publication date: December 1997

Price: \$23.95 (cloth)

For well over a decade, conservationists have warned politicians and the public about the dangers of losing tropical rain forests—and tried to convince them of the need for sweeping policy changes and substantial funding commitments to stem the loss. Missing from many of their arguments, however, have been compelling personal accounts. Ethnobotanist Paul Alan Cox's fills that gap with *Nafanua*, a book that's an engaging mixture of ecology, anthropology, sociology, and old-fashioned natural history.

Just after his mother's death from breast cancer, Cox took his family to a remote village in Samoa, where he planned to spend a year collecting plant samples and interviewing traditional healers, hoping to find medicinal compounds that could cure cancer or other deadly diseases. Working with the National Cancer Institute, he discovered a plant-derived drug, prostratin, that shows promise as a treatment for AIDS.

Cox's book, however, is much more than an ethnobotanical yarn. Fearing that his research might accelerate the decay of Samoan culture, he initially seeks to limit his own interaction with the culture. Yet it's not long before Cox is deeply involved—launching an international campaign to save the rain forest from loggers, leading an effort to get protection for a rare species of flying fox, and helping to

rebuild shattered dwellings and lives after a devastating hurricane sweeps through the village.

For his contributions, Cox is awarded the chiefly title of the legendary Nafanua, who in ancient times, says a local leader, “appeared out of the sea to fight our battles and save the village from oppression.” Nafanua's tale—from detailed descriptions of flying fox behavior to how Samoans try to adapt to the Western world while holding onto traditions and the rain forests that inspired them—provide a persuasive argument for protecting forest in a corner of the world most of us will never see.

—Laura Tangley

## An outdoor puzzle

***The Work of Nature: How the Diversity of Life Sustains Us***

by Yvonne Baskin

Island Press, 1997, 288 pages, cloth, \$25.00

Everybody thinks biodiversity is a good idea, but everybody also has a hard time explaining why, aside from citing a few rare species that have proven to be the source of new medicines, or saying that, well, it's the right thing to do. That's why the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment, a non-governmental organization for scientists based in Paris, commissioned veteran science writer Yvonne Baskin to translate the results of their three-year technical review of the impacts of loss of diversity into layman's terms.

Not an easy assignment, particularly since the scientists could review her work. But Baskin manages it handily. She focuses on the question of “functional biodiversity”: rather than assessing biodiversity's value through the stuff it provides, “The Work of Nature” evaluates how loss of diversity affects the services we, and the rest of the world, need to survive: clean air and water, for example. Since plants recycle two-thirds of rainwater right back into the atmosphere, changes in vegetation profoundly affect water distribution, soil quality, and salinization.

But scientists are just starting to figure out how to identify the “keystone species” that hold an ecosystem together, and quantify how much change a biome can handle before its productivity is radically altered. (Consider the spectacular failure of Biosphere II as one small example of how little we understand.)

Although Baskin doesn't always manage to overcome the academic dryness of her source material, she has loaded the book with real-world examples that brighten the narrative, and prompt some wishful thinking on dream reporting assignments: Should South Africa invest massive amounts of money in uprooting Australian pines and other exotic invaders to protect the Cape Town watershed, and by extension the \$19 million export market for protea flowers, a South African native that looks like an artichoke on steroids? It's unexpected examples like these that make *The Work of Nature* a pleasure.

—Nancy Shute

## If you write..(from page 11)

and their qualifications to discourse on the complexities of climate? Out of 1660 identified, one is a climatologist and only 11percent have any expertise which informs the debate over climate change. Amongst the remainder: mostly biologists joined by a plastic surgeon, landscape architects, lawyers, a dermatologist, English and linguistics experts, a hotel administrator, a gynecologist, sociologists, and an expert in traditional Chinese medicine.

Is this ‘deep journalism’ challenging Gore's fundamental assumption or ‘corporate apology’? It all depends which side you are on.

I don't envy reporters who must attempt to understand these issues without taking sides. I enjoy the luxury of having a chip on my shoulder the size of a two-by-four while environmental journalists, if they deserve the title, need follow the biblical teachings on carrying wood: “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

*Brian Bishop is the Director of Rhode Island WISEUSE. In this volunteer capacity he advocates for individual property rights.*

# Organic Regs: Changes should germinate copy

By SUZANNE SPENCER

After nearly eight years of negotiations with farmers, processors and consumer groups, the federal government has proposed national organic standards.

The organic food industry has been growing by 20 percent per year, according to industry analysts. In 1996, sales of organic food topped \$3.5 billion.

For years, different states have defined the term "organic" differently. About half the states now regulate organic food by 33 different private certification agencies and 11 state agencies. Both produce buyers and customers trust that when they buy organic foods, the farms they come from don't use synthetic chemicals.

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), introduced legislation in 1990 that put in motion negotiations to create national standards to help prevent fraud in the industry.

With the advent of new National Organic Standards, this system of trust and local rule making will largely disappear. The National Organic Program, announced in December by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, would oversee every aspect of the production and handling of produce, meat, and poultry that are marketed as organically grown or raised.

The organic seal may be carried by raw products that are 100 percent organic—grown or manufactured without the use of added hormones, pesticides, or synthetic fertilizers—and by processed foods that contain 95 percent organic ingredients.

Processed foods with 50 percent to 95

percent organic ingredients may be labeled "made with certain organic ingredients," while those produced with less than 50 percent organic only need list organic among the ingredients.

The penalty for false labeling as organic or selling a product that violates the Agriculture Department's standards would be a fine up to \$10,000.

The agriculture department has delayed a decision on whether or not to allow the use of biotechnology, irradiation for killing bacteria, and sewage sludge as fertilizer.



As with the introduction of any new regulation, there will be winners and losers in the organic farming and processing industries with the advent of new national standards.

Stories to watch out for are how your state has certified organic growers and processors in the past and how flexible these new standards will be to your local growing conditions.

Pay attention to see how the unresolved issues of genetic engineering and sludge get resolved. Many farmers fear that the Organic Standards Board will water down often-strict state standards banning all of those practices. Though states have the right to create stricter standards than the national ones, if the national standards do get weakened, will individual state standards do farmers any good? What would an organic dairy farm do if the new national standards allow them to feed their cows genetically-engineered grains? Introduce them? Will the state certifying board enact higher standards? And how will those decisions affect farms financially?

Watch for changes in the number and size of organic farms in your region. Will these new standards open doors for conventional farmers to become organic, will

they drive out current organic farmers, or both? For many organic farmers, their growing practices are as much a statement for independence and local control as a livelihood. With the dawn of national standards, have organic farmers, in fact, become the establishment?

Organic farms, most of them small and under 100 acres, comprise one of the most profitable sectors in agriculture due to the higher prices they can charge. But according to the *Washington Post*, that could change because several large food processors—including major baby food companies—have been moving into the market. National standards will probably hasten the growth of larger processors. What will that do to wholesale prices for organic food, and how will smaller farmers fare?

Finally, follow the money in the grocery store as well. Organic produce generally costs twice the amount as non-organic produce. Will the introduction of national organic standards bring prices down? And will they in fact help eliminate fraud in the industry and build consumer trust? The jury is out but still worth following.

*Suzanne Spencer is a reporter for Vermont Public Radio.*

## Contacts:

- USDA, Damaris Kogut, (202) 720-8998, <<http://www.ams.usda.gov/not/>>
- Organic Trade Association, Katherine DiMatteo, (413) 774-7511.
- National Organic Standards Board, Robert Anderson, (717) 837-0601.
- American Farm Bureau, Scott Rawlins, (847) 685-8747 and Dennis Stolte, (202) 484-3617
- National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, Jay Feldman, (202) 543-5450
- Environmental Working Group, Ken Cook, (202) 667-6982



Certified? New rules will make sure.

# *We never promised you objectivity*

## *The Maine Times celebrates three decades of muckraking*

By JAN WHITT

Maine is a land of lighthouses, late-afternoon fog, more than 5,000 lakes, and forts and covered bridges. It is a state known for lobster pounds and fish hatcheries, for maple sugar and island ferries.

Like those in other states with a wealth of natural resources, Maine residents struggle to balance their desire for residential and commercial expansion with their love of wilderness serenity. For decades, they have been deciding between the rights of developers and the preservation of open space.

Through it all, an alternative weekly newspaper now based in Hallowell has been an advocate for the land. The *Maine Times* today deals with what editor Douglas Rooks calls environmentalism "broadly defined."

"We ask questions such as, 'How do we live? How do we develop the community? How do we provide public services?'" he said. "We don't hate people and worship trees."

When the first issue of the *Maine Times* appeared Oct. 4, 1968, seasoned newspaper editors told its idealistic co-founders that they would run out of stories in two months. Editors John Cole and Peter Cox ignored their warnings, turning the *Times* into an environmental voice that by the mid-1970s began to reverberate throughout the Northeast. It has found ample material in investigative stories on migrant workers, mining, power generation, recycling, oil tankers and refineries, fishing, pollution, hazardous materials, alternative energy sources, and consumer issues, to name a few.

During its early muckraking days, the *Times* was never anti-government; in fact, the publication appealed not only to Democrats, environmentalists, and academicians—but also to a strong Republican state legislature determined to protect property values and the state economy.

"Republicans moved to Maine and bought land at Falmouth and Cape Elizabeth," Cole said. "They wanted to retire and live on the Maine coast where there was no urban unrest. For years, they had been at their clubs or under hairdryers talking about crime.



**Maine Times editor Douglas Rooks**

"Then they wake up one morning and the wind is blowing from the northwest and it stinks," Cole said. "The paint is turning black on their houses. They don't want to play golf with handkerchiefs over their faces."

Cole argues that because of the desire of the Republican legislators to protect their assets, consensus prevailed, and the citizens of Maine set about to preserve the environment and control growth. The *Times* played a role in their commitment.

"In that way, the new Republicans saved us," Cole said. "A real vacuum existed, and our timing was lucky. Residents were hungering for a voice, for something to represent them."

Calling mainstream dailies "official Vatican papers," Cole said that in 1968 state newspapers were conservative, supported the paper industry, and published primarily press agency reports about the statehouse. During the 1970s, he said, the other newspapers had to speed up their coverage to beat the *Times* to a story and journalists stopped being overly concerned about writing without bias.

"We said, 'This isn't objective journalism. We never promised you that,'" Cole said. "My standard, my philosophy, of journalism was different: You can't separate the opinions of the writer from the issues at hand. If we relay them clearly and we don't lie, then we're honest."

