

SEJ Journal

The Quarterly Publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists

Vol. 3 No. 4

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'Trends' panel kicks off lineup

Duke conference

Babbitt, Browner, McGinty headlined program that drew 400 to Durham

Durham, N.C. — It was a conference that drew the nation's top three environmental officials, but at which the most intense spotlight was reserved for the four reporters discussing "trends" in environmental reporting.

The Third Annual SEJ National Conference opened Oct. 22 with the "trends" plenary — said to be the most anticipated SEJ event ever and featuring Keith Schneider of the *New York Times*, Philip Shabecoff of *Greenwire* and formerly the *Times*, Dianne Dumanoski of the *Boston Globe* and Boyce Rensburger of the *Washington Post*. At issue was whether the kind of reporting being done by Schneider, Rensberger and others—focusing on cost of regulation — amounts to an anti-environment backlash or a more sophisticated form of reporting.

More than 400 people attended the conference at Duke University, a little

more than half of those SEJ members. And late additions to the speakers lineup included Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, EPA Administrator Carol Browner and Katy McGinty, director of the White House Office of Environmental Policy.

For those who missed all or part of the conference, the SEJ Journal this issue offers its most comprehensive conference coverage to date. Starting on page 6, Amy Porter offers some colorful commentary on the three-day affair, followed by summaries of plenary sessions and some popular panels. For the "trends" session, the opening comments of each panelist are excerpted beginning on page 12. Coverage is rounded out by the minutes of the lively SEJ annual meeting, a piece by Roger Brown on the minority fellows program and Paul Sullivan's coverage of a meeting between Browner and the SEJ Board.

Survey probes journalist, student knowledge of global warming data

By KRIS WILSON

"The media" gets the blame in some scholarly research for public confusion about global warming. But a link between source of knowledge and lack of knowledge was never tested.

As a former broadcast journalist and now a fledgling academic researcher, I was annoyed at the cavalier assumption that "the media" was the culprit and the way "the media" were all lumped together as though functioning as one entity.

Results from research I conducted at the University of Colorado indicate that the media are important but unequal sources of global warming knowledge, and that some reporters are much better prepared to educate their audiences about global warming than others.

The research was structured around three goals: 1) to determine sources of knowledge about global warming and answer whether the media are important

(Continued on page 17)

Society looks to new goals in '94

by JIM DETJEN

Just four years ago a small group of journalists met at Bud Ward's office at the Environmental Health Center in Washington, D.C., and decided the time had come to launch a new national organization for environmental journalists.

Since that day in December 1989 SEJ has grown and flourished. Despite the worst national economic conditions in almost half a century, our membership has climbed to more than 870, attendance at our 1993 national conference topped 400, we opened up a national headquarters and hired two full-time staff members.

Financially, we have grown from a fledgling operation into a successful non-profit group with an annual budget of about a quarter million dollars a year. Noel Grove, SEJ's founding treasurer, described the transition this way during the annual meeting last October at Duke University: "It's like piloting a Sopwith Camel and then a Concorde."

Our national conference has grown in importance each year. In October we were able to attract top newsmakers such as Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and EPA Administrator Carol Browner. News coverage about our conference hit the national wires and has appeared in several national publications.

As we move into our fifth year much of our attention will be focused on strengthening the services we offer to our members. We are increasing the budget for the SEJournal and hope to improve our ability to publish on a more regular schedule. Under Adam Glenn's editorial leadership, the timeliness and quality of the journal's articles have steadily improved.

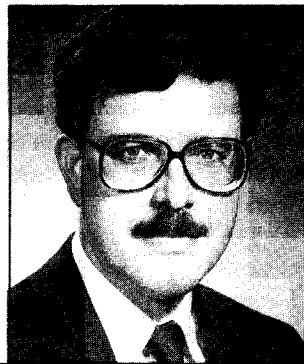
In 1994 we will be increasing the number of regional activities offered to our members. But remember, most of these will be initiated on the local level. I encourage members to plan meetings, regional workshops and other activities. Rae Tyson and Tom Meersman are

overseeing these efforts and Beth Parke and Chris Rigel at SEJ's headquarters will offer logistical and financial

support when they can.

