

SEJ Journal

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Is it carma?

Big brother might be reading you, too

By PETER DYKSTRA

For just a tad over \$46,000 of your tax dollars, Hazel O'Leary's Energy Department can continue its cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Weapons Complex for another 13 minutes. Or, as proven in November, the DOE Secretary can buy a far more sustainable share of ill will for the same money.

O'Leary's DOE “glasnost” had drawn praise from even the harshest agency critics, so what was she thinking when she allowed CARMA Associates to prepare a scorecard of energy-beat reporters? And why were reporters so shocked—shocked—to learn that a prominent story subject was hiring out to analyze their work?

The furor began with a Nov. 9 page one *Wall Street Journal* revelation that
(Continued on page 4)

The business of spinning reporters

By MARY MANNING

When *The Wall Street Journal* put the Department of Energy's paid snoop, CARMA International into the spotlight for rating reporters, it seemed easy enough to brush aside the implications with a laugh and a shrug.

The rankings produced by CARMA (Computer-Aided Research and Media Analysis) showed that the reporters were, for the most part, generating balanced pieces.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary insisted her department, though it might have acted unwisely, had not drawn up any sort of “hit list” or “enemy's list.”

This is far from the first incident of its kind, however. Efforts at media manipulation have been taking many forms, some more troubling than others,

(Continued on page 7)

SEJ at MIT: sparks fly

The challenge for about 500 journalists, writers, academics, and others who gathered on the M.I.T. campus in Boston for SEJ's fifth annual conference was to sort the science from the speculation, the rhetoric from the reality.

There was plenty of all of the aforementioned to choose from. Here are some of the highlights:

The unveiling of a new public opinion survey kicked off the conference's opening session. In this poll conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide in May for Times-Mirror Magazines, 43 percent of 1,003

Americans said current environmental regulations do not go far enough. It was the first time in four years that less than a majority said so. (In 1994, it was 53 percent; in 1992, 63 percent). In all, 29 percent said environmental regulation was about right, while 22 percent said such laws go too far. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

In response to other questions, 27 percent said the media is doing a poor job of covering environmental issues, and 51 percent said the media's coverage is biased,

(Continued on page 16)

Banana bills sprout threats

Some question constitutionality of outlawing fruit-defaming

By EMILIA ASKARI

I grew up during the long, tortuous end of the Vietnam War, when it was fashionable to denounce the U.S. government, burn flags, and wear bracelets engraved with the names of soldiers missing in action.

I had one of the bracelets but I never burned a flag. I didn't even denounce our government—at least not our entire government, at least not very loudly.

I also had cousins in Iran who lived under a regime that cut off thieves' hands and jailed people for speaking against the king. Even as a child, I understood why my family chose this country. I was—and am—proud to be American.

Nevertheless, I cringed in mid-December when the votes of just three senators prevented Congress from sending to the states a proposed new version of the First Amendment, one that would outlaw flag-burning. This margin was too close for my comfort. The next time around, the flag-burning measure may well pass.

I oppose this because I fear any change to the Bill of Rights could open the door to more. Although I have no urge to torch Old Glory, I believe that our overstuffed court system should not be additionally burdened with the few people who do.

The attempt to outlaw flag burning is just one of several recent legislative initiatives that threaten long-standing laws and traditions affecting journalists.

Earlier in 1995, some government officials and members of Congress were seriously considering curtailing "government-in-the-sunshine" laws. Thanks in part to the vigorous response of organizations such as the Society of Professional Journalists and the American Society of Newspaper Editors, that effort seems to be on hold.

Meanwhile, a dozen states since 1991 have passed laws that make it a crime to *defame fruit and produce*. Environmental journalists are partly to blame for this spate of laws known as "banana bills." They grew out of controversy caused by coverage of the apple fungicide, Alar.

As many SEJ members recall, the

Natural Resources Defense Council in 1989 issued a report called "Intolerable Risk: Pesticides in our Children's Food." According to the NRDC, Alar residue on apples exposed children to an intolerable cancer risk.

Coverage of the NRDC report contributed to the banning of Alar's use on apples. It also caused a temporary but dramatic plunge in the apple market. In response, food producers throughout the land have attempted to protect their busi-

nesses by attempting to punish those who would say or write unkind things about their products.

will be challenged for constitutionality. Until then, the bills are likely to have a chilling impact on environmental reporters, especially those who work for smaller media outlets that can't afford a long and costly legal battle.

As American journalists, we are trained to avoid taking sides, to cloak our opinions about the news we cover. As environmental journalists, many of us are doubly careful to avoid any appearance of partisanship. On this beat, like no other, our audience often assumes that we stand always with environmental activists and the Democratic party. So, many of us register to vote as independents. We avoid signing petitions, and we pay the higher, non-member subscription rates for magazines published by environmental groups. We search for neutral mutual funds in which to invest our savings.

This is an obsession particular to American journalists. In other countries (including many with governments and economies similar to ours) journalists are assumed—and allowed—to be aligned with the commentators published or broadcast by their employers. Not so here, for the most part—even though some environmental journalists consider themselves to be in favor of a healthy environment the way many political reporters support the democratic system.

Environmental journalists who work for alternative media often state their partisanship for the planet in even stronger terms. Also, the rise of so-called "civic journalism" has muddied the waters still further recently—with many news organizations now officially acknowledging that they care about their communities and want to see them improve. Critics worry that this caring embrace could lead to boosterish coverage of some issues. Proponents of so-called civic journalism say this approach simply makes reporting more relevant and human.

Not surprisingly, media corporations that have championed civic journalism have applied their caring to issues such as voter registration (for it) and racism

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Report from the society's president

By
Emilia
Askari

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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.

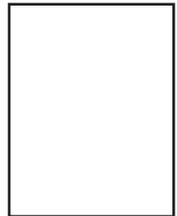
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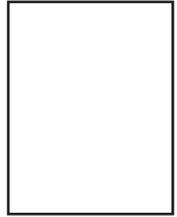
SEJ election fills five board seats; Academics and associates get reps

Angela Swafford of the *Miami Herald's* Spanish edition and Russ Clemings of the *Fresno Bee* won seats on the SEJ Board of Directors in an election that also returned three incumbents to the board and added ex-officio seats representing academic and associate members.



Swafford

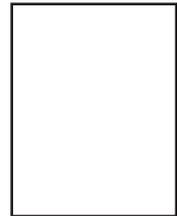
Winning re-election to the board were Marla Cone of the Los Angeles Times, Erin Hayes of ABC News and David Ropeik of Boston station WCVB-TV.



Clemings

JoAnn Myer Valenti, a professor of communications at Brigham Young University won the new academic seat, while Adlai Amor of the Center of Foreign Journalists had no opposition in earning the associate seat.

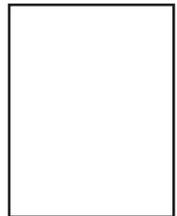
The election, concluded during the SEJ Annual Meeting on Oct. 28 in Cambridge, Mass., was the first to allow associate and academic members to pick non-voting representatives.



Cone

All terms are for three years, except one of the standard board seats, which is for two years of an unexpired three-year term. In compliance with the SEJ bylaws, the five winners were to draw straws at a Jan. 13 board meeting to determine who serves the shorter term. Instead, Hayes volunteered for it.

At a meeting following the annual meeting, the board re-elected all serving officers to one-year terms.

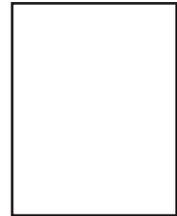


Hayes

Here's more background on the winners:

Clemings started covering the environment in 1982 at the Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel, later moving to the Bee. Research he did while on an Alicia Patterson Fellowship will lead to the February publication of "Mirage: The False Promise of Desert Agriculture."

Cone is now primary environment writer at the L.A. Times, having initially covered the beat in Orange County after joining the paper five years ago. Her work has twice earned the Meeman Award, most recently last year.



Ropeik

Hayes is a Chicago-based correspondent for ABC and previously reported for CBS in Atlanta. Her work at network affiliates earned her two Columbia DuPont awards. As a radio reporter she helped break the Times Beach story.

Ropeik has covered the environment for WCVB-TV for more than a decade, winning or sharing several DuPont-Columbia awards in the process. He recently completed a Knight science fellowship at MIT as was chair of SEJ's Boston Conference.

Swafford is a features writer and columnist for El Nuevo

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Big brother...(from page 1)

the Department of Energy paid \$46,500 for CARMA (a Washington, DC firm that offers analysis of news coverage) to develop profiles of the work of print reporters who regularly cover DOE projects and sites.

The purpose, said O'Leary, was to analyze how her made-over DOE message was playing in the national print press—as well as in newspapers near key (read: besieged and controversial) DOE facilities. According to some reporters who were the subjects of this study, its purpose was to prepare a Nixonian “enemies list” of hostile sources—and then to take the dreaded-but-undefined “appropriate action.”

Reactions came at a gallop as other print press and the networks followed the *Journal's* scoop. O'Leary assured everyone that the project was benign: no reporters had been harmed in the course of the research. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) was one of 69 lawmakers, including some Democrats, to call for O'Leary's resignation. (In a floor speech, Rep. Graham told his colleagues that the money paid to CARMA could be more wisely spent in renewed tritium production at his district's Savannah River Site.) Journalists and other “sources” who had earned low “unfavorable” rankings from CARMA delivered aggrieved sound-bites. Had CARMA still been on the job (DOE ended the contract before the story broke), it certainly would have given a low grade to scalding editorials about this scandal that appeared in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. O'Leary endured Congressional hearings and a sharp rebuke from the White House.

Fruit flies have longer lifespans than this sort of Washington story, however. It withered and fell off the front page within 48 hours, bequeathing to journalists an intense, esoteric debate. How jerked around are we? How common are firms like CARMA? Should this have been even a fleeting furor? What does it all mean for the way we do our jobs?

A subsequent *Journal* story detailed that CARMA is one of several firms drawing top dollars to analyze journalists' work. Their 0-to-100 scale ranks reporters

“by degree of sycophancy,” according to *The Nation's* Barbara Ehrenreich. CARMA President Al Barr put it more gently, saying “It's helped us help our clients be more far more effective with the media.”

How is this research conducted? Barr explained that CARMA's methodology involves intensive research “sometimes involving thousands of documents or stories,” pored over by a small team of as few as two individuals, who rate the performance of individual journalists. Barr's talent pool includes some former journalists and academics, as well as people with less formal training.

Most of CARMA's clients want to focus on inside-the-Beltway policy issues. However, CARMA's 130-name client list also includes MicroSoft (whose mega-roll-out for Windows '95 used a CARMA analysis of the computer trade press, although Barr claims the *Journal* overstated his company's role); strike-torn major league baseball; McDonald's; and each side in the triangular phone war between AT&T, MCI, and Sprint.

Closer to Capitol Hill, CARMA has analyzed coverage of gun issues for the National Rifle Association, and presumably a much wider range of issues for the U.S. Postal Service. CARMA has served the beer and tobacco empire of Phillip Morris, the T-men of the Internal Revenue Service, and the 1992 Bush-Quayle campaign. According to Barr, although his company also worked for several utilities, environmental issues don't represent a sizable portion of CARMA's business.

Former *Milwaukee Journal* reporter Chuck Werle is one of CARMA's competitors. Environmentally oriented clients are rare for his Chicago-based firm, he says. The bull market for media analysis lies in more sprawling beats, such as business. In more rarefied beats like environment and energy, reporters (and the subjects of their stories) generally don't need detailed analysis—they know each other better. When asked why DOE would need the kind of detail provided by CARMA's reports, Werle quipped, “If people are really paranoid, they're the ones that need services like CARMA.”

Skipped beats on DOE story

When the *Wall Street Journal's* Michael Moss broke this story on November 9, the followup reporting made a few wrong journalism-school assumptions.....

• Consultant Bites Dog:

What a great story! O'Leary had cut a dynamic figure by reversing DOE's reputation for Cold War secrecy. Did her reporter research prove that she was instead the second coming of Nixon? (She was, after all, a former utility executive at Minnesota's Northern States Power). Perceiving a supreme hypocrisy, reporters and editors reacted as if they'd caught Ralph Reed in a strip joint—or Al Gore in a strip mine.

• The Smoking Gun:

“Hazel O'Leary wasn't bad,” penned the *New Republic*. “She was dumb.” Her gun was smoking, but was it ever used to commit a crime against journalists? There's no evidence of malevolence, even in subsequent revelations that she spent nearly \$150,000 of federal funds on an image-building consultant. Many journalists, congressmen, and others have cited the use-of-public-funds issue. For journalists pondering their professional universe, that may be a valid story—but it's a different one than the right-or-wrong morality play of Carma's work. In December, a *Los Angeles Times* report blasted O'Leary for what critics called “extravagant” overseas travel, prompting renewed calls for her resignation.

• List History 101:

Perhaps Nixon's notorious “enemies list” isn't the best precedent for why some journalists were alarmed by Hazel's list. A 1970 memo from J. Edgar Hoover, declassified more than a decade later, reported a request by Nixon staffer H.R. Haldeman requesting the FBI's help in compiling a far

more ominous Nixon list: “homosexuals known and suspected in the Washington press corps.” (Hoover’s memo promised the FBI’s enthusiastic help on the project). During an era when homophobes were far more public than gays and lesbians, this list could have been a career-ender for any reporter who ended up on it—and the White House knew it.

However, a few things that deserved scrutiny went largely unchallenged during the flap:

• **The Swimsuit Competition:**

What exactly do these numbers mean, anyway? CARMA employs its own analysts to give a 1-to-100 score to reporters. A rival firm, Werle+Brimm Ltd., sends questionnaires to publicists who judge on a 1-to-10 scale on individual reporters’ performance in categories such as “balanced reporting, interview skills, and personality.” How objective can a statistical chart based on “personality” judgments be? Victor Cohn, long-time *Washington Post* Science Editor, fears that such categories are “too subjective to subject to a valid analysis.”

• **Liberal Media:**

Conservative Republicans—including some of the harshest press critics in Congress—became stalwart defenders of the press, however unintentionally: “Hazel O’Leary has hired a private investigating firm to poke into reporters who write about her,” said Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH), greatly embellishing the scope of CARMA’s services. “She’s then had the private eyes create an enemies’ list of unfavorable reporters who report on her...”

• **Reinventing Government:**

O’Leary defended CARMA’s hiring by saying that the same research done by CARMA for \$46,500 would have cost \$170,000 if done in-house by DOE. No one asked why it would cost four times as much for a government agency to replicate a private firm’s work.

—Peter Dykstra

Should reporters be aghast at this new, apparently sinister development? Sinister is in the eye of the beholder—but new this isn’t. In my decade of experience as Media Director for Greenpeace, judging reporters’ work, and receptiveness, was a routine and daily task. Absent CARMA-style analysis (or pseudo-analysis) and a high consulting fee, I don’t know of a major environmental group, industry, or government agency that doesn’t routinely use this strategy.

During my tenure there, if a reporter unfamiliar to Greenpeace called us in pursuit of a major story, of course we’d look at that reporter’s past work. If that reporter’s news stories or opinion pieces seemed to be consistently hostile, of course we’d consider dealing with that reporter more defensively.

While reporters increasingly benefit from an information-gathering revolution, the everyday wonders of Lexis and the universe of data on the World Wide Web work both ways: Reporting on reporters is easier now, too. Whether it’s good press or bad, what reporters do is important to all factions in the environmental debate. Should it be a surprise that there’s a market for more sophisticated data on how reporters do it?

Dean Rotbart of TJFR publishes a newsletter featuring profiles of environmental journalists and news organizations. For a fee, clients can receive more detailed biographies of specific reporters.

While he declined to name names, Rotbart said that “roughly five percent” of his sales are made to environmental groups in addition to his trove of corporate and environmental clients. He added that several national print and broadcast news organizations also buy his profiles so that they can monitor media-beat reporters and TV critics. While he does not dispute that journalists are targets of manipulation from all sides, Rotbart asserts that he’s “an equal opportunity manipulator.”

Rotbart said he would not necessarily

oppose, for example, hiring a private detective to surveil a journalist, “provided that detective obeyed the law,” and that the detective did not pursue or reveal details of the journalist’s private life. He added that he has never carried out such surveillance.

John Beardsley, a Minneapolis public relations professional and President of the Public Relations Society of America, pronounced CARMA’s DOE work “Defensible. It’s simply good management to assess whether (a media strategy) is working,” he said. Rotbart’s suggestion of

While reporters increasingly benefit from an information-gathering revolution, the everyday wonders of Lexis and the universe of data on the World Wide Web work both ways: Reporting on reporters is easier now, too.

surveillance struck a nerve. “It’s inappropriate. How can you draw the line between ‘public’ and ‘private’ surveillance?”

Beardsley also said that some reporters’ harsh reaction to the CARMA story may be traced to the “natural tension” that exists between reporters and the publicists who are among the most frequent consumers of content-analysis data.

The PR trade publication *PR News* put the blame more directly on reporters in a November 20 editorial: “By now, most PR people are resigned to the fact that the mainstream media is unlikely to ever give the profession any thoughtful discussion.”

For many reporters, the tough call is whether CARMA’s formalization of the rate-the-reporters game breaks unwritten rules. Phil Shabecoff, the former *New York Times* environment reporter, said the CARMA incident “gets too close to thought control.” Nevertheless, he places such Carmic experiences low on the scale of threats to a vigorous press, citing November’s *Sixty Minutes* retreat from an expose against litigious tobacco companies as a more ominous threat.