On the eve of the 30th anniversary of

the *Maine Times*, Cole and Cox admit that they had no idea whether or not the publication they began in Topsham, Maine, would even survive its first year. In 1966, the two had become editors of the *Bath-Brunswick Times-Record*. Realizing that they wanted an alternative publication, not just a state newspaper, they founded the *Maine Times* two years later.

"The first year we lost \$120,000," Cox said. "In the second, \$40,000; in the third, \$10,000. We spent \$170,000 before we broke even."

Cole attributes the newspaper's financial survival to Cox, who worked as publisher, coordinating finances, projections and circulation, and writing for the arts section. Cole was assignment editor and wrote editorials.

"Peter was a great publisher," Cole said. "I can't manage my checkbook, much less a company. We hung on the edge of disaster."

Cox, on the other hand, claims their early success was the direct result of Cole's ability to spot and to develop a story. The founders of the *Times* protested the Vietnam War, supported back-to-nature movements, opposed pesticide, supported small farms, and wrote investigative articles on forests and the paper industry.

Cole left the *Times* in 1982, carving out a career as a writer, environmental activist, and teacher. Cox left in 1986 and returned from 1992-93. Now they are reunited in the pages of the paper. Cole publishes in the weekly for the first time in more than 15 years, while Cox continues his biweekly column and is listed on the masthead as a contributing writer.

"The *Maine Times* has always been interested in the quality of life—visual beauty, health, diversity, job availability," Cox said. "It even fought crime."

Cole agrees.

"We had good radar," he said. "We could always see the issues coming."

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*Jan Whitt is an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Colorado in Boulder.*

# Online store helps you and SEJ

By RUSS CLEMINGS

SEJ took a small step into the world of online commerce—not to mention greater financial independence—in late November with the grand opening of its online store on the Environmental Journalism Home Page at <<http://www.sej.org>>.

SEJ's Online Store features books at steep discounts from list prices, plus SEJ conference tapes, back issues of the quarterly newsletter, *SEJournal*, and those marvelous "Top 10 Reasons to be an Environmental Journalist" t-shirts. Plans for other merchandise—coffee cups, caps, and more—are being discussed.

Through the SEJ Store, one can order from a catalog of more than 800,000 books in the Barnes and Noble catalog, at discounts of 20 percent for paperback and 30 percent for hardcover. Plus, no sales tax need be paid by residents in any of 47 U.S. states (the exceptions are New York, New Jersey and Virginia), and shipping is just \$3 per order plus 95¢ per book.

Books can be ordered from lists that include those written by SEJ members, books by SEJ conference speakers, or books reviewed in *SEJournal*. You can also browse Barnes & Noble's entire "Nature and Ecology" section, or order any book in print by using a direct link to the B&N search engine.

Credit cards can be used safely when ordering books

through the SEJ Online Store. In addition to the usual legal protection against credit card fraud (which generally limits liability to \$50), card numbers used to order books through the SEJ store are encrypted before they are sent over the Internet. Both the Netscape and Internet Explorer web browsers support the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology that makes this possible.

Best of all, book purchases from the SEJ Online Store directly benefit SEJ, which receives a commission on each purchase. Unlike many foundation grants and some other funding sources, this money can be used for any purpose, from paying the rent for the SEJ office to publishing *SEJournal* or the biannual membership directory.

Other sections of the SEJ store include a place where you can order those swell t-shirts (Reason No. 9: Free guided tours of sewage treatment plants) and *SEJournal* back issues, or browse a list of available tapes of sessions from last year's SEJ national conference in Tucson.

*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.*

## Letters...(from page 3)

Alternative Journalism's national media conference. But the facts show that Anita Roddick, CEO of The Body Shop, had agreed to speak several months prior to the IAJ's request for sponsorship.

—Gavin Grant, *The Body Shop*



Mr. Entine responds:

For the record, my wife is an executive at Kinko's. She has never had anything to do with Bath and Body Works in any way, shape or form. She was an executive for Cadbury, then Taco Bell when "Shattered Image" appeared, and then moved to The Weather Channel. My only contact with Bath and Body Works has been with its lawyers, while criticizing its products in Drug and Cosmetic Industry.

As for the "facts" about Roddick's appearance at the so-called alternative media-fest...On July 29, 1997, IAJ director Don Hazen sent me an e-mail that "we made some inquiries about sponsorships and Body Shop was among those who responded." Body Shop then asked if Roddick would be given a prominent spot on a panel. After Hazen agreed, the money

was delivered. Then came the PR effort by IAJ touting Roddick's appearance.

—Jon Entine



To the editor:

In the cover story "Beware of 'green' firms," which probes many companies' claims of environmental correctness, author Jon Entine states that "...some journalists cut slack for campaigning organizations like Greenpeace which sometimes cross well over the line of truth to make a case." This article does not focus on Greenpeace, or contain any further reference to us, nor does Mr. Entine bother to provide one single example of Greenpeace crossing "over the line of truth."

For the record, Greenpeace is distinguished from many of the other businesses and organizations Mr. Entine criticizes in that we do not solicit or accept any corporate or government funding, nor does our magazine, *The Greenpeace Quarterly*, accept any advertising. Since our inception in 1971, this fundamental operating principle has been essential for maintaining the uncom-

promised positions we are known for, and has allowed us to maintain a reputation for truthfulness, no matter how popular or unpopular our message.

—Deborah Rephan, *Greenpeace USA*



Mr. Entine responds:

- Greenpeace activists campaigned to fire University of Florida marine biologist Richard Lambertson for "killing whales." Lambertson was conducting research on whale tissues.

- In 1995, Greenpeace guerrillas occupied Shell's Brent Spar oil platform as it was being towed to its North Sea burial. It rented satellite dishes to transmit pictures of its protest and ballyhoo tests which purportedly indicated dangerous levels of toxic oil. Its supporters fire-bombed petrol stations. Greenpeace later said in an embarrassing public apology that it had "mistakenly" exaggerated oil levels, and acknowledged that sinking Brent Spar would have created little environmental damage. The *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* questioned whether Greenpeace massaged the story because of a need for a high impact campaign to revivify flagging donations.



## 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 \$40 with your application. (Students: \$30) Payment options are noted below.

*(Please print legibly. Include a 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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.)

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## 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

## Get it right...(from page 1)

We went deep, deep, deep into the rain forest. The Smithsonian runs a little camp there. We talked to the worst people, the governors of the provinces. They're just terrible and in the pockets of the powers that be. And also the agitators, the Indians, quite a few of them communists. It was a very marking trip to me. That was more than 20 years ago.

Trying to increase, or add a whole new discipline to the coverage of the newspaper, it takes an awful lot more than a desire to do it. You've got to get slots, you've got to get money. You have to be sure that you don't shortchange something else that you are already doing.

**Q:** *Having gotten some religion on environment when down in Brazil, how did you bring that into the Post, introducing it as an area?*

**A:** It was the beginning of an era of expansion at the *Washington Post*. We were riding a crest, under a regime—the Grahams—that believes in plowing back profits into the product.

**Q:** *We're all sort of concerned about the general state of newspapers and shrinking resources. What trends do you see?*

**A:** I see a wonderful trend for the best newspapers. There are fewer newspapers in the world. One of the reasons we got into this field was to shine the light in the dark corners and to make the world better. And you don't need X number of newspapers to do that, you need a strong bulb and a lot of energy on the staff. So you can do it with television, you can do it with newspapers, you can do it with magazines, you can do it a hundred different ways.

**Q:** *Does the lack of competition in many cities hurt newspapers?*

**A:** I think there's actually more competition now than ever in my time. In this city you've got CNN, the local news channel, and network news that didn't exist many years ago when there were so many newspapers. We are not competing with *The Star* any more, or the *Times Herald*, or *The News*. But we are still competing with *Newsweek*, *Time*, the *New York Times*, *LA Times*. We all get inordinate pleasure out of beating the *New York Times*. When the history of the world is written, that isn't all that goddamned important either, but it's fun.

I think that from an editor's point of view, the downside of decreased competition is that it isn't as important to you all to get that goddamned thing in the newspaper. It's not as important to editors either, believe me. I find sometimes that you can tell someone a story here and it will be in the paper in a couple of days, three days, four days, five days. In the days when *The Star* was a thriving and vibrant newspaper when I was first a reporter here, there were four papers in town, and if you got beat there was a serious attitude discussion with the editors. One was scared for one's paycheck. That hasn't happened around here for 15 years.

The thing that fascinates me about your business now is the conflicting scientific claims. I was a Greek major and I don't know. Most of the scientific people here have given up on me. They think I'm hopeless because I once said that I cannot see why someone schpritzing (mimics spraying underarm deodorant) in the basement of a New York City apartment is going to damage the ozone layer.

**SEJ:** It doesn't any more.

**Q:** *How much can we, through SEJ outreach, work on editors who appear unresponsive to stories that are environmental or scientific or a mix of both, to get those stories into print or on the air.*

**A:** I imagine it will come down to individual newspapers, and you individuals working on editors. Not the top editor, but just one or two above you. There is nothing intrinsically understandable about that science story (referring to one in the *Post*) and I said, hello, I don't think I am going to read that story. I don't get it, I won't get it, and I feel embarrassed to admit it in front of Kathy Sawyer (the reporter), but it's just tough.

**Q:** *What advice do you have on improving stories?*

**A:** I think it's a real challenge. Why is science difficult? Economics is difficult too, so is murder, so is understanding people's motives. Just because it's mathematical and scientific doesn't mean it's basically harder. However you teach explanatory, expository writing, there must be some way of saying this intelligently, consecutively. I have a feeling that science writ-

ers—not environment writers, but science writers—write for the professors and not for the readers. Because they want to be known by their news sources as someone who is goddamned brilliant. That will improve their sources, but it won't improve people's receptivity to their science stories.

**Q:** *Do you worry at all about problems with coverage being alarmist?*

**A:** The trouble of that is that you make genuine cause for concern dismissable by exaggerating it. And the flip side of that is the automobile companies saying that they can't possibly meet the standards that are set up and then they meet them so easily that it's ridiculous.

**Q:** *There's the problem that you have to sell your story to editors with some drama, often with some negative element, some critical element, in order to get them to do the story. Any advice about how to sell a story without over-selling it?*

**A:** I've watched it with fascination for so long. Some people are really good at it. (Bob) Woodward is unbelievable at it. The way he will slowly drop something and let it roll across the table. . . and you say "WHAT??" And he's gotcha. The hook is set.