During the past four years our office has grown from a desktop to a room in Amy Gahran's apartment to a one-room office in Philadelphia. In December we moved again. Beginning December 15 SEJ's headquarters is located in a larger two-room office not far from our old one. Our new address is Suite 209, 9425 Stenton Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. SEJ's

Report from the society's president



By Jim Detjen

phone number—215-247-9710—remains the same.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION—

While SEJ's primary focus will continue to be on environmental journalism in the United States, we will also increase our international activities in 1994. Many environmental problems, such as ozone depletion and the loss of species, are global in scope. SEJ played an important role in setting up a new worldwide organization, the International Federation of Environmental Journalists, at a meeting in Dresden, Germany, in October (see article in this issue).

We will be assisting IFEJ in creating an international directory of environmental journalists. We will also be working to expand SEJ's online computer system to make it an international network. In time,

we hope it will be relatively easy and inexpensive to exchange information about global environmental issues with other reporters in Japan, Nepal, Russia and Australia.

In early 1994 the SEJ board will be meeting to chart out how we want to grow in the coming years. We will be examining other journalist organizations and seeking to determine what our members want. If you have ideas on where you want SEJ to head in the future either give me a call at 215-854-2438 or call Beth Parke at 215-247-9710.

UNITY CONFERENCE—SEJ is planning a series of panels on environmental journalism at Unity '94, a convention of 5,000 to 6,000 journalists of color that will be held in Atlanta from July 27 to 31, 1994. This historic meeting will bring together reporters and writers from the Asian American Journalists Association, the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Native American Journalists Association. If you want to get involved in Unity '94 or wish to find out more about it, please call either Beth Parke at SEJ's headquarters or Diane Yen-Mei Wong at 510-547-1365.

GROVE DEPARTS BOARD—In October, Noel Grove stepped down as SEJ's founding treasurer and left the board of directors. Noel's many contributions to SEJ are too numerous to mention. He always found time to write checks and attend SEJ board members despite an amazing travel schedule for *National Geographic* magazine that took him from Philippine volcanoes to remote mountain ranges in Alaska. His leadership, intelligence, integrity and practical common sense have played an important role in SEJ's success.

Following the election at the annual meeting, the board of directors, with two new members, met to elect officers. Newly elected board member Steve Curwood of NPR's *Living on Earth* was elected the new treasurer.

Notice: SEJ office has new address

The Philadelphia office of SEJ has moved. The new address is 9425 Stenton Ave., Ste. 209, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. Inquiries about membership and services should be directed to Christine Rigel.

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SEJ 1994 conference set at Sundance and Provo, UT

Planning for SEJ's 1994 conference in Utah is well under way and lodging reservations are now being accepted.

Hosted by Brigham Young University and Utah State, the conference will run from Oct. 6-9. SEJ is working on some innovative ideas, such as Saturday on-the-road sessions at a copper mine, radioactive waste dump, U.S. Olympic team ski site and fish hatchery. SEJ is also planning a Sunday morning forum to hone our writing skills, set outdoors with a beautiful backdrop of spruce-lined mountains.

Lodging will be at the Sundance resort as well as several Provo hotels. If you want to stay at Sundance, you'll need to sign up early, since availability is limited to 150 people. Rooms can be booked through Murdock Travel immediately.

SEJ has arranged special rates for Sundance's cottages — \$77 a night for a single, \$110 for a double and \$198 for a suite. Mountain home rentals with

several bedrooms are also available. Provo Park Hotel has also been reserved with rooms costing \$62 a night, while other, less expensive rooms are available in Provo and Salt Lake City.

Spouses and families are welcome, since we are planning many separate activities such as hiking and fishing. We are also making arrangements for trips to national parks in southern Utah after the conference, but it depends on members' interest, so if interested, please tell Murdock Travel.

To book a room or obtain information on lodging, airline service, area attractions and other details, call Lisa Wells at Murdock Travel's SEJ hotline at 1-800-990-4146. Rooms at Sundance must be booked through Murdock. Call soon, since it is first-come, first-served.

If you have ideas for SEJ '94, call conference chair Marla Cone at 1 800 LA TIMES, extension 73497 or SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke at (215) 247-9710.

SEJ plays role in organizing international reporters' group

By JIM DETJEN

The meeting was chaotic and confusing and it seemed that the session might collapse into anarchy.

But it didn't.

And on October 16 — after 1-1/2 days of sometimes frustrating negotiations — a new international organization of environmental journalists was created in Dresden, Germany.

The new group will be known as the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) and it will be based, at least temporarily, in Paris. SEJ will play a substantial role, I hope, in shaping the future of the new group.

About 100 journalists from 26 countries met at the German Hygiene Museum on Oct. 15-16 to help create the new international organization. Among

the participants were the leaders of environmental journalism organizations in Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the United States and other countries.