Shabecoff said that during his contentious 1991 departure from the *Times*, editors labeled his work as “too sympathetic to environmental causes.” However, he added that he knew of no CARMA-like performance studies of his work—whether by the *Times* or by prospective story subjects.

“It’s entirely appropriate for news

sources to informally evaluate reporters,” says Bill Beecher, a former Pulitzer-winning reporter who is now Public Affairs Director for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. “But some of this other activity may cross the line.” Beecher says NRC has never commissioned a formal evaluation of its press coverage or reporters’ individual performance.

Josef Hebert, the *Associated Press* reporter who scored at the negative end of the CARMA/DOE scale, said “I’m not that bothered by it. I don’t know what (clients) get out of it that’s all that useful. Where I would get much more upset is if people were trying to dig into your personal views on things.” Hebert, who has covered energy and environment for the AP for most of the last six years, added that his low marks won him “over a dozen” messages of congratulations from other journalists.

For many reporters, what seems to be the source of the strong reaction to media monitoring is what they can’t see—but do suspect—behind operations such as CARMA’s. *Toxic Sludge is Good for You*, a book by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, documents a litany of what the authors present as ethical abuses in the environmental public relations domain.

While some of what has become

known as “greenwashing” is spread across the beat, some environment reporters say they’ve received a more direct assault. Kathie Durbin, formerly of the *Oregonian*, and Richard Manning of Montana’s *Missoulian* have contended that they were removed from environ-

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When these reporters became statistics (like Shabecoff), media monitors with image-conscious clients may have looked to be scorekeepers. Albert Barr of CARMA and his competitors all say that their services draw the line at analysis. However, Barr adds “What they (clients) do with our data is their business.”

Just as the environment became a booming beat in the 1980’s, stories on

vanishing newspapers, libel suits, and mega-media buyouts have carved out a ‘90’s media beat for reporters like the *New Yorker’s* Ken Auletta, Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post*, and Howard Rosenberg of the *Los Angeles Times*. Rotbart of TJFR says that several national print and broadcast companies are his clients. Have any news organizations wary of self-criticism availed themselves of CARMA’s services? “Not yet,” says Barr, “but they should.”

In December, Barr commissioned himself to do a detailed analysis of reporting on CARMA’s DOE contract. He revealed that 77 percent of the published stories cast media monitoring in a negative light. Despite this, Rotbart, Werle, and Barr all say the spotlight on their businesses prompted inquiries

from prospective new clients.

Meanwhile, O’Leary’s woes continued into mid-December with additional Congressional calls for her resignation. And for a Dec. 14 *USA Today* report on government travel costs, O’Leary broke from her record of openness, declining to be interviewed for the piece.

Peter Dykstra is the News Director for Environment Unit at CNN, Atlanta.

National Public Radio has a new person on the environmental beat. **David Baron**, already a frequent contributor to NPR, is joining the network full time as environmental science reporter. Baron says he won’t be doing policy stories. Instead, he will do “thoughtful features on the science” of whatever is being debated on Capitol Hill. He will focus on the effects of policies, trying to determine what is working and what is not.

Greenwire publisher **Philip Shabecoff** is getting back into reporting, something he says he missed as a publisher and a book author. He’s taken a part-time job as Washington, DC correspondent for *High Country News*. He’ll keep an eye on how Congress is handling red-hot western issues for the Paonia, Colorado-based weekly. At the same time, Shabecoff is putting the finishing touches on his new book, *A New*

Name For Peace: International Environmentalism, Development and Democracy. “It’s about everything,” he says with a laugh.

Moving the publishing company

Media on the Move

Compiled by George Homsy

Van Nostrand Reinhold into the next millennium is no small mission, but it’s part of the portfolio **Nancy Olsen** picked up when she signed on as publisher for environmental sciences. In addition to buying and editing “solutions-oriented” environmental health books and launching a new program in ecology, Olsen is in charge of putting books they already own onto CD-ROM. Olsen’s last posting was at Island Press where she was

editor-in-chief.

Chris Ballman is looking forward to “specializing in one area of the news.” He will get that chance as senior producer of National Public Radio’s *Living On Earth*. It is a new position, designed to help shape the program’s expanded one hour format. Ballman previously was in charge of Monitor Radio’s *Midday Edition*, a newsmagazine distributed by Public Radio International.

Win an award? Start a fellowship? Change jobs? Let us know. Media On The Move. . . is a way for members to keep in touch the 363 long days we are not at the SEJ conference. Send news about you or your colleagues to: George Homsy at Living On Earth, PO Box 380639, Cambridge, MA 02238-0639. Tel: 617-868-8810, fax: 617-868-8659, e-mail: loe@npr.org

Spinning reporters...(from page 1)

according to several journalists who have written on the issue.

Sometimes hired public relations firms try to spin the reporters instead of the information. Take the case of Tom Kenworthy of *The Washington Post*, a low scorer on another CARMA list compiled for the beef industry.

Kenworthy ranked low on loving beef, so to convert him the industry introduced him to some real cattlemen. "I guess they thought I wasn't presenting their side well enough," he said.

The meaty corporations later gave him a better rating, saying they were somewhat happier with his coverage, although Kenworthy claimed the industry-arranged meetings did not cause him to consciously change his coverage.

Public relations companies have enormous resources to shape their messages, while the average reporter has to battle a budget (and often the boss) to get the story, said David

Helvarg, author of *The War Against the Greens* (Sierra Club Books, 1994) "You've got the end of the Cold War with no peace dividend in sight," he said.

Helvarg contends that PR firms are no longer going over the line to tell their stories—rather, they are defining that line. He also believes there is too little investigation or analysis by major news organizations into serious, important environmental issues that warrant major coverage.

The latest PR snoopers have a century-old tradition of carnival barkers and tobacco company hawkers behind them, say authors John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton in their book, *Toxic Sludge is Good for You!* (Common Courage Press, 1995). The subtitle of this book is Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry.

From the nuclear industry's media blitz (planned like a World War II battle to win the hearts and minds of Nevada residents so they would accept a high-level nuclear waste dump) to the Reagan administration's orchestrated attempt to gloss over the Iran-Contra

scandal, Stauber and Rampton pull the covers off the PR industry. They are editor and associate editor, respectively, of *PR Watch*, a newsletter designed to dog the spin doctors.

The book's title came from a "green-wash" of sewer sludge. In the early 1990s a press release came to Stauber's attention saying, "Toxic sludge is good for you!" A group calling itself the Water Environmental Federation was campaign-

The public relations methods used to promote the bovine growth hormone (BGH) developed by the chemical company, Monsanto, included hiring a "who's who" list of the top public relations firms and lobbyists to squelch negative reports. Public Relations firms also campaigned against activist Jeremy Rifkin's book Beyond Beef, which recommends that people stop eating beef for ethical, health, and environmental reasons.

ing to change the term sludge to biosolids. The organization turned out to be the old industrial-strength Federation of Sewage and Industrial Wastes Assoc. from the 1970s, Rampton said.

Stauber became fascinated with the public relations methods used to promote the bovine growth hormone (BGH) developed by the chemical company, Monsanto. The biotechnology leader hired a "who's who" list of the top public relations firms and lobbyists to squelch negative reports, he discovered.

PR firms also campaigned against activist Jeremy Rifkin's book *Beyond Beef*, which recommends that people stop eating beef for ethical, health, and environmental reasons. The book, denounced by the Beef Council and the National Dairy Board, drew the wrath of Ketchum and Morgan & Myers PR powers.

A spy, Seymour "Bud" Vestermark, Jr., infiltrated Rifkin's staff.

This spy-for-hire was caught when a reporter thought he recognized Vestermark from a former life as a McDonald's worker. A *Beyond Beef*

campaign worker also followed Vestermark as he left a press conference to return to the public relations/public affairs firm of Mongoven, Biscoe, and Duchin (MBD). He turned out to be a former analyst for the Department of Defense who had written reports on social effects of nuclear attacks.

MBD represents an array of clients including Monsanto, DuPont, Philip Morris, and Shell Oil. Its interests beyond food safety include acid rain, clean air, clean water, hazardous/toxic wastes, nuclear energy, recycling, South Africa, the United Nations, pesticides, biotechnology, and oil spills.

USA Today's Rae Tyson has a running battle with Fenton Communications, a public relations corporation representing the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC). As a print journalist for the nation's largest circulation newspaper, Tyson said, Fenton gives reports to the major morning shows on network television with an embargo on any release by print media.

"I have protested to Fenton Communications," he said. "They are not interested in us doing anything in depth with it. It just drives me crazy."

Tyson's two concerns are PR firms delving into the lives of reporters and manipulating the newsgathering.

"The thing that surprises me about the CARMA report is I didn't think Hazel O'Leary was getting bad press," he said.

TJFR, a company that sells reporters' bios starting at \$49, is on a smaller scale as troubling as CARMA, "but there is nothing we can do about it," Tyson said. "For \$49 they will send you a copy of my bio. If you want to call me up and ask me, I'll give it to you for nothing."

Mary Manning is environmental writer for the Las Vegas SUN and is a correspondent for Nature and The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. She also has written for several wire services. One of the journalists graded by CARMA, Manning has covered nuclear issues for 30 years.

Public land: Senate bill renews age-old controversy

Who should manage public land, for what purpose? Controversy on these questions is as old as the United States itself, and the history of public land management is marked both with achievement and with scandal.

Now the debate has been renewed.. House bill HR2032 (sponsored by Utah Republican James Hansen), and Senate bill S1031 (sponsored by Wyoming Republican Craig Thomas), propose transferring to the states the surface, water, and mineral rights in lands currently managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Here, an economist and public policy scholar offer two views of the current debate and some of the environmental issues it raises.

Federal land transfer: why and how?

by **ROBERT H. NELSON**

Asked at his confirmation hearing whether he favored a transfer of federal lands in the west to the states, former Interior Secretary James Watt said, in essence, no. Watt represented the traditional Western attitude toward the federal government, described by novelist Wallace Stegner as “get out, and give us more money.”

That approach will no longer work. The federal government’s financial capabilities are likely to be restrained by budget considerations over the next decade, limiting its ability to pay for public land management. There is also a growing discontent in the west with the quality of federal land management, coupled with a general alienation from Washington.

Consequently Congress is once again considering the idea of transferring some of its lands in the west to the states. In 1930, the Hoover administration offered some lands to the western states but proposed to retain the minerals rights. This offer was rejected. In the so-called “Sagebrush Rebellion” of the late 1970s, many western state legislatures passed resolutions asking for the transfer of federal lands. The Reagan administration and environmentalists, however discouraged the effort.

Federal lands comprise a full 47 percent of the land areas of the 11 westernmost lower-48 states (83 percent of Nevada, 68 percent of Alaska, 64 percent of Utah, 62 percent of Idaho, and 44 percent of California). There is more federal land in California than the total area of Washington State.

This huge federal presence is not based on any special relationship between the federal government and the states. In fact, most matters decided by federal administrators of this vast domain, like recreational or grazing use, would be state and

local issues elsewhere in the United States. In the rural west, the federal government effectively functions as a local planning and zoning board.

Today the political and economic forces supporting a transfer of federal lands to the states are much broader than during the Sagebrush Rebellion. In fact, this time, the possibility of transferring federal lands—if the west decides this is what it really wants—is greater than ever before.

The leading candidates for transfer are the 268 million acres, mostly in the west, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM, established in 1946, combined the old General Land Office and the federal Grazing Service to manage lands like national parks never included in earlier systems. The BLM also manages energy and mineral resources on all federal lands, not just its own, giving it partial jurisdiction over 732 million acres.

In any deliberations over transfer options, finances will play a prominent role. The additional revenues that would go to the states under a full transfer of BLM lands are substantial—\$575 million in 1992.

The states would incur costs, too. If the western states took over all the lands and minerals now managed by the BLM (and assuming the states’ land management costs were about equal to BLM’s, even though the states would no doubt act to cut the bloated BLM bureaucracy), a representative western state would receive about \$20 to \$30 million a year less in new revenues than its new management costs (based on 1992 figures).

There is, however, considerable variation in costs from state to state. New Mexico and Wyoming would experience large positive fiscal impacts because of the federal oil, gas, or coal resources there. Alaska would experience a hefty negative fiscal impact (about \$100 million a year) because of the large BLM presence there, high costs, and few revenues generated on federal lands. Most Alaskan oil production is on state lands.

Overall, given that a typical western state would be taking possession of something like a quarter of its land, the added fiscal burdens do not seem unmanageable. They are not of such a magnitude that they

would be the single determining factor.

The more important consideration would be the confidence that westerners have in their own state governments and other political institutions to manage the land. And here is fear of the unknown. How would such a basic change alter land-tenure arrangements? Terms of grazing permits, mining exploration, hunting and fishing access, and other matters have been worked out over many years with various federal agencies. Turning

Terms of grazing permits, mining exploration, and hunting and fishing access have been worked out over many years with various federal agencies. Turning these responsibilities over to state agencies would create giant uncertainties among historic users of the public lands.

these responsibilities over to state agencies would create giant uncertainties among historic users of the public lands.

But if the states took possession of BLM lands, they would, in fact, have many options. They could manage all or some of the lands at the state level, transfer land to local governments, create public corporations, contract with nonprofit groups to manage lands, offer long-term leases, or privatize some lands outright. One of the major advantages of state control is that it would allow for much greater innovation and experimentation. The states, after all, have traditionally been “laboratories” of the federal system.

Doubtlessly, any major change in land tenure would disrupt long-standing political, financial and legal networks, and other relationships. But in the long run, western states would very likely be better off, the lands more efficiently managed and more beneficially used in the service of future generations. Historic federal dominance has kept much of the west in a condition of political and economic adolescence. Now is the time for an informed national debate of the merits of ending federal ownership of such vast areas of the western states.

Robert H. Nelson is professor of public affairs at the University of Maryland, senior fellow of the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, and senior fellow for public lands at the Center for the New West in Denver. His most recent book is Public Lands and Private Rights: The Failure of Scientific Management.

Land management: can states do better?

By SALLY K. FAIRFAX

The nation is wrangling again over the legitimacy of government ownership of land. While the dust-up seems familiar, it would be a mistake to paint the present conversation with the story lines of the past. The outcome is likely to be the same—all the protagonists are so subsidized by present management that unless the budget cutters and market advocates gain considerable steam in Congress, federal ownership will survive.

Nonetheless, the new debate is different in ways that reflect deep changes in both western and national politics. This should be instructive to journalists who take resource management seriously. The states emerge as important players in this altered context—but could they do a better job of land management than federal agencies?

The new debate is distinguished by an explicit concentration on the appropriate level of decision making. The emergence of a new kind of environmental interest group gives vitality to the western expression of this national phenomenon: grass-roots environmental groups are challenging both national preservation groups and commodity interests. These new local groups are defined by their inclusion of not only environmentalists, but also business people and workers who have recognized their mutual dependence on sustainable management of regional resources. The heart of the new emphasis is to build a public

land politics based on community, place, and civic responsibility at a local (and arguably more ecologically appropriate and human) scale.

Thus, debate over land title emerges as a part of a growing consensus that local democracy is vital in the decision-making process about federal public land. What mixture of title, process, and accountability would enhance local responsibility?

States are enjoying unusual attention in this discussion, largely because the states’ experience in land management differs significantly from that of federal agencies. Much state land was granted by Congress when states joined the union. This land is held in trust because it was intended for the benefit of public schools and public institutions. State land trustees presently manage about 155 million surface and subsurface acres—almost twice the National Park Service’s 80-plus million acres, and close to the Forest Service’s 183 million acres.

State trust land management is subject to a familiar mandate and a rich set of well-understood rules. Just like any trust for a grandchild’s education (or similar goal), the beneficiary and the courts will hold the trustee accountable for making the trust corpus productive for the beneficiary. State programs appear to be a reasonable middle way to achieve cost-effectiveness while maintaining public control and benefit because of this mandate.

The states’ experience is suggestive for three reasons. First, it addresses the issues of inefficiency and improper incentives to bureaucrats that figure prominently in critiques of the current system.

Second, this emphasis on containing costs actually can benefit the environment. Trust land managers are not tempted to invest in developments that will not return a profit. What they can spend on management is limited to a fraction of what they produce. Consequently there is no below-cost timber sale problem on trust lands. Similarly, grazing leases are offered at auction to the highest bidder. There is typically no requirement that bidders own land in the adjacent areas—hence, it is possible for conservation buyers to bid on land that they want for hiking, hunting, or watershed protection.

Finally, the school trust is perpetual. The trust resources can never be diminished, and the trustee is obligated to maintain the productive capacity of the trust in perpetuity.

State trust lands offer a rich and diverse set of examples of how to institutionalize sustainable resource management. The states are major land owners and managers in the American West and, in many ways, already are doing a better job than the federal government. More importantly, the state trust concept is a familiar, flexible tool that can be applied in many situations to allow local groups to act responsibly in the management of public resources. It provides experience we can draw upon as we consider public lands programs and priorities for the next century.

Sally K. Fairfax teaches in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California at Berkeley. She is coauthor of State Trust Lands, due in January from the University Press of Kansas.

Particulate air pollution: a primer

By DAVID BARON

If you haven't written about particulate air pollution yet, chances are you will soon.

Tiny particles of smoke and soot from steel mills, power plants, and motor vehicles could be responsible for tens of thousands of deaths each year in the U.S., according to recent studies. The research suggests that EPA standards aren't strict enough, because many of these deaths occur in areas with particulate levels that are well below current EPA limits.

The EPA currently is under court order to review (and possibly revise) its particulate standards, as a result of a lawsuit filed by the American Lung Association. The EPA has until June 30, 1996 to propose new standards or to propose keeping the old ones. A final decision is required by January 31, 1997.