I think that is really one of the first lessons we learn, isn't it, as we go into this business, how to get an editor behind  
(Continued on next page)

### On legendary ground

The setting for the interview with Bradlee was the *Post*'s legendary fifth floor conference room, where many editorial decisions concerning Watergate coverage were made. On the wall behind Bradlee hung a bronzed replica of the famous *Post* front page headlined "Nixon Resigns."

Arrangements for the meeting were made by SEJ board member and *Post* reporter Gary Lee, who also invited *Post* managing editor Robert Kaiser and environment reporter Joby Warrick to attend.

Representing SEJ were officers Kevin Carmody, Marla Cone, Mike Mansur, and Sara Thurin Rollin, board members Adlai Amor, Russell Clemings, Jim Detjen, Ann Goodman, Gary Lee, Jacques Rivard, David Ropeik, and Angela Swafford, and SEJ executive director Beth Parke.

## Get it right...(from page 17)

our stories. And peel that several times. How do you take care of an assignment from an editor that's really a bullshit assignment? You've got to feign enthusiasm for it and move it over into an area where it is interesting. And that's salesmanship and you all know that that's an important part of your job. It's certainly part of an editor's job. In television I would think it would be almost harder. If you try and sell one of these stories and there's not a dead fish around, there's not much action.

**Q:** *Probably one of our biggest dilemmas in covering an environmental story is making it readable but not alarmist.*

**A:** But sometimes it is alarmist. Sometimes it scares the shit out of you what you are writing. You can say that pfiesteria is not really serious, but on the other hand a lot of dead fish flapping around the river banks with really ugly looking sores and you don't know, the scientists don't know and they're the ones in charge of talking about it. It really was an interesting example in this area when the Governor of Maryland really took it very seriously. He closed rivers and closed fish sales. And the Governor of Virginia took it much less so. I think a story about how differently they coped with it would be an interesting way to handle that.

You sense when you may be pushing the panic button a little hard. I always say, "If true." Don't you? I mean, who believes the first explanation from the White House? When the reader is confronted with the scary story, the reader doesn't know the reputation of that scientist, that person. It's up to you to describe that person's reputation, to examine his motive which you do just automatically. Why is this person talking at this time, in this way? As you fill your paper or whatever with that information, people begin to trust you.

**Q:** *Do you see a role for a greater connection between a beat reporter and the people who provide us graphics or pho-*

*tographs? You talked about the pfiesteria story which had pretty graphics of blobs we could put in our papers, and snapshots of dead fish. And you also talked about global warming, which we don't have any pictures of. We have some charts we can use. I'm wondering if in selling environmental stories if we wouldn't be wise to hook up with the picture makers.*

**A:** I think you've got to be careful because those guys are *really* creative. (Laughter) Look at those pictures of that red, changing red-shaped blob that is coming across the Pacific to illustrate El Niño. Much more interesting than just a story about "El Niño's coming." You say, "Holy God! What is that?"



It is my opinion that the greatest change in newspapers in the last 50 years has been graphics. Read the *New York Times* for 1946, please don't read the *Washington Post*. You know, Roman type here, italic, Roman, italic. No pictures. Maybe a one-column head shot. Now the graphics people have intervened wonderfully to make newspapers much more welcome, much more easy to read.

**Q:** *Does it make it easier for an editor to hear if we're talking about pictures and not just words?*

**A:** Oh, I think so, because your first goal as an editor is to get a reader interested and keep them interested, beyond the jump, beyond the first two or three 'graphs. In this culture now, what's the longest story on television? 150 words, a minute and 15 seconds? You can't go back and say, was that Guatemala or El

Salvador?

**Q:** *Do you worry that the growth of coverage of celebrities or entertainment figures is squeezing out more coverage, or in-depth coverage of other subjects, like environment? Is there anything to counter that?*

**A:** The truth has this wonderful way of emerging. It really damn well does. That's the way a democracy works. And just as you think that's a really terribly important discovery of yours, if you go back and read Walter Lippman's public philosophy written in 1910, this is one of his main theories. Just be patient.

The celebrity things, they'll play themselves out. It's an industry now. It's in the magazine industry, it's in newspapers. Even the good newspapers have it. I hope that papers like the *Post* have it cornered, have it contained.

It's a much bigger problem with television. I mean as soon as the news is over, look what follows the news.

**Q:** *What do you mean, as soon as the news is over?*

**A:** I taught an experimental course at Georgetown University this year in "How to Read a Newspaper." One of the people I got to help me was Dick Wald who is a president or vice president of ABC News. And he came down and guest-lectured on

how to watch the television news. It was fascinating. He told these kids, 18 seniors at Georgetown, that there is a moment in every news show when the news is over. There is no more news coming. And, he says, with a little practice you can identify it in a matter of seconds when it is. It's when the graphics start going crazy. You see a page float off a calendar and into the wind, or you see some inversion, the type starts flashing. He was so fascinating about how this came to be. When television news first stopped being just somebody reading.

**Q:** *Is there any one thing you can put your finger on that you think environmental reporting needs for improvement, such as better writing, more depth?*

**A:** I think you will know, you will wrestle the "getting it, getting it simple, getting it right," tackling complicated scientific

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## Cover Story

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issues so that Greek majors can understand it. That's what keeps you worrying about know-nothing editors and worrying about scary scientists who know that they can have a television spot on nightly news if they say the scariest thing possible.

**Q:** *That sounds mostly like writing.*

**A:** It's understanding it first. You can be the best writer in the world but if you don't understand your subject you will be in terrible trouble.

**Q:** *How well do you think newspapers are doing today in covering the environment?*

**A:** I don't know how to answer that because I don't read enough newspapers. But I find on local levels, which I am particularly interested in because I have this place in southern Maryland, that they don't do very well at all. And they are spoon-fed from the person involved.

**Q:** *If you were running that newspaper, how would you instruct your reporters on covering environment?*

**A:** I would keep the goddamned business influences out. That's the first thing. The advertisers and chamber of commerce types. They keep things out of papers and very much influence coverage. Down where I am now is a developer I know who's got 250 acres on the road that goes right by the air base. And he's decided that he's going to try and build a shopping mall, office buildings, 400 condos, all that stuff. It's wall to wall traffic now, before he does it. And it's fascinating to watch whether they can beat him or not, and how they cover it.

First of all they never mention the name of the person who's behind it. They always say "First Colony." That means all you've got to do is pick a good name and you are home free. They had a former county commissioner testify for this thing, but failed to remind the readers that (A) this guy had gone to jail two or three years ago and (B) he had gotten an interest-free loan of \$300,000 from the developer! So that kind of good reporting that we're used to in the good papers doesn't happen there. And that's probably more important than the environmental coverage.

**Q:** *Getting back for a minute to the question of conflicting scientific analysis in a story. Pfiesteria, for example. One group of scientists says its from water pollution from the farms, another group of scientists comes in and says it isn't. What would an editor like you do with that story?*

**A:** I'd get a reporter like you and take him aside and say "Who's lying?" It's not always easy, you know, the truth is hard to find. The truth emerges and it's still emerging there. It seems to me that on that story, you can prove eventually, maybe not by deadline, that pfiesteria is caused by chicken refuse, but I don't know, you just keep whacking away at it. And the people who are against your doing that, who are impeding you, are not dopes. Look how tobacco marshalled their forces! How they're still doing it!

**Q:** *Part of the problem is that scientists cannot prove cause and effect definitively, and editors seem to want cause and effect.*

**A:** They always hedge, but, you get to a point when you can

get the president of one of these tobacco companies to say, look, cough, cough, I'm going to die tomorrow and I've changed my mind! And they know that.

**Q:** *More often than not we're stuck with the climate change story, or pfiesteria story, or environmental policy story that doesn't have the resolution that other stories have that editors long for.*

**A:** How many times did you think that the scientists would support your position, that you have said "these guys are the good guys, and those guys are not." How many times have they exaggerated, how many times have they been wrong? You know, some of these guys will admit that they've taken fliers, they say "the overwhelming, the most evidence is". It's very hard to know what is truth. That's why that majoring in Greek was very useful. You've got to come to grips with that. Do

you believe the President of the United States when he says something? Do you believe a witness when he testifies? Those are judgments that make you a good reporter, if you can live with it.

**Q:** *I don't understand why it's so difficult to convince editors that people are interested in this (environment) when all the public opinion polling shows how deeply people are concerned, they want to know*

*more about the environment. And I'm wondering, as an organization, if we should be gathering that kind of data and taking it to editors, to make the case on that level, as opposed to story by story.*

**A:** Well, you're out-gunned by the people who are on the other side and are going to pay Wall Street lawyers. Look at Harry MacPherson, one of the most brilliant

lawyers and people in Washington under the Johnson Administration. Now the lead attorney for the tobacco companies. You can't beat city hall on that thing. The people who are really interested aren't organized. Getting organized is a step against the trend. But the people whose livelihood is threatened by environmentalists, the chicken farmers in Maryland who think they got screwed when the (anti) tobacco people made them stop growing tobacco and now they're growing chickens and they're going to put them out of that business. I don't think you can correct that.

In the last analysis, it's the people who run your organizations. Have you got their interest? If you don't, you're in trouble. Send them down to Brazil and they'll get interested in it. And I'll tell you, Tom Lovejoy will take them down. He must be interested in you guys. ♦

***Do you believe the President of the United States when he says something? Do you believe a witness when he testifies? Those are judgments that make you a good reporter, if you can live with it.***

## Grazing..(from page 1)

Of all the issues that are uniquely Western, none is more highly charged than the question of ranching on the public lands. Unfortunately, it's a story that falls beneath the radar of most of the national press. Perhaps that's best, since it's difficult to get beyond the Marlboro-man myth unless you've done time in cat-

tle country. But it's unfortunate when you consider that livestock grazing is regarded by many ecologists as having more impact on the West than any other single activity, including logging, mining, or real estate development. Cattle grazing stretches over more than half the Western landscape, 69 percent of the country's

191 million acres of national forests and 90 percent of the land administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Grazing is often allowed in national parks and in officially designated wilderness. It's like a religion, one that you can't get away from if you live here.

The controversy over grazing in the West is embedded in the particularity of landscape. West of the 100th meridian is the basin and range where it rains less than 20 inches a year and the writer Wallace Stegner once noted, "unassisted agriculture is dubious or foolhardy." That could explain why virtually no agriculture, including livestock grazing, is unassisted in the West. Although subsidies exist everywhere, they are indeed staggering in this part of the country. They have to be. Without them most of the rural resource extraction activities in the West would be too marginal to sustain.

Aridity also makes the Western landscape fragile. There is increasing evidence that the traditional ways for rural people to make a living here are having cumulative effects that are turning a near desert into a real desert.