The gathering was held in former East Germany to coincide with an international conference on "Perspectives for Ecological Communications." Many representatives of former Eastern Bloc countries — Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania and others — were present.

Noticeably absent were journalists from Japan, China, Australia, Canada and most South American nations.

The purpose of the new organization will be to link together environmental journalism organizations around the world. It will work to exchange environmental

information across borders and to assist environmental journalists whose work is being censored.

Among IFEJ's possible goals will be the creation of an international directory of environmental journalists, an international newsletter, an international computer forum, journalistic exchange programs and possibly international conferences.

How much of this will actually be achieved remains to be seen. While there is strong support by many for IFEJ's goals, there are wide differences between journalistic and political philosophies in many countries. Language barriers and distances are also expected to hamper the growth of the new group.

Nonetheless, it marked the launch of international cooperation between environmental journalists on a scale that has never been tried before.

The gathering was reminiscent, in some ways, of the frustrating, contentious sessions that are occasionally held at the United Nations. The remarks of each speaker were translated simultaneously into English, German and French. Sometimes this translation required enterprise, such as when a Peruvian journalist's remarks in Spanish were translated first into German and then into English and French.

Differences between journalistic styles and political traditions were much in evidence at the Dresden meeting. There were many differing philosophies to reconcile and suspicions to overcome. It was impossible to settle all of these differences in just two days.

For example, the French journalists, representing Association des Journalistes-écrivains pour la Nature et l'Écologie (JNE), come from a much more activist tradition than their counterparts in Sweden, Denmark and the United States. The French group has taken stands to block the construction of roadways on environmental grounds. Such an approach is unac-

ceptable in the United States and other nations where many view journalistic activism with suspicion.

A lot of time was spent discussing the purpose of the international group. Only when the French agreed that IFEJ would not take stands on international environmental issues — such as banning whaling or nuclear power — did representatives of the United States, Sweden, Germany and

expenses. Some flexibility may be needed in the differing fund-raising traditions between each country.

Among the possible sources of funds may be the German Marshall Fund, the Budapest-based Regional Environmental Center and possibly international agencies such as the United Nations Environmental Programme.

Some American foundations with an interest in international programs may also be willing to support IFEJ programs.

The journalists present at the meeting adopted most, but not all of proposed statutes, and elected a 13-member administrative council, consisting of nine national organizations and four individuals. We agreed to base the new organization, at least temporarily, in Paris but left the door open to a

possible relocation to the United States or another country in the future. Journalists from Sri Lanka agreed to spearhead the publication of an international journal.

SEJ volunteered to help publish an international directory and set up an international online computer forum. We will also assist in overall fundraising for the group.

The next meeting of the new group is tentatively scheduled for someplace in France in the fall of 1994. It is my hope that SEJ's 1995 national conference will be held in conjunction with IFEJ's international meeting and that we will be able to raise enough funds to bring international journalists to the United States.

If any SEJ members are interested in participating in IFEJ or have ideas or programs, please contact either me at 215-854-2438 or Beth Parke, SEJ's executive director, at 215-247-9710.

IFEJ selects officers and board members

SEJ president Jim Detjen was elected one of IFEJ's two vice-presidents at the Dresden meeting. Also elected as officers were: Darryl D'Monte, of Bombay, India, president; Nicole Lauroy, of Paris, France, vice-president; Wolfgang Fruhauf, of Luxembourg, treasurer; Valentin Thurn, of Cologne, Germany, secretary; and Michael Schweres-Fichtner, of Ulm, Germany, assistant secretary.

Also elected to the administrative council were: Pavla Rakovska, of Sofia, Bulgaria; Eugenlucz Pudlis, of Warsaw, Poland; Claude-Marie Vadrot, of Paris, France; Jan Lothigius, of Sweden; Sylvia Katei, of Hungary; Mohan P. Mainali, of Katmandu, Nepal; and Dharman Wickremaratne, of Sri Lanka.

other western nations agree to push forward to set up the organization's statutes.

There are many other differences between nations, as well.

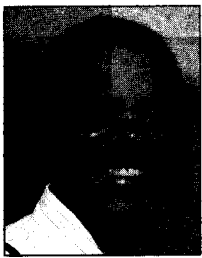
How should such an international group be funded? This issue was not fully resolved.

Some journalistic organizations in developing countries — such as Sri Lanka and Nepal — accept funds from their own governments. SEJ, by contrast, has been very cautious in our fund-raising philosophy; we have rejected proposals to seek grants from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, companies and national environmental groups on the grounds that such funding would be a conflict of interest.