With these deadlines looming, environmental organizations, scientists, and industry representatives are locked in heated debate. There's a lot at stake: implementing stricter standards could cost industry billions of dollars. Not implementing new standards could cost lives.

The following information should provide the background you'll need to cover this emerging public health issue.

What are particulates?

Airborne particulates consist of a wide range of substances—among them carbon soot from wood-burning stoves, dust from construction sites, and tiny acid particles that form when sulfur dioxide or nitrous oxide (combustion products) react with other chemicals in the atmosphere.

When the EPA issued its first particulate standard (in 1970), it treated all particles the same. The regulations put a limit on total suspended particulates (TSP), regardless of size or composition.

Further studies suggested that not all particles cause equal harm—the tinier the particle, the more dangerous it is. So, in 1987, the EPA revised its standards to regulate only particles small enough to penetrate the lungs.

These particles, less than microns in size, are referred to as PM10. (By comparison, human hair is about 100 microns thick.) The current EPA standard for PM10 in the air is set at 150 micrograms per cubic meter for a 24-hour average, and 50 micrograms per cubic meter for an annual average.

Not all PM10 particles are alike, either. They can include "coarse" particles (road dust, sea salt, pollen) and "fine" particles (produced primarily by the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas). The EPA is considering refining its standards further, to focus on the fine particles—those less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5).

What is the evidence that particulates are harmful?

The case that particulate levels allowed under current EPA standards cause disease and death is compelling—but circumstantial.

The evidence comes almost entirely from epidemiological studies that examine the rates of death and disease within a community and attempt to correlate it with levels of particulates in the air. The fact that dozens of studies have been conducted on this topic (mostly by scientists at the Harvard School of Public Health) is impressive.

In Philadelphia, Detroit, St. Louis, Birmingham, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and other cities, when airborne particle levels (especially fine particles) go up, so do death rates. Similarly, studies

show that when particle levels increase, the number of hospital admissions, emergency room visits, and asthma attacks increase.

The key criticism of such studies is that particles may not be to blame, but rather a "confounding" pollutant. When the air is dirty with particles, it's often dirty with other pollutants as well—such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, or carbon monoxide. These other substances in the air may be causing the health effects, say critics. If that is the case, clamping down on particles would be attacking the wrong problem.

However, proponents of more stringent particle standards

point to the consistency of the findings from city to city, in areas with very different compositions of air pollution. No matter what the

other pollutants might be, studies generally find that with each 10 micrograms per cubic meter increase in PM10, death rates rise by 1–1.5 percent. This effect appears to exist even at the lowest measurable particulate concentrations.

Key unanswered questions

• **How do particles cause harm?** There are many theories as to how particles cause disease and death. When fine particles penetrate deep into the lungs, they may cause irritation and constriction of the airways, may trigger harmful immune system reactions, or may damage the alveoli (tiny sacs where gases are exchanged with the bloodstream). Unfortunately, no one really knows what makes particles dangerous.

Confusing matters further, animal studies generally have not demonstrated that particles are harmful at the levels suggested by epidemiological reports. New animal studies, nearing completion, are expected soon to provide the first direct evidence that particles do pose a risk at relatively low levels.

Reporters' Toolbox

is a regular feature of SEJournal, in which experienced reporters provide tips on gathering news about environmental issues

Environmental organizations, scientists, and industry representatives are locked in heated debate: implementing stricter standards could cost industry billions of dollars. Not implementing new standards could cost lives.

Reporters' Toolbox

• **Who is dying?** Is particulate pollution shaving a few days off the lives of people already terminally ill, or is it shortening lives considerably and causing years of disability? The answer could affect EPA's risk/benefit analysis for devising a new standard.

• **Which particles are most dangerous?** Is size the critical factor in determining the harmfulness of particles, or is it composition? What types of particles should the EPA focus on? These are important issues, because the type of particles addressed determines which industries will face tighter regulations.

• **Is there a "safe" level for particulates?** Data suggest that even at the lowest levels, particulates cause harm to some people. If so, how will the EPA choose a "safe" level for its standard?

Key Players

Professors Douglas Dockery and Joel Schwartz of the Harvard School of Public Health (both at 617-432-1244) have conducted much of the pioneering epidemiological work suggesting the danger of particulates. They also work with Professor Arden Pope (801-378-2157), an economist at Brigham Young University.

Professors Morton Lippmann (914-351-2396) and George Thurston (914-351-4254) of New York University also have conducted epidemiological studies of particulate air pollution.

Professor Jonathan Samet (410-955-3286), an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University, is conducting an analysis of

past particulate studies for the Health Effects Institute (HEI). Based in Cambridge, Mass., HEI bills itself as an impartial arbiter of controversial health issues.

HEI's president is **Dan Greenbaum** (617-621-0266). HEI staff scientist **Aaron Cohen** also is a good source.

Professor Suresh Moolgavkar (206-667-4273), a biostatistician at the University of Washington, is a prominent skeptic of the dangers of particulates.

George Wolff (313-556-7888), an atmospheric scientist at General Motors, chairs the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee (CASAC), which is advising the EPA.

Roger McClellan (919-558-1202) is president of the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology, and also is a member of the CASAC panel reviewing the particulate standard.

John Bachmann (919-541-5359) is associate director for science and policy at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards. He helped develop the current particulate standards and is working on their possible revision.

The American Lung Association—which sued the EPA to revise its particulate standards—continues to follow the issue closely. The association's PR person who deals with environmental issues is **Madhu Bhawnani** (212-315-8846).

David Baron is environmental reporter for National Public Radio.

First amendment...from page 2

(against it). These positions are accepted by the vast majority of Americans. However, since there is less consensus on environmental issues, civic journalism appears to be more difficult to practice in this arena.

Despite our many different approaches, I think there are some issues on which all U.S. journalists can agree to take a stand. The First Amendment is one of them. Government-in-the-sunshine laws and the so-called banana bills are another.

We should stand against the passage of banana bills and against changes to the first amendment and sunshine laws. We should take these stands not because pass-

ing of banana bills and changing the first amendment and sunshine laws inconveniences us. Such legal actions also could decrease the quality, timeliness and accuracy of information reaching the public.

That's something we should denounce—completely and loudly.

The next SEJ board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 13 and 14 in Kansas City. A tentative agenda is posted in SEJ's members-only forum on America Online and has been circulated on our Internet mailing list. The following board meeting is scheduled for March 23 and 24 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

As always, SEJ members are wel-

come to attend. If you can't be there but have some suggestions for the board, please contact any of us. In addition, if you have ideas for regional events or other SEJ programs, please step forward. This organization is very open to members who have good ideas and the energy to follow through on them.

SEJ is grateful to the Scripps Howard Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio for ongoing support of SEJ's regional program. In 1995, Scripps Howard Foundation funds helped make it possible for SEJ to offer conferences and seminars in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC.

Detoxing kidspace

KIDSAFE: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO MAKE YOUR CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT SAFE

by **Rae Tyson**

Times Books \$10.00

Reviewed by KATHY SAGAN

USA Today's environment editor Rae Tyson offers a sensible, accessible handbook for parents (and others) on how to

navigate several key environmental issues that can impact the health of children.

Tyson first explains why children may be more susceptible to the effects of various pollutants. Then he discusses the possible health effects of exposure to lead, pesticides, electromagnetic fields, and air and water pollution.

Most importantly, in each instance Tyson offers clear, practical advice and tips on what people can do to protect their

families. In the final chapter, he catalogues other household hazards (such as poisonous plants, cleaning products, art supplies, and toys which may prove to be dangerous), and also includes a checklist to "safe-proof" your home.

Kidsafe presents a non-alarmist, up-to-date discussion of the major environmental threats to children's health and safety. It is a valuable resource of information on how to handle threats if they arise.

Freelancers fight for cyber-rights

By CATHERINE DOLD

Been thinking about making a side trip into the world of freelance writing? Maybe you've been thinking about writing a travel article based on your next vacation and selling it to a few newspapers, or expanding a news story into a larger magazine piece. Or maybe you've even been thinking about tossing out the whole salaried job and jumping into full-time freelancing.

Think twice before you take the plunge. As many SEJ members who freelance regularly can attest, the publishing world is going through some radical changes. The result of these changes is that a writer's hold on his or her copyright often is slashed to the bone.

In the era of the Internet, freelance writers are being asked to sign over every right short of handing over their first-born children. Only rarely are they offered additional money for those rights. Many writers also have found that their older articles, to which they clearly own the copyright, have been uploaded to various electronic sites or commercial ventures and are being used and sold without permission—or compensation.

Traditionally, freelance writers sold only "first North American serial rights" to their articles. That meant the publisher had the right to use the article once and only once. All other uses of the article—such as in an anthology or as a reprint in another publication—were negotiated separately, and usually resulted in additional money for the author. No longer. A typical magazine or newspaper contract today might say something like, "first world publication rights plus, for no additional compensation, the right to distribute the article in any form or by any means, including, but not limited to, print, electronic, CD-ROM, microfilm, microfiche, and any other form whether known now or developed hereafter, throughout the universe."

If these contracts weren't such egregious rights grabs, they would almost be funny. These magazines want freelancers

to hand over every single right to resell or reuse their work, including the right to publish their words on Mars or Venus in media that have not even been invented. Rarely is any additional compensation offered. Some magazines have said, "Gosh, we really wish we could pay writers some extra money, but hey, nobody's making any money on this Internet thing yet, so just trust us and give us all these additional rights for free now, and we'll be sure to remember you later." Sure.

Many writers are fighting back. Organizations that represent primarily freelance writers, such as the National

electronic rights. In that case, says ASJA, it's best to limit the duration of the license and to secure separate payment for each online use. For example, a license could specify use of an article for one year on an America Online forum or World Wide Web site.

In addition, make sure the contract clearly states that the additional fee, however it is calculated, is earmarked for electronic rights. It is not wise to simply take a higher overall fee to surrender electronic rights, because that just reinforces the idea that electronic rights are no different than other rights.

Don't fall for the line from publishers that "we must have every article cleared for online use." Electronic publishing arrangements do allow publishers to include only selected articles. Many publishers also will claim that it is impossible at this time to track the number of electronic "hits" on your article

or the number of reprints that are faxed out. That may be true in some cases, but the situation is changing fast. Two new systems for tracking and compensating writers for additional uses of their work recently were established by the NWU and ASJA.

One of these systems, the Publication Rights Clearinghouse, was launched last June by NWU and the CARL Corporation. In recent months many writers had been shocked to find that CARL was selling their copyrighted work via their UnCover fax-on-demand service (accessible by telnet at database.carl.org). According to UnCover, it has a database of about 17 million articles, and usually collects about \$11.50 per article (which included a \$3 "copyright fee"). Authors never saw that money, and even some publishers didn't know that their magazines were being offered on the service.

The Clearinghouse aims to solve that problem. It will clear the copyrights and also distribute royalties to writers from the fax orders. Enrollment in the Clearinghouse is expected to be \$20. It is not clear at this point whether non-enrolled writers would be

Writers who protest the terms of an offered contract often are finding that a publication actually has two or three "standard" contracts, and speaking up can result in a significantly better deal.

Writers Union (NWU) and the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) are monitoring the markets and urging their members to request specific changes in contracts.

The ASJA advises writers to watch out for several common tactics and phrases in contracts. The worst type of contract is "work for hire," which means that the publisher owns all the work you do under that contract. Period. Just as bad is the "all rights" contract, in which you theoretically own the copyright, but you have sold all future uses of that material to the publisher. Selling all the rights is fine—as long as you actually sell them, and they are not just taken as part of the fee you are paid for the first use of the work. All uses beyond the "first print publication" rights should be licensed separately and compensated separately, says the ASJA.

The preferred means of compensation for additional rights is a share of revenue generated by your work. Just as in the case of traditional reprint rights, the publisher should be willing to split the revenue derived from electronic rights. Some may offer a flat fee—often a percentage of the original fee—for the

Freelancers' Forum

able to collect fees through the Clearinghouse. (For more information about the Publication Rights Clearinghouse, contact the NWU's National Office at 212-254-0279.)

The other clearinghouse is the Author's Registry, founded by the ASJA, the Authors Guild, and the Dramatists Guild. The Author's Registry was formed to centralize sublicensing of electronic rights and other uses, says the ASJA. At its core is a directory of authors. Companies that want to buy rights to an article for electronic use, foreign resales, or any other use can contact the author of the article through the Registry.

The Registry also will collect and distribute royalties for the use of some secondary rights, such as by large database companies that routinely resell articles. More than a dozen writers' organizations representing more than 50,000 writers already have signed up with the Registry. (For more information about the

Authors Registry, contact the Authors Guild at 212-563-5904.)

Remember that both of these services will be useless if you give away the electronic rights to your articles for nothing in the first place. Even if you don't plan to resell any of your articles, should others be profiting from your work, without giving you a cut? It pays to negotiate. Writers rarely get everything they want in their contracts these days—but compared to even just a few months ago, progress has been made.

Many magazines that once held a hard line on electronic rights are starting to back down, realizing that they will lose their best writers unless they start paying for additional uses. Writers who protest the terms of the offered contract often are finding that a publication actually has two or three "standard" contracts, and speaking up can result in a significantly better deal. Also, magazines that once tried to commandeer the right to upload all your old copyrighted material are finding that

more than a few writers are saying, "Thanks, but no thanks. Call me when you are ready to pay for it." Remember, too, that even if you feel the need to sign a less-than-perfect contract, voicing your objections now just might help to change things in the future.

To keep on top of this issue, a good resource is Contracts Watch. This free electronic bulletin from ASJA has the latest news on contracts, detailing exactly what various magazines have been demanding in their contracts and what writers have been able to negotiate with those publications. To subscribe, send e-mail to: majordomo@eskimo.com. The body of your message should read: SUBSCRIBE ASJACW-L.

Catherine Dold is a Colorado-based freelance writer who covers the environment, science, and medicine for several national publications.

To subscribe to the SEJournal, please complete this form and mail with your payment of \$50 to:

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Corporations reluctant to comply?

Some companies are striving to exceed regulations

By WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS

It has long been an assumption in the country that American corporations comply with regulations, environmental and otherwise, with great reluctance. We envision them being dragged, kicking and screaming, to the bar, doing only the minimum required under the law.

That may have been the case decades ago, but it no longer accurately reflects corporate America. Sure, there are still corporate outlaws, but for companies such as the one I work for, Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), basic compliance with environmental rules and regulations is just the starting point. Exceeding those regulations is now part of our environmental management system. In fact, we strongly believe that meeting society's rules and regulations is part of our license to do business. If we do not comply in a forthright manner, we lose the permission granted to us by society or by a community to operate. For us, it's as simple as that.

When we enter a new market overseas, one of our first tasks is to determine exactly what the regulatory requirements are that the host country has established for companies to conduct business there. We then conform our business to meet those requirements precisely. Again, we understand that is what we must do to be permitted to operate in that country.

We believe companies should take that same attitude when moving into a new market or business line in this country. At BFI, we try to instill that kind of attitude in all our managers to ensure they understand the rules and obey them completely. It's a simple, logical way of looking at the regulatory landscape—and it saves us a lot of trouble.

Critical to any environmental compliance program is the structure created to ensure that managers and employees are motivated to meet their compliance goals. We believe we have created the right incentives at BFI to do just that. It's not the only way, but it works for us.

Managers at BFI receive a substantial part of their annual compensation in the form of a bonus. Each year, bonus objec-

tives and their contribution to an overall bonus are agreed upon by senior management. They then are communicated to our managers in the field. There is a great deal of deliberation that goes into determining the weight of those components, and broad discussion with all managers takes place to ensure general agreement about the company's priorities. There is an environmental component to our bonus structure that serves as a multiplier of the other bonus components.

Commentary

In other words, if a manager does not achieve a certain level of compliance with our environmental goals (which include, of course, compliance with both state and federal regulations), the multiplier is zero, and the manager receives no bonus, no matter how well he or she may have done in achieving his or her other goals, including financial goals, for the year. This provides a powerful motivator, and ensures that our managers pay attention to our highest priorities at BFI.

Another factor that keeps companies like BFI focused on their environmental responsibilities is the practice of many corporations not to do business with firms that have a weak record of environmental compliance. This practice stems from concern about a company's reputation or future liability. More and more, companies are reviewing the records of their suppliers before awarding them significant business. Compliance has become an important part of a company's ability to compete in today's marketplace.

The environmental record of companies throughout this country is getting increased scrutiny in the 1990s. This is not likely to diminish in the years ahead. When I was first administrator of the EPA in 1970, one of my tasks was to convince American corporations that the environment was not a passing fad and that EPA was not going to fade away in a few short years if only companies dug in their heels and resisted change. As we have seen in the 25

years since, concern about the environment is one of the most enduring values in America and one which elected officials ignore at their peril. Concern about companies' environmental records has moved from regulatory agencies and the courts to the board rooms as corporations weigh the environment as an important factor in any business deal. Companies recognize environmental compliance is a key component of future financial success.

The issue of environmental compliance at a corporation is one more critical factor in the conduct of business that cannot be ignored. Once environmental compliance is treated with the same care, concern and attention as other more traditional functions of a corporation, such as cost control, training, etc., we have succeeded.

William D. Ruckelshaus is president and chief executive officer of Browning-Ferris Industries in Houston, Texas.

Board...from page 3

Herald, and often uses her bi-weekly editorial page columns to report on environment issues that otherwise get limited play in the Hispanic press.