It's not a pretty sight and it can turn conservatives into tree-huggers. Listen to this comment from Doug Haines, a Republican stockbroker who also happens to be a quail hunter and a member of the Western Gamebird Association, which is aggressively trying to remove cattle from Western public lands: "If I lived on a

ranch I'd be rationalizing, too. But because I didn't grow up on a ranch I have the benefit of objectivity. My attack on ranching is not personal. I just feel it's the right thing to do. I don't believe in subsidized industries. I've seen the destruction with my own eyes. The government is paying someone to destroy the land. That's got to be stopped."



**Cattle on streams: romance or ruin?**

The Big 10 conservation groups, such as The Wilderness Society, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, have taken up the economics argument, pointing out that ranchers pay \$1.41 to graze a cow for a month, about a quarter of the private land price. Karl Hess, an ecologist and free market proponent, estimates annual federal subsidies to ranchers at \$400 million. The economic argument plays well inside the Beltway, but there's a certain amount of disingenuousness in it that isn't lost on cattlemen. The real motivation for reforming federal grazing policy is the growing evidence that it is intrinsically harmful to the ecology of arid places.

The economic argument also leaves out the mythology. On this issue, I don't think you can do that, because the cowboy is a mythic figure to so many people, including reporters. Why does a guy who chases big dumb animals in a pickup truck deserve more respect than a schoolteacher or a carpenter? Or a biologist who knows land science? Maybe these questions don't matter when you consider that, as former Arizona Game and Fish biologist David Brown says, ranchers tell better stories than environmentalists.

Because the cowboy myth dies harder than a bad guy in a Sam Peckinpah movie, people you would expect to be against ranching often embrace it, for reasons that

range from the attraction of cowboy clothes and rural culture to the desire to prevent marching subdivisions. This latter group includes *High Country News* publisher Ed Marston, a fan of the consensus approach to conflict resolution, who wrote that "only people who live on the land can save it." It also includes The Nature Conservancy, which buys grazing leases and grazes cattle itself, although partly in response to the fact that it's next to impossible to retire a grazing lease on federal land. (This is what Sonoran Institute economist Ray Rasker calls a "perverse incentive" to overgraze federal land; it's extremely difficult and sometimes impossible for a rancher to rest his grazing allotment for more than a couple of years without having to relinquish it.)

I like some ranchers too, but it's important not to forget that some of these folks are the rural equivalent of the railroad barons of the 1880s. Consider the words of eminent historian Donald Worster of the University of Kansas: "The agriculturalists who constitute the private sector have become in recent times too rich and well-organized, when compared with the archaic peasant class, to be cowed into submission by any state." This is a rural aristocracy and, as my experience with the tall man in the cowboy hat shows, they don't like being treated like regular folks.

That doesn't happen very often, or they might get used to it. Federal subsidies insulate many ranchers from the economic realities that most Americans live with on a daily basis and they're not used to being questioned about that. Environmentalists are disgusted with reporters who come out West and become "rancher groupies." You've got to grapple with the myth, not merely repeat it. Inject the facts, and come out the other side. That doesn't mean ignoring what ranchers are calling "custom and culture" — just placing it in context. And that takes time and research.

Ranching is so deeply embedded in the social structure of the intermountain West that I didn't even write about it until I had lived in Arizona for several years. I tackled it only after driving on dirt roads from Caborca, Sonora, to Three Points, Arizona, country that had been ranched since Father Eusebio Kino introduced

## Contacts:

- Joy Belsky, PhD. range scientist, (503) 228-9720
- David Brown, Arizona State University, (602) 973-0591
- George Wuerthner, cattle v. subdivisions, compare grazing in different parts of West, (406) 222-1655
- Karl Hess, economics of ranching, (303) 492-2328
- Andy Kerr, consultant, former exec. dir. Oregon Natural Resources Council, political strategy, (541) 432-0909
- Bob Ohmart, Center for Environmental Studies, Arizona State University (riparian areas), (602) 965-4632

cattle and Christianity to the region in the 1600s.

There seemed to be something eternal in the Mexican ranches I passed on my way to Baboquivori Peak. It was spring and the brittlebush was explosively yellow; you could hear people singing in the small, whitewashed missions.

That's the romance. But others also see romance in a desert with running rivers lined by willows and sedges, where you can startle dense flocks of scarlet tanagers and cedar waxwings. At Cienaga Creek outside Tucson, which was fenced off to cattle a decade ago, you see a remarkable contrast to the wide, dusty streambeds bereft of vegetation that are the norm on much of the range, including the ranch where Tucson conference attendees were wowed by great vistas and an old cottonwood last October.

Unlike native wildlife, cattle gravitate to rivers and decimate the vegetation, transforming grasslands to scrublands and replacing indigenous species like pronghorn antelope with mule deer. The most common word Western environmentalists use to describe rangelands is "nuked." The federal government is more restrained, reporting that two-thirds of rangelands are in "less than good" condition and more than half of streams and riparian areas are overgrazed and degraded. Not very romantic.

Of course, you don't know this if you fly in from Atlanta or Pittsburgh or New York, walk along a fenceline and see mountains and blue sky. And it's tough to get good science on this issue. Many "range scientists" are paid directly or indirectly by the cattle industry. There are a few exceptions and you'll be hearing from

them more and more, as the grazing issue heats up. (See "contacts," page 22)

Ranchers do tell good stories. Society may decide to subsidize them to keep these stories around, even if it means fewer tanagers and willows and trout. Or economics may decide the cowboy's time is over.

Let's help society make an informed decision with good reporting. It's time to do justice to the landscape that is the real source of the Western myth when we tell our own stories.

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*Susan Zakin is the author of Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First! and the Environmental Movement, (Penguin 1994) and writes a column on environmental politics for Sports Afield magazine.*

## Kyoto..(from page 1)

minute walk across a covered footbridge from the main conference building.

I had brought all the equipment needed to become a one-man publishing operation in Kyoto, but there was no need for it. Japan being the land of advanced electronics, the conference facility was equipped with perhaps 100 PCs, all of which had high-speed Internet access and a package of basic software. The Japanese-English computer keyboards took some getting used to, but after the first day, I left my laptop at the hotel and used the conference's facilities to file my stories and print promotional copies of *Greenwire*. (For those who used laptops, almost all of the pay phones had computer ports and directions in English on how to use them.)

Most of the reporters in Kyoto were not environmental specialists. Many were general assignment correspondents based in Tokyo, Hong Kong or Bangkok, and a sizable throng came and went with Vice President Gore. But a few SEJers were in sight, including myself, Alex Barnum of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Cheryl Hogue of BNA, and Randy Loftis of the *Dallas Morning News*. If an award existed for best coverage of the Kyoto event in the English language, it should probably go to the Tokyo-based *Japan Times*, which gave the story front-page play and at least a full-page interior spread on most days, cover-

ing every major and minor development.

The official proceedings were televised on closed-circuit monitors. With the exception of Gore's speech, when the prevailing dull roar faded to rapt silence, most people tuned out the speeches and scurried about pursuing their own agendas. For the environmental reporter, deciding where to begin each day was like trying to choose from among all of those fine panel discussions offered simultaneously at the SEJ annual conferences. On my busiest day, I arrived at 8:30 a.m. and attended seven press briefings before filing my story at 9 p.m. and heading for an inexpensive *udon* noodle shop.

I soon discovered there was an advantage to *Greenwire* in the 14-hour time difference between Kyoto and Washington. Because most morning papers are put to bed late the previous evening, reporters in Kyoto had to file stories by, say, 11 A.M. on Wednesday, in time for the home office to get it at 9 P.M. Tuesday evening and include it in Wednesday morning's East Coast papers. But because *Greenwire's* first copy deadline is at 8 a.m., and its delivery time is 10:30 A.M., I could arrive at the conference after a leisurely breakfast, run my hurdles all afternoon and then file my story right after the U.S. government briefing concluded at 7:30 p.m. On three occasions, this

meant *Greenwire* featured breaking news that the morning newspapers and CNN did not have.

Despite the similarities to an American political convention, Kyoto was very different in other respects. Most political conventions are highly scripted for a public audience, with the outcome known in advance. By contrast, in Kyoto the negotiations were touch-and-go almost to the last minute. The issues dividing nations seemed completely intractable at the outset, and even at 3:30 a.m. on the final day of the conference—which had been extended for an extra 24 hours to wrap up the deal—it seemed the compromise might collapse under the weight of eleventh-hour objections.

There were no celebrations; one could practically smell the rhetorical poison in the air, especially in the first few restless days, when the hall seemed to offer nothing but Cassandras of varying stripes and government officials strenuously denying their bosses would ever budge from fixed positions.

Even after the final, 48-hour marathon negotiating session produced a deal, there was relatively little applause in the hall: Many participants had already left the site to get some sleep or to return home. In one of those ironic vignettes that one sees in these situations, two Americans with very different opinions on the issue were seen snoring on adjacent

*(Continued on next page)*

sofas in the hall that last morning: Greenpeace climate change campaign director Kalee Kreider and White House Climate Change Task Force chair Dirk Forrester.

Was the final result a “meaningful” accord? Time will tell. But the substance of the deal was this: 38 industrial nations agreed to restrain or reduce their emissions of six greenhouse gases by a collective 5.2 percent beginning in the next decade and continuing beyond that. Much of the peripheral activity of the conference consisted of discussions about how those goals might be realized, but there are few actual policy measures being seriously considered anywhere that would actually achieve them.

Nevertheless, the pact was a landmark statement by the leading nations of the world that they are willing to sacrifice some small degree of economic and political sovereignty in the name of cooperative, precautionary action to protect our shared atmosphere. Real progress will still occur in tiny steps, but global climate change will become the context in which most energy, transportation and development issues are discussed.

And because change will occur so slowly, it will provide years of work for environmental journalists, policy wonks and politicians. The Kyoto pact left a list of topics that must still be addressed in future talks, including emissions trading, equitable baselines, forest conserva-

tion and—most important for domestic US politics and long-term emissions trends—binding emissions limits for developing nations.

Thousands of policy debates, conflicts and collaborations lie ahead, presenting just as many opportunities for enterprising reporters and the people who would spin them.