But, if an international group is to function, substantial grants will be needed to pay for long-distance telephone calls, international travel, interpreters and other

Kathy Sagan named SEJournal's book review editor

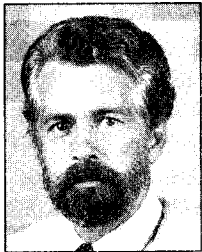
SEJournal has a new book editor beginning with the Spring issue. Kathy Sagan is editor-at-large and journalist with Family Circle Magazine in New York. To submit new book information or help with short reviews, call her at 212-463-1240, fax 212-463-1808 or write her at 121 W. 79th St., #4A, New York, N.Y. 10024



Steve Curwood



Mike Mansur



Rae Tyson



Randy Loftis

4 elected to board; 2 incumbents back

Steve Curwood of NPR's *Living on Earth* and Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star* were elected to the SEJ Board of Directors at the annual meeting at Duke University, Durham, NC. Re-elected were Rae Tyson of *USA Today* and Randy Lee Loftis of *The Dallas Morning News*.

Curwood is the executive director, host and executive producer of *Living on Earth*. A former reporter for NPR, *The Boston Globe*, and WBUR-FM and WBGH-TV in Boston, Curwood shared *The Boston Globe's* 1975 Pulitzer Prize for public service.

Mansur, a writer for *The Kansas City Star* since 1986, was assigned to the environment beat for that paper in March 1990. He was one of a team of reporters to win a 1992 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. Mansur is currently on a Michigan Journalism Fellowship.

Tyson is environment writer and editor at *USA Today* in Arlington, Va. He formerly was environment writer for Gannett News Service in Washington, DC, and reporter for the *Niagara (Falls) Gazette* where he covered issues such as Love Canal. Tyson is currently writing a book on environmental risk.

Loftis is environment reporter for *The Dallas Morning News*. Prior to moving to Dallas in 1989, he was a reporter for the *Miami Herald*, specializing in coverage of the Everglades and related topics. A native of Atlanta, Loftis has a degree in journalism from the University of Georgia.

Reporters take home So. Journalism Awards

Reporters from newspapers in Texas, Florida and South Carolina took top honors for environmental reporting as part of the 1993 Southern Journalism Awards announced in November.

Randy Lee Loftis and Craig Flournoy of the *Dallas Morning News* won top prize among dailies with 100,000-plus circulation with their series, "Race and Risk." The articles focused on a federal plan to build public housing in the city's most polluted neighborhood.

First prize for dailies with 30,000-100,000 circulation went to William Levesque of *The Ledger* in Lakeland, Fla., for his coverage of du Pont's sale of the fungicide Benlate to farmers.

Frank Heflin of the *Beaufort (S.C.) Gazette* placed first among under 30,000 circulation papers for his reporting on the environment and communities of the Sea Islands.

The contest, in its seventh year, honors environmental and investigative reporting in the region's daily newspapers. It is sponsored by the Institute for Southern Studies in Durham, N.C. First prize winners each get \$300 and their pieces are excerpted in the institute's quarterly, *Southern Exposure*.

Among the honors also awarded:

- Over 100,000 circulation: Charles Seabrook, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*,

for reports on mining of the substance Kaolin and its impact on Georgia's land, people and tax equity (second prize); Bailey Thomson, Ronni Patriquin, Michael Hardy, Carol McPhail and Renee Busby of the *Mobile Register* for their examination of the scope of pollution in Alabama's Mobile Bay (third prize).

- 30,000-100,000 circulation: Maria Carrillo, Daryl Lease and Paul Sullivan of the *Free Lance-Star* in Fredericksburg, Va., for reporting of growth and pollution that focused on one creek and its surrounding community (second prize); Lucy Beebe and Elaine Hamaker of the *Ocala Star Banner* in Ocala, Fla., for coverage of the development of a greenway across the state (third prize).

- Honorable mentions: Tom Charlier of the *Commercial Appeal* in Memphis for a range of environmental reporting; Bob Anderson of *The Advocate* in Baton Rouge, La., for his piece, "Disappearing Coast, Disappearing Culture;" Jack Horan of the *Charlotte Observer* for his series on the demise of dozens of plant and animal species in the Carolinas; Diane Tennant of the *Virginian-Pilot/Ledger-Star* for the story of the underground slaughter and sale of wildlife for profit; and Katherine Bouma of the *Montgomery Advertiser* for a series on the Alabama Forestry Commission.