Amor is director of training at the Center for Foreign Journalists in Reston, Va. He previously held a similar position with the Press Foundation of Asia in Manila and was deputy executive editor of its news and features service.

In addition to her professorship at Brigham Young, Valenti is a fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a elected member of the committee on Teaching Standards for the Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications.



Amor



Valenti

In Boston: can't spoof it, eat it

By DAVID HELVARG

From Ants to ozone, sewage plants to politicians (and other forms of nutrient loading), the fifth annual SEJ Conference at MIT was perhaps the best in years in terms of scale, scope, and worry-free travel deductions (especially for those who toured the wastewater treatment plant).

On my arrival, I was tempted to visit the Harvard Experimental Forest in order to see the autumn foliage matriculate. However, I opted instead for the Woods Hole tour where they gave out free Alvin pens (the submarine, not the endangered chipmunk). On this tour, I was told that, "da clams in da hahba will soon be ready for Harvard." "Brilliant bivalves," I commented, before our translator explained that "the clams in the harbor will soon be ready for harvest".

That evening, we had our first reception—with plastic plates, domestic beers and a buffet based on the principle that you can't objectively report on any animal you haven't eaten.

I must have had a few too many Sam Adams, though. In the morning, I had this weird hallucination with Michael Dukakis on stage at MIT's Kresge Auditorium pretending to be Phil Donahue, while a CNN "people on the street" interview tape was drowned out by the marimba band on its soundtrack.

The opening session finally settled down with the results of a Times-Mirror poll that found "69 percent of Americans say that environmental protection and economic development can go hand-in-hand," while 28 percent of Americans think these issues go hand-in-foot, and three percent insist they go hand-in-hoof (animal rights activists, no doubt). A surprising 81 percent of respondents said they were uncertain if the environment pre-dated O.J., while 51 percent said they thought media coverage of the environment focused too much on animals, vegetables, and minerals.

Such confusion was also reflected among the panelists. Former U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop, for example, mixed up Carol Browner's EPA with the National Weather Service when he asked her about her "storm troopers." Thankfully no one

asked Dukakis what he'd do if it was his planet that was being raped.

Lunch was served in MIT's cavernous gym (site of some fiercely competitive robot wars), accompanied by a haunting, tonal performance piece by someone from the UN.

I attended an afternoon panel on the oceans where the principles of modern fisheries practice were explained, "Sorry Charlie...Oh what the hell, we'll take you and that tumorous dogfish and, what is that—a turtle? A radial tire? Hell, with enough tarter sauce,

Satire

who's gonna notice."

Small group meetings with fashionably jackbooted Carol Browner and Clean-Water Canoeist Bruce Babbitt reassured us that even though the 104th Congress has eliminated all funding for alternative energy, there's still plenty of conventionally heated air and old-fashioned boilerplate in Washington.

Being a double winner of the Browner/Babbitt lottery, I missed out on a plenary session in which TV reporter and regulatory critic John Stossel demonstrated what happens when you eliminate all command and control.

The annual SEJ business meeting involved some debate over whether freelance reporters who also worked for advocacy groups should hold full memberships. One side argued that people working for advocacy groups lack the professional objectivity of, for example, broadcast journalists working for GE, Westinghouse, Disney, or Rupert Murdoch. The other side argued that, given industry trends, freelancing was the wave of the future; many a good story can be found while collecting used cans and papers at three in the morning.

Naturalist E.O. Wilson gave a blatant insectocentric talk on biodiversity at lunch, failing to point out that no ant or termite ever prepared yellow tapioca for 500-or developed a family of chemicals that could protect tomatoes from infestations while simultaneously getting male alligators to reject patriarchy. He did say something about trying to educate

a southern amphibian—although I think he'd have a better chance working with a chimp than a Newt.

That evening, the Clinton Administration, responding to three years of student protests to "Free Al Gore," sent the Vice President to speak to the conference (after a few security frisks to make sure nobody was packing any Freon).

After a few warm-up jokes, Al gave a stem-winding campaign speech in which he accused the Republican congress of practicing "devastation with misrepresentation" (a bit of Jesse Jacksonization without accreditation). Gore also made a convincing case for saving the rainforest by exhibiting half of it on stage with him.

Sunday's whale watch tour was moved to the New England aquarium when tour organizers figured that given the rough winds and waves the only spewing seen that day would have been the SEJers.

I myself went to the Walden Pond state complex where Thoreau developed his theories on simplicity. First, we checked out the boulder pile remains of the cabin where he wrote Walden, and then adjourned to the grand-elegant Thoreau Center (which he must have bought after selling the movie rights). Standing by the edge of Walden Pond that afternoon—with the leaves changing color, watching ducks and cormorants splashing about in the brisk, clear water—I was reminded once again why I don't cover hazardous waste issues.

Still, I have to admit that after last year's scenic Sundance conference, and this year's intellectually brawny MIT conference, I'm looking forward to next year's centrally redundant conference at Washington University in St. Louis, a site noted primarily for its centrality. Oh, St. Louis where the mighty Mississippi meets the Army Corp of Engineers under half a McDonald's Logo. Another easy travel deduction.

Author and TV producer David Helvarg actually won a fellowship to go to MIT and dis the conference. How are those judges selected anyway?

Sparks fly...from page 1

making environmental issues seem either worse (35 percent) or better (16 percent) than they really are.

Accompanied by an anecdotal video of person-on-the-street interviews, the poll served as the backdrop for a panel moderated by former Massachusetts governor and presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. He set the tone by telling the audience, "I don't think you're reporting the story." Noting that he had seen and read a lot about Medicare, but almost nothing about the congressional assault on the environment, Dukakis asked, "What the hell is going on?"

For the next two hours, using the same witty, provocative approach he honed as moderator of a popular public television program called *The Advocates*, Dukakis lithely refereed a non-linear discussion among the nine panelists. Several offered their interpretations of the poll results.

Nationally syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman commented that public opinion polls are conducted "in an information-free zone" in which reporters provide the public with propaganda and opinion from both sides, but not the facts. People, she said, are left skeptical and confused. "They don't know what to do and when they don't know what to do, they recycle," she said.

EPA Administrator Carol Browner said the change in views shows continued strong support for environmental laws, but "reflects the progress" that has been made in tackling

many of the problems. Such topics as clean air, she said, now have so many nuances that it is much harder for the press to explain and the public to grasp. However, Malcolm Wallop, a former Republican senator from Wyoming and now a Heritage Foundation Distinguished Fellow, pulled no punches in blaming the media for sending one-sided messages to the public. As if to illustrate the zone where rhetoric substitutes for information, he referred to "Carol Browner's storm troops" going into Wyoming.

In another conference plenary session titled "Environmental Journalism Ethics: Are We Scaring the World to Death?" ABC 20-20 reporter John Stossel (whose special two years ago raised the scare question) offered no apologies for his message. After showing a video clip of the program's opening, Stossel argued his case with microphone in hand—once shoving it into the face of fellow panelist Ellen Silbergeld in ambush-interview fashion—while suggesting that he was one of few journalists gutsy enough to challenge conventional environmental wisdom.

Washington Post reporter Gary Lee, another panelist, prompted some personal concessions from Stossel by asking about the tens of thousands of dollars in speaker's fees that Stossel has received from the chemical industry and others, and whether, considering his open advocacy, Stossel still considered himself to be a journalist. "Industry likes to hire me because they like what I have

to say," Stossel responded. Stossel said that he might no longer be a journalist in the traditional sense, but is now a reporter with a perspective.

A scientific counterpoint to the morning session was provided during a luncheon address by Edward O. Wilson, the Harvard biologist and acclaimed author of *The Diversity of Life* and other books. He pointed out that less than 20 percent of the estimated 10 million species of the earth's flora and fauna have been identified. "This is a poorly known planet," he remarked.

An evening speech by Vice President Al Gore drew a large crowd, but generated little news. MIT's Kresge auditorium was packed with SEJ conference attendees, MIT students, and members of the local media—all of whom had waited in a long line outside the building for nearly an hour before the Secret Service allowed them in (two at a time, with polite but thorough searches).

Gore demonstrated his concern for the environment by using recycled jokes about his stiffness, and by having the stage decorated with a rainforest. Most of his speech was devoted to an attack on the Republican budget, with emphasis on proposed cuts to the EPA, and attempts to weaken environmental legislation and regulations through budget riders. However, he proved fairly knowledgeable and articulate during the brief question-and-answer period that followed.

The conference included panels on a



Photo by Charlotte Kidd

Frank McDonald (right), *Irish Times*, was among the journalists questioning Vice President Al Gore.

Conference

wide range of topics. By and large, attendance of these panels was good, and members found them thought-provoking and useful. One example was the panel on fisheries, titled "International Sea Wars: Fighting for the Last Fish," which was moderated by Newsday's Dan Fagin.

This panel included four fisheries experts. One of these, Michael Sutton of the World Wildlife Fund, said that since fish stocks are dwindling worldwide, coastal nations and fishing fleets are clashing "over smaller and smaller slices of a shrinking

pie." The result: violent confrontations on the high seas, higher seafood prices, and disruptions of marine ecosystems. Two recent proposals—a U.N. treaty and the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act—could help fish stocks recover. However, prospects still are murky for the habitats in which fish live. Off the coast of Louisiana, nutrient pollution from the Mississippi river has helped create a "dead zone" of oxygen-depleted water in the Gulf of Mexico, according to Paul Coriel, a wetlands specialist with Louisiana State University.

Another well-received panel was devoted to conflicts between scientists and environmental journalists. "Why Does it Often Seem We're at War?" addressed a common goal of most scientists and journalists: trying to understand the planet.

Some of the conflicts between these professions have to do with unprepared journalists, according to David Marks, director of M.I.T.'s Program of Environmental Engineering, Education and Research. Mentioning that he often had been "sound-bitten," Marks said that some reporters want to be educated on complex subjects in 15 minutes or less. Many of the university's scientists refer to calls from journalists as "incoming," he said, alluding to artillery fire.

Heidi Hammel, another M.I.T. scientist, noted the two-way street of communications between scientists and journalists. She said that scientists worry that a reporter's use of quotes will make them "look stupid" to their peers, that scientists dwell on details and don't understand the content of news stories for laypeople, and that some scientists don't want to be understood. "Science is a very serious business, so you have to speak about it seriously," said Hammel, whose presentation was liberally sprinkled with humor.

Both the scientists and journalists on the panel agreed that good information about environmental science depends on getting independent, unbiased judgments and studies from scientists. Reductions in federal financing of basic science and increasing dependence on industry dollars are of particular concern. "There does seem to be a strong correlation between who's paying the bill and what comes out," Marks said.

Once again, sessions on computer-assisted reporting had much to offer SEJ members (most of whom have little if any experience in the online world) and other conference attendees. More than 100 people took advantage of three tracks of sessions that provided training in computer-assisted reporting and the use of the Internet. Despite some scheduling errors and the usual telecommunications glitches, many of those who attended said the sessions were worthwhile. Similar sessions are planned for next year's national conference in St. Louis.

In one of MIT's splendidly equipped computer labs, Russell Clemings of the *Fresno Bee* and Miguel Llanos of the *Seattle Times* took attendees on a guided tour of SEJ's Environmental Journalism Home Page (<http://www.sej.org>) on the World Wide



Photo by Charlotte Kidd

Conference chair David Ropeik (right) with Vice President Al Gore.

Web. Meanwhile, in another room, Jennifer Lafluer and Brant Houston from the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) set up laptop PCs and gave hands-on lessons in how to use database and spreadsheet software to analyze environmental data. Here, journalists learned about using these powerful tools to analyze reams of regulatory data, using a real-life database of Wisconsin hunting accidents. The duo from NICAR also made suggestions about what kinds of databases lend themselves to eye-popping environmental stories.

Next door, SEJ board member Amy Gahrn introduced Internet newbies to the mysteries of electronic mail, with an emphasis on SEJ's fledgling "listserv," where members can exchange tips and discuss environmental issues. She also gave tips on tasks that most Internetters only master after arduous trial-and-error, such as how to successfully transfer files over the 'Net.

Amid all the sessions, panels, luncheons, tours, and schmoozing, one of SEJ's fundraising efforts netted \$1,700 for the group: a silent auction, managed by Sara Thurin Rollin of BNA's Chemical Regulation Reporter.



Photo by Yawu Miller, Bay State Banner

Robert Bullard, (left) Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University, discusses urban environmental justice issues during a tour to some of Boston's large toxic waste sites.

The hottest item of the auction (a Hard Rock Cafe tee shirt, autographed by Billy Joel, Don Henley, Elton John, Neil Young, and Sheryl Crow) drew 13 bids and sold for \$130. An autographed copy of Mario Molina's paper describing his theory that CFCs would deplete the stratospheric ozone layer sold for \$105. Molina and his co-authors recently won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for that paper. Three vacation trips also spawned a lot of bidding interest from conference goers. The same few people kept trying to out bid each other for the weekend at Sundance, Camping on Sapelo Island, and a 10-day geology trek. Those three items alone raised \$760.

Behind the scenes, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt was turned away from the luncheon and lecture by E.O. Wilson on Saturday because he didn't have his lunch ticket. Without a hint of indignation, Babbitt and his team made other arrangements for lunch, lauding the ticket-taker for doing her job well.

The Heroic Panelist Award goes to Richard Rhodes, who was scheduled to appear on the Writers on Writing panel on Sunday at Thoreau Institute. He called SEJ board member Mike Mansur to say there'd been a glitch: his private plane had crashed. No one was hurt, but he'd be late, since he had to rent a car and drive. (Okay, he wasn't in the plane when it crashed, and he *didn't* climb out of the wreckage, crawl to the nearest phone booth, call for a rental car and point it toward Cambridge. But the conference staff said they really appreciated the extra effort he made to get there.

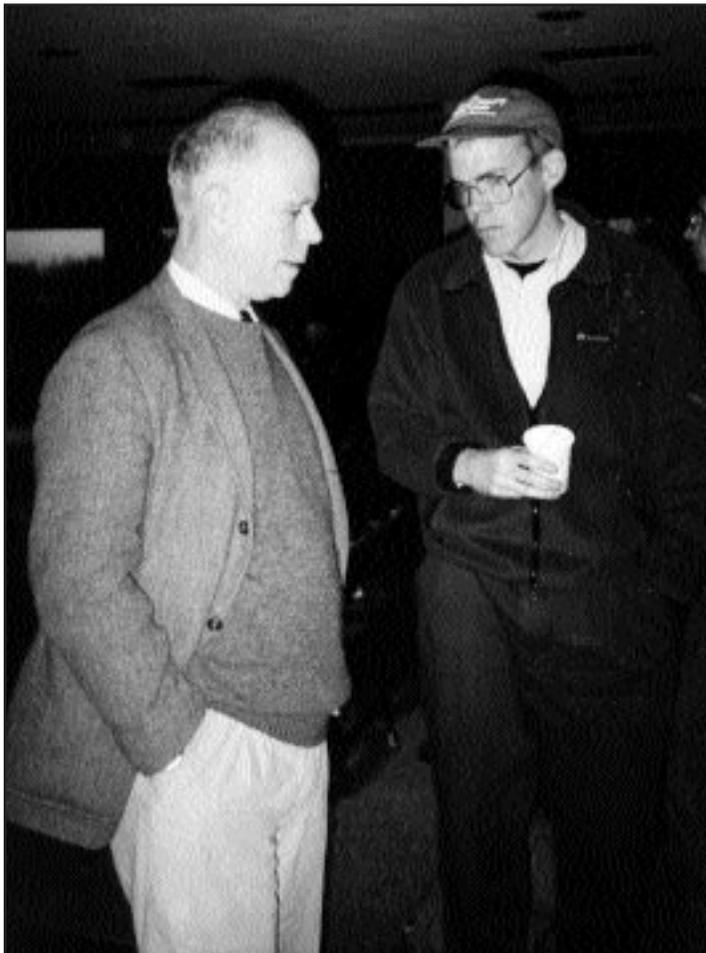


Photo by Bruce Robertson

Columnist Alton Chase with author Bill McKibben.

Contributing to this peice were SEJ members Russ Clemings, Fresno Bee, Marla Cone, Los Angeles Times, Amy Gahrn, E Source, Stuart Leavenworth, Raleigh News-Observer, Sara Thurin-Rollin, Chemical Regulation Reporter, and Chris Rigel, SEJ staff. It also contains excerpts from a piece Len Ackland of the University of Colorado, wrote for Sciphers, the newsletter of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

Ghost of SEJ conference yet to come?

Transcript of an oral essay, delivered as part of a panel on "Environmental History: Past, Present, and Future," an event of SEJ's fifth national conference, Sunday, October 29, 1995, at Thoreau Institute.

By **BILL MCKIBBEN**

I decided I would cast this in the form of a report some 50 years hence at a future meeting of SEJ. So imagine that the year is 2045—The 50th convention of the Society of Environmental Journalists. Some of you may have already done the quick calculation in your heads—this should be the 55th convention. But you're forgetting the five years of travel restriction in the early 21st century, the so-called "No Go" era.

...As the oldest surviving (and still lucid) member of this organization, I have been called upon to give you a short history of our brotherhood, familiar in its outline to you all, of course. Perhaps I can also add a slight bit of nuance to this account—some sense of what it felt like to live through it.

Thinking back 50 years I am struck by the sense of antiquity that surrounds that earlier era. To give you just one small example, the majority of our colleagues at that time worked in the medium of print! Their work is preserved in SEJ's museum.