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*Dale Curtis is publisher of Greenwire and Daily Energy Briefing.*

*For more information on the Kyoto Protocol, visit [www.cop3.org](http://www.cop3.org), a website maintained by the secretariat to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.*

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## Calendar

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### MARCH

1-5. **WM '98** (a conference on radioactive waste management issues). Tucson. Contact: Carol Worth, Ph: (703) 742-0017, E-mail: [carolworth@aol.com](mailto:carolworth@aol.com), or WM Symposia Inc., 245 S. Plumer, Ste. 19, Tucson, AZ 85719. Ph: (520) 624-8573; Fax: (520) 792-3993. WEB: <http://www.wmsym.org>

1-5. **Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting** (with sessions on topics ranging from endocrine disruptors and respiratory effects of inhaled particulates, to impacts of breathing wood smoke or autoimmune disease triggered by chemical exposures). Seattle. Contact: Deborah Hyman, SOT, 1767 Business Center Dr., Ste. 302, Reston, VA 20190-5332. Ph: (703) 438-3115; Fax: (703) 438-3113; E-mail: [sothq@toxicology.org](mailto:sothq@toxicology.org); WEB: <http://www.toxicology.org>

11. **Peer Review of National Toxicology Program Electric and Magnetic Field (EMF) Studies** (focusing on studies on cancer studies in animals exposed to 50- and 60-hertz fields). Research Triangle Park, N.C. Contact: Larry G. Hart, PO Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. Ph: (919) 541-3971; Fax: (919) 541-0295; E-mail: [hart@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:hart@niehs.nih.gov)

16-19. **International Zebra Mussel and Aquatic Nuisance Species Conference** (sponsored by the California Sea Grant College System, it features sessions that go beyond the bivalve problem, to ruffes, mitten crabs, and the Eurasian watermilfoil). Sacramento. Contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, 567 Roy Street, Pembroke, ON K8A 6R6, Canada. Ph: (800) 868-8776; E-mail: [profedge@renc.igs.net](mailto:profedge@renc.igs.net); WEB: <http://www.zebraconf.org>

22-26. **Wetlands Engineering & River Restoration Conference** (sponsored by the American Society of Civil Engineers). Denver. Contact: Don Hayes, Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112. Ph: (801) 581-7110; Fax: (801) 585-5477; E-mail: [hayes@civil.utah.edu](mailto:hayes@civil.utah.edu); WEB: <http://www.civil.utah.edu/~hayes/conference.htm>

[civil.utah.edu/~hayes/conference.htm](http://www.civil.utah.edu/~hayes/conference.htm)

23-25. **Riparian Management in Forests of the Continental Eastern United States** (sponsored by the USDA Forest Service). Columbus. Contact: Nancy Walters, US Forest Service, N. Central Forest Experiment Station, 1992 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. Fax: (612) 649-5256; E-mail: [nwalters@nc.fs.fed.us](mailto:nwalters@nc.fs.fed.us); WEB: <http://www.ncfes.umn.edu/riparian/>

29-Apr. 1. **North American Conference on Pesticide Spray Drift Management** (with sessions on the social, legal and environmental repercussions of pesticides landing in non-targeted areas—such as school yards or organic farms). Portland, ME. Contact: Paul Gregory, Maine Board of Pesticides Control, 28 State House Station, August, ME 04333-0028. Ph: (207) 287-2731; Fax: (207) 287-7548; E-mail: [afpgreg@state.me.us](mailto:afpgreg@state.me.us); WEB: [www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/](http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/)

### APRIL

5-7. **Air Pollution: Science and Regulation** (with sessions on such topics as particulates, health effects of emerging fuels, and epidemiological studies of gaseous pollutants and health). Boston. Contact: Gail Allosso, Health Effects Institute, 955 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139. Ph: (617) 876-6700; Fax: (617) 876-6709; E-mail: [gallosso@healtheffects.org](mailto:gallosso@healtheffects.org)

6-9. **Clinical and In Vivo Research Studies on Health Effects of Electromagnetic Fields** (sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, it will feature data on research from exposures at frequencies associated with electric power). Phoenix. Contact: EMF RAPID Program, LCBRA, NIEHS, NIH, PO Box 12233 MD EC-16, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. Ph: (919) 541-7534; Fax: (919) 541-0144.

**14-18. Air and Waste Management Association's Annual Meeting** (with more than 180 sessions on environmental research). San Diego. Contact: Kevin Wander, A&WMA, 1 Gateway Center, 3rd FL., Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Ph: (412) 232-3444; Fax: (412) 232-3450; E-mail: kwander@awma.org  
**20-23. Symposium on Environmental Toxicology and Risk Assessment** (with sessions on topics including biomarkers of exposure to hormone mimicking pollutants, assessing reproductive hazards and brain alterations from such pollutants, monitoring PCBs in pine needles, and minimizing impacts from seafood processing). Atlanta. Contact: Diane Henshel. Ph: (812) 855-4556. E-mail: dhenshel@indiana.edu  
**20-24. Pacific Basin Conference on Hazardous Waste** (sponsored by the East-West Center). Honolulu. Contact: Executive Secretary, PBCHWRM, c/o East-West center, Program on Environment, 1777 East-West Rd., Honolulu, HI 96848. Ph: (808) 944-7224; Fax: (808) 944-7298; E-mail: NishiokJ@ewc.hawaii.edu; web: <http://envgov.ewc.hawaii.edu/abc/call98>

**23-24. Redefining the Crop Protection Industry** (a conference on regulatory, policy, and technology issues, sponsored by the American Crop Protection Association). Arlington, VA. Contact: Chris Klose, ACPA, 1156 15th St., NW, Washington DC 20005. Ph: (202) 872-3869; E-mail: chris@acpa.org

## MAY

**11-13. Characterizing the Effects of Endocrine Disruptors on Human Health at Environmental Exposure Levels** (with sessions on the toxicity of such compounds on the brain, on development, on the immune system, and in cancer causation). Raleigh, NC. Contact: Anna Lee Sabella, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Ph: (919) 541-4982.

**18-21. 1st International Conference on Remediation of Chlorinated and Recalcitrant Compounds** (sponsored by Battelle, with sessions on topics that include human health risk assessments). Monterey, Calif. Contact: The Conference Group, 1989 W. Fifth Ave., Ste. 5, Columbus, OH 43212-1912. Ph: (800) 783-6338; Fax: (614) 488-5747; E-mail: conferencegroup@compuserve.com

## JUNE

**3-6. Who Owns America: How Land and Natural Resources are Owned and Controlled** (sponsored by the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison). Madison. Contact: Land Tenure Center, 1357 University Ave., Rm 210, Madison, WI 53715. Ph: (608) 262-3658; Fax: (608) 262-2141; E-mail: ltc-nap@facstaff.wisc.edu.

**14-18. Becoming a Complete Outdoor Writer.** Redding, CA. Contact Outdoor Writers Association of America, Inc. (OWAA) Headquarters, 2155 East College Ave., State College, PA 16801. Ph: (814) 234-1011; E-mail: 110375.3722@compuserve.com

## SELECT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

**March 3-7. Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation** (with sessions on such topics as interactions between sea turtles and fishing fleets in Latin America and advances in conservation programs). Mazatlan, Mexico. Contact: F. Alberto Abreu Grobois, BITMAR, Estacion Mazatlan, Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnologia-UNAM, A.P. 811, Mazatlan, Sinaloa 82000 Mexico. Ph: ((52) 69-85-28-45/8; Fax: ((52) 69-82-61-33; E-mail: abreu@servidor.dgsca.unam.mx

## APPLICATION DEADLINES

**March 1 for the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships** at MIT. Open to English-speaking U.S. and Canadian print and broadcast journalists, including freelance writers, applicants must have at least three years experience in communicating science or technological issues, such as environmental research, to a broad audience. The \$26,000 stipend covers an academic year of residence at MIT beginning Sept. 1. Contact: Knight Fellowships, MIT E32-300, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph: (617) 253-3442; Fax: (617) 258-8100; E-mail: ksji-www@mit.edu; WEB: [http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/k/ksji/www/how\\_to\\_apply.html](http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/k/ksji/www/how_to_apply.html).

**March 1 for the Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Journalism** at the University of Colorado. Applicants must be U.S. citizens with at least five years of full time professional experience in print or broadcast journalism—though not necessarily in covering the environment. A \$26,000 stipend will cover the fellows' 9-month period of research and seminars in Boulder, beginning in August. Contact: Center for Environmental Journalism, University of Colorado at Boulder, Campus Box 287, Boulder, CO 80309-0287. Ph: (303) 492-4114; WEB: <http://campuspress.colorado.edu/cej.html>.

**March 2 for a \$1,000 Radio and Television News Directors Foundation Fellowship** for a broadcast journalist covering science and environmental issues. Applicants must have been covering the beat for 10 years or less. Winners need not take a sabbatical to qualify for the fellowship. Contact: Michelle Thibodeau, RTNDF, 1000 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 615, Washington, DC 20036. Ph: (202) 467-5206; Fax: (202) 223-4007; E-mail: michellet@rtndf.org; WEB: <http://www.rtndf.org>.

**March 15 for the Marine Biological Laboratory Science Writing Fellowships** of up to eight weeks -- usually during the summer, and usually on Cape Cod. Applicants must have two years of full time professional experience in print or broadcast journalism, and preference will be given to journalists with staff positions, including those at the editorial or news director level. Contact: Pamela Clapp, Science Writing Fellowships Program, 7 MBL St., Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods, Hole, MA 02543-1015. Ph: (508) 289-7423; E-mail: pclapp@mbledu. ♦

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# Green Beat Correspondents

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## 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 for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state(s) or, if none are listed, contact the SEJ office..