Volunteer editors needed

The SEJournal thrives on the efforts of many volunteers, including those who can spend a few minutes each quarter bringing the best in our field to these pages.

Openings are available for:

- GENERAL FEATURES EDITORS — Responsible for soliciting one-to-three pieces quarterly on the full range of environmental reporting and writing topics.

- SCIENCE FEATURES EDITOR — Responsible for soliciting one or more pieces quarterly that focus on techniques of science reporting and writing, or that

report on scientific breakthroughs or resources related to the environment.

- VIEWPOINTS EDITOR — Responsible for soliciting one or more pieces quarterly, largely from non-journalists, that provide diverse and expert perspectives on environmental issues of the day.

If you would like to work with the journal, soliciting and editing articles on a quarterly deadline, please let us know. Contact SEJournal Co-Editor Adam Glenn at (days) 202-942-1406, (evenings) 202-625-6832 or by email (at AAdamG@AOL.com).

Commentary

Hot topic, big names led event

By AMY PORTER

Durham, N.C. — The fireworks were expected right at the very opening of the Third Annual SEJ National Conference.

The three-day conference's initial plenary Oct. 22 on trends in environmental reporting found current *New York Times* environment reporter Keith Schneider defending himself against thinly masked criticism from former *Times*' correspondent Philip Shabecoff, now of *Greenwire* news service.

Fellow panelist Dianne Dumanoski, reporter for the *Boston Globe*, on sabbatical at the University of Colorado, added to the critique of what's been called "backlash" reporting. And *Washington Post* science writer Boyce Rensberger defended his work as being grounded in the kind of skepticism he said environmental reporters should and will develop as the reporting specialty matures.

The foundation for the debate was laid earlier this year when Schneider started writing major pieces for the *Times* questioning the federal government's environmental policies of heavily regulating such substances as dioxin, a known human carcinogen whose effects are currently being reviewed in the scientific community. If dioxin isn't as harmful as once thought, why does EPA continue enforcing regulations that costs industry heavily, asks Schneider.

The *Times*' correspondent told the nearly 350 plenary attendees that he's rightfully questioning the soundness of expensive regulations justified by inflated human health or environmental benefit. "Is this the best way to spend money to help protect the environment?" he said he's asking in his stories.

Shabecoff, who retired from the *Times* several years back after disagreements over his focus on environmental problems (rather than the economic cost of solutions), criticized environmental writers who advocate any position under the guise of strict news reporting, and those who ignore the most important aspect of environment reporting — the environment.

Although panel moderator Len Ackland, director of environmental jour-

nalism at the University of Colorado J-school, reminded the panelists of the ground rules — no criticizing individual reporters or stories — Shabecoff clearly chafed under those restrictions.

Whether or not the audience got to see the tough duel they also hoped for, they did get to participate in a lively de-

situation, the issues it raised were important.

The most controversial aspect of Browner's appearance may have actually been what she did for the hour preceding her press conference (see related story in this issue). At the briefing itself, she was to speak for 10 minutes, but at least doubled that time. During the Q&A that followed, she took extra time explaining the issues and often side-stepped the questions.

By contrast, McGinty, closing the SEJ conference at a Sunday morning panel, wowed the tired crowd with her sharp wit and intelligent answers.

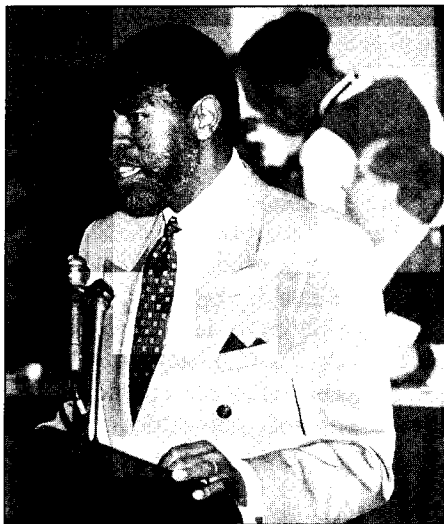
Not only were big names visible as conference speakers. Big names even mingled surreptitiously in our midst. They were some of the 132 non-members who joined the 214 SEJ members and 50 guests from Duke at this year's conference. Everywhere you turned, there was a cultivated or potential source behind you in line for the bathroom, or sitting across the room in the same panel session, or on the tour bus with you.