You will be struck even more when I tell you that at the time, though our Society was a lively one, the environment was a largely peripheral concern. The world still viewed itself primarily through an economic prism, and decisions were made about issues of policy based on the answer to the question, "is this good for the growth of our economy or not?" Environmental specialists were concerned about what seemed at the time a large, but limited, set of problems. We reported on what we thought were mistakes in an otherwise reasonably sound system.

In fact, in those early years we spent much of our time debating the question of whether people were making more progress than regress; whether the problems that the country was solving would outnumber the ones that would arise. The organization

contented itself for the most part with uncovering these small threats and debating their significance.

You must remember that among our audiences, and among most citizens at the time, on their list of priorities the environment ranked somewhere below basketball (but perhaps above bowling) as a cause of interest and concern. There was an occasional sense of foreboding that animated our work. Our first true environmental politician (Albert Gore) had urged, for

Essay

instance, that environment needed to become the central organizing principle of the future. However, even he—in his single term in office—showed very little sign that he was organizing his own life in this way.

There was an oft-repeated truism that some of those who spoke at those early con-

You must remember that among our audiences, and among most citizens at the time, on their list of priorities the environment ranked somewhere below basketball (but perhaps above bowling) as a cause of interest and concern.

ventions engaged in: that we had 10 years in which to solve our environmental problems (or else face some unspecified disaster). Since people had been saying this for perhaps 20 years, almost all of us were taken aback when it actually turned out to be true.

Looking back at the archives, perhaps the year 1995 is as good as a starting point as any for the dawning of the new and darker era we've spent most of our professional lives in—that was in fact the warmest year on record, to date. This meant that all 10 of the warmest years on record had occurred in a 15-year stretch of time. It was a year that saw the then-unprecedented list of hurricanes (extending well into the S's or T's of the alphabet). Today, we don't find uncommon—but at that time it was strange, almost startling.

Our stories were transformed. In retrospect, a key realization (the key realization),

was that the most profound sorts of environmental damage came not from small mistakes around the margins and the edges, but (most powerfully and most importantly) from processes that seemed on their face to be the very stuff of normal society. They simply were occurring at such a high volume—and so quickly—that the earth could not sustain them.

Of course, the warming—the warming—was the most obvious and the most profound.

There was a regular sense of crisis to our work in those years, as it turned out that in fact we really had reached certain limits. Not all of the pinches came in the places where we expected. Food prices, for instance, increased swiftly at times after long periods of drought—especially as growing populations turned surplus grain supplies into mere pipeline amounts exquisitely vulnerable to any disruption (even temporary ones).

Of course, as always in history, those shifts and instabilities in food prices led to deep political instability. Extreme events, including extreme meteorological events, became more and more common. Eventually, every phenomenon was blamed on some environmental outrage. "It's the damn greenhouse effect!" replaced the older "We need the rain!" as an elevator greeting.

The environmental movement was transformed too, of course, since everyone became an environmentalist in some way. There was no more real need for an Audubon Society than there had been for an Adam Smith Club in an earlier era.

Of course there were many, many shades of opinion—ranging from those who sought salvation through technology to those environmentalists of an earlier age (on the more radical fringe) who found themselves always pushing for decentralization, for smaller-scale solutions, for increased self sufficiency, for a retreat from the extreme globalization of trade (and of culture) that had marked the end of the 20th century.

(Continued on page 23)

1995 conference: members talk back

By JAY LETTO

Three main points are evident from compiling attendees' evaluations from the '95 conference. All of these points have also been true of previous SEJ conferences):

- In general, the 1995 conference garnered rave reviews—as did past conferences.

- Networking continues to be cited as the most important and attractive aspect of our conferences.

- Reactions to particular speakers, panels and other sessions, and tours, are so varied that one simply cannot categorize the opinion of our membership—it is much too diverse.

SEJ members just can't seem to get enough time to schmooze at our conferences. At '94's Utah conference, attendees reported over and over that they want more time to network. So, for '95, we built in half-hour breaks between the sessions (instead of the standard 15 minutes), we left Friday evening open (instead of talks or salons), we skipped speakers on some of the tour buses, and we scheduled two receptions for members to mingle. Still, in '95 attendees said that this was not enough!

Here's a sampling of responses: "Connecting with renowned journalists and scientists the main attraction;" "Friday night free—do that again;" "Need more time for socializing;" "Need more time to network;" and "Great, but SEJ board should make more effort to introduce themselves in special-event situations."

So, for 1996 in St. Louis, we've decided to forgo all keynoters, cancel the plenaries, skip the concurrent sessions and tours, and simply have one big weekend party. (Just kidding, of course.) However, we will try to accommodate the continuing request for more networking opportunities—while at the same time providing a full, diverse, and worthwhile program.

The SEJ office received 31 evaluation forms (as of November 30) from attendees of the '95 annual conference (a more than five percent sampling of the total attendance). Nine of them said they filed stories from the conference on such

topics as new board members, Browner talk, Gore challenge to GOP, E.O. Wilson comments on Gingrich, airborne particulates, Times-Mirror poll, electric cars, fisheries, and "scaring the world to death." If this can be extrapolated to the full attendance (which might be a reach),

SEJ members just can't seem to get enough time to schmooze at our conferences. At '94's Utah conference, attendees reported over and over that they want more time to network.

than perhaps as many as 150 stories were filed from the '95 conference.

Of the 31 respondents, 26 wrote glowing comments under the basic evaluation question, including: "Array of speakers superb;" "Another well-planned, informative and dynamic conference;" "Session topics were a good balance between hard factual stuff and subjective, philosophical topics;" "As always, panels offered excellent overviews of the beat's major topics;" "Fantastic—as an environmental reporter at a small daily newspaper, this conference was a wonderful opportunity to rub shoulders with the best in the biz;" and "A good mix of indoor and outdoor sessions, as well as topical and vocational discussions."

Among the few complaints and many general suggestions were: "Somewhat disappointing compared to previous years, as it was harder to feel the conference coalesce;" "Impressed with caliber of speakers, but want more practical workshops;" "Need stronger moderators to maintain speakers' time limits and cut off personal attacks;" "Skip large panels and spread out the smaller workshops;" "Republicans' views needed to be represented;" "Conference suffered from lack of Hill staff and members of Congress;" and "Far too heavily weighted with Democrats, need more conservative voices."

The lack of political balance (missing GOP and/or Congressional representatives) was noted by several respondents. Conference organizers worked tirelessly in an effort to attract

Republican Congressional leaders, Governors, and Presidential candidates to our event. Indeed, the Friday afternoon plenary "What's New in Washington?" was supposed to a platform for the candidates and/or Congressional leaders. The candidates, all of whom were invited,

gave various excuses for not attending. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich was seriously considering attending for several months, but eventually turned us down owing to a scheduling conflict. Finally, the countless Majority leaders and committee chairs we invited turned us down, they said, because of the impending budget debate. Their collective absence was probably the conference organizers biggest disappointment.

In an effort to compensate for this hole, we pursued various conservative voices in the final days before the conference and managed (at considerable expense) to secure both LaVarr Webb, Deputy for Policy for Utah's Republican Governor Mike Leavitt, and former Republican Senator Malcolm Wallop.

Attendees really liked E.O. Wilson—several named him as their favorite speaker. Comments included: "An honor to hear him;" "Great brain food for lunch;" "I could listen to him for hours;" "The high point;" "Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful;" and "Pleasure to listen to the Darwin of our century."

On the other hand attendees were really turned off by ABC's John Stossel, though most of them praised the session he participated in ("Environmental Journalism Ethics: Are We Scaring the World to Death?"). Stossel elicited some seemingly emotionally charged negative responses. In all, 21 respondents wrote about this session, 12 of them specifically blasting Stossel with comments such as, "I was almost 'scared to death' by John Stossel—a lively session on egos;" "Stossel's conduct was not appropriate;" "Stossel is an egomaniac with a pedestrian mind—the topic was good, but he didn't deserve the stage;" "I could have done without Stossel's personal attacks on other panelists;" "Certainly lively, but

Conference

I didn't like Stossel's attack on Silbergeld;" and "Stossel didn't seem like a nice man—but the exchange was provocative."

At least one attendee saw this session differently: "The treatment of John Stossel by the audience was the low point of the conference. It was a good move by David Ropeik to apologize on the scene."

The opening plenary, "The Environment and the Mood of America," was well received—with 19 generally saying it was good, while four thought it was bad. Most respondents liked the diversity of views and the exchange between Carol Browner and Malcolm Wallop, and thought Michael Dukakis was a terrific moderator. However, several felt there were too many panelists and a couple thought that the topic was not useful.

As in previous conferences, the tours were popular—although attendees would like to be outdoors more, and to have SEJ members and/or local reporters leading

them (rather than PR people). The "Greenwashing" panel had the largest audience of all the concurrent sessions and received the most praise. We will likely do a follow-up session on this topic next year. The CEOs panel also was highly praised in the evaluations, though attendance was only about 50.

Audience size was very well dispersed among concurrent sessions this year, with a high of about 100 in "Greenwashing," a low of 25 in "New England Fisheries" and "Basic Reporting," and the rest of the sessions attracting 40 to 80 attendees. This is unlike past years, where some sessions would attract the bulk of attendees and other sessions were nearly empty.

This year's expanded computer sessions were also very popular with attendees. Comments include: "Excellent, I got my money's worth attending these;" "Invite NICAR back;" "Good handouts;" "Amy Gahrn really knows her stuff;"

"What an eye-opener, give me more;" and "Useful and a good chance to explore what's available."

All of the Walden Pond/Thoreau Institute sessions were also quite popular. We will probably have some similar sessions (authors' panel and environmental history) next year.

Finally, we just can't seem to find the right time or format for the annual membership meeting. In past years we would save one of the late afternoons for the meeting, but found that many members were "meetinged-out" by that time. This year we tried early morning, but attracted possibly the worst attendance yet. Perhaps next year we'll offer free cocktails.

Jay Letto was the Coordinator of SEJ's 1995 national conference and previous national conferences. He also is a freelance writer and conference planner based in White Salmon, Washington.



Photo by Charlotte Kidd

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt answers questions during a small group session with reporters

IFEJers: International journalists bring a tough perspective to Cambridge

By DWIGHT WORKER

M'hammed Rebah writes a weekly environmental column for *Le Matin* in Alger, Algeria. What does he believe his major problem is? Is it getting enough column space, or editorial support, or even censorship? No. It is getting killed. In the last three years M'hammed says that 40 journalists in Algeria have been killed by religious extremists—including four at his own paper.

I was a Spanish and French translator for some of our international journalists at the annual SEJ conference. I attended two international panels workshops and had some enjoyable and informative conversations with our guests. However, it seemed I never had enough time at our annual SEJ meeting—being surrounded by so many wonderful people and with such interesting panels happening simultaneously.

In Romania, journalist Dan Stoica says that there is no equivalent of the Freedom of Information Act. Environmental journalists are censored and sued for reporting—and they cannot legally obtain information to defend themselves. Other East European journalists said that just getting paid for their work is an accomplishment. When I asked Mike Anane of *The Triumph* (Ghana) what his most serious problems were, he did not mention the droughts, food shortages, migrations from the Sahel, or

even population growth. He answered, “World Bank policies.”

Darryl D'Monte of India voiced strong opposition to the Montreal protocols on CFC reduction. He stated that the reduction schedule was weighted in favor of “already-industrialized” countries. Manuel Satorre of the Philippines spoke articulately of how the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development had financed ill-conceived projects during the Marcos era. He said that all that remains of many of these projects is environmental devastation and massive international debt.

I often learned more from the international journalists after the panels were over. They too were having difficulty getting published.

A woman from France said that she thought that news sources were eliminating full-time positions and using more freelancers instead.

Valentin Thurn of Germany helps produce an environmental program for public TV in Germany. He said that with the advent of private television in Germany, his program time has been cut in half. There is pressure to compete with the “entertainment format” of private TV, and he must now sacrifice depth of coverage. Have we heard this before?

Masud Khan of Bangladesh said that the same news organi-

Cautious advice to U.S. environmental journalists

Based on my experience from living overseas for over six years, learning to speak several languages, and freelancing international environmental pieces, I have some thoughts on how American journalists can improve communications—and relations—with their colleagues from other parts of the world.

- We should speak English slowly and distinctly, without using slang, idiomatic expressions, or difficult words. It is enough to ask of our guests to speak basic English. We cannot expect them to speak like us. Always imagine yourself in a comparable situation. How would you be coping if everyone around you was speaking Spanish, or Russian? Also, keep in mind that it is embarrassing for someone to say that they do not understand what is being said to them. Therefore, do not assume that our international colleagues automatically understand what we are saying, even if they nod their heads and say that they do. I make a habit of periodically asking whomever I am with if they understand me.

- It is vital that we learn other languages, and that our children do too. International understanding is too important for us not to. I have found that when our guests discover a North American who actually speaks something other than English, they are pleasantly surprised. Taking the time to learn another language is a way of saying to others that they are important. International citizens often feel that we suffer from an extreme case of mono-cultural and mono-lingual disease. The good news is that, with some hard work, this is curable.

- We should be thoughtful when referring to nationalities.

At the SEJ conference, I heard two things that I think we all should be aware of. One SEJ member continued referring to our guests as “foreign” journalists. “International” would have been a more appropriate term. I also heard our members referring to ourselves as “Americans” in front of Central and South American journalists. Are they not also Americans? Amongst international company, I refer to myself as a ‘North American’ or a “citizen of the United States.” Central and South Americans sometimes are offended at our expropriation of the term “American,” although often they are too polite to mention it.

- We should be aware of, and accepting of, cultural differences. Cultures vary immensely. For instance, when I speak Swahili to an African man, we often hold hands. In sub-Saharan Africa, this is a proper show of friendship and brotherhood—it has none of the connotations that it would have in the U.S. However, to hold a woman’s hand in public in rural Africa could be considered inappropriate. What universals can we apply for other cultures? Smiles, for one. Everyone recognizes a smile and feels comfortable with it. There is no substitute for genuine curiosity about another’s culture and country. Asking questions about another’s home does wonders. You may be surprised at how much you will learn. It is my impression that Europeans generally know about 10 times as much about the U.S. as we know about them. With Africans, Japanese, and Chinese, I would estimate this ratio to be one-hundred to one.

zations pay much less to Bangladesh citizens than they do to internationals for the same work in his country.

Here are some informal impressions that I heard from our international guests. One, they universally loved the trip to Woods Hole. They were fascinated by the science and the international cooperation, and enjoyed the intellectual level of MIT and of Cambridge in general. Several complimented the quality and availability of the scientists on the panels. Many were honored that Vice-President Gore would show up. One was surprised that the visible security was not more intense. "And not a machine gun in sight!" she commented. The hors d'oeuvres were good, the alcohol bad (and expensive), and the meals satisfactory. Unfortunately, the Boston area was very expensive!

What complaints did I hear? One was about how we spoke English. Rapidly, in slang, and with the common U.S. assumption that everyone speaks like us (or ought to). A more serious complaint was about how few U.S. journalists attended the international sessions. At the International Journalists Roundtable, I counted only five people from the United States. Several journalists commented that this was sad, but typical of the U.S. mentality of just paying attention to our own affairs and thinking that we are the center of the universe. European journalists added that they also had a bad habit of just covering local issues.

Perhaps the most serious complaint that I heard from the international journalists came from those from what is called "the south." Many said that first-world environmental programs did not consider third-world human problems of poverty and environmental justice. Many felt that the journalists of the north were not acknowledging enough responsibility for the environmental damage inflicted upon them by multinationals and World Bank programs. They were saying that we "just didn't get it" when it came to their problems. Perhaps we have more to learn from our guests.

Dwight Worker, a member of SEJ, is a freelance journalist for publications such as E Magazine, and also does shorts for NPR and other radio programs.

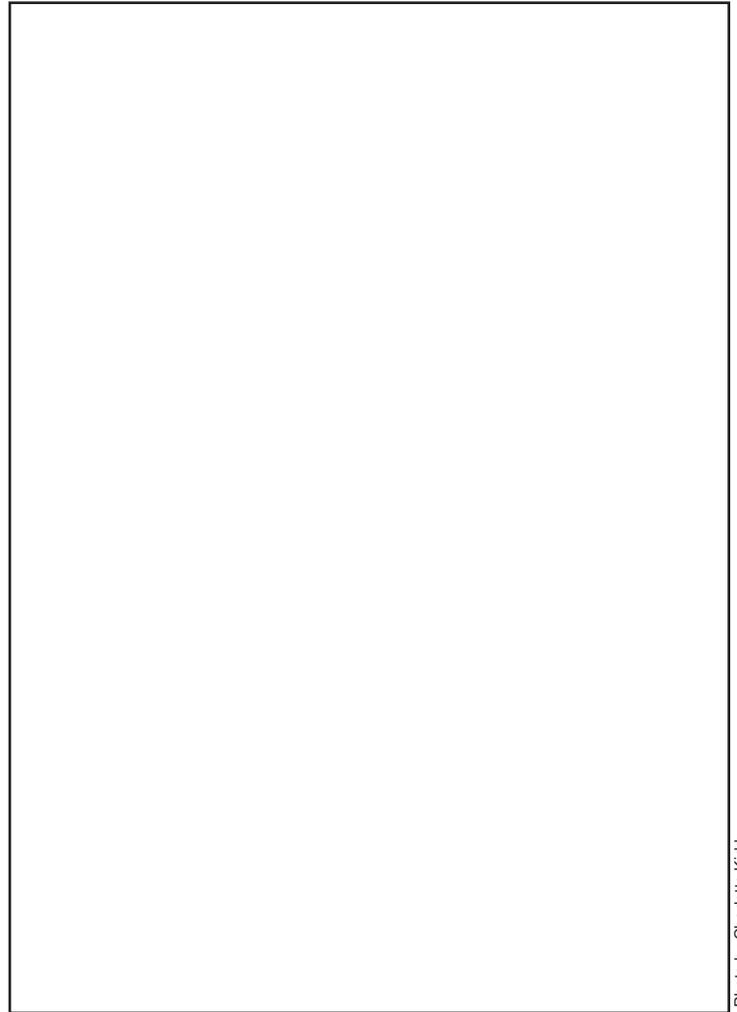


Photo by Charlotte Kidd

Louisa T. Molina (right), Nobel prize-winning research scientist in MIT's Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences converses with Austrian journalist Michael Lohmeyer of *Die Presse*.

