

SEJ Journal

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Sagas of nuclear secrecy

By JOANN VALENTI, LEN ACKLAND, AND KAREN DORN STEELE

Editor's note: The hazards at two infamous nuclear sites, and the media's role in uncovering them, were discussed on a panel at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Seattle in February, 1997. This summary of that discussion says much about the role of journalism then, now, and in the future.

A key article of faith in human nature—and in journalism—is that truth is a good thing. But an African proverb warns, “truth is not always good to say.”

Truth tellers like the journalists, engineers, and technicians who have opened the closed doors of secrecy on the nation's nuclear facilities shouldn't

have to be defended; they should be applauded. Nonetheless, few of the investigative reporters who have broken stories on nuclear hazards have received heroic treatment from their editors, and many of the scientific sources are labeled whistleblowers.

The cost of government secrecy in nuclear matters has been tremendous, assuring even more deeply rooted distrust of government, science, and industry. Most media scholars say the facts shaped nuclear attitudes, not the media. But the uncovered deceit, the reports from victims, and the information itself formed the public's attitudes. The public, although often skeptical and critical of media performance, is better served when media act as agents for the good of the people, rather than relying on governments to ethically

handle “secrets.”

The issue of how to dispose of nuclear waste has festered in the United States for decades, but few citizens take comfort in plans proposed by government agencies. One reason for this lack of confidence is the example set by the U.S. Department of Energy's nuclear weapons production sites, where managers committed numerous acts during the Cold War that put people's health at risk and degraded the environment.

Having finally been exposed by environmental reporters, past behaviors have led to general outrage among citizens, multiple lawsuits, and cleanup plans that total in the billions of dollars. Of these nuclear sites, Hanford and Rocky Flats are the most infamous.

(Continued on page 21)

In this issue

SEJ News

■ Update: 1998 national conference in Chattanooga, Tennesseepage 4

■ CA/NJ regional events coverage ...page 5

Science Survey

■ Getting scientists to open uppage 12

Online Bits & Bytes

■ Pioneer Press explores computer-assisted reporting.....page 13

Features

■ Children's books: how to break in and who the genre influences mostpage 14

Viewpoints

■ Tomorrow editor discusses sustainable journalismpage 15

Reporters Toolbox

■ Forest Certification.....page 16

Green beat

■ State-by-state rounduppage 25

Balance, they say, is bad

Brits compare US—UK press

By HAVEN MILLER

In their effort to achieve balance American journalists often send an unclear message to readers. That's the opinion of a handful of prominent British environmental journalists I interviewed last summer for a university research study.

Of all the questions I asked, the question of balance was the only one that got exactly the same response from every reporter. The University of Kentucky requires anonymity for research subjects, so in preparing my paper as a doctoral student I assigned “letter names” to the journalists I interviewed.

An environmental correspondent for

a leading London paper, referred to as Reporter A, said journalists on both sides of the Atlantic are trained to report opposite points of view, but Americans do it “quite studiously.”

“So you get a situation where you have 2,000 scientists who say global warming is happening and five who say ‘no, it isn't’ and the American press report both sides,” the correspondent said. “British reporters would not feel morally obliged in that situation to report somebody else's point of view saying it's not happening.”

An environmental writer for another large London newspaper said American reporters are obsessed with reporting

(Continued on page 22)

New faces for leadership

Family matters, new roles will shuffle SEJ officers

As of October, you will see new faces at the helm of your organization.

As long planned, I will opt not to seek a second full term as president. Marla Cone appears likely to run for reelection to the SEJ board, but she has said she does not intend to seek another term as first vice president and won't run for president. If the board decides to elevate the other vice president, Mike Mansur, to the presidency, it means at least three of the five officers will be new in their positions.

This kind of change is healthy—a source of fresh ideas and new energy. It also comes at a good time. In sharp contrast to last year, SEJ's finances are in excellent shape with sufficient grant funding secured to operate through the end of 1999.

Thus, the SEJ board and staff should be able to concentrate on the organization's primary mission—devising and delivering programs that improve quality, accuracy, and visibility of environmental journalism—while methodically pursuing long-term financial stability. It is the perfect opportunity for other talented, dedicated board members to grow into new leadership roles under less dire circumstances.

I do intend to finish out the remaining two years of my current term as member of the board. My passion for this organization has not waned in the nine years since I was privileged to be involved in its creation, and I feel I have more energy to give. But this clearly marks a transition in my role with SEJ, one that was prompted by a coming transition in my personal life.

Later this fall my wife and I will likely become first-time parents, via adoption of a little girl from China. We started the adoption process in mid-1997, just before Rae Tyson resigned the presidency mid-term. When I succeeded Rae, I committed to this job for a year and a half, knowing that the foreign adoption process normally takes that same amount of time.

There are other recent parents on the board and I admire their ability to balance work, family, and SEJ duties. But I know myself well enough that I didn't want to

try to split my attention between a new daughter and the SEJ presidency. This way, there is no risk that I might short-change either.

Last month we received confirmation from China's national adoption agency that our application had been approved. We also received a photo of our soon-to-be daughter. Sometime after mid-September we will get the phone call saying it's time to travel to China.

Report from the society's president



By
Kevin
Carmody

It's quite possible we will be required to be there during the SEJ national conference. If so, it will mark the first time I will have missed any SEJ board meeting or a national conference. Because I find myself ready to do so without a second thought, I take it as some type of cosmic affirmation that I made the right decision.

Now here's a roundup of recent organizational news:

- In July, the board formally agreed that the experiment of having the associate and academic membership represented on the board should be made permanent policy. For the past three years Adlai Amor and JoAnn Valenti held those non-voting board positions. Their presence helped better inform the board's decisions and debates, and their constituencies owe them their gratitude for the many hours of hard work. Adlai recently resigned from the board after changing jobs. The board deferred on appointing a short-term replacement given that associate members will vote to fill that position in the upcoming election. JoAnn will complete her term

in October, when one of her academic colleagues will be elected to succeed her.

- The SEJ National Advisory Board is taking shape in impressive form. Former *New York Times* managing editor Gene Roberts and former *Boston Globe* editor Tom Winship had agreed several years ago to assist SEJ by sharing their advice and wisdom about ways SEJ can better serve the journalism community. Now this panel of distinguished journalists has been expanded to include former *CBS* anchorman Walter Cronkite, *CNN*'s Judy Woodruff, former *Christian Science Monitor* editor Kay Fanning, former *CBC* senior anchor Peter Desbarats, and (Portland) *Oregonian* editor Sandra Mims Rowe, who is also the immediate past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. SEJ founding president Jim Detjen is coordinating this initiative, and hopes to add a couple more top-flight journalists to the roster.

- In Chattanooga, just prior to our national conference, SEJ will host the presidents of nearly 30 national journalism organizations for their semi-annual meeting. The Council of Presidents (COP) membership includes every major journalism organization in the country and is coordinated by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. The SEJ conference host committee in Chattanooga is providing invaluable help with COP meeting logistics. *Chattanooga Times* Publisher Paul Neely, an SEJ member who played a key role in bringing the SEJ conference to his city, even graciously offered to host the COP's opening reception and dinner at his home.

- Also at the July meeting, the board agreed to establish a retirement program for its three full-time employees. The financial commitment is relatively modest, at less than two percent of the organization's annual budget. The board believed it was not only the right thing to do morally speaking, but an important step in assuring the organization's salary and benefits package are competitive with other comparable organizations. Keeping good employees is an investment whose value is hard to quantify. ❖

SEJournal

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The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization. The mission of the organization is to advance public understanding of environmental issues by improving the quality, accuracy and visibility of environmental reporting. We envision an informed society through excellence in environmental journalism. As a network of journalists and academics, SEJ offers national and regional conferences, publications and online services. SEJ's membership of 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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Board elections to be held in October

SEJ elections to the Board of Directors will be held at the annual meeting in Chattanooga, Saturday, October 10, 1998. If you were a member in good standing, i.e., not in arrears with membership dues, as of August 10, your name will be included on a list of eligible voters. Members in arrears or new members added after this date will not be included on this list. Those eligible to vote will receive a proxy ballot in the mail to use in lieu of voting on site at the annual meeting. Questions about elections procedures may be directed to elections coordinator Chris Rigel at (215) 836-9970 or crigel@aol.com.

Letter

To the Editor:

In the review of my book *Tracking the Charlatans* which appeared in the Spring SEJournal I am mystified by the criticism of my not substantiating my critique. The book contains extensive end notes but beyond that, I took great pains to use the bashers' exact words (lifted directly from their writings and duly annotated) to hoist them on their own petards. In the example you cite, I reproduced direct quotes of Limbaugh's distortion of E.O. Wilson's *NYT Magazine* article and then provided direct quotes of what Prof. Wilson actually said in the piece. I can't figure out what the missing substantiation is that you are complaining about in this case, or for that matter, in the entire book. You have the prerogative to judge the book harshly if you see fit, but given my understanding of the term "substantiation," I find your criticism of my documentation very much "unsubstantiated"; indeed, wholly without merit.

—Ed Flattau

Colorado opens writers' institute

The first Colorado Magazine Writers Institute will open Saturday, September 26, at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Editors from five national magazines will describe their editorial needs and what they look for in nonfiction freelance ideas, and discuss their readership and policies.

The institute, co-sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Society of Journalists and Authors and the University of Colorado School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will take place in the Hale Science Building from 8 AM to 6 PM. The editors discussing the needs of their publications include: Malia McKinnon, associate editor of *American Health for Women*; Lisa Gosselin, editor-in-chief of *Audubon*; Florestine Purnell, managing editor of *Emerge: Black America's News Magazine*; Sheila Buckmaster, associate editor of *National Geographic Traveler*; and Greg Daugherty, editor-in-chief of *New Choices*.

Three experienced freelance writers in a panel discussion will talk about handling sticky situations—from contracts to revisions—that can arise in selling their words. Lunch speaker Marian Faux, author of *Successful Freelancing*, will speak on managing the realities of a writing business.

Program information, registration forms, and links to hotel information are available on the ASJA website in the events section, www.asja.org. ❖

Conference to examine revived beat

Environmental reporting gets positive spin in Chattanooga

By PETER DYKSTRA

Ahh, the cycles of nature. Each fall, the gray whales head for Baja, the geese learn how to spell at least one letter of the alphabet, and the squirrels take their lives in their paws in a roadside scramble for acorns. But few things in Nature can compete with the splendor of SEJ members' annual migration to the National Conference. For four remarkable days, they gather in receptions, panels, hallways, and taverns—instantly recognizable by their familiar squawk about declining coverage and their bosses' ambivalence toward the beat—a declining habitat for a unique species.

But reports from across the nation suggest that we may be witnessing a reversal of environmental journalists' habitat loss. As suburbs continue their relentless spread outward, reporting opportunities on sprawl issues are spreading faster than white-tailed deer. Transportation, schools, loss of forest and farmland, air quality, water quality, and just plain quality of life are all issues drawing increasing scrutiny from the front page to the business page to the radio traffic



report. This year's SEJ conference will continue to examine what may be going wrong with the beat. But we'll also include a strong focus on the best new opportunities for the environment beat to come along in years. SEJ stalwarts like Stuart Leavenworth of the *Raleigh News & Observer*, and Perry Beeman of the *Des Moines Register* will discuss the new directions and heightened opportunities that the interest in sprawl coverage have afforded them.

Special sessions tailored for business, political, science, or academically-oriented SEJ members will make the conference more user-friendly than ever. Past SEJ conferences have benefitted from great locations. We hope to make Chattanooga the best one yet.

The city's well-known transformation from an industrial ashtray to a living laboratory for sustainability is itself an ongoing story. Still another great reason for coming to the conference are the opportunities you'll have to get away from it: Spectacular scenery and outdoors activities surround the conference site, as Chris Rigel's accompanying piece describes.

Agenda and site offer a good mix of work and play

By CHRIS RIGEL

SEJ's national conference planners have added Dr. Sylvia A. Earle to the list of confirmed speakers in Chattanooga.

Dr. Earle is a marine biologist whose research focuses on the ecology of marine ecosystems—particularly marine plants—and developing technology to access the deep sea for research.

What makes her interesting to journalists, according to 1998 conference chair Peter Dykstra, is her "bullet-proof" status: Dr. Earle has maintained credibility and integrity in spite of being both a celebrity and an advocate. She will address the conference Saturday, October 10, at the IMAX 3D Theater during an evening reception at Chattanooga's freshwater aquarium.

SEJ's opening plenary session, "Is Environmental Reporting Good for the News Business?"—moderated by Paul Neely, editor and publisher of *The Chattanooga Times*—audience interest, competition, ownership, marketing of news and more. SEJ members will have an opportunity to ask the panelists questions during a Q and A session following panel discussions.

Confirmed plenary session panelists to date are David Anable, president of the International Center for Journalists in Washington DC and former editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*; Teya Ryan, one of SEJ's founding board members, CNN vice president, and senior executive producer of program development; and Robert W. Mong, executive vice president, publishing division, of the A.H. Belo Corporation

Concurrent sessions this year will be arranged according to specific themes. *The South* will cover topics from wood chip mills and "redneck environmentalism" to alien invaders (Kudzu, Zebra Mussels, Melaleuca). *The Street*: emissions trading, 21st Century energy, damming rivers or damming dams. *The Campus* will focus on journalism students with a session on what isn't

taught in J-school, a workshop on finding a job, and information about university programs on environmental reporting,

The Lab will track five sessions including pfiesteria hysteria, deformed frogs, and endocrine disrupters; *The Government* sessions include sprawl issues, elections previews, and new organic regulations. *The Craft* will spotlight builders of the beat and award winners; *The Podium* will be a soap-box moment for issues ranging from Earth First! to the Wise Use movement; and *The Globe* will deal with the big picture in fisheries; the science, politics, and media coverage of global warming; and international environmental journalism.

Ted Turner is now a confirmed speaker; he'll be addressing the conference on Friday in the Silver Ballroom of the Radisson Read House.

After this packed agenda, everyone will be in dire need of attending the "extremely undignified party" Saturday evening at the Radisson Read House Silver Ballroom, starting at the close of SEJ's annual meeting. Vidalia—a country swing rock group out of Atlanta—is booked, cash bars will be strategically located. If you happen to be a business writer attending this shindig, check the Continental Room opening off the Silver Ballroom. You'll see a cluster of other business writers there, near the sign reading: SEJ welcomes SABEW (Society of American Business Editors and Writers). Organized by SEJ board member Ann Goodman, this reception is for anyone who is drawn to—or immersed in—business writing.

Pick up most brochures on the Smokies and you'll find full-color ads for about five country music theaters, a few factory outlet shopping malls, something called a state-of-the-art Motion Theatre Virtual Reality Ride, an Elvis museum, Dollywood, and any number of places to eat, shop, browse, and generally



immerse yourself in touristdom.

Just south of all this human scurrying is The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, home to some of the last and largest old growth forests in the eastern US. It is a place of thick, dark woods and winding roads with hairpin turns, where vehicles sometimes stop to wait for wildlife—maybe a family of wild boar—to cross the road and disappear into the woods.

This is the most heavily visited park in the United States, and the site of SEJ's post-conference tour. Receiving about 10 million visitors annually and bordered by areas described by conference chair Peter Dykstra as "wretched overdevelopment," the park is rampant with issues of interest to environmental reporters.

SEJ will take 30 preregistered SEJ members by bus from Chattanooga on Sunday October 11 at 10:00 AM to the Smokies, located about three hours away on the Tennessee-North Carolina border. Stuart Leavenworth, development reporter and editor with *The (Raleigh) News & Observer*, will lead the tour.

Leavenworth will focus the two-day tour on two of the park's most serious threats—unchecked development in gateway cities such as Gatlinburg and Cherokee, and windblown pollutants, responsible for a visibility reduction from 93 to 22 miles.

Plans include hiking, talks with air quality and forestry scientists on insects and pollutants changing the forests, the wolf reintroduction program, and how the park is affected by its 10 million visitors a year. Leavenworth is also scouting for a local storyteller for an evening of mountain tales around the campfire.

For a complete rundown of SEJ's national conference agenda to date, contact SEJ headquarters in Philadelphia at (215) 836-9970, e-mail sejoffice@aol.com or Web site: www.sej.org.

SEJ's conference falls on a legal holiday weekend this year, making it easy to mix work and play. Tennessee in October is rich with Autumn color, and the city and surrounding areas offer plenty of recreation for people of all ages, talents, and tastes. Contact the Chattanooga Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 322-3344 or www.chattanooga.net/cvb to request a

brochure to help you plan.

Downtown Chattanooga is filled with things to do, from the fresh-water aquarium and IMAX theater to the Creative Discovery Museum and the Bluff View Art District. Almost everything is within walking distance, but the free electric buses, which are designed with facing benches, make the transport a social event. People are friendly, and strangers often cease to be strangers during the short trip.