### Alabama — Vacant

### Alaska — Vacant

**Arizona and New Mexico** — Patti Epler, *Phoenix New Times*, PO Box 2510, Phoenix, AZ 85254, patti\_eplar@newtimes.com, (602) 229-8451

### Arkansas — Vacant

### California:

#### Northern California — Vacant

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

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

**Colorado** — Todd Hartman, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 30 S. Prospect St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903, toddh@gazette.com, (719) 636-0285

**Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts** — Peter Lord, *Providence Journal*, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902, plord@projo.com, (401) 277-8036

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

**North Florida and South Georgia** — Deborah Hoag, 727 Egret Bluff Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32211, hoagd@aol.com, (904) 721-3497

### South Florida — Vacant

### North Georgia — Vacant

### South Carolina — Vacant

### Hawaii — Vacant

**Idaho** — Rocky Barker of the *Post-Register*, 1020 11th St., Idaho Falls, ID, 83404, (208) 529-8508, rbarker@

micron.net, (509) 459-5431

**Illinois** — Jonathon Ahl, *WCBU 89.9*, 1501 W. Bradley Avenue, Peoria, IL, 61625, ahl@bradley.edu, (309) 677-2761

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

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

**Kentucky** — Andrew Melnykovych, *Louisville Courier-Journal/Metro Desk*, 525 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40201, amelny@aol.com, (502) 582-4645

**Louisiana** — Mike Dunne, *Baton Rouge Advocate*, Box 588, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0588, mdunne@theadvocate.com (504) 383-0301

**Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont** — Robert Braille, *Boston Globe* correspondent, P.O. Box 1907, Exeter, N.H., 03833, braille@nws.globe.com, (603) 772-6380

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

**Michigan** — Jeremy Pearce, *Detroit News*, 615 W. Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit, MI 48226, (313) 223-4825

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

**Missouri** — Bill Allen, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 900 N. Tucker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63101, 72263.3236@compuserve.com, (314) 340-8127

**Montana** — Todd Wilkinson, P.O. Box 422, Bozeman, MT 59771, Tawilk@aol.com, (406) 587-4876

### Nebraska — Vacant

### New Jersey — Vacant

### New York — Vacant

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

**Ohio, Indiana** — Charlie Prince at *Ohio Environmental Reporter*, 516 Ludlow Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45220, chasprince@aol.com,

(513) 221-0954

### Oregon — Vacant

**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, elimanning@earthlink.net, (303) 527-4898

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

### Texas and Oklahoma:

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

**Central and West Texas** — Robert Bryce, *The Austin Chronicle*, 3812 Brookview, Austin, TX 78722, rbryce@compuserve.com, (512) 454-5766

**East and Coastal Texas** — Bill Dawson, *The Houston Chronicle*, Box 4260, Houston, TX 77210, bill.dawson@chron.com, (713) 220-7171

**Utah** — Brent Israelsen, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 143 South Main, Salt Lake City, UT 84111, israel@sltrib.com, (801) 237-2045

### Wyoming — Vacant

### Virginia and North Carolina — Vacant

### Washington State — Vacant

**West Virginia** — Ken Ward, *Charleston Gazette*, 1001 Virginia St. East, Charleston, WV 25301, kenward@newwave.net, (304) 348-1702

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

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

### SEJ needs Green Beat correspondents

Please note openings in several states. If interested, contact Kevin Carmody at (708) 633-5970 or Chris Rigel at rigel@voice.net.com, or (215) 836-9970. Positions are open to SEJ members, though preference is given to journalists or educators.

## ARIZONA

► Proposals to ease pressing environmental woes and other concerns at the Grand Canyon were explored in detail in a four-part series in the *Mesa Tribune*. In March, the National Park Service is expected to choose a plan to help alleviate problems caused by five million visitors a year—ranging from overcrowding, poorly maintained trails to inadequate housing for park employees. “Canyon In Conflict,” published Nov. 16-19 by staff writer Kirk Mitchell, examined competing private development proposals, including the much-publicized Canyon Forest Village being pushed by a consortium of U.S., Italian, and Iranian businessmen. The series spent one day looking at possible political links between the consortium’s principals and government officials, including park service higher-ups and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Mitchell devoted one story to the Havasupai Indians, who he calls the strongest opposition to the mega-development. The tribe fears the project would suck too much water out of the natural springs that both supply water and play an important role in the tribe’s spiritual beliefs. The series wraps up with a comparison of Canyon Forest Village to Dollywood in Tennessee, which critics point to as an example of ill-planned development that has undermined the natural beauty of—and detracted visitors from—the Great Smoky Mountains by luring them into a theme park. Kirk Mitchell can be reached at (602) 898-6542 at the *Mesa Tribune*.

## CALIFORNIA

► On Jan. 14, the *San Jose Mercury News* ran a story on the agreement known as the Environmental Protection Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty. The entire continent of Antarctica—from towering mountain ranges to seas teeming with blue whales, emperor penguins and leopard seals—will be set aside as a global wilderness preserve under an international agreement that took effect in January. The accord bans mining and oil drilling for a minimum of 50 years across the world’s coldest and most pristine ecosystem. Unprecedented in its emphasis of conservation over development, it also forbids a wide range of wildlife threats including

pesticides and even dogs. Call Paul Rogers, at (408) 920-5045. See National Science Foundation at [http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/\\*](http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/*)

► Alternative energy, spurred by 1970s foreign oil embargoes and a sweater-clad Jimmy Carter telling us to turn down our thermostats, faces an uncertain future in this new era of deregulation. Whether it survives in California may end up depending solely on whether people are willing to pay something like eight to 18 percent more than they will pay for traditional but more polluting sources. Subsidies, economics, and new technology are part of the story, which ran on Jan. 2. Call Jim Bruggers, *Contra Costa Times*, at (510) 943-8246.

► This is where the rubber really meets the road. Here on U.S. 101, five miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge, drivers zoom quietly from Sausalito to Larkspur on six miles of asphalt pavement containing 90,000 chopped-up tires. The Jan. 4 story describes the stretch as among hundreds of miles of highways in California paved in the past five years with rubber from worn tires, part of a 1990s recycling project that offers the first real hope of reclaiming used rubber instead of burning or burying it. For information, contact Jane Kay, *San Francisco Examiner*, at (415) 777-8704.

► High on bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean on one of the last unspoiled stretches of California coast between Carmel and Cambria, the Hearst Corp. wants to build an 18-hole golf course, four hotels, restaurants, and shops in the shadow of the fabled Hearst Castle. But the California Coastal Commission, at a hearing attended by 1,000 people Jan. 15 in San Luis Obispo, sent back the \$100 million resort for severe cuts. The Hearst Corp. owns 16 magazines, six radio stations, and 12 daily newspapers, including the *San Francisco Examiner*, and is a partner in cable networks ESPN and Arts & Entertainment. The corporation, whose stock is held by a family trust, says it has a right to build on the 77,000-acre Hearst Ranch, founded in 1865 after the Gold Rush by mining magnate George Hearst. The resort won’t disturb the rustic character of the coast, representatives say. But

ranchers and other coast dwellers argue that the law protects agriculture, wildlife, views, water supplies, and open space from big development. Call *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and other state newspapers for advance and folo stories.

## COLORADO

► The Environmental Protection Agency has warned Colorado regulators that a law allowing companies to shield certain environmental violations from public view conflicts with federal law. The so-called “immunity and privilege” law gives companies immunities from fines and allows them to withhold information about certain violations from the public if they voluntarily report environmental problems discovered during self-audits of their operations. The law, versions of which exist in several other states, has the backing of Colorado’s Department of Public Health and Environment and many state legislators. It first came under fire from environmentalists, who last year asked the EPA to take over certain enforcement programs from the state if officials don’t dump the law. For information, contact Todd Hartman of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, [toddh@gazette.com](mailto:toddh@gazette.com) or (719) 636-0285

► Colorado wildlife officials announced in January a plan to release 200 endangered lynx into the wilds of the Rocky Mountains beginning in the year 2000. The lynx, a tuft-eared creature resembling a bobcat, are plentiful in Canada and Alaska, but not in the lower 48 states. The last Colorado lynx was spotted in 1973. The lynx became a high-profile creature when the world-famous Vail ski area sought to add nearly 1,000 acres to its terrain. Forest Service officials granted Vail’s request last year, despite complaints from environmentalists that the expansion would threaten the elusive lynx. If officials release the creatures, they could be afforded endangered species protection, a prospect that worries timber and ski resort interests. Contact Berny Morson, *Rocky Mountain News*, (303) 892-5201.

## ILLINOIS

► Illinois Public Radio broke the

story on changes in the State EPA "Clean Break" program. It allows companies to come forward with violations without facing fines or other penalties. Starting in 1998, businesses will no longer be required to have a sponsoring community or environmental group to qualify for the amnesty. So far, more than 600 violators of State Laws have come forward through the program. The state EPA says the relaxed qualifications for the amnesty program should increase the number of businesses that come into compliance with EPA rules. Contact Sean Crawford, *Illinois Public Radio* at (217) 682-6058.

► Two stories concerning the Illinois River were profiled by the *Peoria Journal Star*. The river is up for National Heritage River Status by the federal government. While environmentalists and most local politicians want the designation and hope it could lead to more funding for clean-up of silt and waste, the Illinois Farm Bureau and several rural counties bordering the river are complaining that there will be restrictions on river traffic, making it difficult for barge traffic to carry grain to market, and that it will encroach on private property rights of farmers who are farming the land near the river. For information, contact Elaine Hopkins, *Peoria Journal Star*, at ehopkins@ns.pjstar.com or phone (309) 686-3114.

► Also on the river beat, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a feasibility study for a dredger that Peoria-based Caterpillar Inc. is considering developing. The dredger would cut the cost of shallow water dredging in rivers and lakes by up to 80 percent. It also does not re-hydrate the silt or re-suspend any chemical pollutants in runoff water. Cat has put some research and development time into the project, but has not moved past building a model. Cat is not talking to reporters about the subject, but said in statement that there are doubts about the profitability of such a super-efficient dredger. In comes the Army Corps of Engineers who are leading the effort to get public and private money to build a prototype of the dredger at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. Environmentalists and some local legislators say the problem of erosion and siltation on bodies of water around the country is growing

rapidly, and an efficient dredger could help in many areas. For more information, contact Elaine Hopkins at the *Peoria Journal Star* at ehopkins@ns.pjstar.com or (309) 686-3114.

► Illinois Governor Jim Edgar signed legislation that strengthens rules on large livestock operations. The new guidelines include annual inspections of waste lagoons by the Illinois Department of Agriculture for units of more than 1,000 animals, seven-day notification to county boards of intent by developers to construct or modify a lagoon, on-site written recommendations to facility managers by the Department of Ag, slightly larger setback requirements, and bans new or expanded sites in 10-year flood plains. While environmentalists and local activists agree the law is more strict than previous regulations, they say it does not go nearly far enough to protect ground water, protect area residents in the case of a lagoon leak, or address smell and airborne disease issues. Activists are still pushing for County Boards to have zoning power to control over all large livestock operations. That proposal seems to have little support in the state legislature. The Illinois Pork Producers are calling the newest rules signed by the Governor, "a good compromise". The story was covered by numerous print and broadcast sources.