Ghost...from page 19

Simultaneously, of course, we were forced to take the rest of the world seriously for the first time. Environmentalism was forced to transform itself into an idea that dealt with the most profound issues of wealth and of poverty. The W.T.P. (Wealth Transfer Protocols) negotiated with China and India were at the heart of foreign policy concerns for more than a decade, once those countries realized that demographic power (not to mention concentrations of coal reserves) gave them un-trumpable bargaining chips. I won't bother you with the details, and as we get closer to the present day you know them anyway.

Suffice it to say that by now we have come through the bottleneck, come through

the 50 years that saw maximum population, maximum toxic loading, maximum loss of ozone, maximum levels of extinction, and maximum combustion of fossil fuels.

The question we still have not answered, the question that now dominates our work as environmental journalists, is: how severely did that half century of stress degrade our physical resources? And how soon, if ever, will they bounce back to the levels we enjoyed when we first met as a professional organization.

It has been a bruising 50 years, and we must content ourselves with the knowledge that we had front-row seats at the great historical epoch of our time, that we have been what the war

correspondents were to an earlier age. A mixed blessing of course, because we've seen first hand the passing of many things we would like not to have seen pass away. But for journalists, it has been an exciting, powerful, and important time.

Bill McKibben is a freelance writer and author. His work has appeared in The Atlantic, New York Times, Natural History, and Audubon. His books include The End of Nature; Hope, Human and Wild; The Age of Missing Information; and The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job and the Scale of Creation.

Listserv aids nonfiction writers

Moderated list has over 500 subscribers in the first year

By JON FRANKLIN

When I was a young writer, it seemed to me that the worst thing about my condition was the isolation. Lip service aside, few newspapers had more than one seriously committed writer, coaches generally were considered to be remedial, and writers' groups usually were composed of folks who wanted to talk art. Even when we had a serious writers' group, as we once did on *The Evening Sun*, we were all at about the same level and nobody knew the important secrets.

So when the Internet evolved to the point that writers started to get online (and I wanted an excuse to play with the machinery), establishing a writer's discussion group seemed the natural thing to do.

Quality nonfiction writing is a craft that requires serious study—that's why few environmental journalists write as well as John McPhee. Professional chemists, astronomers, and other scientific specialties all have had serious discussion lists—so why shouldn't nonfiction writers?

The surprising thing about setting up an electronic discussion for nonfiction writers was how easy it was. I happened to mention my embryonic idea to the University of Oregon Journalism school's computer guy, Mick Westrick. The first thing I knew, I was explaining it to someone over in the university's computing department. I mentioned that I might name it something like "Writer-L", which at the time matched the conventional format for discussion lists.

In hindsight, there must have been a thousand better names, but I thought all of this was theoretical. Then, suddenly, a message came from the computer center that Writer-L was up, running, and ready to do my bidding. Just like that, I was committed.

Writer-L is different from most Internet discussion lists in that it is moderated. Most lists are totally automated; members send what they want to post to the list address, where it is duplicated and sent out to all subscribers. Writer-L, however, is moderated—it has a "master of ceremonies" sitting at the middle of the system, keeping a finger (or a thumb) on

things. All posts come to me, and I edit them and post them to the list.

Our boilerplate welcome message explains that Writer-L is devoted to the discussion of feature writing, explanatory journalism, literary journalism, and the high-level reportage that generally is associated with such writing. The obvious advantage of a moderated list is that we don't get off the subject. We are probably the only list on the net—and certainly the only journalistic list—that has basically ignored the OJ trial, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Unabomber. Very little of our discussion is about the Internet or computers.

So far, Writer-L has about 520 subscribers. In first the year of its existence, the list has featured ongoing, in-depth, and sometimes heated discussions on subjects ranging from cleaning up quotes to the nature of journalistic accuracy and its relationship (if any) to truth. We have critiqued (and complained about) the current state of journalism, and have speculated about its future. We had one long, heated discussion over the legitimacy of sports writing and whether the concept of "literature" had anything to do with subject matter.

Along the way we have posted a number of high-quality (and some not-so-high-quality) examples of newspaper journalism. One of these was a series from *The Oregonian* about the drunk-driving trial of a man who ran down and killed several people near Portland. These posts, and the critiques they provoke, make the various fragments of our profession stand out in sharp relief. To judge from personal e-mail I get, a lot of writers value the glimpse Writer-L provides into the minds of senior journalists.

With the passage of time, I started getting compliments on the editorial quality of the list—especially the general absence of messages that are childish, off topic, or recreationally argumentative. Such comments often are accompanied by questions about how much time I spend editing this stuff.

The truth is, not much. The other truth is that no, in fact, I don't deny many people the use of the forum. Occasionally I cut off a thread that's gone on too long, or one that's off topic. Not long ago, I took the hook to a line of discussion that had gotten us off into Zen and New Age religion.

For the most part, however, my presence here in the center of the web is all it takes to keep folks focused. If I refuse to post a message, I always explain my decision to the author. So far almost everyone has taken refusals in good grace. I only recall one situation in which my refusal to post an accusatory diatribe provoked real acrimony in the other party.

Like the Internet itself, Writer-L is a new medium unlike any with which I'm familiar. It is like a magazine in some ways, and in other ways it is not. It is newspaperish, in that subscribers expect to get it in their electronic mailbox every morning—but it's not a newspaper.

I do wish there had been something like this for my generation. If nothing else, Writer-L makes it a lot less lonely out there.

Jon Franklin is a journalism professor at the University of Oregon. He won two Pulitzer prizes while writing for The Evening Sun in Baltimore, and is the author of Writing for Story.

Subscribing to Writer-L

To join Writer-L, please send your application, in the form below (including all of the X's), to: jonfrank@darkwing.uoregon.edu

In the body of your message, type only:

Subscribe WRITER-L email@address.whatever.com

XXXLastname, FirstnameXXX XXXemail@address.whatever.comXXX

XXXThis block contains professional bio material for the subscriber list, to be made available to all subscribers. Provide no more than 3 lines. Please close with: XXX

New web sites provide free newsletter subscriptions

By **RUSSELL CLEMINGS**

Since the World Wide Web exploded into the public consciousness about a year ago, new sites have appeared at the rate of . . . well, nobody really knows the rate. Let's just say it's very rapid. How can one keep track of the best of these new sites? Here are two newsletters, available for free via electronic mail, that can help guide you through the chaff:

- *Internet Newsbrief*: a weekly newsletter from the headquarters library of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, provides a sampling of new or useful Internet resources for EPA staff and other environmental professionals. Recent issues have focused on subjects covered in EPA's own sprawling web page (<http://www.epa.gov>), as well as other government and private sites, such as a page on the ISO 14000 international environmental standards effort (<http://www.iso14000.com>).

To subscribe to *Internet Newsbrief*, send an e-mail message to: listserv@unixmail.rtpnc.epa.gov. In the body of the message type only: subscribe INTERNETNB-L followed by your first and last names.

(For example: subscribe INTERNETNB-L Russ Clemings)

- *The Island Press Eco-Compass*: published monthly by the well-known environmental press, *Eco-Compass* focuses not only on web sites, but also via e-mail, Gopher, and computerized environmental bulletin board systems. One recent issue had a section on the Oregon Land Use Information Center (http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~pppm/landuse/land_use.html) which was described as "a virtual primer on effective land-use planning and growth management." A section of each issue is devoted to a single topic. A calendar of ecological events is also included.

To subscribe to *The Island Press Eco-Compass*, send e-mail to: majordomo@igc.apc.org. In the body of your message type only: subscribe islandpress-l. Back issues are stored at the Island Press web site:

(<http://www.islandpress.com>).

Russell Clemings is environment writer for the Fresno (Ca.) Bee, and recently was elected to the SEJ Board. He also constructed and manages SEJ's web page.

Real-life legal thriller

A CIVIL ACTION

by **Jonathan Harr**

Random House, 1995, \$25.00 (hard cover)

Reviewed by **GEORGE HOMSY**

On vacation, about a month before I read *A Civil Action*, I ripped my way through another lawyer book. That one was a thrilling account of an attorney prosecuting the toughest murder trial of his career. Despite its predictable ending, it was a page turner. Murder, treason, and high-level government corruption make for exciting reading.

But that was fiction. In reality, lawyers (as most professionals) toil long hours for few moments of excitement. Could a writer make real-life law a thriller?

Jonathan Harr did. The achievement is even more incredible given that his book focuses on a Superfund case in Woburn, Massachusetts.

In the mid-1960s, the city of Woburn opened town wells G and H. At first, complaints by residents about the taste of the water were dismissed by city officials as due to high mineral concentrations. Then, in the early 1970s, neighborhood children started getting leukemia.

A Civil Action opens with young Jimmy Anderson's heart-wrenching story of leukemia diagnosis. The Anderson family, who would play a prominent role in the infamy of the Woburn case, suffered the

first of many losses in the working-class neighborhood. What many saw as an alarming number of cancers began occurring in adults as well as children.

Eventually, the residents came to believe that hazardous waste from two nearby factories (owned by W.R. Grace and Beatrice Foods) had migrated into the drinking water wells. Scientists would later claim that even families that drank bottled water were susceptible to the carcinogens—which could enter the body through pores in the skin during showers.

However, proving that the companies were to blame was difficult. Toxic pollution is a complicated area of the law. As shown in *A Civil Action*, such cases drag on for years and breed scientific uncertainties—which are quickly seized upon by lawyers eager to protect their clients. (Incidentally, one goal of rewriting the federal Superfund law is to limit the flow of money to lawyers who, many people say, eat up the lion's share of cleanup funds.)

Nevertheless, a lawyer is the hero of *A Civil Action*. Jan Schlichtmann is portrayed as an attorney with a sense of justice. At the time he takes the Woburn case, he is undefeated in the courtroom and holds a record for the largest wrongful-death settlement in Massachusetts history. He believes the Woburn case can bring him fame and fortune, as well as send shock waves through the boardrooms of

corporate polluters.

But the Woburn case is unlike any Schlichtmann has ever tackled. In the end, his prophecy proves accurate as the case leaves Schlichtmann bankrupt—both financially and emotionally.

A Civil Action is more than a thriller. Harr sets out to indict the civil justice system. He believes the courts are lopsided in favor of the rich. The portrayal of that inequity is the main source of tension in the book, as Schlichtmann goes up against huge corporations whose lawyers are respected professionals with large staffs and seemingly unlimited resources.

The author's emotional investment is obvious. In the closing notes of the book, Harr details the huge amount of time he spent with Schlichtmann and the Woburn families. He constructs a passionate case for the plaintiffs. That's not to say the companies' arguments are poorly presented. Harr, however, spends few words building the same kind of sympathy for the corporations or their employees.

A Civil Action, an exemplary piece of literary nonfiction, is a fast read in a style more environmental authors should emulate. It weaves science and law into an educational (yet thrilling) narrative that will keep you hooked from beginning to end.

George Homsy is a producer of National Public Radio's Living on Earth.

Society of Environmental Journalists**Minutes of the fifth Annual Meeting of the membership of SEJ****October 28, 1995**

SEJ's FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING, held at Kresge Auditorium on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Emilia Askari, SEJ president.

After welcoming comments, Askari introduced SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke, who offered a briefing on the financial and organizational health of the society. Parke said the society was very healthy but not wealthy, having operating reserves of six to nine months. Many non-profit groups don't have the luxury of reserves, operating month-to-month. Of the society's \$300,000 annual budget, one half is dedicated to the annual conference. Parke noted that 60 percent of the society's funding comes from grants from nonprofit foundations, and she is courting media companies for support. SEJ does not accept money from special interest groups of any type. She said that the organization's monthly financial reports are available upon request to any member.

Askari introduced Julie Edelson, one of SEJ's founders, who was departing the board. She also recognized outgoing board member Wevonneda Minis. Both chose not to seek re-election.

Askari turned the floor over to Kevin Carmody, board secretary, to conduct the annual election. Because 80 active members had cast absentee ballots, an automatic quorum of 10 percent of the active membership (69 members) existed for the board election. In the event other matters requiring a quorum were brought to the floor at the Annual Meeting, there was an attempt to certify a quorum, but it was determined by a show of hands that only 59 active members were present. Carmody said that a quorum could be established if, by a show of hands later in the meeting, 10 or more active members were among the latecomers.

Candidates for the regular seats on the SEJ Board of Directors were introduced and given two minutes to make candidacy statements. The nine candidates were Russ Clemings of the Fresno Bee, Marla Cone of the Los Angeles Times, Bowman Cox of Pasha Publication's Defense Cleanup newsletter, Erin Hays of ABC News, Gary Polakovic of the Riverside (Calif.) Press-Enterprise, Sara Thurin Rollin of BNA's Chemical Regulation Reporter

and Daily Environment Report, David Ropeik of Boston's WCVB-TV, freelance reporter Nancy Shute and Angela Swafford of the Miami Herald's Spanish-language edition.

For the first time, both academic and associate members were able to elect a non-voting board member to represent each membership category. Those candidates were also offered the opportunity to make a two-minute statement. The candidates for the ex-officio position representing academic members were JoAnn Valenti of the Brigham Young University faculty and Amy Seirer, a student at Drake University and former SEJ staff intern. The only candidate for the associate member position was Adlai Amor of the Center for Foreign Journalists.

There were no bylaws amendments on the ballot. Ballots were distributed using lists of members who had not voted absentee. Each of the three membership classes voted only for their own representatives. A volunteer election committee including Chris Rigel of the SEJ staff, Perry Beeman of the Des Moines Register and Heather Dewar of Knight Ridder's Washington Bureau then retired to count the ballots.

Vice President Rae Tyson opened a discussion about how the society determines membership eligibility and how it deals with members and applicants who do not clearly meet membership criteria. Tyson said that the society's bylaws and the board interpretation of them has not changed since SEJ's founding: that the board recently reaffirmed the founders' vision that SEJ is an organization of journalists and educators and that, under the bylaws, any involvement in public relations activities makes someone ineligible for any category of membership. The gray area, Tyson said, involves the associate category, which was created to allow membership by freelancers and others who might not derive the majority of their income from journalism, but whose contribution to the public discourse warrants their participation in SEJ. The criteria for associate membership was intentionally left somewhat vague, with decisions on applications to be made by the membership committee or its designee. Tyson said that a review of the membership has revealed some inconsistency in the way some of those decisions have been

made, and a few cases in which people have intentionally or unintentionally misrepresented themselves to become members. Tyson said the board and staff are reviewing the matter to determine the best way to keep the process consistent and fair, while protecting the society's integrity. Tyson invited questions and comments.

Kris Thoenke, who serves on the board of the Outdoor Writers Association, said his group requires a membership committee to act on each application and has a process in which current members can comment on the whether an applicant deserves membership. Tyson noted that SEJ bylaws offer due process, in which someone denied membership or switched to a different category can appeal the decision up to the Board of Directors. Removal of a member requires a vote of the board. A staff writer for South Carolina Sea Grant, who did not offer his name, said the line for Sea Grant staff and freelancers is fuzzy, and asked if SEJ could consider the quality of someone's writing to determine if someone was primarily a journalist. Tyson responded that judging quality of writing would take the society down a dangerous path. Will Nixon, former editor of E Magazine, said that under current criteria, SEJ might be losing people who are very good journalists. Whitman Bassow of Tomorrow Magazine said 1. Everyone needs to remember that SEJ is not an accrediting organization. 2. The world will little remember, once you're gone, whether you were an active or an associate member of SEJ. 3. The SEJ Board needs to be tough if it is to protect the integrity of the organization, and must make clear whatever it stands for. Stephen Wittman of the Sea Grant program at the University of Wisconsin said that as employees of a public university, Sea Grant staff are not allowed to take sides in a partisan debate, and for most, their public relations functions, like giving tours, are incidental to their journalistic work. Tyson concluded the discussion by stating that one of the reasons SEJ is reviewing the matter so carefully is the dilemma posed by the duties of the Sea Grant staff.

Carmody conducted another show of hands to certify a quorum. It confirmed at least 10 of the latecomers to the meeting were active members, and a quorum was

so certified.

Askari opened to floor to member comments, other business and announcements. Paul MacClennan of the Buffalo News said the society had grown to the point that there is a need for a system of better overall accountability for society affairs. He said he would like to have the society distribute a list of board member attendance and information on when terms expire. He said he was pleased to hear about the availability of monthly financial statements, but was concerned by the use color-coded badges at the conference. Adam Glenn of Tufts University thanked the board for producing what Glenn termed a uniformly superb conference, but he expressed concern about the loss of social time on Saturday night. Stewart Leavenworth of the Raleigh News & Observer praised the conference quality, but expressed concern about conferences being more expensive to attend each year. Carmody said that the 1996 conference at Washington University in St. Louis would offer low-cost air connections from many parts of the county and lodging at about half the cost in Boston. Gary Lee of the Washington Post complimented the organization for way the conference fosters camaraderie among journalists from across the nation and world. Board member Amy Gahrn said the society owed a lot to Russ Clemings for his work in setting up some of SEJ's online services, including the web page, and for coordinating the computer-training programs at the conference.