Lookout Mountain is only about 15 minutes from downtown—just head south on Broad and follow the signs—where you can visit Ruby Falls, the 145-foot natural waterfall and caverns deep inside Lookout Mountain, ride the incline railway, or wander mountain paths through Rock City and stand atop lookout mountain to see seven states. About 20 minutes beyond Rock City you'll find Lookout Mountain Flight Park, one of the prime spots for hang gliding in the East.

Also available within easy driving distance of Chattanooga: golfing, camping, white water rafting, and family fun spots of all kinds. Check your visitors guide for details.

Maybe what you'd most enjoy after a three-and-a-half day, session-jammed, party-down journalists' conference is to find a quiet spot in the Tennessee woodlands on a wide river and toss in a line. At the Hiwassee River you'll find good fishing less than an hour from Chattanooga. Stop in the Orvis shop just outside Benton and ask Lisa what the hatch is; she'll let you know what the trout are biting on, and help you pick out some flies. Or you might try this trick I heard from one Tennessee angler: put a bare hook on your line, then back-cast just to the edge of the trees, pick up a natural fly and flick it onto the water. (This doesn't work for Yankees.)

But even if the trout swim around your ankles and eat everything except what you're throwing, you might find that standing in the middle of the Hiwassee in the late afternoon, with the sun dancing off the water and the mist creeping across the distant mountains, is all you need. ♦

Photo by Chris Rigel



Trout fishing on the Hiwassee River near Chattanooga, Tennessee



Journalists study delta options

Issues are muddied by politics and conflicting scientific studies

By LISA VORDERBRUEGGEN

Nearly 40 California journalists took environmental coverage to new depths with a daylong cruise and conference on the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta in late June. The event was a sell-out, with the boat and meeting room filling to capacity.

One of the largest estuaries in the nation and the water supply for more than 20 million people, the Delta is in crisis. Its water quality is deteriorating. Its fish habitat is declining for endangered species such as Chinook salmon and Delta smelt. And its shorelines, streams, and bottom mud are populated with foreign species.

In an effort to turn the tide in the Delta, California and Federal governments are jointly undertaking a major scientific and political study of Delta management policies through a 30-year restoration program that could cost as much as \$12 billion. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has called it the largest environmental restoration program in the United States. SEJ members and guests discovered that, as in most debates centered on water in the West, the issues are muddied by layers of politics and complicated by conflicting scientific studies.

SEJ board member James Bruggers developed the idea for the event and organized it with the help of fellow *Contra Costa Times* environment writer Denis Cuff. Bruggers and Cuff were key authors of a 20-page, 1996 report on the Delta. Also assisting in developing the program and helping to carry it out was Steve Barbata, executive director for the Delta Science Center at Big Break, a non-profit research and education group that agreed to serve as SEJ's host. The program was co-sponsored by the *Contra Costa Times* and the *San Jose Mercury News*.

Bruggers said he wanted to help reporters wade through 3,500 pages of environmental documents that were released by CALFED, the state-federal consortium planning the Delta's future.

Morning at the event was devoted to science and the afternoon to politics and plumbing. Journalists from big and small newspapers, journals, magazines, radio, television, and other media outlets gathered at the Antioch Marina in Contra

Costa County about 30 miles east of San Francisco early on a sunny Saturday, June 20. Aboard the "Betty T," they munched on muffins and drank juice while learning about the ecology and geography of the Delta from several experts.

fish habitat looks like," Miller said. "I spent my childhood out here fishing and hunting, but not everyone has had that chance."

After the cruise, journalists met at the nearby Ironhouse Sanitary District headquarter—a sewage treatment plant that has become a significant preserver of wetlands—for lunch on the lawn and a panel discussion about the Delta. Writers heard viewpoints from environmentalists, farmers, big business, and the huge Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Lester Snow, executive director for CALFED, presented a 30-minute overview of the three current proposals and explained they are likely to be modified after the first round of public comment.

Thanks to financial support from the Delta Science Center, SEJ abandoned typical box-lunch sandwiches and packaged chips in favor of true Delta food—steamed clams, oysters, marinated venison, crayfish, asparagus, nuts, and fresh blackberries, cherries, and strawberries.

Lisa Vorderbrueggen covers growth and land-use in Alameda County for Contra Costa Newspapers, publishers of the Contra Costa Times and four other East Bay newspapers.



Sacramento Bee Reporter Nancy Vogel interviews U.S. Rep George Miller, D-CA, aboard the "Betty T"

Photo by Frank Sweeney

Bruce Herbold, a fisheries ecologist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco, and East Bay Regional Park District naturalist Mike Moran hauled aboard samples of an invasive, imported plant from South America that threatens the Delta ecosystem. And the "Betty T" crew tied up next to a dredger long enough to capture a bucket of Delta mud for journalists to sift through in search of signs of water life.

Also on board was U.S. Rep. George Miller, Democrat from Martinez, the ranking Democrat on the House Resources Committee and a legislator known for his environmental work in Congress for the past two decades, including a landmark water law. Miller met one-on-one with many of the participants and also addressed the group. He lauded SEJ for offering the conference. "It's very important to have the opportunity to see at least some part of the Delta, to be able to visualize what riprap looks like, what

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Sustainability: Covering the indefinable

By **ROBERT SCOTT**

Over 30 journalists and others met in Trenton, NJ, June 19 for SEJ's mid-Atlantic regional conference on covering sustainability.

Few better settings could be found for a first hand look at brownfields and sustainable development than Trenton, one of the sixteen showcase communities chosen to receive aid as part of the Clinton Administration's commitment to clean up and redevelop brownfields. Attendees met at New Jersey Network public television station for breakfast and discussions, welcomed by event organizer Ed Rodgers, environmental reporter and producer for NJN News.

First to address the group was David Crockett, traveling from SEJ's 1998 national conference site, Chattanooga, TN, to define sustainability for the journalists and others who attended.

Crockett, chairman of Chattanooga's city council and president of the Chattanooga Institute for Sustainable Development, emphasized the difficulty of covering new ideas with language which has not yet evolved. (See transcript excerpts, following)

A sneak preview of *Escape from Affluenza*, sequel to the PBS special, *Affluenza*, followed Crockett's remarks. The show, hosted by Scott Simon, aired in its entirety on July 7 on PBS.

Todd Bates, environment reporter at the *Asbury Park Press*, then moderated a panel discussion about sustainability—it's roots, it's slippery definition, and what reporters need to know to cover it.

The panel included Mark Jaffe, 15-year environment reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (on leave while finishing his book, *The Gilded Dinosaur: The Exploration of the American West, the Rise of American Science and the Fossil Feud Between O.C. Marsh and E.D. Cope*; Angela Park, president of the Catalyst Company; Randy Solomon, director of New Jersey Future's Sustainable State Project; Rob Young, executive director of the New Jersey Office of Sustainability, the only state office of its kind in the coun-

try; and Crockett.

Jaffe, who took an admittedly "contrarian view" on the subject offered a journalist's insight to the presentation, and a caveat about using environmental lingo. He showed that many environmental stories are already about sustainability. The writer—and the reader—don't have to be bogged down with terms such as "sustainable development." (See transcript excerpts, page 8.)

Angela Park explained the connection between environmental justice and sustainability. Many economically strained communities bear the brunt of industrialization and the ecologic impact it has, she said. However, without economic growth the people in those communities would be in more dire economic straits. Only when economic, social, and environmental questions are addressed, panelists agreed, could sustainability exist.

Jaffe cautioned that "with all due respect to the panelists here, you can't trust these folks for a minute." Some sparks flew when he said that "the use and disposition of private property is the biggest problem—and always has been—in terms of wise town planning."

Young countered: "I'm amazed that you would make that statement, because up till now everything you've said has been very informed and very intelligent. Private property isn't worth a damn without public infrastructure and public investment. The whole issue is public investment."

Shortness of time broke the panel's momentum, and the attendees moved out of the meeting room and into the real world. A bus took the conference to Katmandu, a tropical restaurant occupying an abandoned ironworks.

The absence of Kathleen McGinty, the scheduled lunch speaker, gave attendees an opportunity to get to know one another and swap stories of life on the environmental beat.

The last leg of the event was a bus tour of the brownfield sites in Trenton, including the Roebling Marketplace, housed by the once-abandoned Roebling steelworks.

The event was organized by SEJ mem-

ber Ed Rodgers and Chris Rigel, SEJ's programs manager, co-sponsored by NJN Public Television, and partially funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Robert Scott is a student at LaSalle University, majoring in Communications and English, with an Environmental Studies minor. During the summer he worked at the SEJ office as general support staff, especially involved with regional events.



The following was excerpted from introductory talks and discussion at SEJ's mid-Atlantic regional conference in Trenton, NJ, June 19, 1998. Speakers included here are David Crockett, Chairman of the Chattanooga City Council and president of The Chattanooga Institute for Sustainable Development, and Mark Jaffe, 15-year veteran environmental reporter at the Philadelphia Inquirer.

DAVID CROCKETT

Several years ago I was in Massachusetts. We were promoting a trail along the Merrimac River, from New Hampshire to Boston. We wound up in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Davy Crockett had been there in 1834. Andrew Jackson had been there in 1833. Every politician of the era had been in Lowell. Why were they in Lowell, Massachusetts around that time? It was because something remarkably different was happening. They had harnessed the power of the Merrimac River, used its energy to power plants that made shoes, that made clothing, that organized a labor force in a much different way than it had ever done.

They invented the corporation. Stockholders, boards of directors, came out of that city. Stockholders—what does that have to do with a piece of paper? Candlepower—what does that have to do with light? Horsepower. The language was

(Continued next page)



Sustainability...David Crockett

different, because they were coming from an agrarian age, a time when all thought processes—every bit of the system, the education, the way we live, urban centers, transportation—were geared to that. And the language was geared to that. So they were trying to describe it in the best terms they could, but it was fundamentally changing everything about life in America. It was starting in this one place while most of the country was still in another age; you had this shift of thinking that was beginning there.

Now they didn't have a meeting that morning at the Lowell Chamber of Commerce and say "we are going to kick off the Industrial Age. Today's the kick-off meeting. Reporters, front page: The Industrial Age is launched!" They used language from an old period. What they were doing was new.

I struggle with this every day, trying to communicate [sustainability] to the chamber of commerce or whoever. They either hate the word, don't understand the word, apply the word to whatever they've been doing before. When you are starting something new, the language is not there. People tend to describe it based on their past, not on the future.

That's about where we are right now. We are entering a time of change. It will be defined in retrospect as the age of something—maybe the Age of

Sustainability. A new term, as new as the age of the automobile and as hard to grasp for some as it would have

been in 1910 or a hundred years earlier in Lowell Massachusetts. Imagine, in those days, going to your newspaper editor and saying "I want to go to a conference on the Industrial Age," or in 1960 going to your editor and saying "I want to go to a conference on the Information Age. It will transform life as we know it."

In the next century I think it will be called sustainability. It's not readily understood. That's a part of it.

The three basic principles of sustainability are these:

- It ties together environment, economy, and community. You don't optimize on one over another. You don't trade off one over another.
- It recognizes interdependency.
- It's long term.

Sustainability requires that we fundamentally re-engineer, redesign every approach we have to everything. Is that new? Our lives shifted by an industrial age, an automobile age, an information age, all with powerful quality of life enhancements, but all with down sides. The idea of sustainability is very simply that we will build on all those things without a down side. And we will do it for long term.

When we got to a point where something wasn't working right, we went to what? A compromise. I have an environmental topic here that's a huge interest, but we have an economic interest. So what we need to do as reasonable people is get together and compromise. Right?

To go to a win-win is much different. You can't take two solutions which were exactly the same as they've always been and get a win-win. That requires that you innovate and create a new recipe. And that's just what we need for the next century. I don't hold the notion that it's impossible to get a win/win. I absolutely don't believe that. I believe it's impossible to get a win/win if you want to run the same play you ran yesterday.

Our Cherokee heritage from the ancestral people of the

Cherokee, the Iroquois, tells that when making a decision, consider the impacts on the next seven generations, and learn from the seven generations past.

The definition from Gutenberg, Sweden is "live, live wisely, let live."

These are principles we've tried to do in Chattanooga. We will view business, the environment, and society as one subject, consider waste in any form bad for business, bad for society, and promote the goal of zero.

That means redesigning—like our carpet mills, that now redesign carpet to be, instead of four billion pounds in the landfill, taken back, recycled. They took the formaldehyde out of the glue to make the indoor air quality better. A fundamental redesign, a shaping of the entire culture. M&M Mars Co. just went to zero process waste in Chattanooga.

Our strategy is to be a defining place for these things—for factories, for transportation, for urban design, for thinkers—that's why we bring people from all over the world, the best thinkers in other cities.

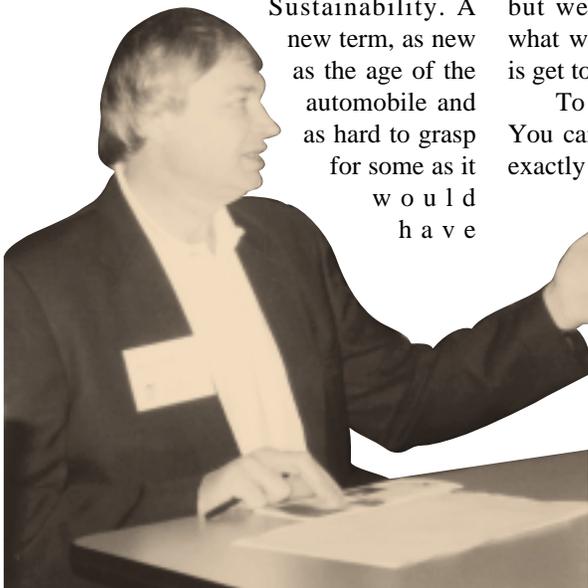
We believe in sustainable growth, that change is inevitable, that quality of life is key, that we learn from our past, and that working together works. We promote private-public partnerships; we believe it takes forever—sustainability is not a five-year plan—and we believe it takes everyone.

MARK JAFFE

I take a bit of a contrarian view on sustainable development. I'd like to talk about where this concept came from, what it means—what it really means—and some ways that in the context of daily journalism we can get our arms around it.

I think you have to go back to 1972 when the United Nations set up a commission to look into the environment. It was a ground-breaking commission, but it was opposed by developing nations, by Third World countries who were suspicious that this was going to thwart their economic and political aspirations. So instead of a commission on the environment, it became a commission on the environment and development.

From that point on, the idea of having to deal with development in a more sustainable, a more reasonable context started



David Crockett, Chattanooga city council chairman



Sustainability...Mark Jaffe

to take root. For the next 20 years environmentalism and development would lockstep, and the growth of the environmental movement dragged development—sustainable development, responsible development—along with it. Sustainable development has fed off the growth of the environmental movement.

What is sustainable development? How do you define it? How do you know that what you're looking at is sustainable development?

The United Nations commissions defines sustainable development as follows: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It's both a pretty severe and a pretty vague standard at the same time.

Economist Herman Daly drew the distinction between growth—which is the creation of material—and development—which is the realization of potential. So growth is getting bigger, and development is getting better. But is sustainable development just a new, more sophisticated model for economic and land development, or does it have some other components to it? Progressive social betterment is one of the things Daly talks about.

So is it a social, is it a political, is it an economic exercise? It's very unclear how you parse that out. Invariably we see people talking about sustainable development in the context of land and economic development. If you're looking at a plan that's going to take part of an area and preserve or restore it and another part and develop it, and there's no social context to it, is that sustainable development? These are the kinds of questions that hover around this buzz phrase that nobody ever really answers. My feeling is to be wary.

Underlying the concept, and this is what everyone dances around, are some very very deep and complicated issues. We heard this morning that we've got to go for a win-win situation. It sounds too good to be true. As my grandmother used to tell me, if you hear something that's too good to be true, it probably is.

Ocean County is the fastest-growing county in [New Jersey], which is the most densely populated state in the country. A

lot of the issues of development are engendered in that county. So you say we just can't have any more growth in Ocean County. That means some people are going to be denied an opportunity of a choice. Once you start doing that, the question of equity and social context become all that more important.

I would submit that sustainable development isn't a story about zoning or about transportation, or about land use. It's a broader concept that can be applied to a variety of stories. It's a way of looking at stories that we do routinely.

One way to think about sustainability is what's called urban metabolism. You look at the area, be it your township, your city, and think of it as an organism that's got inputs and outputs. By measuring its energy and its waste—its respiration if you will—you can get a sense of how it's doing. If there's a proposal for development or a proposal for significant change, the question then becomes how does it affect its metabolism? Again, to do that, you've got to first sit down and think about how you can define the life of the city and how you can get the indices, the things that you can measure: traffic flow, pollution.