► The *Chicago Tribune's* Bob Merrifield and Bill Presecky on Dec. 3 broke the news that a California developer planned a 100 million-ton landfill and quarry at the former Joliet Army Arsenal—immediately adjacent the new 19,500-acre Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the 985-acre Lincoln National Veterans Cemetery. Veterans and environmental groups, and the two congressmen who engineered the arsenal's conversion to various civilian uses, immediately cried foul. The *Tribune* duo, plus the *Chicago Daily Southtown* and the *Joliet Herald News* have followed up with numerous enterprise stories. The *Southtown's* Kevin Carmody reported Dec. 14 that a developer's partner, the Michigan-based Best Group Inc., which has an Army contract to demolish old buildings at the arsenal, was already violating state air pollution laws by openly

burning demolition debris. Carmody also revealed on Jan. 7 that the Elwood Village Board, after promising residents that the village would impose extra health and safety regulations, rushed to approve an annexation and zoning agreement that would pay the tiny village \$75 million but blocks the village from imposing environmental rules any stricter than the minimum state standards. In a long string of front page stories, Bob Okon of the *Herald News* has closely tracked the developer's ever-changing plans. As of late December, the developer, Danny Kohrtdt of Maxwell, Calif., said he would no longer talk to reporters because their stories have fueled the controversy, endangering his other industrial projects at the 1,800-acre industrial park that a state development authority sold Kohrtdt at a \$4.2 million loss. For more information, call Presecky at (815) 722-8355, Carmody at (708) 633-5970 or Okon at (815) 729-6046.

### KANSAS

► A special commission appointed by Gov. Bill Graves has made a preliminary recommendation to weaken the state's water quality standards. Last year, agriculture and urban interests—faced with million of dollars to comply—joined forces to lobby for less stringent standards. Now, the commission has proposed weakening the state's ammonia, atrazine, and chloride limits. It's expected to issue a final report this summer. For more information, contact Jean Hays of the *Wichita Eagle*, (316) 268-6557

### LOUISIANA

► Environmental justice is at the center of a debate that could have a major impact on Louisiana's industrial corridor. The battleground is a hearing on a request by Shintech Inc. to build a \$700 million plastics plant in St. James Parish. The state Department of Environmental Quality will listen to comments on whether allowing Shintech to build is just or unjust to the tiny minority community of Romeville and the larger St. James Parish population. A related article showed local opposition to building the plant to be strong, although some, including the local branch of NAACP, were tossing out the welcome mat. Shintech's offer to provide \$500,000 to assist in

training people to be qualified to work in the Shintech plant or any other plant helped get local NAACP support. Opponents, however, say that the parish is already home to eight petrochemical plants and still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. It also has the third highest level of toxic discharges, opponents said. Local industries already emit 22 million pounds of toxic chemicals annually, according to reports made to the EPA and DEQ. The stories ran January 24. Contact Mike Dunne, *Baton Rouge Advocate*, mdunne@theadvocate.com or (504) 383-0301.

### MARYLAND

► Maryland's governor has proposed requiring all state farmers to limit their use of animal manure and chemical fertilizer to grow crops in an effort to avoid repeats of last summer's fish kills and human health complaints in the Chesapeake Bay vicinity, which have been linked to *Pfiesteria piscicida* or similar toxic microorganisms. Gov. Parris N. Glendening introduced legislation in January requiring all farmers to have nutrient management plans by the year 2000 and to actually limit fertilizer or manure application by 2002, based on its nitrogen and phosphorus content. The bill follows the recommendations of a blue-ribbon commission the governor appointed last summer after three Maryland waterways were closed by fish kills. The legislation is opposed by farmers and by the state's poultry industry, which disputes the evidence that manure runoff triggered last summer's outbreaks of *Pfiesteria*-like organisms in the Eastern Shore rivers and creek. The governor also has proposed spending \$41.3 million over the next three years to help farmers and feed companies comply with the law, and to help scientists research *Pfiesteria*, the single-celled microorganism blamed for fish kills along the Atlantic coast. A team of Maryland doctors for the first time also linked human health problems, such as memory loss and confusion, to exposure to infested waters. For more information, call Heather Dewar at (410) 332-6100.

► A federal appeals court has declared invalid federal regulations controlling development in "isolated"

wetlands—a ruling that affects the entire Midatlantic region and could have nationwide import. A three-judge panel of the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., overturned the 1996 conviction of a Washington-area developer for allegedly illegally bulldozing 70 acres of freshwater wetlands while building a planned community in southern Maryland. The panel ruled in December that federal prosecutors had failed to prove the criminal intent of the developer, James Wilson and his company, Interstate General Corp. But the panel, in a split opinion, went on to declare federal regulation of wetlands invalid unless they were directly linked to navigable waters. A significant portion of the freshwater wetlands—half or more in Maryland—could be considered "isolated" and therefore open to development under the ruling. Maryland protects wetlands under state law, so the federal ruling has little immediate impact in this state. But it could open up development in Virginia, West Virginia, and the Carolinas, where Fourth Circuit rulings apply, and where wetlands are protected mainly by federal law and regulations. The court rejected a Justice Department request to re-argue the case, and no decision has been made on whether to appeal it to the Supreme Court. For information, call Tim Wheeler at *The Baltimore Sun*, (410) 332-6564.

### MICHIGAN

► Record prices for maple trees have spurred logging in Michigan and are luring a deluge of timber buyers to the state. Demand for maples has led to clashes between loggers and local landowners, who claim there's a growing black market for stolen trees. The *Traverse City Record-Eagle's* Diane Conners also investigated misleading timber contracts in a Jan. 12 package of stories. Contact Conners at (616) 933-1446.

► Problems with potentially explosive methane emitted from most landfills may soon be solved by selling the gas. *Detroit News* reporter Jeremy Pearce examined efforts by Michigan companies to trap methane and use it to fuel plant boilers and generators. New EPA rules set to take effect this year could force landfill owners across the country to burn the gas

and recycle "gold from garbage," the Dec. 15 story reported. For more information, contact Pearce at *The Detroit News*, (313) 223-4825.

► In a groundbreaking bid by local officials in Michigan, a county has for the first time demanded a complete list of air emissions and water discharge permits granted by state environmental officials. Genesee County wants to compile its own pollution inventory and ultimately help explain higher incidences of certain illnesses in the county. *The Flint Journal's* Tammy Webber reported the Dec. 10 story. Contact Webber at (810) 766-6237.

► In a four-part series that won an American Association for the Advancement of Science Journalism Award, *Bay City Times* reporter Jenni Laidman detailed the impact of exotic species in the Great Lakes. Decades of human tinkering with stocking fish, environmental accidents, and introduction of the zebra mussel have created an unstable, often chaotic ecosystem. The series ran from June 29 to July 2. For more information, contact Laidman at laidman@concentric.net or call her at *The Bay City Times*, (517) 894-9637.

► With the keen and practical eyes of developers plotting a subdivision, bald eagles are descending and building on Detroit's suburban fringes. New eagle nesting sites are part of a surge in eagle numbers in Michigan and across the nation. Scientists credit pollution controls and rising public awareness for the eagle's rise from the federal Endangered Species List. For more information, contact Jeremy Pearce at *The Detroit News*, (313) 223-4825.

### MINNESOTA

► Environmentalists are trying to block the planned logging of 6,000 old red pines at a site called the Little Alfie timber tract in Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. Acting on a lawsuit brought against the U.S. Forest Service by the Minneapolis-based group Earth Protector, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order on Jan. 21 that put logging on hold. The order remains in effect at least until the judge decides whether to hold a trial.

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## The Green Beat

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Meanwhile, members of Earth First! are winter camping at Little Alfie and have vowed to block the logging road leading to the site, which is just outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The red pines are about 100 years old and 85 feet tall. Environmentalists say the trees are becoming increasingly rare in the Superior National Forest because the Forest Service has targeted them for heavy logging. Call Dean Rebuffoni, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-4432.

► Growing concerns about the environmental and economic effects of large livestock operations, especially of those raising hogs, have propelled the issue of feedlots to the Minnesota Legislature. The state is likely soon to authorize a \$3 million Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS) on the cumulative effect of large livestock operations. Some environmentalists, farmers, and county officials also want the state to go a step further and to impose a moratorium on large feedlot expansions during the two-three year study, but that idea faces strong opposition from industry and from other farmers. Contact: Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-7388.

### MISSISSIPPI

► In January, the EPA restricted use of the herbicide Buctril, which farmers had wanted to apply to a new, genetically engineered variety of cotton. EPA said contamination of cottonseed (used in food products) could pose a health risk to children and others. The ruling was controversial in Mississippi, where nearly a million acres are planted in cotton. Farmers were already upset because another new breed of genetically altered cotton, Monsanto's Roundup Ready, turned out to have growth problems. Bruce Reid has written a number of articles on this topic in Jackson's *Clarion-Ledger*. He can be reached at (601) 961-7063.

► The South's thriving catfish-farm industry has resulted in exploding populations of fish-eating birds, especially double-crested cormorants, which consume as much as \$6 million worth of catfish a year in Mississippi (where about two-thirds of all farm-raised catfish are produced). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed allowing farmers to shoot more of

the birds, but animal lovers worry that relaxing the rules could lead to widespread massacres of fish-eating species. Bruce Reid reported this story in the August 4th *Clarion-Ledger*.

### MISSOURI

► The Missouri River is the nation's longest, if measured from its source at Red Rock Lake in southeast Montana. But for years it's been the ugly sister to the Mississippi. Towns gamble along it, drink from it, and dump their sewage in it. Otherwise it's mostly ignored. But an historic battle over its wealth of water is shaping as its species and its natural beauty struggles to survive. A three-part series by *The Kansas City Star*, "Big Muddy Blues," explored these issues and others. For more information, contact Mike Mansur, [mmansur@kcstar.com](mailto:mmansur@kcstar.com) or (816) 234-4433.

### NEVADA

► Four low-level radioactive waste containers leaking liquid arrived at the Nevada Test Site and brought the wrath of Nevada officials to bear on the U.S. Department of Energy. Seven trucks from Fernald, Ohio and arriving in Nevada the week of Dec. 15 were inspected. One alert driver spotted up to two gallons of liquid leaking from his truck parked in Kingman, AZ. The DOE stopped all shipments of low-level nuclear waste to the Nevada Test Site from Fernald and Energy Secretary Federico Pena promised a full-scale investigation. Both the *Las Vegas SUN* and the *Las Vegas Review Journal* covered the stories. The *SUN* also covered a technical transportation meeting where State Sen. Jon Porter, (R-Boulder City) called for a change in transportation routes for the hundreds of shipments of radioactive waste traveling across Hoover Dam on a two-lane highway. Reporters were Keith Rogers of the *Review Journal*, (702) 383-0264 and Mary Manning of the *Las Vegas SUN*, (702) 259-4065, e-mail: [manning@lasvegassun.com](mailto:manning@lasvegassun.com).