Carmody announced that the election committee had not completed its tabulations and the results of the elections would be announced during the luncheon featuring E.O. Willson. As later announced, those elected as regular board members were: Russ Clemings, Marla Cone, Erin Hayes, David Ropeik and Angela Swafford. Because one person would fill an unexpired two-year term, the five electees would later draw straws to determine who would serve the shorter term. Academic members elected JoAnn Valenti to fill the three-year ex-officio seat, while Adlai Amor was elected by the associate membership to be its ex-officio representative.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

— Submitted by Kevin Carmody, Board secretary

JANUARY

24-27. **Annual Ecological Farming Conference.** Asilomar, CA. Contact: Committee for Sustainable Agriculture, PO Box 838, San Martin, CA 95046-0839. Ph: (408) 778-7366.

31. **Air and Water: 25 Years of Environmental Protection in New York City** (sponsored by the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection, Council on the Environment of NYC and Assoc. of the Bar of the City of New York). New York, NY. Contact: Assoc. of the Bar. Ph: (212) 382-6724.

FEBRUARY

1-3. **International Symposium on Deep Shelf Fisheries** (with sessions on the status of deep stocks and the need to manage them). Miami, FL. Contact: John Merriner or Jennifer Potts, conference organizers, National Marine Fisheries Service, SEFSC, Beaufort Laboratory, Beaufort, NC 28516. E-mail: jpotts@hatteras.bea.nmfs.gov

4-6. **Internat'l Waterfowl Symposium** (sessions on status and outlook for America's waterfowl, and on species management in context of how wetlands are protected). Memphis, TN. Contact: Mickey Heitmeyer, Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, Ducks Unlimited Inc., 1 Waterfowl Way, Memphis, TN 38120. Fax: (901) 758-3850.

5-16. **Habitat II Prepcom** (third preparatory committee meeting for the next major UN environment conference, which will focus on human settlements, June 3-14 in Istanbul, Turkey). New York City, NY. Contact: U.S. Network for Habitat: Ph: (202) 879-4286. Alternate contact: the United Nations: Ph: (212) 963-4200; Fax: (212) 963-4556.

8-13. **Annual Meeting: American Association for the Advancement of Science** (sessions on farmland preservation, stratospheric ozone depletion by halogens, loss of biodiversity, global change and coral reefs, and analyses of health and enviro risks from radiation contamination in Chelyabinsk, Russia—the most radioactively contaminated city in the world). Baltimore, MD. Contact: Ellen Cooper, AAAS, 1333 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20005. Ph: (202) 326-6440; Fax: (202) 789-0455; e-mail: ecooper@aaas.org

13-14. **Corporate Environmental, Health, and Safety Conference** (sponsored by Arthur D. Little and the Conference Board). Planned sessions: how industry managers can break down the "green wall" so executives can understand the business benefits of good enviro management; examining where government, industry, and the public have not found common ground and what executives can do about it; and measuring a company's return on investments in environmental, health, and safety programs. New York City, NY. Contact: Carol Courter, Conference Board, 845 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10022. Ph: (212) 339-0232; Fax: (212) 980-7014; e-mail: courter@conference-board.org

19-21. **Annual Winter Toxicology Forum** (with sessions on EPA views on Delaney Cause reform, status of pesticide-reform legislation, toxicity analyses on the MTBE gasoline additive, and FDA's position on assessments of *in utero* exposures to carcinogens). Washington, DC. Contact: Charlene A. Petty, Toxicology Forum, 1575 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC 20005. Ph: (202) 659-0030 Fax: (202) 789-7594.

21-24. **Seventh American Forest Congress** (the first since 1975, this Congress is intended to "develop a shared vision, a set of principles, and recommendations for forest policy, research, and management needs for the protection and sustainable management of America's forests"). Washington, DC. Contact: Dan Smith, American Forests, 1516 P St. NW, Washington, DC 20005. Ph: (202) 667-3300 ext. 208; e-mail: dsmith@amfor.org; WWW: http://www.cis.yale.edu/forest_congress

22-23. **International Conference on Pregnant Women in the Workplace: sound and vibration exposures.** (sponsored by University of Florida College of Medicine). Gainesville, FL. Contact: RM Abrams, Dept. of OB-GYN, University of Florida, PO Box 100294, Gainesville, FL 32610-0294. Ph: (904) 392-3179; Fax: (904) 392-4955; e-mail: rabrams.obgyn@obgyn.ufl.edu

25-29. **WM '96—A conference on nuclear wastes and mixed nuclear and hazardous wastes** (Sessions on what to do with plutonium, enviro remediation of defense sites, siting issues for waste repositories, and more.) Tucson, AZ. Contact: WM Symposia Inc., 245 S. Plumer, Ste. 19, Tucson, AZ 85719. Ph: 520-624-8573; Fax: 520-792-3993.

Calendar

26-27. **Urban Conservation 2000: a conference to evaluate urban erosion control and water management innovations** (with sessions on local, state, and national perspectives; as well as establishing standards for erosion and stormwater controls). Seattle, WA. Contact: Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 NE Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA 50021-9764. Ph: 800-THE-SOIL ext. 18; Fax: (515) 289-1227; WWW home page: <http://www.netins.net/showcase/swcs/>

28-March 1. **Emerging Solutions to Volatile Organic Chemicals and Air Toxics Control**. Clearwater, FL. Contact: Linda Stein, Air and Waste Management Association, 1 Gateway Center, 3rd Fl., Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Ph: (412) 232-3444 ext. 3126; Fax: (412) 232-3450.

MARCH

4-6. **The first international Solar Electric Buildings Conference and Renew '96** (the first of this pair of energy conservation meetings that piggyback on one another promises to premier the findings of a five-year International Energy Agency program examining photovoltaics used in buildings). Boston. Contact: NESEA, 50 Miles St., Greenfield, MA 01301. Ph: (413) 774-6051; Fax: (413) 774-6053.

5-7. **International Zebra Mussel and Other Aquatic Nuisance Species Conference** (sponsored by US Coast Guard, US Army Corps of Engineers, Canadian Coast Guard, and Detroit Edison). Dearborn, MI. Contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, 567 Roy St., Pembroke, Ontario, Canada K8A-6R6. Ph: (800) 868-8776; Fax: (613)732-3386; e-mail: profedje@renc.igs.net

10-13. **Environmentally Friendly Polymers Workshop**. Charleston, SC. Contact: Diane Morrill, Polymer Chemistry, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1103 Hahn Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0344. Ph: (703) 231-3029.

12-16. **Solar Energy Industries Association annual meeting**. Palm Springs, CA. Contact: Michelle Birkenstock, SEIA, 122 C. St. NW, 4th Fl, Washington, DC 20001. Ph: (202) 383-2600; Fax: (202) 383-2670; e-mail: 71263.377@compuserve.com

19-22. **National Hydropower Association annual conference** (with sessions on economics and new technologies). Washington, DC. Contact: Chris Gordon, National Hydropower Assn., 122 C St. NW, 4th Fl., Washington, DC 20001. Ph: (202) 383-2530; Fax: (202) 383-2531.

24-28. **American Chemical Society annual meeting** (sessions on estrogen-mimicking pollutants, evaluating products for biodegradability, cleaning up petroleum-contaminated environments, and assaying pesticide exposures to workers and consumers). New Orleans, LA. Contact: Marv Coyner, ACS, 1155 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036-4899. Ph: (202) 872-4451; Fax: (202) 872-4370; e-mail: mdc93@acs.org

26-29. **Globe 96: Developing the Business of the Environment**. Vancouver, B.C. Contact: Globe Foundation, World Trade Center, 504-999 Canada Place, Vancouver, B.C, Canada V6C-3E1. Ph: (604) 775-1994.

APRIL

3-4. **The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements annual meeting**: Implications of New Data on Radiation Cancer Risk. Arlington, VA. Contact: W. Roger Ney,

Executive Director, NCRP, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 800, Bethesda, MD 20814-3095. Ph: (301) 657-2652; Fax: (301)907-8768.

23-24. **Chromium Symposium sponsored by the Industrial Health Foundation** (with sessions on reproductive toxicity, environmental monitoring, and human studies). Arlington, VA. Contact: Marianne C. Kaschak, IHC, 34 Penn Circle W., Pittsburgh, PA 15206-3612. Ph: (412) 363-6600; Fax: (412) 363-6605.

26-May 3. **American Occupational Health Conference** (with sessions on health effects of acute exposures to hazardous chemicals, aircraft air quality, lung diseases from minerals and artificial fibers, and the role of the environment in diseases of the body's airways). San Antonio, TX. Contact: Kay Coyne, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 55 W. Seegers Rd., Arlington Hts., IL 60005. Ph: (708) 228-6850 ext 152; Fax: (708) 228-1856.

FELLOWSHIPS

Jan. 31 deadline for U.S. journalists applying to the Nieman Fellowship for Environmental Journalists at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Fellows pursue graduate and undergraduate studies at the university over the academic year. The program is open to journalists with at least three years of professional media experience; and who are full-time staff or freelance environmental journalists working for newspapers, news services, magazines, or broadcast outlets "of broad public interest." A stipend of tuition plus \$25,000 a year will be provided. Contact: Program Officer, Nieman Foundation, 1 Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Ph: (617) 495-2237; Fax: (617) 495-8976.

March 1 deadline for the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship at the MIT. Only full-time staff or freelance journalists with at least three years of experience covering science, technology, or environmental issues will be considered for this program, which lasts one academic year and offers a stipend of \$26,000 and a relocation allowance up to \$2,000. Contact: Victor McElheny, director, Knight Science Journalism Fellowships, MIT, Bldg. 9, Room 315, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph: (617) 253-3442; Fax: (617) 258-8100; e-mail: mshenry@mit.edu

The Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) will be offering a limited number of science writing fellowships lasting one to eight weeks, summer, 1996. Support covers tuition, housing, library use, and transportation. Equipment may be available for broadcasters wishing to film. Fellows will participate in a hands-on course where they will isolate and sequence DNA, learn polymerase chain reaction techniques, and study chromatography and electron microscopy. Contact Pam Clapp, (508) 548-3705.

Another offering from MBL specifically for environmental reporters may begin in summer 1996. At least one fellow will go to the North Slope of Alaska for the Arctic ecosystems research at MBL's year-round center there. Also under consideration are similar programs at field sites in Brazil and Sweden. Journalists with an interest in environmental problems interested in these field station opportunities should state this when requesting an application. Contact Pam Clapp, (508) 548-3705.

Woods Hole Science Writing Program offers a week-long seminar on nature and science writing March 17—22. Contact Bill Sargent, (617) 242-3752.



Society of Environmental Journalists Application for Membership

Instructions:

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

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

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

Name _____ Employer or University _____

Publication or Department _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Title _____ Date of Application _____

Home Phone * _____ Primary Area of Employment (*Check one only*):

Work Phone _____ Author Educator Freelancer Government Magazi

Fax _____ News service Newsletter Newspaper Nonprofit Photogr

E-mail address _____ Publisher Radio Student Television Univers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Payment Information:

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



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

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

Briefly describe duties _____

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

If yes, provide details and dates: _____

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

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

If yes, for whom? _____

To Be Completed by Applicants for Active or Associate Membership.

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

Yes No

If yes, what organization or movement? _____

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

advertising paid subscriptions membership dues other

If "other", please specify: _____

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

Please complete the following with as much detail as possible

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

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

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

To Be Completed by All Applicants:

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

Signature

Date

Office Use Only

Status Assignment: _____

Date of Acceptance: _____

Notes

New Members

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from September 25 through December 15. Memberships recorded after December 15 will appear in *SEJournal* Volume 6, Number 1.

Alabama

- Emily Roane (active), News & Public Affairs, Ala. Public TV, Montgomery

California

- Lisa Owens-Viami (academic), Science Writing, San Francisco State University, Richmond
- Lawrence Schneider (academic), Department of Journalism, California State University, Northridge, Northridge
- Virginia Velasquez Cruz (associate), Production/Operations, KTVU-TV, Oakland

Colorado

- Sarah E. Asmus (academic), Fort Collins
- Sarah Gilbert (academic), University of Colorado, Boulder

District of Columbia

- Joseph A. Davis (associate), *Environment Writer*, Environmental Health Center
- Kurt Kleiner (active), *New Scientist Magazine*
- Dena Leibman (associate), *Friends of the Earth*
- Meg Walker (active), *Federal Times*, Army Times Publishing Co.
- Daniel Whitten (active), *Environmental Compliance Tool Kit*, Thompsons Publishing Group

Florida

- Louis F. Misselhorn (active), *Florida Today*, Melbourne
- Jane Tolbert-Rouchaleau (academic), Humanities Department, Fla Institute of Technology, Melbourne Beach

Georgia

- Jon Entine (active), Atlanta

Hawaii

- Robert Loy (active), News Department, KGMB (CBS), Honolulu

Illinois

- Amanda E. Doyle (academic), Environmental Economics Dept., University of Illinois, Springfield
- Stevenson Swanson (active), *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago

Maryland

- Thomas M. Koval (associate), *Protection and Measurements*, National Council on Radiation, Bethesda
- Emmanuel F. Wongibe (academic), College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park

Massachusetts

- Peter A. A. Berle (active), *Environment Show*, Nat'l Productions-WAMC Public Radio, Stockbridge
- Karen Klinger (active), UPI, Cambridge
- Mark Kramer (active), *Boston Globe*, Boston

Michigan

- Gillian J. Klucas (academic), Department of Communication, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Minnesota

- Norman C. Erickson (associate), *Rochester Post-Bulletin*, Rochester

New Hampshire

- Michael Argue (academic), Environmental Studies, Antioch New England Graduate School, Keene
- Elizabeth Maguire (academic), Environmental Communications, Antioch New England Graduate School, East Alstead

New York

- Bob Aglow (active), *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, ABC News, Bronxville
- Francesca Lyman (assoc.), Bronxville

- Carol Milano (associate), Brooklyn
- David Seideman (associate), *Audubon Magazine*, New York
- Trisha M. Voner (academic), Newhouse School of Communications, Syracuse University, Syracuse

Ohio

- Gene Mapes (academic), Environmental and Plant Biology, Ohio University, Athens

Pennsylvania

- Suzette Parmley (active), *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia
- Patricia A. Wittig (assoc.), Kutztown

Texas

- Jeffrey S. Guillory (academic), *Texas Shores Magazine*, Texas A&M University Sea Grant, The Woodlands
- Jim Hiney (academic), *Texas Shores Magazine*, Texas A&M University Sea Grant Program, Bryan

Vermont

- Christine T. Corder (academic), School of Natural Resources, University of Vermont, Burlington

Virginia

- Curtis Runyan (active), *Greenwire*, American Political Network, Alexandria

International Canada

- Jill McWhinnie (associate), *RCO Policy Bulletin/Update*, Recycling Council of Ontario, Toronto

Hungary

- Jeff Gailus (associate), *The Bulletin*, Reg. Env Cntr, Cntrl/East Europe, Budapest

Mexico

- Soledad Moline (academic), Department of Communications, University Iberoamericana, Mexico

Green Beat Correspondents

Contribute to Green Beat

The Green Beat is designed as an idea exchange for environmental journalists and educators. It relies on information submitted by reporters about important issues, outstanding coverage, and developments in environmental education and the communications profession on a state-by-state basis. To submit ideas or copies of series for possible mention in The Green Beat, contact the SEJ correspondent for the appropriate state(s). They are:

Alabama — Sean Reilly, *Anniston Star* Montgomery Bureau, 1621 Deatsville Hwy., Millbrook, AL 36054, (205) 264-8711.

Alaska — Vacant.

Arizona and New Mexico — Tony Davis at the *Albuquerque Tribune*, P.O. Drawer T, Albuquerque, NM 87103, (505) 823-3625, fax (505) 823-3689.

Arkansas — David Kern at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, P.O. Box 2221, Little Rock, AK 72203, (501) 378-3862.

California:

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

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

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

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

Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts — Bob Wyss at the *Providence Journal*, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902, (401) 737-3000.

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

Florida:

North Florida — Bruce Ritchie at the *Gainesville Sun*, P.O. Box 147147, Gainesville, FL 32614, (904) 374-5087.

South Florida — William Howard at the *Palm Beach Post*, 2751 S. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach FL, 33405, (407) 820-4417.

Georgia and South Carolina — Ron Chepsiuk, 782 Wofford St., Rock Hill, SC 29730, (803) 366-5440.

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

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

Illinois — John Wasik at *Consumers Digest*, P.O. Box 51, Wauconda, IL, 60684, (302) 275-3590.

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

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

Kentucky — Vacant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nevada — Mary Manning at the *Las Vegas Sun*, 800 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, (702) 259-4065 or Jon Christiansen of *High Country News*, 6185

Franktown Road, Carson City, NV 89704, (702) 885-2023.

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

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

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

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

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

Texas and Oklahoma:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wisconsin — Chuck Quirnbach of Wisconsin Public Radio, 111 E. Kilbourn Ave., #1060, Milwaukee, WI 53202, (414) 271-8686 or (608) 263-7985.

Please note that some states are vacant. If you are interested in being a Green Beat correspondent, call Kevin Carmody at (312) 229-2814

CALIFORNIA

► *Los Angeles Daily News* reporter Tony Knight wrote about Miller Brewing Co.'s fight against plans by at least two water districts in the Los Angeles area to recharge aquifers with reclaimed sewage water—including one aquifer from which the company's Irwindale plant draws its water. Environmentalists fear if the company is successful, plans for future water-conserving methods would be in jeopardy. For copies, call Knight at (818) 713-3769.