Another way of looking at it is the ecological footprint—the impact of a particular activity—and they calculated it out in land. For example, the consumption level for North America needs 15 times more land than exists, which means that we're consuming 15 times more than our sustainable limit.

The third concept is the idea of life cycle: beginning-to-end. But I would urge reporters to think of it more broadly. There are all kinds of life cycles in our areas that indicate how our communities are doing. Births, primary school enrollments, high school graduates, college diplomas, jobs, and deaths. That's a life cycle for your community, and there are many others like that. These kinds of ideas—life cycles, urban metabolism, ecological footprints—are ways of looking at things we already deal with: traffic development, housing developments, impacts on rivers, in a way that asks is this impact so degrading that it's changing

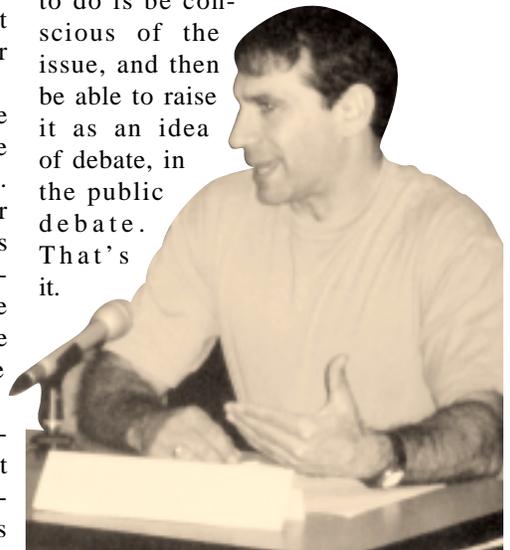
our community?

For reporters, what's most important is to step away from this kind of discussion, what "professional sustainers" are doing, and to get back to just being reporters and looking at an issue, but looking at it slightly differently—doing our job the way we do it.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* had on the front page [June 18] a story about a fox hunt farm in rural Chester county that the heirs have now inherited, and because of the booming land prices and the taxes, they're going to sell it to Toll Brothers (a big housing developer).

They interviewed somebody—there's actually a Fox-Hound Hunters Association of America—and had a wonderful quote about how everyone wants to live in hunt country, but pretty soon all that will be left are housing developments named Fox Chase and Horse Run. That was a sustainable development story, and it didn't mention sustainable development.

What you need secondly is a set of tools to help you get at those issues. Fortunately there's a tremendous amount of material now on the Web that helps enormously in trying to give you a baseline and in trying to be able to measure impacts. The EPA, the DOE, the Census Bureau—there's all kinds of data right down to the census tracks in townships that you can access immediately and start to make some assessments—what does this mean to the town? What does it mean to its streams? What we as reporters have to do is be conscious of the issue, and then be able to raise it as an idea of debate, in the public debate. That's it.



Mark Jaffe, *Philadelphia Inquirer*



Jonah the crawdad, and other tales

► On a recent family foray to an old fishing haunt in western Pennsylvania, Chris Rigel's brother Bob was gutting a catch when he noticed that the fish's stomach was crammed full. Curious, he cut the stomach open and out walked a crayfish, which paid obeisance and then scuttled back into the creek. Says Chris, programs and systems manager at SEJ headquarters in Philadelphia, "I figured that was Jonah Crawdad in the belly of a trout, delivered by the hand of Bob."

She adds: "I caught my limit. My crawdad was dead. Guess I'm no deliverer." Wrong about that. To ye editor, who e-mails tons of copy to the designer of *SEJournal* and sees how she shoe-horns them into the *SEJournal*, all while serving as editor of Green Beat copy and holding down her day job at headquarters, Ms. Rigel is not only a "deliverer," she approacheth beatification.

► Chuck Quirnbach with Wisconsin Public Radio thought he'd spotted a soul mate in Milwaukee when he saw a black Honda Accord bearing a Missouri license plate with the letters "SEJ." A quick check with SEJ headquarters on Missouri members turned up no initials to fit the plates. Must have been a vain Samuel (or Sabrina) Evans Johnson.

But the check with headquarters did jog executive director Beth Parke's memory of a dispute over use of our initials. It seems the publication *Success Express Journal* in Canada uses them as well and claimed proprietorship. An attorney absolved the Society of Environmental Journalists of guilt, since the two publications are in different countries and their subject matter does not overlap.

► The chronicling of bloopers in this column in the last issue of *SEJournal* jogged contributor Merritt Clifton's memory of more. He writes of a *faux pas* while newspapering:

"My own worst published grammatical error was, I hope: 'Returning to competition after having a baby in the Bedford Fete National 5-k, Louise Voghel won before a hometown crowd.'"

The embarrassment of suggesting the woman had her baby while running a 5K was compounded, says Merritt, now publisher of *ANIMAL PEOPLE*, by the fact that while running the same race he was beaten by Ms. Voghel as she pushed her two children through the course in an old-fashioned fringe-topped baby buggy. "I could run a bit in those days," he adds, "(completed 22 marathons and seven ultramarathons) but Ms. Voghel was a former runner-up in the Montreal International Marathon and could really fly low. To rub it in (actually because she's a very nice person) she handed me a cup of water when I finished, about 20 seconds behind her."

► In the last issue Merritt told the story of a misplaced "F" in a headline about truckers that was published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and we mistakenly placed him on the *Chronicle* staff. "I worked for the *Oakland Tribune*," says Merritt. "The *Chronicle* made the error; the *Tribune* laughed over it."

Not yet finished with his former competitors, he has another story about a caption that appeared in the *San Francisco*

Examiner. "In 1961 the *Examiner* depicted Baseball Hall of Fame slugger Willie McCovey practically twisting himself into a pretzel on a giant swing-and-miss and appearing to fall over backward with the bat going where the sun doesn't shine. The writer captioned it 'McCovey screwed himself into the ground, trying to hit the forkball.' *Examiner* practice was to boldface the first part of a caption, so the bold part came out, 'McCovey screwed himself.'"

► Last issue's bloopers opened the floodgates of errant headlines. Try these on for size:

- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Never Withhold Herpes Infection from Loved One
- Is There a Ring of Debris around Uranus?
- Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
- Deer Kill 17,000
- Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
- Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge
- Sex Education Delayed, Teachers Request Training

If you ever run out of trail food on a rigorous hike, take cheer from this headline: Kids Make Delicious Snacks. And finally, now we know the answer to population growth in Michigan, thanks to this post-Christmas headline: Lansing Residents Can Drop Off Trees.

Now GABI would like to try a limerick contest for a future issue. Sorry, no prizes; fame and reader yuks will be your only reward. The subject must be (vaguely) environmental and must be in limerick form. You know the rhythm:

*It's a fact, and a bit paradoxical,
That reporting on poisons quite toxic,
Can be done on your duff,
but for copy quite rough,
You've got to get off of your coccyx.*

Or...

*Said a logger, a definite meanie,
To a tree-hugging, bona fide greenie,
Don't bug me with facts
Cause one slip of my axe
And your friends will be calling you "Queenie."*

The gauntlet is thrown. Send your entries to the addresses below.

Limericks, or any humorous stories that relate to the environmental beat and might be part of a future Grin And Bare It (GABI) column, should be submitted by e-mail to Noel Grove at ngrove1253@aol.com or by regular mail to Noel Grove at Box 1016, Middleburg, VA 20118.



A new crop of reporters is heading to Boulder this fall to brush up on environmental science and policy as Ted Scripps Fellows in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado. **David Baron**, *National Public Radio* environment reporter, plans to focus on eco-law, the history of the American West and global warming. Another public radio reporter in the pack is **Paula Dobbyn** of *KTOO-FM* in Juneau, Alaska. **Jennifer Bowles** who writes for the *Associated Press* in Los Angeles is also a fellow. Rounding out the class are **Cate Gilles**, a correspondent for the *Navajo Times* in Window Rock, Arizona and **Todd Hartman**, an environment reporter at the *Gazette* in Colorado Springs.

SEJ board member **Jim Bruggers** will be in Ann Arbor this year: he won a Michigan Journalism Fellowship at the University of Michigan.

Moving to a new job this summer is **Kris Wilson**. He leaves the University of Kansas and heads for University of Texas at Austin. Included in the environmental research he is taking with him are two

new studies of TV weather reporting. In bookstores now is a new "environmental" guidebook by **Ron Mader** and **James Gollin**. It is called *Honduras: Adventures in Nature* (John Muir Publications). The volume includes regional ecological information as well as insights to the nation's growing environmental move-

ing Lake Powell, the release of California Condors in Northern Arizona and the controversy over Utah's new Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

CNN Radio's Dale Willman was honored by the Radio-Television News Directors Association for investigative reporting. Willman broadcast a series on the dangerous health and environmental conditions facing musicians, actors, and stagehands in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* Broadway production. The stories prompted OSHA to extract a promise that Disney would discontinue use of pyrotechnics and fog which can cause serious lung damage to the workers.

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Mader is also author of *Mexico: Adventures in Nature* due out this fall.

Gary Cohn and **Will Englund** of *The Baltimore Sun* took the big prize this year. Their reporting on the dangers posed to workers and the environment when discarded ships are dismantled won the Pulitzer for investigative reporting.

John Daley, environment reporter for the ABC affiliate *KTVX-TV* in Salt Lake City, won the 1998 Radio and Television News Directors Foundation Environment and Science Reporting Fellowship. Daley's series examined development in the West including the debate over drain-

Win an award? Trying student life for awhile? Finally putting the finishing touches on that book? Let your colleagues know about it. Send professional information to George Homsy, Living on Earth, 8 Story Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. E-mail: <ghomsy@world.std.com>. Fax: 617-868-8659. Please include a daytime telephone number.

New Members

New SEJ members from 5/15/98-7/15/98:

ARIZONA

- Diane Raab (Active), *Sedona Red Rock News*
- Jay Withgott (Academic), University of Arizona, Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Tucson

CALIFORNIA

- J. W. August (Active), McGraw Hill Broadcasting, *KGTV*, San Diego
- Suzanne Bohan (Academic), Stanford University, Communication, Los Gatos
- Mary Fricker (Active), *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*
- Salvador Morales (Active), *KSTS Telemondo 48*, Daly City

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Bonner Cohen (Active), EPA WATCH,

FLORIDA

- Herb Allen (Active), Dunedin
- Craig Pittman (Active), *St. Petersburg Times*
- Scott Harrison Streater (Active), Gannett

News Corp., *Pensacola News Journal*

GEORGIA

- Viviana Fernandez (Active), *CNN en Español*, Cumming
- Lee Hughey (Active), *CNN Earth Matters*, Chamblee
- Mark Stevenson (Active), CNN Enviro. Unit/*Earth Matters*, Atlanta

IDAHO

- Jyl Hoyt (Active), Boise State University, *BSU-Radio*, Boise

ILLINOIS

- Joel T Patenaude (Active), *The Beacon-News*, Aurora

MASSACHUSETTS

- John Dougherty (Active), *WBZ-TV News*, Boston

MARYLAND

- Scott Broom (Active), E.W. Scripps Co, *WMAR-TV*, Baltimore

MICHIGAN

- Eric Freedman (Academic), Michigan State University, Journalism School, East Lansing

MISSOURI

- Gary Grigsby (Associate), University of Missouri, School of Journalism, Columbia

NORTH CAROLINA

- Kimberley Murray (Academic), Duke University, Morehead City

NEVADA

- Steven Parker (Academic), University of Nevada, Political Science Department, Las Vegas

NEW YORK

- Cynthia Berger (Active), Finger Lakes Productions International, Ithaca
- Mary-Powel Thomas (Associate), National Audubon Society, Audubon, NY

OHIO

- Elaine Kauh (Active), *Springfield News-Sun*, Springfield

OREGON

- Pat Forgey (Active), *The News Register*, McMinnville

PENNSYLVANIA

- Paul Nussbaum (Active), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia

(Continued on page 17)

Getting scientists to talk

By SARA THURIN ROLLIN

For weeks ahead, I knew it was coming and I had better get ready.

Just after Labor Day 1994, the Environmental Protection Agency was set to release publicly the draft health risk assessment on dioxins and related environmental contaminants.

I knew this would be front-page news in all the daily papers, a top story in weekly news magazines, and TV and radio news programs would cover it too. I knew my articles for the Bureau of National Affairs would be successful if I got scientists to talk.

I wanted my article on this major scientific document grounded in the science, not other competing issues, such as the politics of chlorine or incineration, which are sometimes easier to explain to readers and editors.

There are many science-laden, hot-button issues in the domain of the environmental journalist today that are ripe for reaching out to scientists. Among these often controversial issues are concerns about the potential for endocrine disruption in humans and wildlife, illness from

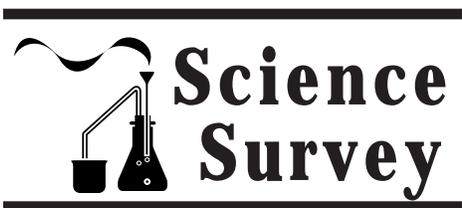
In more than 10 years of reporting I have found scientists hesitant to talk to reporters.

of reporting, I have found scientists hesitant to talk to reporters. They complain that in previous contacts with the press their comments were “taken out of context” or reporters “skipped over the science” and focused on the policy issues. I counter these complaints by developing a two-part relationship with scientists.

When I see a major environmental science story on the horizon, I plan to work with scientists on two levels—with them as a teacher and a source. I have a third level of contact which I call a “secret

scientist” that I will explain later.

I first focus on finding scientists who will to talk to me as a “teacher” and then I seek out scientists who will be a “source” for my articles. By working together in a teacher-student forum that is not for an article, I have had tremendous luck in gathering information and many times end up with a quotable comment for a story too. I also have assembled a list of scientists who are willing to serve as a “fact checker” only.



In the case of the dioxin health reassessment, I especially needed to find scientists who could explain the importance of “background levels” of exposure and others who are specialists in chemical-cell interactions.

As I searched for scientists to fill these needs, I found several with active research programs who were anxious to tell me about their “elegant science” on minute details of dioxin toxicology. Some had created new methodologies or measuring techniques, but what I really needed was some basic information.

I found that by investing time to learn from the scientists, even if I knew the news article I would write would not include this information, I benefit. First, I have gained an understanding of the issue (often the interview evolves into an oral exam). Second, I may win the trust of a scientist because I participated in this learning-exercise, and this often leads to a comment for the record. Occasionally, I can write an article about “elegant science” but like most everyone, I need to focus on what the scientific data may mean and what environmental policy outcomes may follow.

Although developing the dual-relationship with scientists takes an investment of time, this approach also has paid off in another way. I maintain a cadre of so-called secret scientists, which is a spe-

cial work relationship I cultivate with about three or four scientists annually.

These are scientists who I trust and who I know understand the limits of my scientific knowledge. These are people, who have agreed that I can call them during the chaos of deadline to check a phrase or an editor’s change.

My secret scientists also are the people I rely on to tell me, off the record usually, the hard-to-find or “sensitive” scientific information. In this way, they also give me early warnings about emerging scientific issues which other reporters may not know about.

This system worked recently. One of my secret scientists told me that a colleague’s peer-reviewed study in the endocrine disruption area was not reproducible because questionable techniques were used.

Although my cadre of “secret scientists” started by accident, it has evolved into an “essential element” in of my beat. In the case of covering the dioxin reassessment, my secret scientists also have helped me untangle the cutting-edge science from the web of policy issues.

Some of my best resources for finding this type of scientist are professional societies, members of a federal science advisory committee, and past conference agendas that come in the mail.

Most of these resources are accessible from the World Wide Web. I got a useful resource list and met representatives of scientific professional societies by attending the American Chemical Society’s annual Science Writer’s Workshop, which I highly recommend to all reporters.

Web Resources

Here are my two favorite resources:

- Scroll to the bottom of this web page to find pointers to many chemistry and science Web sites. The address is <http://irptc.unep.ch/irptc/othersit.html>
- The media experts list under the Society of Toxicology’s homepage: <http://www.toxicology.org>

Pioneer Press explores new frontier

Newspaper chain adds Internet access and training to newsrooms

By DEBRA A. SCHWARTZ

To make good reporters and editors better, the Pioneer Press Newspapers in the Chicago area decided to teach them Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR).

With that in mind, the chain of suburban newspapers owned by Hollinger International Inc. created a CAR committee last spring prompted by Carol Goddard, chief of Pioneer's Bannockburn bureau.

More than half of the company's editorial employees are not comfortable using a PC, let alone the Internet, spreadsheets, or databases, according to a survey the committee conducted last June. Goddard said she knew what she was up against even before the survey.