### ONTARIO

► Children of women who ate Lake Ontario fish before delivery stand a chance of having lower IQs and other learning and behavioral problems later in life, according to scientist Theo Colborn

who addressed the International Joint Commission in Niagara Falls. The Nov. 3 story in *The Standard* described the effects of toxins like PCBs and dioxins which include lower incidence of laughter and smiling in babies and a two-year lag in reading skills in eleven-year-olds. Contact Doug Draper at *The Standard*, (905) 684-7251.

► The Joint Commission conference in Niagara Falls also brought differing views of the Great Lakes cleanup to light: U.S. EPA regional director Jeanne Fox pointed to the healthier state of the lakes, while environmentalists held that the lakes remain in crisis. Their complaints included government downsizing of staff in the Ministry of Environment by an estimated 30 percent and its stripping of environmental regulations and programs for monitoring pollution. The Nov. 3 article, which ran in *The Standard*, quoted director of Environment Canada's Ontario region office John Mills as saying that "all this progress is not to deny that there are continuing problems." Phosphorus and algae are drastically reduced, as well as concentrations of DDT, PCBs, and mercury in fish and other wildlife in the lakes. But Great Lakes United, a citizens' coalition of environmentalists from both sides of the border, pointed out that more than 100 kilograms of hazardous chemicals are being discharged to the lakes each year, according to the groups executive director, Margaret Wooster. Contact Doug Draper, *The Standard*, (905) 684-7251.

► Researchers have determined that most of the pollution in the Great Lakes is airborne, with Lake Superior getting probably 90 percent of its pollution from the air. Smog, reported a Nov. 21 story in *The Standard*, is one of the culprits, along with long-lasting pollutants such as DDT and PCBs which blow north all the way to the Arctic. For details, contact Tom Spears of *The Standard*

### RHODE ISLAND

► Scientific studies of the damages caused by the North Cape oil spill in southern Rhode Island two years ago conclude that 12 million lobsters, 82 million crabs, 679 million mussels, 81 million surf clams, and between 2,842 and 5,559 shore birds were killed. The studies, reported in

the *Providence Journal* on Jan. 8, are being reviewed and the final natural resource estimates are expected to be altered somewhat. Then negotiations begin on how the owners of the North Cape barge should repair the damages caused when their vessel ran aground in January 1996. The spill occurred when Eklof Marine Inc. sent its tug and barge out into a severe winter storm. The tug caught fire and its crew abandoned ship. In a heroic effort, the Coast Guard helped two crewmen board the barge so they could try to drop an anchor. But the anchor windlass had been removed for repairs and the anchor was lashed to the barge's deck. Both the tug and barge were driven onto a Rhode Island beach. The barge spilled 828,000 gallons of diesel fuel, the worst oil spill in state history. This is one of the first natural resource assessments of an oil spill being done under new guidelines set by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), so oil spill experts around the country are keeping a close watch on the negotiations. In a historic criminal settlement, Ekloff and two employees paid fines and penalties in early January after pleading guilty to criminal negligence. A federal judge found them negligent for failing to sail with an anchor and adequate fire fighting equipment, even though neither was required by Coast Guard regulations. Another consequence of the spill became known Jan. 21 when the *Providence Journal* reported that the Coast Guard had quietly promulgated new national safety regulations for the tug and barge industry. The new rules, prompted by the North Cape spill and legislation sponsored by R.I. Sen. John Chafee, will cover thousands of tugs and barges involved in coastal commerce. But few people in Rhode Island, including Chafee's staff, were aware the rules were up for public comment. Those who did know about them were incensed. U.S. Attorney Sheldon Whitehouse complained they were so weak they would do nothing to prevent another North Cape spill. They don't even require anchors or fire suppression equipment on existing vessels. After Chafee's office complained, the Coast Guard reopened the public comment process for an indefinite period. For more information contact Peter B. Lord at the

*Providence Journal*, (401) 277-8036, or [plord@projo.com](mailto:plord@projo.com).

## SOUTH DAKOTA

In 1942 the War Department seized 340,000 acres of Oglala Lakota land in South Dakota and uprooted 125 families in the biggest native American land-taking of this century. The land became the Badlands Bombing Range, and was used for two decades to test thousands of air-to-air rockets, incendiary bombs, howitzer shells, artillery rounds, and other weapons. Air Force demolition crews swept and cleared parts of the range in 1963, 1964, and 1975, but some areas are still littered with dangerous explosives. Tribal officials approached the Defense Department in 1993, suggesting that if federal money was available, their members were in the best position to identify problems on the former range and clean them up once and for all. Defense officials agreed, and federal agencies so far have given the tribe about \$2.5 million to train and employ a staff of 28. More clean-up money will be needed, but if the tribe and the feds are successful in their efforts, the pilot project could affect another 70 tribes struggling with the aftermath of Defense Department land seizures. Contact: Bob von Sternberg, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, (612) 673-4414.

## TENNESSEE

► Nashville's *The Tennessean* has done an extensive series of articles on East Tennessee's Oak Ridge nuclear complex, penned by staff writers Anne Paine, Susan Thomas, and Laura Frank. Most of these stories have been collected into a 36-page reprint, divided into two sections: "Toxic Burn," about worried residents near a hazardous-waste incinerator, and "Toxic Burden," about Oak Ridge's history of contamination and what's being done to clean it up. Contact Anne Paine at [abpaine@aol.com](mailto:abpaine@aol.com) or (615) 259-8071.

► Thanks to the Federal Express Corp. headquarters, Memphis International Airport handles the most cargo volume of any airport in the world. But round-the-clock takeoffs and landings at FedEx and at Memphis' Northwest Airlines hub have created a growing air-pollution problem, and unlike other industries, airport emissions are unregulated. In the December

28th *Commercial Appeal*, Tom Charlier wrote a comprehensive story on the subject, beginning on the Sunday front page and jumping to a full page, with graphs, photos, and sidebars. Charlier's number is (901) 529-2572.

## UTAH

► The politically embattled proposal to store high-level nuclear waste in Utah won some high-level endorsement in January. Five prominent U.S. scientists—including three Nobel Prize winners—say storing spent nuclear fuel on the Goshutes Indian Reservation 40 miles west of Salt Lake City poses few risks. The endorsement, however, has done little to quash the state's opposition. Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt has asked the Legislature for \$603,000 to fight the proposal. Sources: Danny Quintana, attorney for Goshutes, (801) 363-7726; Connie Nakahara, State Office of High-level Nuclear Waste Storage Opposition.

► The day after President Clinton announced new measures to combat global warming, a legislative committee advanced a resolution calling for Clinton to ignore the international agreement signed in Kyoto, Japan. The resolution's sponsor is Democratic state Sen. Mike Dmitrich, who represents Utah's coalbelt counties. With just 0.7 percent of the U.S. population, Utah accounts for 1.2 percent of the nation's CO2 emissions, mainly from large coal-fired power plants. Dmitrich says the Kyoto agreement should not be honored unless developing nations agree to the same limits as developed nations. Contact Sen. Mike Dmitrich, (801) 538-1035; Jeff Burks, Utah Office of Energy Resource Planning, (801) 538-5412.

► Envirocare of Utah, the largest private radioactive waste landfill in the state, was fined \$100,000 by the Utah Division of Radiation. The division found the company, in violation of its permit, was accepting waste that contained too much of three radioactive isotopes used in the production of nuclear weapons. The action follows a \$197,000 fine levied to Envirocare by the state Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste for unrelated violations. Envirocare's founder, Khosrow Semnani, remains under investigation by

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## The Green Beat

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the FBI for paying \$600,000 to the former state director of radiation control. Contact Charles Judd, Envirocare president, (801) 521-9619; Division of Radiation Control, (801) 536-4250.

### WEST VIRGINIA

► The *Huntington-Herald Dispatch*, a Gannett newspaper focusing on public journalism civic involvement, sponsored a public forum in early December on environmental concerns about mountaintop removal strip-mining. The controversy over these large-scale coal mines continues in the wake of a *U.S. News and World Report* exposé on the environmental consequences of chopping off the tops of mountains, digging out the coal underneath, and filling in streams with the leftover earth. The magazine report, by Penny Loeb, is available on the internet at <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/coa/hhigh.htm>. For information on the *Herald-Dispatch* forum, call the newspaper at (304) 526-4000.

► Newspapers and television in West Virginia focused coverage in the last few months on a joint campaign by the United Mine Workers union and the coal industry to oppose the global climate treaty drafted in Kyoto, Japan. Union leaders and coal executives drew a big crowd at numerous press conferences, and newspapers published op-ed pieces under joint bylines by union and company offi-

cials. The UMW and the largest industry negotiating group, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, also announced they had reached early agreement on a new national coal contract to avoid a strike and focus efforts on fighting the treaty. Some media coverage also addressed the industry-union cooperation in fighting the new EPA particulate and ozone standards, as well as the smog SIP call. Call Ken Ward Jr. at *The Charleston Gazette* for more information at (304) 348-1702.

► The state Division of Environmental Protection got a lot of coverage when it helped local prosecutors win a conviction and jail time for a Kanawha County man who was caught collecting residents' garbage and dumping it illegally. Call Ward for more.

► December also saw the end of a nearly 10-year controversy over proposed construction of a \$1 billion pulp and paper mill along the Ohio River in Mason County, W.Va. Under pressure from environmental and labor groups, the developers announced they had dropped the project. Call Ward (see phone number above).

### WISCONSIN

► Just as the SEJ listserv was debating whether environmental reporters should be advocates, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* environment writer Don Behm

penned an editorial, rare activity for that reporter. In the January 11 paper, Behm advocated "American Heritage River" status for the Milwaukee River. At least one Wisconsin environmentalist was surprised Behm favored the Milwaukee over several other state rivers that were nominated. A reader letter blasted the Clinton administration's Heritage River initiative. Call Behm at (414) 224-2000.

► Thirty *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reporters and editors chose "Tumult in the state's energy system" as third place in a list of Wisconsin's top news stories for 1997. The energy issue trailed Wisconsin's welfare experiment and Super Bowl hoopla. Contact Chuck Quirnbach, (414) 271-8686.

► The January 15 edition of Milwaukee's *Shepherd Express* newspaper carried a front cover picture of a deformed frog. Inside, freelance writer Brian Lavendel detailed Wisconsin and Minnesota investigations into odd-looking frogs that have been found in parts of the midwest and Canada. Lavendel wrote a similar piece in the Nov. 28 edition of Madison's *Isthmus* weekly. Lavendel says the frog photo is an actual untouched picture provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Contact Lavendel at [lavendel@bigfoot.com](mailto:lavendel@bigfoot.com) or (608) 249-3370.

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## SEJ **ournal**

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