COLORADO

► Colorado's two major newspapers continue a Jekyll-and-Hyde approach to covering major environmental stories. *Denver Post* reporter Mark Obmascik got wind of a proposal to sell off national forest lands that are currently leased to the ski areas before it hit the national news; consequently the story was given the top spot in page one coverage on September 18, another front page the next day, and two inside as the proposal was dropped on Sept. 22 due to public outrage. Congressional leaders revived the bill as a rider to an appropriations bill within days. But it was again killed in November. The *Rocky Mountain News* ran one article on Sept. 21 when the plan appeared headed for defeat. Likewise, the *Post* virtually ignored a story in late August when the *Rocky Mountain News* gave top placement to a wire service story on massive cyanide spill at a Guyana mine that was partially owned by a Denver mining company. The *News* ran several follow-up stories, pointing to both the company's involvement in the mine and its links to the former owner of the Summitville mine in southern Colorado, which suffered a similar disaster in 1990. The *Post*, however, continues to give major coverage to environmental changes being proposed in Congress, while the same stories barely rate a mention in the *News*. For more information, call Ron Baird at the *Colorado Daily*, (303) 443-6272.

► After a strongly worded editorial in the *Post* chided Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell in September to support native people in Alaska and Canada by voting against oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, he

received an estimated 2,000 phone calls on the subject and voted against his party in committee. He later changed his vote back to the party line, blaming the "phone-banking tactics" of the Sierra Club for the switch.

CONNECTICUT

► Add Connecticut to the states where concern is rising over the use of reformulated gasoline, and one fuel additive in particular—methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE). Residents of Alaska, New Jersey, and Wisconsin have all complained of health problems which they say are linked to the cleaner burning fuel. Scientists and the EPA have not established a definite connection. The issue came to Connecticut in August, eight months after reformulated gasoline had been introduced, when a chapter of Oxy-Busters (an activist organization first begun in New Jersey) was created and began pressing for the elimination of MTBE in the fuel. For more information, contact Dan Jones, *Hartford Courant*, (203) 241-6200.

FLORIDA

► The Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* showed how two years of heavy rains are damaging tree islands in the Everglades—a barely noticed side effect of South Florida's man-made flood control system. Deer, raccoons, and other animals depend on the tree islands for food. Large trees killed by flooding may take generations to replace.

For more information, call reporter Robert McClure at (305) 356-4597.

► The *Palm Beach Post* used Florida Power & Light Co.'s Riviera Beach plant to demonstrate that regulators continue to allow "grandfathered-in" power plants to emit twice as much pollution-laden smoke as newer plants. State officials said they have not tried to impose the stricter new standards on old plants because they fear legal opposition from permit holders. For more information, call reporter William Howard at (407) 820-4417.

► Despite efforts in Congress to eliminate the Toxic Release Inventory, the federal database remains a useful tool for journalists. Associated Press offered a five-part "Toxic Troubles" series in November examining emission,

statewide. The results of this three-month reporting project were not surprising—phosphate mining and paper and pulp mills are the state's biggest polluters. But in a state where rampant development is the leading issue, toxic chemical pollution often doesn't get as much examination. The series examined issues involving the TRI and the industries that dominate the top polluters list. Contact Will Lester or William C. Hidlay at AP Miami, (800) 824-5498 or (305) 594-5825.

HAWAII

► Hawaii has only a few sheltered bays which provide shelter for many marine mammals, including spinner dolphins and their young. But the animals could be threatened by increasing numbers of people who want to swim with the wild creatures. "Sometimes we just love these animals to death," special agent Gene Proulx of the National Marine Fisheries Service was quoted as saying in a Sept. 14 article in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. Staff writer Greg Ambrose reported that dolphins come into bays during the day to rest from predators, which is exactly when they are rushed by kayakers, bodyboarders, paddleboarders and swimmers. The activity could force the creatures away from the beaches to an uncertain fate. Those who violate federal laws against harassing marine mammals face a \$10,000 fine, but agents are hoping education will be more effective in encouraging people to keep their distance.

► About 2 million acres of Hawaii's land—roughly half the entire state—falls within the conservation district. Designated in 1964, these public and private lands were intended to protect and preserve the state's natural resources, to be used and managed in a sustainable way. But increasingly frequent requests to develop huge homes, utility lines, radio towers, and even freeways within the district have prompted state officials to take another look at how to manage these vast holdings, reported staff writer Joan Conrow in the Oct. 16 edition of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (808) 828-0620. The state's Department of Land and Natural Resources is developing a database of resources, so it can then identify sensitive lands that shouldn't be developed and appropriate uses

for others. Public meetings are being held around the state.

➤ Hawaii has 207 plants on the federal Endangered Species List, far more than any other state. Both the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and *Honolulu Advertiser* report frequently on various issues associated with the native flora. The latter offered a Nov. 26 report on the growing popularity of native plants among home gardeners and landscapers, and a profile of a woman who had fought back alien plants to make way for a native garden. Contact *Advertiser* Home Section Editor Mike Leidemann (808) 525-8000

➤ On another front, Joan Conrow of the *Star-Bulletin* reported that a quarter of the state's endangered nehe plant could be wiped out in a cinder mining operation permitted by the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The agency, which administers lands for native Hawaiian beneficiaries, acted after receiving a draft opinion from the state Attorney General's office that it was exempt from the state's endangered species laws. Environmentalists and scientists are worried about the loophole in the law, and have criticized the involvement of a state Senator's family in the venture. Conrow also wrote a two-part series on efforts to propagate the state's rarest plants and return them to the wild. The paper's Washington correspondent, Pete Pichaske, also has written a number of reports in recent months on legislative action to protect Hawaii from invasive alien plants that damage native flora and crops. Some say the weeds are Hawaii's single greatest environmental threat. (202) 783-2790

➤ Both the *Advertiser* and *Star-Bulletin* have given extensive coverage to a proposal to greatly expand the marine sanctuary for humpback whales in Hawaii. The huge animals breed and calve in the warm bays around the state, and are especially common in waters off Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. These areas included in current sanctuary boundaries, which the federal government has proposed extending to include the Big Island and portions of Oahu and Kauai. Advocates say the designation would attract federal for education and research. But opponents fear new restrictions on fishing and commercial boating.

ILLINOIS

➤ The *New York Times* featured Chicago "brownfields" in a December 4 front-page story by John Holusha. "Brownfield" is an urban planning euphemism for an abandoned industrial site that usually has environmental contaminants, but is ripe for sale because of its proximity in an urban setting. The EPA estimates that there are more than 2,000 brownfields in Chicago alone.

➤ The normally pro-development *Chicago Tribune* raised the spectre of environmental degradation in a series of articles in late November concerning the proposed move of the Chicago Bears to an industrial site near blighted Gary, Indiana. The front-page articles co-written by *Tribune* environmental writer Stevenson Swanson warned of endangered wetlands that would be threatened by the proposed development of a football stadium and entertainment complex called "planet" park.

➤ The biggest environmental event in Chicago in early December garnered scant notice in the city's two largest dailies. The city's "blue bag" recycling program—nearly five years in development—will impact some 750,000 households in the city and be one of the largest urban recycling efforts to date. On December 4, *Chicago Sun-Times* environmental writer Jim Ritter covered the story on page 18. "Poverty may prove to be one of the biggest obstacles to blue-bag recycling," Ritter observed, noting that affluent suburbanites typically recycle at a higher rate than inner-city residents. The *Daily Southtown*, meanwhile, gave stories on the controversial program page-one play on Nov. 28 and Dec. 12.

MASSACHUSETTS

➤ The use of electric vehicles to help clean up air pollution remains a major story in Massachusetts. The latest twist is that California's anticipated decision to back off its requirement that automakers begin selling electric cars in the west coast state by next year will have an impact in both Massachusetts and New York. Both states adopted the California car plan, which calls for the sale of increasingly cleaner burning vehicles. They have both also come under heavy pressure from car manufacturers to drop

those schedules. If the California Air Resources Board pushes back the 1996 electric vehicle deadline, by law both Massachusetts and New York must do the same. For more details, contact Scott Allen, *Boston Globe*, (617) 929-3000.

➤ The siting of a low-level radioactive waste dump somewhere in Massachusetts was expected to be one of the biggest environmental issues of the year. But the issue is rapidly fading. The sense of urgency to site a dump, held by both state officials and the nuclear industry, began to falter after South Carolina reopened its dump site to other states in order to raise more revenue. Utilities, faced with paying both disposal fees as well as for the planning and building of a Massachusetts site, began wavering in their support. With environmentalists vowing to fight the plan, support within the Weld administration also began to falter. For more information, contact Tim Sandler, *Boston Phoenix*, (617) 859-3248.

MINNESOTA

➤ Minnesota officials have given Potlatch Corp. permission to double the size of a large board manufacturing plant in northeastern Minnesota. The project is the latest in a series of pulp, paper, and wood board expansions that have more than doubled the amount of annual logging in the state during the past two decades. The pressure for more wood has outraged some environmental leaders, who say that additional cutting should not be allowed without stronger measures to protect biodiversity, water, and soils. The risks and benefits of the proposed expansion have also deeply divided wildlife experts and foresters within the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The large mill owners contend there is plenty of wood available for more logging, but smaller for their businesses. A coalition of the environmental groups is almost certain to challenge the Potlatch project in court. Contact Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-7388.

➤ An increasing amount of garbage is being shipped from Minnesota to its neighboring states, especially to Iowa. The shipments have angered small-town Towns who live near two landfills, and

have alarmed Minnesota officials who committed millions of dollars to building composting plants, garbage shredding facilities, and waste-to energy incinerators in the late 1980's. The Minnesota solid waste system was based on the assumption that county ordinances could require that a community's garbage be sent to local solid waste facilities. but a 1994 U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that local ordinances that try to control the flow of trash are unconstitutional because they violate the interstate commerce clause. Waste hauling firms and landfill owners say that well-managed, modern landfills are cheaper and in many cases environmentally superior to incinerators and composting plants. Contact Tom Meersman, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

► Corporate farms are increasingly taking hold in the hog industry. One such farm in Missouri raises nearly 2 million hogs a year in dozens of computer-monitored, climate-controlled barns. Industry folks say big-time hog farms are the wave of the future and will provide low-cost, high-quality food. But critics say the immense scale of these operations is causing a host of environmental problem, and is changing the economics of livestock production in ways that will drive more family farms out of business. The issue is provoking considerable debate throughout the country, especially in Midwestern states. Contact James Walsh, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, (612) 673-4414.

MISSOURI

Test burns began in December to determine whether an incinerator in Times Beach will destroy dioxin. The incinerator's job is to take 100,000 cubic yards of contaminated material—everything from mattresses and furniture to rocks and tree stumps—and turn it into sterile soil, carbon dioxide, and water vapor. The material will be excavated from Missouri's 27-year-old dioxin site. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, backed by the state Department of Natural Resources, says incineration is the best method for ending Missouri's 20-year dioxin legacy. The Times Beach Action Group, which has about 100 supporters, has led opposition to the burn. If the incinerator passes muster, the

burn could begin January, and take about seven months. The incinerator then would be dismantled; the state plans to turn Times Beach into a park. Contact environment writer Tom Uhlenbrock, at (314) 340-8128.

NEW JERSEY

► *The Record* in Hackensack, N.J., published a three-part investigative series on a chemical-plant explosion that killed five workers. The series, "Formula for Disaster," concluded that the April 21 explosion at Napp Technologies in Lodi was caused by "a deadly mixture of negligent managers, poorly trained employees, and lax government oversight." Three reporters worked on the project for four months, aided by an engineering consultant hired by the newspaper. *The Record* found that Napp's senior chemist, the man to whom workers turned shortly before the explosion, had questionable credentials and a checkered background in dealing with hazardous waste. The U.S. Attorney's office has opened an inquiry to see if there were any criminal violations. Contacts: Debra Lynn Vial, Mike Moore, or Bruce Locklin. *The Record*, 150 River St., Hackensack, N.J. 07601 (201) 646-4100.

PENNSYLVANIA

► The number of trees that can be harvested on a sustainable basis from the Allegheny National Forest is far less than previously thought. The *Erie Times-News* reported that a new U.S. Forest Service study found the sustained timber harvest capability of the forest is only 53.2 million board feet (MMBF) annually. That is only 56 percent of what was estimated in the Allegheny's management plan adopted in 1986 that set the sustained yield capacity at 94.5 MMBF annually. The reduction in the sustained yield capability was blamed on poor regeneration of many tree species. A reduction in timber harvests on the forest could have widespread economic impacts in a four-county region of northwestern Pennsylvania. The Allegheny is the only national forest in Pennsylvania.

► A new book on urban sprawl by Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Hylton of the *Pottstown Mercury* is attracting statewide attention. Currently on leave

from the *Mercury*, Hylton spent the last two years researching and writing *Save Our Land. Save Our Towns: A Plan for Pennsylvania*. Hylton proposes comprehensive state planning, urban growth areas, and regional governments as ways to save Pennsylvania's cities and small towns alike and to preserve the state's farmlands and wildlands. Hylton's book has been the subject of articles in several papers across the state, and others have used the book for stories on the issues raised by Hylton. The book is available from RB Books, 1006 Second St., Suite 1-A, Harrisburg, PA 17102.

RHODE ISLAND

► The *Providence Journal-Bulletin* has began an occasional series which looks at an ecosystem by writing stories about the people, wildlife, and habitat of that area. The series centers on the state-owned Great Swamp Management Area, a 3,350-acre preserve. Stories so far have focused on: the comeback of the osprey (which each summer nest at the Swamp); a bush pilot based for many years at Great Swamp; and how hunting, which is in a rapid decline in New England, is still popular each fall at Great Swamp. For more information, contact Bob Wyss, (401) 277-7364.

► For years concern has been growing about the rising levels of bacteria in Greenwich Cove, in Warwick, R.I. Once this estuary could be counted on for a bountiful harvest of shellfish as well as to be a playground for boaters and swimmers. It was assumed the prime source was either from the local marinas or failed septic system in the suburban communities around the saltwater cover. But after a four-year search, researchers found that the prime source was a farm several miles up a tributary. It was a surprise, especially since local and state officials had been striving to keep the farm open to prevent further development in this highly suburban area. For further information, contact Peter Lord, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, (401) 737-3070.

TENNESSEE

► Twenty-five years ago, Chattanooga was labeled the most polluted city in the U.S. by federal air-quality officials. Now, despite the fact that its

economy remains the most manufacturing-dependent of any city in Tennessee, Chattanooga has given itself an environmental makeover, and has drafted a long-range plan to become a model for how industry and clean air can co-exist. Chattanooga hosted the January 1995 meeting of the President's Council on Sustainable Development; it has been recognized by the United Nations for its environmental progress; and it now has the second-largest fleet of non-polluting electric buses in the nation. Admittedly, there are still problems- Chattanooga Creek is a Superfund site. Tom Charlier reported this story in the Nov. 20 edition of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. Tom can be reached at (901) 529-2572. For a packet of press materials about Chattanooga's progress and upcoming projects, contact Nancy Bearden Henderson at the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, (423) 756-2515.

UTAH

► (Salt Lake City) the National Centers For Disease Control (CDC) will not delay activation of a chemical weapons incinerator in Utah's West Desert, despite serious deficiencies found in emergency preparedness. The CDC report was made public in mid-November, and finds serious flaws with local training and preparedness at the incineration facility and among local emergency medical providers. For further information: Jim Woolf, *Salt Lake*

Tribune (801) 237-2045.

► (Salt Lake City) Utah Governor Mike Leavitt hosted three days of public meetings December 6-8 to seek answers to Utah's growth problems.

The series of public meetings, debates, and state-wide television and radio broadcasts focused in particular on three areas of concern: transportation, decreasing open space, and water. The program is aimed at finding state-wide solutions to growth-related issues which could be presented to the state legislature and local governments. For further information: John Hollenhorst, KSL-TV (801) 575-5500.

WISCONSIN

► *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* environmental reporter Don Behm gives an unfavorable review to a new book critical of the public relations industry. In November, Behm wrote that the authors of *Toxic Sludge is good for you!* often employ "many of the techniques for manipulating information that they denounce." Authors John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton later responded that Behm's review was "error-ridden."

► After a second State of Wisconsin health report downplayed concerns about reformulated gasoline (RFG), Milwaukee-based environmentalists held a news conference. At the September event, they said they hoped the local media would give as much play to the positive studies, as reporters did to concerns about the gas

last January. The news conference featured a brief argument between a clean air activist, and a television news reporter, whose station had aired many stories critical of RFG.

► State officials in December released a land use planning report, promoted in part by a media consortium's series last summer on land use issues. But there's already partisan sparring on the plan, and fears that it will collect dust.

WYOMING

► The National Park Service has developed a 36-page report to combat lake trout invasions of Yellowstone Lake. The report, entitled "The Yellowstone Lake Crisis: confronting a lake trout invasion," is being used by the Park Service to sway public opinion on why controls of lake trout are needed in the nation's first national park. In a cover letter accompanying the report, park superintendent Michael Finley states "the potential destruction of the world's last great inland stronghold of cutthroat trout may serve as the impetus to raise awareness among the public of the damage done by such thoughtless, foolish acts." The Park Service says this "appalling act of environmental vandalism" is the result of someone introducing lake trout into Yellowstone Lake, jeopardizing native cutthroat. For more info, contact Michael Finley, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park (307) 344-7381.

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