"The trouble is, nobody really knows how to use these things yet," Goddard said. "But if you're expecting to have a future in this business, you have to get up to speed on these skills."

Although databases provide a lot of national and regional information, they don't by themselves carry much relevance for a community newspaper, Goddard said. "But you can build your own database, and that's where the local newspapers need to go. That's where the potential is for doing really, really terrific stories."

Creating those databases has been part of Associate Editor Rob Loerzel's job at Pioneer.

"Our basic goal is to educate ourselves on what CAR can do and what we can accomplish with it, then come up with a way of making sure that all the reporters and editors around the company can learn more about it, have access to the Internet, and the software they'll need. Then educate everyone else about it," he said.

CAR gives reporters access to a wealth of information that was a lot harder to come by before computers came along, Loerzel said. Knowing how to use databases lets community newspapers quickly analyze thousands of documents to determine a local angle on a story.

Using databases not only helps reporters find information, but also helps them hone questions, said Sarah Cohen, training director for the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting.

It changes the nature of reporting partly by helping reporters ask different questions, Cohen said. "Instead of calling and asking someone how much taxes are going up for a typical family, you can call and ask why taxes are going up for older people. It's a very different question. You can ask that because you figured it out. Council members or state government people aren't going to tell you about the real effects of their actions," she said.

But CAR is not right for everyone, she said. "If your goal is to go to council meetings and repeat what you hear, then you probably don't need computer-assisted reporting," she said. "You're not going to improve on your ability to produce a story in an hour. But if you view your job as reporting on what people do rather than what they say, this can be a great help."

Although Denys Bucksten, a reporter in Pioneer's Bannockburn Bureau, doesn't use spreadsheets and databases

yet, the Internet has helped him write magazine-length regional features, he said.

"It has changed the way I approach a story, and it has changed the quality of my stories," Bucksten said. "I've become more and more dependent on computers. They have helped me find the most knowledgeable sources, and that's invaluable."

To start the CAR committee at Pioneer, Goddard broadcast a memo to editorial employees asking for volunteers. From the responses, she gathered a handful of editors and one reporter to be among the first to use CAR at Pioneer.

The committee initially met weekly, but now meets monthly and rotates among the various offices. As a prerequisite, anyone interested in joining was required to have working knowledge of Windows. A keen interest in computer research was considered a bonus. Knowledge of how to use Access and/or Excel was considered a double bonus.

Pioneer Press, which circulates 250,000 newspapers, added Internet access to all its newsrooms last March.

To learn CAR, the committee has identified a project and will reap lessons by applying their collective knowledge about using databases, spreadsheets, and the Internet to shape the story. At this point, though, few if any reporters at the company know how to use CAR, including committee members, Goddard said.

The next step is to pass along to other reporters and editors what committee members learn from the project, Goddard said. "We have to get it to another tier group, but there isn't anyone trained to teach in all the areas that encompass CAR. I'd be reluctant to hire someone from NICAR to do that because of the survey results. We have a long way to go," she said.



Debbie Schwartz is a reporter at Pioneer Press Newspapers, where she covers education in Lake County, Ill., and also some environmental news.

Getting started with CAR

The CAR committee at Pioneer Press Newspapers has relied heavily on the book *Computer-Assisted Reporting* by Brant Houston as a guide. Some of the book's advice:

- Keep a daily log of what you learn
- Start with small databases; build your own
- Get databases for subjects you know
- Integrate CAR into your daily journalism
- Use databases as tipsters
- Don't forget to use graphs and charts to illustrate stories
- Spreadsheets allow you to use column letters and row numbers to create formulas
- Database managers allow you to join two or more tables of information by matching names or identification numbers
- Online resources allow you to connect directly with governmental bulletin boards and databases

Parents read, and get the message

Kids books spur environmental action

By LYNNE CHERRY

Environmentally minded citizens receive most of their information from educational materials for their children, and their children are the most common source of pressure on them to act responsibly toward the environment. So says a recent study by the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, which revealed that even the messages and values conveyed in children's books and in educational materials can effect how seriously both children and their parents take their own "earth stewardship."

Children's books often take complex concepts and synthesize them so that children, and their parents, can understand them. Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* is a perfect example. It shows a corporation despoiling a natural ecosystem and providing jobs that create products of questionable need, but after the resources are gone, the plant closes down, the jobs are gone and the natural ecosystem is gone as well.

As a writer of children's literature, I have tried to introduce ecological principals in my books such as *The Great Kapok Tree*. My point: trees hold the earth in place. When the trees are cut the roots wither and die, the soil washes away and the forest becomes a desert. *A River Ran Wild* is an environmental history that tells how one person can make a difference. I show how the river is cleaned up by an organization started by Marion Stoddard. *The Shaman's Apprentice*, my most recent book, is a true story about the Tirion Indians of Suriname and the knowledge of medicinal plants held by their shaman.

Perhaps the power of a children's book is that it elicits an emotional reaction to an issue rather than simply presenting hard, dry facts. This holds especially true when an issue is presented through the life of one particular creature to which children and their parents can relate. In *The Hunter*, written and illustrated by Paul Geraghty, a boy finds a young ele-

phant by the side of its dead mother, a scene emotionally wrenching to children and adults alike.

My own book, *Flute's Journey*, is about the travails of a wood thrush migrating from the Belt Woods in Maryland to the Monteverde rain forest in Costa Rica. It becomes more compelling to save "Flute's forest" than to save "migratory bird habitat".

How compelling is it? Recently a man who had read *Flute's Journey* told me at a booksigning.

"I had no idea how much trouble reading this book to my kids was going to make for me."

His children had become very upset that he had cut down two trees

in front of his house and convinced him not to cut a third but to leave it "for the birds." They were also upset that he had used pesticides on his lawn, and convinced him to leave weeds so that their yard would be safe for songbirds.

Hundreds of letters inspired by books come to authors from children asking what they can do to help save the habitat of songbirds, save rain forests, or clean up rivers. Because of letters like these, a publication called *Nature's Course* now reviews children's books and responds to such questions.

The newsletter reviews the best children's books according to themes—rain forest, water, birds, oceans, air pollution—and gives examples of what some kids have been doing to make a difference in the environment. School children in Michigan, for example, saved the last remaining old-growth forest in their area by raising \$200,000 to purchase and protect it. Children in Vancouver wrote letters to politicians and rallied to save the Clayoquot Sound ancient forest. Sixth graders in Mosinee, WI, pressured officials into saving their schoolyard bird habitat from becoming a parking lot.

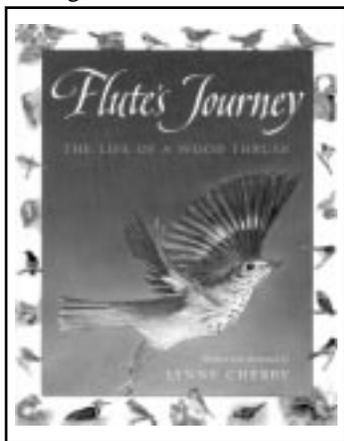
Nature's Course is published by The Center for Children's Environmental Literature, established by 200 children's

book authors and illustrators. Considering all the environmental educational materials produced by corporations, the founders feel it is important to reach teachers and parents with alternative information.

Can teachers trust information on pesticides provided to them by a chemical company? The timber industry gives grade-schoolers coloring books called "My Friend the Forester." The industry suggests group games such as having students stand close together like a crowded forest so that animals can't move around until a student acting as "forester" and another as "logger" remove a few trees.

If the authors of children's literature don't provide influence about environmental practices for both children and adults, others will do it for them.

Lynne Cherry, author and illustrator of numerous children's books on the environment, is also director of the Center for Children's Environmental Literature and the editor of Nature's Course.



How to break in:

To write for kids you have to think like a kid. Most children's book authors and illustrators are kids at heart. They still see the beauty and wonder of life and are able to translate their own experiences for kids.

- Start by joining an organization such as the Children's Book Guild. Connections help.
- Most publishers no longer take unsolicited manuscripts, so it helps if a published author sends your manuscript to her or his editor with a personal note.
- Illustrators can still make appointments with art directors of publishing houses and show them a portfolio of their work.
- Perseverance pays. Going back again and again with new samples and sending illustrations on greeting cards every year may result in a first book contract.
- If your talents are obvious, having an agent is the easiest road.

Sustainable journalism, anyone?

By **CARL FRANKEL**

Lately I have been tracking, with a sort of bemused perplexity, the debate that pits 'independent journalism' against 'advocacy journalism.' According to the general understanding, it seems you can be one or the other, but not both.

As I understand it, this view emerges out of the concept of the 'fourth estate,' i.e., of a press whose chief role is to preserve democracy by standing outside the system, shining light on its dark spots, and calling miscreants to account. It is the 'independent journalists' who do this, we are told. And then, across from them and inside the system, as it were, are the 'advocacy journalists.' They're the ones working for a cause inside the political apparatus, not standing outside the system as its watchdogs.

This makes perfectly good sense intellectually, but emotionally I can't relate to it at all. That's because I don't experience myself as either an independent journalist or an advocacy journalist. I experience myself as both.

I got into environmental journalism precisely because of my concern about the planet. That probably makes me an advocate by definition. Yet I also feel like an independent journalist, which is to say—committed at all times to the higher ideal of the truth. Am I correct in suspecting that many of my SEJ colleagues got into environmental journalism for the same reason? And that many of them feel the same way?

Contrary to conventional wisdom, I do not experience these two identities— independent journalist, sustainability advocate—as incompatible. Yes, there is a tension between the two, but I find myself able to resolve that tension, in the following ways.

First, I address the tension regularly in the act of doing environmental journalism—in the words I choose, the tone I take, the perspective I convey. The challenge requires subtlety but is manageable. Usually I manage to come out at a place I am comfortable with.

Second, and more philosophically, I resolve the tension between 'advocacy' and 'objectivity' by believing that we can articulate our beliefs (e.g., 'pro-sustainability') and then be objective on top of

that root belief system, so to speak. In fact all journalists build their objectivity on top of some sort of core ideology, so this is hardly anything new.

Third—and with this I come to the main thrust of my argument: I believe the tension between being an independent journalist and a sustainability advocate can be resolved by pursuing what I call 'sustainable journalism.' By this I mean: journalism as it would be in our much-imagined, perhaps-never-attainable 'sustainable society.'

Viewpoints

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

As I see it, sustainable journalism embraces the three following tenets.

First: sustainable journalism incorporates the best and noblest aspects of conventional independent journalism—diligence of research, precision of language, fairness of reporting, etc.

Second: sustainable journalism strives to educate people, in a fair-minded and balanced way, about the nature and importance of sustainable development. This assumes that sustainability has been largely marginalized by our mainstream discourse, and that this marginalization needs to be overcome; and that, to the extent that sustainability is part of the public dialogue, its character and dimensions are woefully misunderstood.

Third: sustainable journalism supports dialogue. And what precisely is dialogue? Etymologically, it means the 'flow of meaning.' So sustainable journalism encourages the flow of meaning.

I think we can all agree that not all conventional journalism meets that standard. When it falls short, it's usually because the journalists in question are so intent on winning, i.e., on imposing their own point of view, that they resort to aggressive psychological and rhetorical tactics to prevail. Maybe they march into the 'opine forest' and hunker down, intent on outlasting (or out-shouting) the opposition. Maybe they go *ad hominem*, assaulting and insulting and withering.

Regardless of the specific strategy, their aim is to silence, to overwhelm, rather than to engage or communicate. And that by (my) definition is not sustainable.

Why not? Because a somewhat unorthodox notion is embedded in this proposition—namely, that to make the transition into sustainability, we need to change what we talk about, and how we talk about it. In other words, sustainability has a discourse dimension. I firmly believe that as journalists—as sustainable journalists—we need to be modeling the high road for public discourse, not the lower ones, which suffocate the flow of meaning through their infatuation with argumentation and victory. We need to make our case(s) through intelligence, through graciousness, through elegance, through (you should excuse the usage) virtue—by standing above the crowd, not by competing with it in the slam-'em-and-win' competition that rules the world of discourse in this far too tacky age.

We live in a world that degrades discourse and does its best to stamp out dialogue. As sustainable journalists we need to do better.

In conclusion, I find it curious that the notion of 'sustainable journalism' hasn't yet made its way into the general discourse about sustainability—not to my knowledge, anyway. We have corporate environmentalism, Education for Sustainability, green building and architecture, even green accounting—why not Journalism for Sustainability?

I suppose the answer is because journalists, in the tradition of the fourth estate, view themselves as in the audience, not the movie. But we need to move beyond that now. We all need to be part of the solution, journalists included, and that calls for us to examine the extent to which our current professional practices correspond with how we want the world to be.

We need to explore what this new model, 'sustainable journalism,' might mean, and its capacity to take us beyond an archaic attitude that sets 'independent journalism' here, and 'advocacy journalism' there, and proclaims the twain cannot meet.

Carl Frankel is U.S. editor for Tomorrow Magazine.

Forest certification: Separating good boards from bad

By **DIANE DULKEN**

In May, a group of reporters toured a California logging operation where towering redwoods rose above a forest floor of swordfern, salmonberry, and other vibrant plant life. The city of Arcata, which owns and manages the 1,200 forested acres, had just been awarded an environmental seal of approval for its forestry operations, and reporters were invited to learn why.

“What is unique about this site is that it’s not about to be logged—it already has been logged, and the forest wasn’t destroyed in the process,” said Walter Smith of Smartwood, one of two organizations in the United States that inspect forests and certify those that adhere to strict standards set by the internationally-recognized non-profit Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Standing next to a sign that read “Logged in 1981,” Smith looked over a forest of unbroken green. Visitors searching for stumps had to walk among mature redwoods, cross downed logs, and brush aside salmonberry and young redwoods to find evidence that not long ago, 300 truckloads of lumber had been hauled from the 30-acre stand. “A forest should look and function like a forest, even after it’s logged,” said city forester Mark Andre.

By meeting the SmartWood and FSC standards, Arcata joins a growing number of landowners and businesses that have earned the right to market their forest

products with the certification designation, which is intended to open markets to environmentally conscious consumers and encourage other landowners to improve their practices.

Certified forests, or businesses that use certified wood, now exist in most regions of the country, providing opportu-



nity for environmental reporters to examine the movement and its potential for challenging conventional forestry. Worldwide, more than 22 million acres have been certified in 24 countries. In the United States, the amount of certified forests has doubled in the past year to 3.6 million acres. These include private landowners as well as the states of Minnesota and Pennsylvania. Arcata is the first certified municipal forest. Among the high-profile businesses and organizations using certified wood are:

- The American Museum of Natural History, which used certified wood in its new and acclaimed Hall of Biodiversity
- Bank of America, which renovated its public plaza in San Francisco using certified benches and planters
- Habitat for Humanity, one of the largest homebuilders in the nation
- The Nature Company, which installed music kiosks made of certified wood in more than 80 stores
- Whole Foods Market, which used certified tropical and domestic wood in its new San Rafael, CA store
- San Francisco International Airport, which will feature a giant certified cherry panel in its new terminal
- Turner Construction, the largest commercial construction company in the U.S.

Major environmental organizations involved in certification include World Wildlife Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society, World Resources Institute, and Rainforest Alliance (which operates SmartWood). They see certification as a new tool to

encourage forest stewardship, and a counterpoint to forest products companies that advertise themselves as environmentally responsible but do not invite independent auditors to verify those assertions.

“When a company says it’s environmentally friendly, a consumer doesn’t know whether to believe it or not,” says Jay Francis, senior forester with Collins Pine Co, one of the first certified businesses in the U.S. “But the certification label isn’t coming from us; it’s coming from an independent auditor. That’s believable.”

Diane Dulken is a writer in Portland, OR, who has written about environmental issues for a number of years. She became involved with certification while organizing media tours.

Source list:

To find certified lands in your area:

- Forest Stewardship Council: (802) 244-6257; www.fscus.org
- Smartwood: (802) 434-5491 or www.smartwood.org
- Scientific Certification Systems: (510) 832-1415 or www.scs1.com (Smartwood and SCS also certify forest managers—who may oversee a number of properties—and manufacturers and distributors.)

To find certified products:

- Certified Forest Products Council President: David Ford (former vp of the American Forest and Paper Assoc.), (503) 590-6600; www.certifiedwood.org
- www.certifiedproducts.org

Consider the European angle:

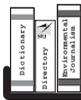
- England helped World Wildlife Fund organize a buyers group with a goal of buying and selling exclusively certified products. Bruce Cabarle, (202) 822-3450

For a counterpoint to certification:

American Forest and Paper Association (certification depends on an independent audit, but the AF&PA initiative relies on member companies to report their own achievements. (202) 463-2700



Certified forests require leaving trees around streams after logging



Spotlighting oceans

Song for the Blue Ocean: Encounters Along the World's Coasts and Beneath the Seas

By Carl Safina
Henry Holt and Company,
New York, 1997
458 pages, cloth, \$30.00

Dead Reckoning: Confronting the Crisis in Pacific Fisheries

By Terry Glavin
Greystone Books, Vancouver, 1996
181 pages, paper, \$18.95 (Canada)

Oceans, which comprise 71% of the world's surface area and more than 99% of the biosphere, are perhaps the most important yet least appreciated ecosystem on the planet. Most creatures of the deep are yet to be discovered, while others are being exploited to near extinction, with little understanding of the consequences.

Realizing the need to bring broad attention to the problems of the seas, the United Nations has designated 1998 the Year of the Ocean. In this same pursuit, both of these books serve well to heighten the level of public discourse.

Carl Safina's book is by far the more ambitious and important of the two. In *Song for the Blue Ocean*, Safina, Director of the Living Oceans Program of the National Audubon Society, travels the globe to "search out the ocean's messages, and to bring those messages ashore." His travels take him from the shores of Long Island and Cape Cod where he studies the decline of bluefin tuna, to the depleted salmon fisheries of the American northwest, to the increasingly stressed coral reefs of the South Pacific.

Throughout, he combines a conservationist's passion for the creatures of the sea, a humanitarian's empathy for the peoples who rely on them for survival, a scientist's analytical acumen, a fisherman's familiarity with the ocean, and a storyteller's eye for detail and adventure.

Finding much evidence of ecological damage, but also some reasons for hope, Safina ultimately sees the need for a fundamentally new relationship between humanity and the sea.

In the book's epilogue, Safina refers to Aldo Leopold's famous "land ethic," in which we extend our sense of community responsibilities beyond isolated humanity

to encompass the whole living landscape. Despite the revolutionary appeal of the land ethic, it has typically extended only to terrestrial plants and animals.

It is time, Safina argues, to develop a "sea ethic."

In contrast to the peripatetic Safina, Terry Glavin, a former reporter for the Vancouver *Sun*, focuses *Dead Reckoning* on the fisheries of British Columbia. But like Safina, he engages an array of fisherman, biologists, and local conservationists in his quest to unravel the reasons for the dramatic declines in fish populations and to search for possible solutions. His ultimate message is that while it is later than we think in terms of our impact on the coastal ecosystems, it is not too late.

"There are lots of little lights at the end of the tunnel," one character says. But it will require real, serious change.

Both books are narrative in style, so one must sometimes wade through the story line to get to the underlying issues. But the stories are so compellingly—in Safina's case, often lyrically—written and the problems so critical, that both of these books are important reads for anyone trying to understand and cover the political, cultural, and ecological complexities surrounding the world's coasts and oceans.

—Marc Norman

New members...from page 11

PUERTO RICO

•Susan Soltero (Active), *TeleOnce WL11-TV*, San Juan

TENNESSEE

•Linda Moist (Associate), University of Tennessee, Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy, Knoxville

VIRGINIA

•Penny Loeb (Active), *U.S. News & World Report*, Great Falls

WASHINGTON

•Vivia Boe (Active), National/International Production, Seattle

CANADA

•Stephen G. Leahy (Active), Brooklin, Ont

NEPAL

•Bishwa Thapa (Active), *To-Day National & International Magazine*, Kathmandu

PERU

•Verónica Valcárcel (Academic), Universidad de Lima, Facultad de Ciencias de la Comunicación, Lima

PORTUGAL

•Ricardo Garcia (Associate), *Publico Newspaper*, Monte Estoril ❖

Classified Ads

Science/environmental

writer (junior):

WRI is seeking an assistant writer on the *World Resources Report*, a biennial publication on the global environment. Writer will be responsible for researching and writing majority of stories for one section of the report. Work involves generating graphic ideas, writing captions, headlines, fact-checking, and proofreading. Requirements: Bachelors degree in science or journalism and a minimum of two years writing experience or an advanced degree and minimum of one year writing experience. Ability to understand and translate often technical material into clear and concise language is critical, as is proven ability to meet deadlines. Must have excellent research skills, be detail-oriented, and able to work in a team. Familiarity with environment and development issues a plus. Salary high 20's to low 30's, excellent benefits. Send résumé and cover letter to Personnel, WRI, 1709 New York Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20006; Fax: (202) 638-0036. Visit our web site: www.wri.org.



Senior editor:

WRI is seeking a senior editor for the *World Resources Report*, a biennial publication on the global environment. This is a one-year appointment. Responsibilities: designing and writing several in-depth chapters focusing on global ecosystem health, management, and policy; interacting with international collaborators and commissioning and/or editing pieces from outside contributors. Requirements: Advanced degree and a minimum of eight years experience in writing and policy analysis or equivalent experience. Demonstrated ability to write tight, analytical prose essential, as is ability to work closely with scientists and policy makers. Must be well-versed in global environment and development issues and able to work independently and as part of a team. International experience highly desirable. Salary commensurate with experience, excellent benefits. Send résumé to Personnel, WRI, 1709 New York Ave NW, Washington, DC 20006; Fax: (202) 638-0036. Visit our web site: www.wri.org.



Next deadline for classified ads is October 15. Cost is \$5/line. Send ad copy to rigel@voicenet.com or fax to (215) 836-9970.

SEPTEMBER

10-14. **Association of Earth Science Editors** (with sessions on ethics, intellectual property rights, science communication, information retrieval, and electronic publishing). Registration fee is \$195 before Aug. 3 and \$245 afterward (with one-day registration \$100 to \$130). Washington, DC. Contact: Lee Zirkel, American Geophysical Union, 2000 Florida Ave. NW, Washington, DC. 20009. Ph: (202) 462-6900; Fax: (202) 328-0566; WEB: <http://earth.agu.org/edinfo98>

12-16. **Pesticides and Susceptible Populations** (with sessions on the elderly, the fetus, and groups in between, including the economically disadvantaged). Little Rock, AR. Contact: Joan Cranmer, Dept. of Pediatrics, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, 1120 Marshall—Rm. 304, Little Rock, AR 72202. Ph: (501) 320-2986; Fax: (301) 320-4978; E-mail: cranmerjoanm@exchange.uams.edu

13-18. **17th Congress of the World Energy Council** (with sessions on “the greening of fossil fuels,” “moving towards sustainable systems,” and “technological prospects for advanced nuclear and renewable resources”). Houston TX. Contact: Houston World Energy Congress, 1620 Eye St., NW, Ste. 1050, Washington, DC 20006. Ph: (202) 331-0415; Fax: (202) 331-0418; E-mail: hwecc98@aol.com; WEB: www.wec98congress.org

15-16. **Environmental Liability Recovery for Manufactured-Gas Plant and Brownfield Sites** (with sessions on estimating liability and minimizing remediation costs). Washington, DC. Contact: Melissa LaMarche, 225 Turnpike Rd., Southborough, MA 01772; Ph: (508) 481-6400 ext.468; Fax: (508) 481-4473; E-mail: mlamarche@ibcusa.com; WEB: www.ibcusa.com

16-18. **Connections '98: Transportation, Wetlands, and the Natural Environment** (a national conference on biological issues associated with environmental mitigation and surface transportation). New Bern, NC. Contact: Ph: (919) 515-8620; WEB: <http://itre.ncsu.edu/itre/cte/Conferences/Connections98.html>

24-25. **Environmental Forensics: Determining Liability Through Applied Science** (an “executive” forum with topics such as understanding how petroleum weathers over time, fingerprinting inorganic contaminants and dioxins, evaluating the age of hydrocarbon pollution, and using historical aerial surveys to identify probable polluters). Houston TX. Contact: IBC, 225 Turnpike Rd., Southborough, MA 01772. Ph: (508) 481-6400; Fax: (508) 481-7473; E-mail: inq@ibcusa.com; WEB: www.ibcusa.com/conf/eforensic/index.html

25-26. **Wildlife, Pesticides, and People** (with sessions on toxicity of pesticides to nontargeted species, including people, case histories, pesticides that mimic hormones, and ecological requirements for pesticide registrations). Fairfax, VA. Contact: Rachel Carson Council, 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Ph: (301) 652-1877; E-mail: rccouncil@aol.com

26-27. **Low Level Radiation and Implications for Medicine**

and Nuclear Industries (with sessions on such topics as genetic damage, medical consequences of food irradiation, and cancer rates among nuclear workers). New York City. Contact: Carrie Clark, Standing for Truth About Radiation, P.O. Box 4206, Easthampton, NY 11937. Ph: (516) 324-0655; Fax: (516) 324-2203; E-mail: info@noradiation.org; WEB: www.noradiation.org

28-30. **International Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration** (with session on rangeland restoration, cross-border cooperation, environmental justice, restoration with fire, and desertification). Austin, TX. Contact: Society for Ecological Restoration, 1207 Seminole Highway, Ste. B, Madison, WI 53711. Ph: (608) 262-9547; Fax: (608) 265-8557; E-mail: ser@vms2.macc.wisc.edu. WEB: www.phil.unt.edu/ser/

30-Oct. 3. **Ecosystem Considerations in Fisheries Management** (with sessions on climatic impacts on fish stocks, cooperatively managing stocks that straddle national boundaries, effects of fishing rates on seabird populations, impacts of bottom trawling, implications of jellyfish dominance in some ecosystems, and role of commercially discarded fish in maintaining seabird populations) Anchorage, AK. Contact: Brenda Baxter, Alaska Sea Grant College Program. Ph: (907) 474-6701; E-mail: FNBRB@uaf.edu; WEB: www.uaf.alaska.edu/seagrant/Conferences/symposia.html

OCTOBER

4-8. **Expanding Bioenergy Partnerships** (with sessions on ethanol and biocrude oils, biodiesel, cropping and production, environmental issues, and case studies). Madison, WI. Contact: Fred Kuzel or Naureen Rana, Great Lakes Regional Biomass Energy Program, 35 E. Wacker Dr., Ste. 1850, Chicago, IL 60601. Ph: (312) 407-0177; Fax: (312) 407-0038; E-mail: fkuzel@cglg.org; WEB: www.cglg.org/bioenergy98

7. **Pollution Prevention Strategies for the Health Care Industry**. Tyngsborough, MA. Contact: Lara Sutherland or Scott Fortier. Ph: (617) 727-3260; E-mail: Lara.Sutherland@state.ma.us; WEB: www.magnet.state.ma.us/ota/

8-11. **SEJ 8th Annual Conference** (see p. 4) Chattanooga, TN.

13-16. **Global Climate Change: Science, Policy, and Mitigation/Adaptation Strategies** (sponsored by the Air and Waste Management Association, with sessions on economic impacts of the Kyoto Protocol, projected climate and greenhouse-gas emission trends, emissions trading, and case studies of emission reductions). Washington, DC. 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

19-22. **14th Annual Conference on Contaminated Soils** (with sessions on such topics as arsenic, MTBE, radioactive pollutants, decontamination by living plants or microbes, and the forensics of pollutants). Amherst, MA. Contact: Denise Leonard, Environmental Health and Sciences, N344 Morrill, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA -1003. Ph: (413) 545-3165; E-mail:

dleonard@schoolph.umass.edu

20-23. **Biennial Watershed Management Council conference.** Boise, ID. Contact: Charles Slaughter, Northwest Watershed Research Center, Boise, ID 83712. Ph: (208) 422-0722; Fax: (208) 334-1502; E-mail: cslaughter@nwrc.ars.pn.usbr.gov

23-25. **Bioneers Conference: Visionary solutions for restoring the Earth** (sponsored by Collective Heritage Institute, with sessions on indigenous agriculture, environmental justice, seed diversity, biodynamic agriculture, and integrating urban development with ecology). San Francisco CA. Contact: Holly Lucas, CHI, 826 Camino de Monte Rey, #A6, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Ph: (505) 986-0366; Fax: (505) 986-1644; E-mail: chisf@nets.com

26-28. **Lead Tech: New Opportunities in Lead Hazard Control** (with sessions on new technologies to limit lead exposures, new screening methods, and liability analyses). Baltimore. Contact: IAQ Publications Inc., 7920 Norfolk Ave., Ste. 900, Bethesda, MD 20814. Ph: (800) 394-0115; Fax: (301) 913-0119

26-28. **Earth Technologies Forum** (with sessions on focusing on technologies and policies to minimize stratospheric ozone depletion and global warming in such diverse areas as electronics production and transportation to methyl bromide use and crude-oil production). Washington, DC. Contact: Heather Tardell, ETF, 2111 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 850, Arlington, VA 22201. Ph: (703) 807-4052; E-mail: iccpaf@aol.com

28-30. **Ecosystem Restoration** (with sessions on everything from freshwater wetlands and estuaries, to prairies and arid grasslands). Tacoma, WA. Contact: Nancy Mack, Washington State University. Ph: (509) 335-4097; Fax: (509) 335-0945; E-mail: wsuconf@wsu.edu; WEB: www.eus.wsu.edu/c&i

NOVEMBER

4-6. **Exploring Energy and Facilities Management Opportunities in a Changing Marketplace** (sponsored by several federal agencies and the Association of Energy Engineers). Atlanta GA. Contact: Association of Energy Engineers, 4025 Pleasantdale Rd., Ste. 420, Atlanta, GA 30340-4264. Ph: (770) 447-5083; Fax: (770) 447-4354; WEB: www.aeecenter.org

5-6. **Practice of Restoring Native Ecosystems** (a national conference on wildlife management, forestry, landscape architecture, and restoration engineering). Nebraska City, NE. Contact: National Arbor Day Foundation: 100 Arbor Ave., Nebraska City, NE 68410. Ph: (402) 474-5655; E-mail: jparsons@arborday.org; WEB: www.arborday.org

15-19. **Environmental Integrity and Human Health** (the annual meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, with sessions on the effects of pollutant exposures from diet, the water, or breathing contaminated air). Charlotte. NC. Contact: SETAC Office, 1010 N. 12th Ave., Pensacola, FL 32501-3370. Ph: (850) 469-1500; Fax: (850) 469-9778; E-mail: setac@setac.org; WEB: www.setac.org/setac1.html

16-18. **Incentives for the Protection of Nature: Managing for Biodiversity** (sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute, with sessions on bioprospecting, amending the Endangered Species Act, and economic incentives for protecting resources). Savannah, GA. Contact: Barbara Klein, EPRI, 3412 Hillview Ave., Palo Alto, CA, 94304. Ph: (650) 855-2413; E-mail: bklein@epri.com

17-20. **Scientific Conference on Chemical and Biological Defense Research** (with sessions on toxicology, decontamination, weapons destruction, detection, and biotechnology). Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Contact: Judy Cole, Science & Technology Corp., ATTN: ERDEC '98, 101 Research Dr., Hampton, VA 23666-1340. Ph: (757) 766-5855; Fax: (757) 865-8721; E-mail: cole@stcnet.com; WEB: www.stcnet.com/meetings/erdec98.html

DECEMBER

1-4. **Conference on Air Quality: Mercury, Trace Elements, and Particulate Matter** (sponsored by several federal agencies and the Energy & Environmental Research Center). McLean, VA. Contact: Steve Benson, EERC, University of North Dakota, P.O. Box 9018, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9018; Ph: (701) 777-5177; Fax: (701) 777-5181; E-mail: afiala@eerc.und.nodak.edu.

7-9. **Leading the Retail Revolution** (sessions on deregulating the energy industries, investigating "green pricing," environmental benefits of new technologies, and valuing products on a life-cycle basis). Lake Buena Vista, FL. Contact: Elliot Boardman, Association of Energy Services Professionals, Ste. 261, 7491 N. Federal Hwy., #C5, Boca Raton, FL 33487. Ph: (561) 982-9903; Fax: (561) 982-9905; E-mail: eboardman@aesp.org

SELECT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

July 29-31. **First International Conference on Oil and Hydrocarbons Spills, Modeling, Analysis, and Control.** Southampton, U.K. Contact: Helen Fisher, Wessex Institute of Technology, Ashurst Lodge, Ashurst, Southampton, SO40 7AA, United Kingdom. Ph: (44)1703-293-223; Fax: (44) 1703-292-853; E-mail: sue@wessex.ac.u.k.; WEB: www.wessex.ac.u.k.

Sept. 21-23. **Improving Electricity Efficiency in Commercial Buildings** (sponsored by the European Commission, with sessions on successful technologies and strategies for saving energy in offices and public buildings). Amsterdam. Fax: (31) 70-356-2878; E-mail: rostra@euronet.nl

Nov. 16-18. **Beyond Growth: Institutions and Policies for Sustainability** (the fifth biennial meeting of the International Society for Ecological Economics, with sessions on sustainable consumption patterns, what is ecological economics, what can be done to anticipate and prevent social conflicts, and can economic growth improve equity and eliminate poverty). Santiago, Chile. Contact: ISEE. Ph: (410) 326-7414; E-mail: beckman@cbl.umces.edu; WEB: www.uchile.cl/facultades/ISEE3.html

Calendar

APPLICATION DEADLINES

October 5 for the **John B. Oakes** award for distinguished environmental journalism in the U.S. Newspaper and magazine entries that “make an exceptional contribution to the public understanding of contemporary environmental issues” and were published between Oct. 1, 1997 and Sept. 30 of this year are eligible. The \$3,000 award program is administered by the Natural Resources Defense Council. Contact: Peggy Alevrontas, Oakes Award Committee, The Amicus Journal, NRDC, 40 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011. Ph: (212) 722-4412; Fax: (212) 727-1773.

October 15 for the new four-month **fellowship** program funded by **The Pew Charitable Trusts**, beginning in January, to study international affairs—such as environmental issues—overseas on a reporting project. Applicants must have at least three years of journalistic experience. Seven fellows will receive two months of seminars and discussion in Washington DC at the Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), then travel overseas for up to five weeks to pursue an international reporting project of their choice. Fellows return to Washington for a final two weeks of seminars and follow-up discussions. Will receive a stipend and free accommodations in Washington, plus travel expenses for their overseas reporting. Contact John Schidlovsky, Director, Pew Fellowships in International Journalism, School of Advanced International Studies, 1619 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20036.

Ph: (202) 663-7761. Fax: (202) 663-7762. E-mail: pew@mail.jhuwash.jhu.edu

November 2 for the **H. John Heinz III International Fellowship in Environmental Reporting**, for overseas reporting next year. Selected fellows must divide their time between working closely with a media association or university overseas for 3 months—especially in the developing world or in new democracies—and reporting on environmental issues in those countries for the fellow’s home media outlet. Upon returning home, the fellow will be expected to share his or her experiences with other reporters through lectures and seminars. Contact: International Center for Journalists, 1616 H. St. NW, Washington DC 20006. Ph: (202) 737-3700; Fax: (202) 737-0530; E-mail: editor@icfj.org; WEB: <http://www.icfj.org>

CORRECTION: Two typos occurred in the front page story headlined “Media silence on MAI” that appeared in the Spring *SEJournal*. Quotes by a Chantelle Taylor were wrongly attributed as “he said,” when in fact Ms. Taylor is a “she”.

Later in the article the sentence that reads...”the *opponents* of global free trade will continue to lobby for multilateral agreements, be it through regional agreements like APEC or NAFTA...” should read *proponents of global free trade* instead of “opponents.” *SEJournal* editorial staff regrets the errors.

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Nuclear secrecy...(from page 1)

The Rocky Flats Story

The news media have been covering the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons production plant since 1951. Located 18 miles from downtown Denver, the plant's main task was to process plutonium for nuclear and hydrogen bombs. In 1989, the DOE abruptly halted plutonium production for safety reasons. Production never restarted, leaving 14.2 tons of plutonium in various places in the production pipeline.

Coverage of Rocky Flats shows the media generally mirrored the community's values and assumptions. Only after problems in plant operations were exposed in a huge industrial fire in 1969 did the media become somewhat more aggressive in pursuing the story. Until the waning years of the Cold War, the general public and mainstream media went along with national security ideology and secrecy. National security was lucrative for communities that landed military installations, contracts, and jobs.

Journalists didn't even ask many questions about a major fire at the plant in 1957 which released plutonium into the atmosphere. The *Denver Post* quoted a plant spokesman who attributed the fire to "spontaneous combustion" in a processing line. The newspaper didn't carry a single follow-up story. Those "trusting, happily unquestioning years" ran from 1951 to 1969.

That changed after spontaneous combustion of plutonium sparked another huge fire in 1969. This time, a group of independent scientists took soil samples around Rocky Flats and found plutonium contamination, then made journalists aware of their discovery. The press began posing harder questions to the Atomic Energy Commission and Rocky Flats operator Dow Chemical Co.

When facility operators denied the plutonium fire had caused the soil contamination, they were forced to disclose a contamination source that had been kept secret: more than 5,000 drums of plutonium-contaminated oils and solvents had leaked into the soil, where the contamination was spread by heavy rains and high winds.

The public mood changed with the

revelations of the '80s about problems throughout the nuclear weapons complex. These stories initially appeared in techni-

Operators disclosed a contamination source that had been kept secret: more than 5,000 drums of plutonium-contaminated oils and solvents had leaked into the soil.

cal journals such as *Science* and *The Bulletin of The Atomic Scientists*, but the local and national press also began to publish their own major stories on the nuclear contamination problems.

The world learned of the fallibility of nuclear technology with the Chernobyl disaster. The press became more aggressive, and a federal grand jury was summoned to investigate Rocky Flats.

In a 1992 plea agreement, site operator Rockwell International pleaded guilty to several pollution violations and agreed to pay an \$18.5 million fine. A federal judge refused to release the grand jury report, but it was leaked to an alternative Denver weekly, and portions were published. Secrets had found ways to get out.

The Hanford Saga

Official secrecy enacts a heavy price: loss of faith in government. In 1984, a telephone call to a reporter at *The Spokesman-Review* in Spokane, WA, demonstrated how profound that loss can be. The woman on the line had an urgent message: conditions at a Hanford plutonium plant were so unsafe that she was afraid there might be a major nuclear accident.

The call to journalist Karen Dorn Steele came during the Reagan administration, when the Cold War was still very chilly and revealing nuclear secrets was a felony. Hanford workers' telephone calls could be monitored for national security reasons.

The caller was a chemist at PUREX, a Hanford plant that made plutonium. She said the '50s-era facility had terrible problems. PUREX used a chemical process to chop up and leach plutonium from fuel

rods, but the process was faulty. Huge amounts of plutonium were missing, either diverted by theft or backed up somewhere inside.

Dorn Steele tried to verify the woman's story. Through a Freedom of Information Act request, she learned the FBI had recently conducted an audit of PUREX and had concluded that a dozen kilograms of plutonium wasn't stolen, but was lost "somewhere in the pipes."

Hardly reassuring, given the dangers of a critical accident that would release deadly radiation.

The Spokane newspaper's story led to a first-ever press tour inside the plant. But the tour alone was hardly conclusive. At that time, the press could not penetrate the veil of national security that allowed Hanford authorities to deflect almost all questions about plutonium production.

Why did Hanford's problems and its environmental pollution remain a secret for so long? The reasons are complex. Nuclear secrecy was enacted during World War II, and it was perpetuated during the long Cold War. Congress exempted the Atomic Energy Commission from most outside scrutiny, and the AEC ignored safety concerns about nuclear waste as pressure mounted to build the nation's atomic arsenal.

Meanwhile, the small towns bordering Hanford and other nuclear sites had become heavily dependent on nuclear jobs. The hometown media rarely pursued negative stories.

Small towns bordering Hanford were heavily dependent on nuclear jobs; hometown media rarely pursued negative stories.

Hanford managers visited Dorn Steele's editors, suggesting that she had a hidden agenda and questioning her patriotism. Much of that criticism ceased

in 1986, when after public pressure the DOE released 19,000 pages of Hanford environmental monitoring documents that showed the facility had been a massive polluter, ejecting radiation into the air, soil, and groundwater near the Columbia River.

Chasing a footnote in one of the documents, Dorn Steele broke the story of the Green Run, a secret 1949 military experiment conducted at Hanford that spread radioactive iodine 131 for hundreds of

(Continued on page 22)

US—U.K. press...(from page 1)

both sides. "It isn't objectivity to drum up adverse comments, it's pointless. You can always find anyone almost certifiably insane to dispute any moral contention or scientific fact."

"Balance is when you take in all the available information, then say what's going on. And if it's a bloody shambles then you say it's a bloody shambles."

"It's a question of how you define balance," said a freelance environmental journalist. "To me, balance is when you take in all the available information, try and figure out what's going on, and then say what's going on. And if it's a bloody shambles then you say it's a bloody shambles."

The British reporters also said American newspapers were more complacent than U.K. newspapers, and less concerned with world events. "It's a much more competitive press in Britain," one of them said. "There is less competition in

America which means there are some extraordinarily smug and poorly-written papers which tend to always reflect the same view."

A former magazine reporter suggested, "The American papers are far more parochial. World news is tiny in comparison to the amount devoted in the British papers."

When asked about the status of environmental reporting in Britain, most of the journalists indicated that it is healthy and also experiencing something of a resurgence. "At the moment it's thriving," said one. "In the early 1990s I think there was a bit of 'compassion fatigue' but lately it's really taken off."

Yet another environment correspondent for a large daily said green reporting is bouncing back but in a different form inspired by new grassroots awareness. "People are wanting to do something for their own environment and this involved new people, new communities, new groups. I think the whole thing is rethinking itself, and that has set a populist agen-

da in much of Britain."

The same reporter believes environmental reporting in the U.K. has undergone something of a transformation. "Five years ago transport was not an environmental issue, genetics was not an environmental issue. But many things we now consider part of the environmental debate—like foxhunting—are now slap-bang in the agenda."

The former magazine reporter said that green issues are more likely to be covered now by a wide variety of reporters. "In the '80s most papers appointed an environmental journalist and

Nuclear secrecy...(from page 20)

miles. After a FOIA lawsuit to obtain a previously classified report, the newspaper revealed that the Green Run was part of a series of highly classified Air Force monitoring tests conducted at Hanford and Oak Ridge, TN. It took 10 years and thousands of dollars in legal fees to tell the full story of the Green Run.

Cold War attitudes die hard. The newspaper again faced resistance in 1994 when it sought to determine whether the billions of dollars that had gone to Hanford cleanup were being spent effectively. Hanford's government overseers admitted they had almost no auditors. Westinghouse Hanford Co., Hanford's site manager, told reporters Dorn Steele and Jim Lynch they had no right to know the salaries of their top managers—paid by the U.S. taxpayer.

Ultimately, the newspaper developed sources who leaked the budgetary and salary information. Numerous workers told the reporters they were embarrassed by wasted money and the lack of cleanup progress.

After six months of hard investigative reporting, the results were disconcerting: one of three Hanford cleanup dollars was being wasted on misguided projects, corporate lawyers, redundant reports, and contractor perks.

The articles sparked a U.S. Senate

investigation and led to changes in Hanford's cleanup contracts. DOE fired 10 of the 12 law firms working on a major lawsuit brought by thousands of people exposed to Hanford radiation releases. But the case, brought in 1991, still has no trial date, and attorneys for the contractors have been paid over \$54 million so far.

Comments from British reporters were obtained in both face-to-face and telephone interviews in the U.K. in July, 1997..

Journalist Haven Miller, a third-year doctoral student at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, is studying international communications and plans a dissertation comparing British and

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investigation and led to changes in Hanford's cleanup contracts. DOE fired 10 of the 12 law firms working on a major lawsuit brought by thousands of people exposed to Hanford radiation releases. But the case, brought in 1991, still has no trial date, and attorneys for the contractors have been paid over \$54 million so far.

The story isn't over. This summer, Washington state's attorney general announced she's about to sue DOE over the lack of cleanup progress.

Journalists need to keep informing the public about the human health and environmental damage that is the legacy of the arms race. Hanford is a discomfiting case history in nuclear secrecy.

SEJ board member Joanne Valenti is professor of Communications at Brigham Young University.

Len Ackland, Univ. of Colorado journalism teacher and director of the university's Center for Environmental Journalism is completing a book on Rocky Flats.

Karen Dorn Steele is environment and special projects reporter for The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, WA, and has won the 1995 George Polk, Gerald Loeb, and National Press Club awards for her environmental reporting.



Application for Membership Society of Environmental Journalists

P.O. Box 27280

Philadelphia, PA 19118

Phone: (215) 836-9970 Fax: (215) 836-9972 Email: sejoffice@aol.com

http://www.sej.org

READ AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

Return completed application with \$40 (students: \$30) to the SEJ office.

Fill out both sides of the application completely. Please include a résumé. Attach a business card if available.

Incomplete or unsigned applications will be returned.

Sign the application and return to the Society of Environmental Journalists. Include a check for \$40 (students, \$30), or, to pay with VISA or Mastercard, fill in your card number, expiration, and signature on the last page of this form.

Please note: SEJ precludes from membership persons who lobby or conduct public relations on environmental issues.
SEJ expects applicants to be honest and complete in filling out this application.

These are our categories of membership:

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, radio and television stations and networks, syndicated news services, and other media available to the general public.

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.

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

You will be notified about your category of membership upon your acceptance into SEJ by the membership committee.

Please print legibly.

Name _____ Business Title _____

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Publication or Department _____

Position _____
(Editor, producer, freelance journalist, photographer, student, etc.)

Mailing Address* (work Home) _____

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Alternate Address (work Home) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Work Phone* (_____) _____ Fax* (_____) _____
Not for publication in annual directory

E-mail Address* _____
Primary Other

World Wide Web address _____

* For publication in annual directory

Which of the following most accurately describes your employment. SELECT ONE ONLY.

- Author
- Faculty
- Freelancer
- Magazine
- News service
- Newsletter
- Newspaper
- Nonprofit
- Online Media
- Photographer
- Publisher
- Radio
- Student
- Television

Answer the following questions completely and accurately. Incomplete or unsigned applications will be returned for completion.

1. Are you reporting or editing stories for the print or electronic media? Yes No
2. Are you working for a publication that is generally available to the public, either through subscription, newsstands, TV, radio, or on the internet? Yes No
- 2a. Is your publication restricted only to members? Yes No
3. Is this your primary employment? Yes No
- 3a. If no, please describe your primary employment. _____
4. Who pays you to report or edit stories? _____
5. Please describe duties: _____
6. Are you an educator on the full-time faculty at an accredited college, university, or other school? Yes No
- If yes, please describe duties: _____
- 6a. Do you have any other employment? Please describe: _____
7. Does any part of your job include public relations on environmental issues? Yes No
- If yes, please describe: _____
8. Have you received pay to write press releases? Yes No
- 8a. If so, who has paid you to write press releases? _____
- 8b. Is this work a substantial or small part of your job responsibilities? _____
- 8c. What percentage of your income comes from this work? _____%
9. Have you done freelance work, either editing or reporting of environmental stories? Yes No
- 9a. Who has paid you for this work? _____
- 9b. Does any of this pay come from an organization, institution, or business that engages in extensive lobbying or public relations work on environmental issues? Yes No
- 9c. If yes, what percentage of your work comes from such an organization? _____%
- 9d. As a freelancer, do you have any other employment that is not related to journalism? Please describe: _____

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.

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Green Beat Correspondents

Contribute to Green Beat

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

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

Alabama—Vacant

Alaska—Vacant

Arizona and New Mexico—Patti Epler, *Phoenix New Times*, PO Box 2510, Phoenix, AZ 85002, pepler@newtimes.com, (602) 229-8451

Arkansas—Robert McAfee, Thinking Like A Mountain Institute, 2610 West Hackett Rd, Hackett, AR 72937, arkenved@aol.com, (501) 638-7151

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—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

Florida and Georgia

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

South Florida—Andrew Conte, Stuart News, 1591 Port St. Lucie Boulevard #K, Stuart, FL 34592, conte@stuartnews.com, (561) 337-5827

North Georgia—Vacant

Hawaii—Vacant

Idaho—Rocky Barker of the *Idaho Statesman*, 2875 Harmony Street, Boise, ID, 83707, (208) 377-6484, rbarker@micron.net

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 Melnykovich, *Louisville Courier-Journal/Metro Desk*, 525 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40201, Amelnyko@louisvil.gannett.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 Braile, *Boston Globe* correspondent, P.O. Box 1907, Exeter, N.H., 03833, braile@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

Massachusetts—David Liscio, *Daily Evening Item*, 38 Exchange Street, Lynn, MA 01903, dlicio@aol.com, (617) 593-7700

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—Julie Anderson, *Omaha World-Herald*, 1334 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68102, julieand@radiks.net, (402) 444-1000 ext. 1223

New Jersey—Vacant

New York—Vacant

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

North Carolina—Stuart Leavenworth, *The (Raleigh) News and Observer*, PO Box 191, Raleigh, NC, 27602, (919) 829-4859, stuartl@mindspring.com

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

Oregon—Zaz Hollander, *The Daily Astorian*, 949 Exchange Street, Astoria, OR, 97103, (503) 325-3211, zaz@pacifier.com

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

Puerto Rico/Caribbean Islands—vacant

South Carolina—Vacant

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

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

Please note vacancies in several states. Interested? Contact Chris Rigel at rigel@voicenet.com or at the SEJ office: (215) 836-9970, P.O. Box 27280, Philadelphia, PA 19118 to discuss possibilities.

ALASKA

► As part of a three-part series reported April 12-14 from commercial fishing boats in Alaska's wintry Bering Sea, *The Oregonian's* Hal Bernton analyzed the effect of 50 years of fishing on Alaska's booming fishery and found the bounty of the Bering could bust. So far, regional managers say Alaska's stocks remain strong. More than 50 Oregon vessels trawl the Bering for pollock, cod, and flatfish in the 878,000 square mile sea that supports a \$1.4 billion-a-year fishery for fleets from Alaska, Washington, and Oregon and employs more than 15,000 crew and processing workers.

But more than 630 million pounds of dead and dying fish—the wrong species, size, or sex—were thrown overboard in Alaska through the 1990s, more last year alone than were caught off the Oregon coast. A 1996 National Academy of Sciences report found it “extremely unlikely” that not only the fish, but other marine life and birds, could sustain current rates of fishery harvests in the Bering. Call Hal Bernton at (503) 221-8100.

ARIZONA

► Growth and land-use planning were hot political topics in Phoenix this spring as the governor, legislature, and environmental groups wrestled with competing proposals to get a grip on growth in the rapidly expanding urban area. Environmental groups lost their bid to get a strict growth-control measure on November's ballot while the legislature passed a less restrictive version that centers on buying open space for preservation. The *Arizona Republic's* environmental reporter, Kathleen Ingley, has taken the lead on reporting on the growth management issue. Contact her at kathleen.ingley@pni.com.

► In the May 7 issue, *New Times* environmental reporter Michael Kiefer detailed a mining company's effort to clean up a huge spill in Pinto Creek, considered one of the nation's most endangered rivers by the American Rivers environmental group. The spill occurred when giant tailings piles collapsed and more than 317,000 cubic yards of waste the consistency of toothpaste flowed into

the creek. For more information, contact Kiefer at mkiefer@newtimes.com or (602) 229-8434.

ARKANSAS

► The Arkansas Supreme Court ruled on July 9 that Northwest Arkansas can hold future landfills to the region's strict design and operation standards. In a unanimous ruling the state's high court reversed a lower-court decision won by Sunray Services Inc., the company that challenged regulations set by the four-county district that oversees solid-waste management. Sunray Services, now a subsidiary of USA Waste Services, filed the lawsuit in 1994 to test whether regional waste districts could impose stricter standards than the state or federal governments. In 1995 the company amended their complaint to reflect a change in state law that required any regional district that imposed stricter standards to base them on generally accepted scientific knowledge or engineering practice.

After a trial in June of 1997 the local court ruled that the district's regulations did not meet that test. The Supreme Court sided with the district asserting that the lower court applied the wrong standard in reviewing the regulations. Kelly Murphy McQueen, the deputy attorney general who argued the state's position in the lawsuit, asserted that the case sets a standard for a lot of environmental regulations. When the General Assembly delegates authority to the regions the law must leave the responsibility to decide what is proper to each region. For information, contact Brenda Bragg, *The Morning News* of Northwest Arkansas, news@nwaonline.net

BRITISH COLUMBIA

► Canadian Federal Fisheries and Oceans Minister David Anderson announced June 26 that Canada and Washington state had reached a tentative agreement to protect endangered chinook and coho salmon species. According to the July *Canadian Environmental Regulation and Compliance News* story, Washington agreed to a 22 percent reduction of its commercial catch of coho salmon bound for the Fraser River just south of Vancouver this year. In return, Canada will catch 50 percent fewer chi-

nook bound for US waters. For more information contact: *Fisheries & Oceans Canada* (613) 993-0999

COLORADO

► The *Colorado Springs Gazette* did an in-depth eight-page report Aug. 16 on the Fountain Creek watershed, an extensive network of creeks that are tributary to the Arkansas River. Among other things, the report looked at rising discharges of sewage effluent in the creeks, the extensive erosion and sedimentation problems associated with more stormwater rushing off a paved-over landscape, the threats of contaminants running off urban and suburban areas, and the frequent treatment of the creeks as a community dumping ground. In large part, the report raised questions about whether the community puts much value on the creeks as an aesthetic and environmental asset. Contact Todd Hartman, (719) 636-0285 or at toddh@gazette.com

► One of the largest landscaping jobs in Colorado has been undertaken by Newmont Mining Co., which is trying to reclaim large gold mines near the Western Slope towns of Ouray and Telluride. The company, under the supervision of state health officials, is using a novel approach that farmers and backyard gardeners can relate to: it tilled thousands of tons of cow manure and hay directly into the sand-like waste, or tailings, to create soil that can accommodate grass and wildflowers. The approach, which so far has proved successful—but still has years to go to prove itself—is designed to be cheaper but environmentally friendly and less disruptive than existing methods to reclaim spoiled land. The *Denver Post* did a lengthy article on the cleanup Aug. 9. Call Roger Fillon, a *Post* business writer, at (303) 820-1201.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

► The year 2000 computer bug may foul up the functioning of pollution control technology such as equipment to monitor air emissions and treat waste water. Alec Zaccaroli, an air pollution reporter for *Daily Environment Report*, in a July 9 article probed how environmental regulators and industry are starting to define and respond the Y2K problem in pollution

control systems. For information, contact Zacaroli at (202) 452-6364.

► The mysterious worldwide decline and disappearance of frogs and other amphibians was examined by freelancer William Souder in the July 6 *Washington Post*. According to Souder's piece, there are four prime suspects: increasing ultraviolet radiation due to ozone depletion; global climate change; pesticides; and new diseases. The story may be downloaded for a fee from the on-line *Post* archives at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/archives/front.htm>.

► Environmental stories can end up in the Home section as well as in national, local, and business pages. An article by contributing writer Sandra Evans in the July 9 *Washington Post* Home section focused on "green" furnishings, such as beds made from certified wood. Evans' piece may be retrieved for a fee from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/archives/front.htm>.

FLORIDA

► The wildfires have been the "hot" topic since a foreboding May 26 A-1 story ran in the *Florida Times-Union* in Jacksonville: "Pollution Advisory a warning sign? More bad weeks could be ahead." The piece warned of the first-ever, statewide air-pollution advisory resulting from poor air quality from a high pressure system, temperatures eight degrees above normal, and fire danger from dry conditions (rain was .41 inches compared to Jacksonville's average 3.55 inches). Jim Baltzelle, *Florida Times-Union* staff writer (904) 359-4280, contributed to this AP story.

► More than 100 residents were evacuated from east Jacksonville after a June 5 chemical plant fire at Confederated Specialty Associates. The fire was brought under control by morning, but the Florida Department of Environmental Protection spent the day completing air tests. Contact *Times-Union* staff writers Sean Gardiner and Kathleen Sweeney at (904) 359-4280.

► Florida state scientists are looking for the root causes of a fish kill that caused lesions and tumors on 34 species in the St. Lucie River and Indian River

Lagoon, the *Stuart News* reported in May. Scientists have linked the kill to an organism resembling the one that killed thousands of fish in Maryland and North Carolina in 1997. Scientists are looking at nutrient-rich fresh water releases from Lake Okeechobee that flow into the brackish waterways. When the lake fills with rainwater, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flushes overflow east through canals into the waterways rather than south through the Everglades. Contact Andrew Conte at (561) 337-5827 or conte@stuartnews.com.

► A property-rights battle in Daytona Beach threatens conservation by preventing the state from creating environmental buffer zones on private property, the *Daytona News-Journal* reported on May 26. A landowners group successfully challenged a rule by the St. Johns River Water Management District to create an environmental buffer zone along the Tomoka River and Spruce Creek. A couple who was barred from cutting down trees in their backyard argued that the rule infringed on their property rights and a federal jury in Orlando agreed. The legal wrangling could have sweeping impact, preventing environmental buffer zones throughout the state. Contact Carol Cole at (904) 252-1568.

► Florida may be surrounded by water on three sides, but rapid development has turned much of the state from oasis to desert, according to a four-part series that started in the *Miami Herald* on May 24. A six-month investigation by Michael Browning found that an overwhelming demand for fresh water has caused sinkholes, consumed half of the Everglades since 1949, and dried up state aquifers. With the state's population increasing by 650 people every day, Floridians consume an extra 40.1 million gallons of fresh water every year and consumption has increased 520% since 1950. Contact Browning at Michael_C_Browning@compuserve.com.

Georgia

► A June 23 *Times-Union* story reported on the final two days of a wood stork banding operation by federal biologists at Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Georgia. This is home to one of the few remaining

wood stork colonies in the U.S. Contact Teresa Stepzinski, staff writer, at (904) 359-4280.

IOWA

► On June 28, The *Des Moines Register* launched a series of packages examining changes in Iowa prompted by the move to large-scale hog confinements. The series examines the economic, health, social, financial, and quality of life issues whirling around the changes, one of the hottest issues the state has seen in decades. Critics say large-scale hog operations threaten water and air quality and some neighbors of big pork operations say they lose property value and can't live with the odor. However, pork production accounts for \$8.5 billion a year and 89,000 jobs in Iowa and producers threaten to move if the state restricts too much. For more information contact Perry Beeman at (515) 284-8538.

LOUISIANA

► The *Baton Rouge Advocate* ran a four-part look at environmental justice along the Mississippi River petrochemical corridor between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, often called "Cancer Alley." Currently, a battle is raging over plans to build a \$600 million PVC plant. Reporter Vicki Ferstel looked at the history, the attempt to define environmental justice, and use of the concept to keep out such a plant. The story ran June 21-24, and is available for the next few months at *Advocate On-Line* Internet site: <http://www.theadvocate.com/news/story.asp?StoryID=1687>

MAINE

► The *Portland Press Herald* and other newspapers in Maine and across New England reported in June on the concern among environmentalists over a plan by a South African firm to sell nearly one million acres of timberland in central Maine. The land, a prized part of the 26 million acre Northern Forest spanning northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, includes over 80 miles of undeveloped lake shoreline and 25 miles along the Kennebec and Moose Rivers. The owner, South African Pulp and Paper, has promised to sell to a buyer that practices sustainable forestry

and will comply with Maine's forest practice law. But environmentalists fear the land will be subdivided and developed for vacation homes. The *Portland Press Herald* also ran an editorial urging the state to find the money to buy the land, as the opportunity to make such a major acquisition will not likely come again soon. Contact Dieter Bradbury of the *Portland Press Herald*, (207) 791-6328.

► The *Bangor Daily News* and other Maine papers reported in June on the growing debate in the state over MTBE, the gasoline additive that helps reduce smog, but is also a suspected carcinogen that has been turning up in drinking water supplies. MTBE is a key part of the state's plan to comply with the federal Clean Air Act, as it has been in other states. But Maine state officials are proposing to suspend the use and sale of MTBE until the state legislature could assess the results of drinking water tests ordered by Gov. Angus King, following the detection of MTBE in drinking water supplies. State Environmental Protection Commissioner Ned Sullivan also recommended a stronger drinking water protection program than the state currently had on the books. Contact Orna Izakson at the *Bangor Daily News*, (207) 990-8149.

MARYLAND

► Sixty Mid-Atlantic fish biologists gathered in Maryland in early July to figure out why the Chesapeake Bay's stock of menhaden—an important commercial fishery, as well as a vital food source for other fish—are in decline. The scientists also debated whether the menhaden decline was linked to a persistent plague of sores showing up on striped bass, the migratory fish known in the bay as rockfish. The July 12 *Baltimore Sun* story said the sores are caused by a bacterial infection unrelated to last summer's outbreak of *Pfiesteria*. For more information, contact Heather Dewar at (410) 332-6100.

► Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke, reversing an earlier position, agreed in early July that the city would negotiate to buy 98 homes in Wagner's Point, a cancer-ridden neighborhood ringed by industries. A July 8 story in *The Baltimore Sun* said the mayor announced his change of heart when he toured the

beleaguered community July 7 and met with residents. After initially refusing to consider a buyout, Schmoke said the city now could use the space to expand a municipal wastewater treatment plant, one of several industrial facilities surrounding the rowhouse community. The sewage plant has long been a source of odor complaints from residents and a persistent polluter of the Patapsco River, a tributary of Chesapeake Bay. Contact Joe Mathews at (410) 332-6100

► Groups that once fought over preserving wetlands from bulldozers now are uniting in trying to restore lost marshland, as federal and state governments make restoration an environmental priority. *The Baltimore Sun* reported June 7 that Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening has pledged to create or restore 60,000 acres in this state—roughly equal to what has been lost since World War II to sprawl development. While debate still rages on whether wetlands can be successfully carved out of dry land, biologists, builders, and environmentalists increasingly are finding it easier and cheaper to return old farm fields and other former swamps to their natural state. Wetland mitigation “banks,” meanwhile, have yet to catch on in the state, and real estate developers blame it on over-regulation. Scientists, however, raise caution flags about the profit-oriented approach to environmental protection. Contact Tim Wheeler at (410) 332-6564.

MASSACHUSETTS

► The largest issue facing Lowell, MA, is that of Combined Sewer Overflows, or CSOs—a national problem endemic in the northeast. Because Lowell's storm drainage system is tied into its sewer lines, a heavy rainfall will overload the city's sewage treatment facilities. In a two-month period of a heavy storms this spring, 70 million gallons of excess sewage mixed with rain run-off was dumped directly into the Merrimack River. The problem isn't unique to Lowell. The New Hampshire cities of Nashua and Manchester upriver from the Lowell and Massachusetts cities of Lawrence and Haverhill also have CSOs. Lowell is currently under a EPA mandate to fix the problem, likely by separating the storm drainage system from

the sewer pipes at an estimated cost of \$100 million. Contact Matt Wickenheiser, *The Lowell Sun*, at e-mail wickenheiser@lowellsun.com, or call (978) 970-4835.

► Negotiators from General Electric, the Environmental Protection Agency and 12 state and federal agencies will make one last attempt to find an acceptable cleanup solution for GE's heavily polluted transformer plant and 55 miles of the Housatonic River. EPA regional administrator John DeVillars has said that if GE won't agree to expedite the cleanup of the river and the 250-acre GE plant, and pay at least \$25 million in compensation for long term environmental damage, he will move the site towards a final Superfund listing. In early June, DeVillars ordered GE to immediately dredge half a mile of river next to the GE plant starting next year after EPA testing revealed high levels of PCB-contaminated soil in people's back yards. At the same time, EPA is engineering the work on the next mile and a half, where the river flows through residential neighborhoods.

The order has been widely seen as a precedent for dredging the Hudson. One Congressman with ties to GE has managed to get language attached to the EPA budget that forbids the agency from dredging any PCB-tainted sediments anywhere in the nation for at least the next 18 months. GE has vowed to wage a scorched earth legal battle to fight the proposed moves and has already filed a number of court actions designed to tie up agency resources. The company has also launched an aggressive public relations campaign denying the toxicity of PCBs, and has enlisted the city by offering Pittsfield a \$150 million economic redevelopment package contingent on the EPA backing off its demands for a timely river cleanup.

Meanwhile, GE is spending an estimated \$20 million to remove more than 100,000 cubic yards of tainted soil from 60 residential properties this year. The company gave away the material as “free fill” between 1948 and 1972, then failed to notify regulators about the practice after PCBs were banned in 1977. Contact Theo Stein, reporter, *Berkshire Eagle* at (413) 496-6248 or Greg Sukiennik at (413) 496-6249 or e-mail is eagle@berkshire.net.

MICHIGAN

► Michigan's Goose Island is a 24-acre spit of land that looks like a frayed toothbrush emerging from the depths of Lake Huron. Dead and dying trees cross the island's middle, ending in barren areas whitewashed with a potent herbicide. The cause? Thousands of pounds of bird droppings from double-crested cormorants, which are nesting in such concentrations that cormorant excrement is destroying wetland vegetation. Anglers insist the birds devastate fishing; state and federal researchers insist they don't. Dave Poulson of Booth Newspapers examines the recovery of a once-threatened species and its environmental cost in his July 19 report. For more information, call Poulson at (517) 487-8888.

► A wolf once kept in a Michigan zoo has become the mother of the first Mexican gray wolf born in the wilds since the 1950s. Part of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reintroduction program, the female wolf and 10 others were set free in Arizona and New Mexico in March. Biologists hope the releases will result in a wild population of 100 wolves by the year 2005. Liz Wyatt of the *Battle Creek Enquirer* has followed the progress of the Binder Park Zoo female, which gave birth in July. The wolf pup's gender is not yet known, but researchers plan to capture it, check its health, and attach an electronic tracking collar later this year. Contact Wyatt, now with the *Idaho Statesman*, at (208) 377-6400.

► When it sprouted on Lake Michigan's shore 35 years ago, the huge green dome at Big Rock Point seemed to hold a mysterious genie that promised to power the modern age. Michigan's first commercial nuclear reactor kindled enough energy to light a small city before its owners abruptly pushed the genie back into its bottle in 1997. The reason was nuclear waste. In Michigan and across the country, highly radioactive waste and lack of space to store it threaten the future of the American nuclear industry. As more reactors are reaching the end of their 40-year federal license spans, the problem of storing the waste may force utilities to consider switching off, a process called decommissioning. Jeremy Pearce of *The Detroit News* explores decommissioning

and its consequences in his July 7 enterprise report. For more information, call Pearce at (313) 223-4825.

► In a three-part series titled "Disappearing Amphibians," Great Lakes Radio Consortium reporters delve into the worldwide decline recently observed among frogs and toads. The first installment deals with frog losses around the Great Lakes. The second part visits species in the Panamanian rainforest. The series concludes with indications that frog deformities may warn of pending human health risks. In the past year, scientists have speculated that parasites, chemical pollution, or increased ultraviolet light (or some combination of those factors) may be at the root of the problem. For more information, contact David Hammond of the Great Lakes Radio Consortium at (734) 764-9210.

MINNESOTA

► U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced in Minnesota on June 29 that he will formally propose by the end of the year that gray wolves be removed from Endangered Species Act protection. Babbitt called the recovery of wolf populations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Upper Michigan a "genuine success story." The proposal to delist wolves will be followed by a public comment period, he said, and final removal from the list will not occur until mid-1999. Some environmental leaders criticized the announcement as premature because the last population survey of wolves in Minnesota occurred in 1989, and a new study this year has not been completed. Others are convinced that removing the wolf from the endangered list will be followed quickly by establishment of a state hunting season. For more information, contact Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune*, (612) 673-7388.

► The National Park Service proposed the first-ever restrictions on motorboat use near Isle Royale National Park in northwestern Lake Superior, and many boaters and environmentalists are unhappy about them. Part of the 20-year masterplan for the park includes establishment of two nonmotorized zones and 10 no-wake zones in relatively small but popular portions of the waters surrounding the island. Some boating groups say the restrictions

are unnecessary, and environmentalists say they don't go far enough. The Park Service said the changes are necessary to protect sensitive shorelines and wildlife habitat, and are compatible with the wilderness character of the island, which is 45 miles long and nine miles wide. The Park Service conducted public meetings in Minnesota and Michigan to discuss the proposals, and will release a final version of the plan this fall. Contact: Tom Meersman, *Star Tribune*, (612) 673-7388.

MISSISSIPPI

► The state of Mississippi is testing new methods to eradicate South American fire ants, insects so aggressive and tenacious that pesticides are often ineffective against them. Researchers are "inoculating" fire-ant mounds with a microorganism called *Thelohania solenopsae*, which the ants then spread from mound to mound, infecting the egg-laying queen. Scientists also plan to introduce tiny Phorid flies that decapitate the ants. These biological control methods are supposedly species-specific and will not affect the rest of the ecosystem. Bruce Reid reported this Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* story in June. His number is (601) 961-7063.

► Despite opposition from the timber industry and farming interests, Mississippi has passed a bill calling for a study of the "ecological, scenic, recreational and natural characteristics" of the state's free-flowing waterways. Even though the legislation does not authorize any regulatory controls, conservationists hailed it as a breakthrough. Bruce Reid's story appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger* on Earth Day. Call (601) 961-7063.

MONTANA

► The *Billings (Montana) Gazette*, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize a decade ago for its daily coverage of the 1988 Yellowstone forest fires, published a deft, 10-year retrospective in late July and early August on the historic blazes. The paper assigned seven reporters and three photographers to a series that ran over 15 days and included more than two dozen stories. To date, this series has provided the most thorough review of the fires that burned almost 800,000 acres and their implications for America's first national park. Not only is Yellowstone renewed but the park

served as a fulcrum for educating the country about the profound importance of wildland fire, despite ongoing political pressure to prevent it. Contact Dick Wesnick, publisher of the *Billings Gazette* at (800) 543-2505 or Michael Milstein, who contributed to the series, at (307) 527-7250.

NEW BRUNSWICK

► The June issue of *Canadian Environmental Regulation & Compliance News* ran a story about five Eastern Canada premiers and six New England governors that agreed June 8 to cut mercury emissions by 50 percent over the next five years. The move will require new emission limits to be placed on waste incinerators, coal-burning power plants, and some industrial facilities in the five provinces and six states that committed to the initiative. The provinces and states also agreed to reduce or eliminate the use of consumer and medical products containing mercury, to co-ordinate programs to identify mercury as a toxin on products that contain the metal, and to eliminate the use of mercury in school science programs. For more information contact: *Environment Canada*, Atlantic Region (506) 536-3025.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

► The *Concord Monitor* and other New Hampshire newspapers reported in June on the state's new sludge management rules, touted by state environmental officials as the toughest in New England. The state has long been criticized by environmentalists for having the weakest rules in New England, making New Hampshire a dumping ground for out-of-state sludge brought in by haulers seeking to avoid stricter regulations in their own states. But New Hampshire state officials said the new rules require sludge to meet tougher toxicity criteria than even the federal government recommends. The new rules were praised by environmental groups such as Clean Water Action, a longtime critic of the state. But that group still cautioned that the rules should be enforced by an office other than the state Department of Environmental Services, as the DES promotes sludge as a fertilizer. Contact Jim Graham at the *Concord Monitor*, (603) 224-5301.

NEVADA

Flash floods, fierce thunderstorms and heat dominated the news from Las Vegas in July. The *Las Vegas SUN* published a Sunday feature outlining the difficulties of keeping up with growth in the Las Vegas Valley while trying to protect 5,000 new residents moving to the area a month—an impossible job. It will take 30 years to fully protect the valley, flood officials said. Contact Mary Manning of the *Las Vegas SUN* at manning@lasvegassun.com or (702) 259-4065

NEW JERSEY

► A controversial plan to link Trenton highway segments was approved August 5 by a state council, allowing NJ Dept. of Transportation to fill in nearly an acre of the Delaware River to construct a half-mile highway tunnel along the riverbank. Project opponents will appeal the decision, which, they say, will increase traffic, hurt fish migrations, destroy open space, and cause flooding problems on both sides of the river. Advocates for the plan say the public park which is planned to cover the tunnel replacing the riverbank would add better lighting, allow continued river access, and clean up the area. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* story ran August 6. For more information, contact Lewis Kamb, lkamb@phillynews.com or phone (215) 702-7809.

NEW MEXICO

► When wildfires in Mexico caused an international smoke cloud along the Southwest border, the *Albuquerque Journal* sent a team of reporters to Mexico to write about health and environmental effects. The three-story package was published on Sunday, May 24. A follow-up series in June looked more closely at the ecological devastation in Mexico's already shrinking forests. Contact science reporter John Fleck at jfleck@abqjournal.com or Rene Romo at rromo@abqjournal.com.

► *Albuquerque Journal* environment reporter Mike Taugher continues to follow the development of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in southern New Mexico. In June, Taugher reported that the opening of the facility, authorized to handle military nuclear waste, has been delayed while

officials investigate whether planned shipments meet the legal criteria for the plant. Contact Mike Taugher at mtaugher@abqjournal.com or (505) 823-3833.

ONTARIO

► The restoration and clean-up of the Detroit, St. Clair, and St. Marys Rivers has been re-energized. The governments of Canada, the US, Ontario, and Michigan signed a Letter of Commitment (LOC) April 17 pledging to renew the restoration activities for the three rivers. The LOC sets out the roles and responsibilities of Environment Canada, the US Environmental Protection Agency, Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, and Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality in implementing a strategy to restore the rivers to health. Notice of the agreement appeared in the May issue of *Canadian Environmental Regulation & Compliance News*. For more information contact Environment Canada (819) 953-1656; fax: (819) 994-3266.

► According to Heather Auld, a top Environment Canada forecaster, water levels in the Great Lakes could drop as much as one meter if current global warming predictions are correct. That means ships could scrape bottom and cross-border water skirmishes could break out, Auld told a meeting of the Canadian Science Writer's Association in Toronto. For southern Ontario farmland, weather models indicate soil moisture could be reduced by 14 to 67 percent. The story ran in the June 1 edition of the *Toronto Star* and was written by science reporter Joseph Hall. For more information contact Heather Auld, Environment Canada, (819) 953-1656; fax: (819) 994-3266.

► Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, recently asked the US to agree to refer the issue of boundary water exports, including water taken from the Great Lakes, to the International Joint Commission (IJC). If the proposal proceeds, the IJC would be asked to make recommendations by October 1998 on the consumption, diversion, and export of boundary waters. Axworthy's move was prompted by a permit granted to an Ontario company by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, for the annual export of 600 million litres of Lake Superior water to Asia until the year 2002. That

permit has since been cancelled. News of the proposal appeared in the May issue of *Canadian Environmental Regulation and Compliance News*. For more information contact Foreign Affairs and International Trade (613) 996-9134.

OREGON

► A federal judge dealt a major blow to Oregon's pioneering effort to wrest endangered species protection out of federal hands. U.S. Magistrate Janice Stewart ruled June 1 that the National Marine Fisheries Service erred in approving Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber's wild salmon recovery plan in lieu of more stringent Endangered Species Act protections. Stewart faulted the state's mostly voluntary measures and shaky future funding, and said that NMFS' April 1997 decision had no legal basis under the ESA or case law. State officials were predicting a threatened listing for coho likely, which would eliminate as much as \$13 million promised by Oregon's timber industry on the condition that coho stay off the ESA list.

On July 21, however, the Clinton Administration appealed Stewart's ruling. The appeal raises the possibility that NMFS will *not* list coho on August 3. The appeal also means that the Clinton Administration is standing behind other state-led efforts to recover endangered species. But if the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rules against the administration, that would set a legal precedent in 9 Western states including Washington and California where state-federal recovery plans are under way. Meanwhile, on March 13, Columbia River steelhead in the Portland area were protected as threatened under the ESA. Call *Oregonian* reporters Joan Laatz Jewett or Jonathan Brinckman at (503) 221-8100.

► A seafood processing company that pleaded guilty to dumping tons of fish slurry into the Columbia River came to Oregon with a long trail of environmental violations in its wake. In the first such case prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice in Oregon, Crystal Ocean Seafoods Inc. admitted June 26 to knowingly and illegally dumping more than 5 million pounds of chopped Pacific whiting into the Columbia. Capping off a yearlong investigation, federal prosecutors based a \$150,000 penalty and plea agreement on

the company's future commitment to environmental compliance. But an investigation by *The Daily Astorian* showed Crystal Ocean accrued a total of 26 water- and air-quality violations in only two years of operations in Washington state, including one penalty incurred when the company sprayed minced, rotting fish onto a vacant lot near a Kmart store. The company may contest its penalty at a November sentencing. Contact Zaz Hollander at *The Daily Astorian* at (800) 781-3211 or zaz@pacifier.com.

TENNESSEE

► The affluent Memphis suburb of Collierville, one of the fastest-growing towns in Tennessee, was slapped with a penalty by state officials for dumping raw sewage into the nearby Wolf River and not reporting it. In addition to monetary fines, the punishment included a moratorium on new sewer connections, which would prevent the town from planning any more new subdivisions until it cleaned up its act. Tom Charlier reported this story in *The Commercial Appeal* June 12th. He can be reached at (901) 529-2572.

► Tennessee's prisons have cut their waste-disposal costs by 75 percent through a program that combines recycling and food composting. Thanks to the prisoners' mandatory compliance, the program has worked well in West and East Tennessee, but prisons in the Nashville area do not yet participate, because the airport authority is worried about birds being attracted to compost sites, posing a hazard to planes (prison officials say the concerns are unfounded). This story by Anne Paine appeared in *The Tennessean* April 4th. Contact her at (615) 259-8071 or abpaine@aol.com.

TEXAS

► Despite years of promises by politicians to provide water and sewer services to colonias (housing developments or subdivisions on the border that have little or no regulations regarding sanitation and other issues), thousands of Texans are still living in disease-ridden homes that are miles away from potable water supplies. A four-part series written by Ralph K.M. Haurwitz of the *Austin American-Statesman* found that hepatitis A rates in the border counties are triple the statewide

rate. Tuberculosis occurs three time more frequently. The series which ran from July 12-15 examines the 1990 legislation to clean up the colonias and how \$479 million was spent while providing water to just 36,000 border residents. Limited copies of the series are available. Go to: www.austin360.com. Contact Haurwitz at (512) 445-3604.

► The city of Carrollton, TX, made what turned out to be a very bad decision. On July 23, the city responded to a handful of complaints about the smell from a large egret rookery by sending in bulldozers to level all the trees as the baby birds slept. The results, wrote Randy Lee Loftis of *The Dallas Morning News*, were "hundreds of dead or injured birds, a near-revolt by outraged residents and a federal investigation of apparent violations of one of the nation's oldest environmental laws," the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

Carrollton, a suburb just north of Dallas, didn't apply for a permit and said it didn't even know a permit was required (although the fact that they started the work at 4 a.m. raised some questions about that claim). Neither did the city do the obvious thing, which was to wait a month until the birds migrate and the trees could have been bulldozed legally (the law protects birds and nests, not habitat). Community outrage—the *Morning News* got more than 150 letters, more than on any topic in about three years—has turned into renewed attention to the need for habitat conservation in urban/suburban Dallas. For information, contact Loftis at (214) 977-8483 or loftis@ix.net com.com.

UTAH

► Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt in May signed a major agreement to remove state school trust lands that are trapped within national parks, monuments, forests, and Indian reservations. The plan calls for the feds to receive title to some 377,000 acres of trust lands inside the federal reserves in exchange for the State's receiving \$50 million cash and 39,000 acres of federal land elsewhere in the state. The swap has yet to be approved by Congress. For more information contact Brad Barber, Utah Office of Planning and Budget, (801) 538-1558; David Terry, director, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands

The Green Beat

Administration, (801) 538-5100.

► In July, a federal court ordered Canyonlands National Park to close Salt Creek Canyon to vehicles. The decision by U.S. District Judge Dale Kimball was a major victory for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), which sued the park after its new backcountry management plan failed to make the popular canyon, which is home to Angel Arch, off limits to vehicles. SUWA argued that motorized use is destroying Salt Creek, which is one of just three perennial streams that run through Canyonlands. Contact SUWA, (801) 486-3161 and Canyonlands National Park superintendent Walt Dabney, (435) 259-3911.

► Environmentalists pushing a bill that calls for 5.7 million acres of wilderness in Utah now believe at least 8.5 million acres of federal land in the state qualify for wilderness protection. The new figure is the result of a two-year "citizens reinventory" effort by the Utah Wilderness Coalition, an umbrella group of 155 environmental groups nationwide. Beginning in September in Boston, the coalition will take its new proposal on the road to gather national support. Contact the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance at

(801) 486-3161 and the Wilderness Society at (202) 429-2657.

► A three-part front page series on the Great Salt Lake called *Troubled Waters* ran July 5-7 in the (Ogden) *Standard Examiner*. Part one of the series spelled out major problems as identified by scientists who say the lake is on the verge of an ecological disaster. The second part dealt with management of the lake to maximize profit with little regard for its ecosystem's future. The series ended with identifying the critical need to solve the lake's unstable salinity content. For more information, contact Pat Bean, reporter for the *Standard Examiner*, at (801) 625-4224 or pintolee@aol.com.

WISCONSIN

► After 13 years on the environment beat, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* writer Don Behm has been reassigned to a bureau covering two suburban Milwaukee counties. Behm says he was told by the paper's editors of a "change in philosophy" and that no one would stay in a beat for more than a couple of years. Behm had won several awards and had written many prominent series, including ones on Great Lakes pollution, a state land purchase program, and Milwaukee's cryp-

tosporidium crisis. He was allowed to complete a series on the Nature Conservancy as his reassignment was taking effect. Taking over the environment beat is Tom Vanden Brook, who has been with the paper, or its predecessors, since 1990. Vanden Brook has served as Higher Education reporter. He refutes published reports that the *Journal Sentinel* will back away from pollution stories. But he says he will do more stories on land use and wildlife, in addition to doing some general assignment work on the state desk. Contact Behm and Brook at (414) 224-2000.

► Golf writers visiting the state in July to cover the U.S. Women's Open were offered a free round of golf at a controversial new course along Lake Michigan. The greens fee at the Whistling Straits course usually runs \$132 for 18 holes. Some environmentalists opposed the course's construction, citing damage to ancient bluffs and wetlands loss. But course officials say environmental safeguards have been taken. They also deny allegations that Wisconsin gave preferential treatment to the Kohler Corporation, the plumbing manufacturer that owns Whistling Straits. For more information, contact Chuck Quirnbach at (414) 227-2040 or quirnbach@vilas.uwex.edu.

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