They included: Deborah DeYoung, spokeswoman for Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont); PR mavens Tom Gilroy of the Chemical Manufacturers Association and Clayton Allen of Dow Chemical; Deeohn Ferris, a leader of the environmental equity/justice movement; Loretta Ucelli, Carol Browner's right-hand woman; Terri Swearingen, citizen-activist against the WTI incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio; and Hugh Kaufman, EPA whistleblower extraordinaire.

Some SEJers said they were uncomfortable with so many outsiders at a journalism conference — especially sitting in on the ethics panel where reporters bared their souls and struggled with profound, controversial issues.

So BNA reporter Jeff Johnson got a round of applause at the sparsely attended SEJ annual meeting Oct. 23 for suggesting that these outsiders be forced to wear the same obnoxiously colored name tags reporters are often forced to don at industry events.

That might be helpful not only for



Kenneth Olden, Director of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, spoke Oct. 23

bate and ponder where they are in their own reporting. (See excerpts of opening comments, page 12).

Administration Big Wigs

Anything that followed the opening plenary session would have been a let down had it not been for the other big names that SEJ — now more than 800 members strong — was able to attract: Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, EPA Administrator Carol Browner, White House Office of Environmental Policy Director Kathleen McGinty, Rep. Jimmy Hayes (D-La.), to name just a few.

Little news emanated, however, from the heavies.

Babbitt, after giving a speech rich in detail about the bizarre rituals of rare birds, worked to convince local reporters he actually knew what was going on in their back yards. A common response to such questions was that although he was not personally familiar with a particular

SEJ conference-goers, but especially for the session moderators in fielding questions first from working journalists. It seems a few of those non-members couldn't resist sermonizing in front of a couple hundred journalists.

Numerous kudos were heard for SEJ for getting such big names to attend and speak. There were some comments from small-town newspaper reporters, however, who said the stars are irrelevant to their coverage. Perhaps regional administrative sources would be more beneficial to those way outside the beltway, one SEJ member suggested.

But there's a flip side to that coin, as Peter Page of the *Trenton (NJ) Times* pointed out at the annual meeting. The conference is the only opportunity he has to be exposed to these high-level people and he wants access.

Another little controversy crept up — in the ethics panel, appropriately. In a quandary about what to do about all those free lunches, gifts, and junkets? Chew on this one—who paid the way for a handful of reporters to take the post-conference two-day tour of the North Carolina coast? Moderator and SEJ President Jim Detjen explained that SEJ was very careful in selecting a neutral sponsor: the Sea Grant Programs of five mid-Atlantic states. But I want to know how many reporters decided on second thought not to go to the beach because of their guilty consciences? 'Fess up. Maybe we can have a little report on that at next year's ethics panel?

PLENARY

Former EPA Chiefs Reflect on Environmental Policy

On the subject of tough calls, former EPA administrators and aides that spoke at the Oct. 23 plenary session all agreed EPA has a formidable task and that to run most effectively, the agency needs to build public trust and strengthen the science behind the regulations, reports moderator Julie Edelson.

The panel elicited some thought provoking dialogue on EPA's mission and its priorities. William Ruckelshaus, chairman and CEO of Browning Ferris Industries, began the discussion with a dis-

course on the importance of trust in ensuring credibility. Ruckelshaus, who came to EPA a second time after EPA Administrator Ann Burford had demoralized the agency, said that the public still distrusts EPA, especially in Superfund decisions.

"We need to fashion solutions and open the process more," giving EPA needed flexibility to deal with these problems, he said.

Joseph Cannon, now CEO and chairman of the board for Geneva Steel in



Ex-EPA chiefs William Ruckelshaus, (left) and Douglas Costle (right), at plenary session.

Provo, Utah, and an assistant administrator under both Burford and Ruckelshaus, added that the legitimacy of regulations and laws will depend upon their acceptance and understanding by citizens in local communities. If EPA is successful in communicating the benefits of regulation, the legitimacy of rules will increase, he said.

On the other hand, if the larger public does not see the benefits of environmental regulation or believe there is some scientific underpinning to regulations, it will not trust EPA and Congress will write the regulations. "Constant attention should be paid to explaining the health and environmental benefits to the general population," said Cannon.

Douglas Costle, administrator under Jimmy Carter, said environmental problems have become truly globalized and that the agency's knowledge base "continues to grow every day." He added EPA has an impossible task, pointing out that even when EPA made sound decisions,

"it's tough to make them stick," because so many are challenged in the courts.

Costle also said that while Superfund is "broken," the joint and several liability provisions have worked well, changing the sociology of corporate decisionmaking to emphasis preventing pollution.

In general, Costle suggested a new way of doing business with an emphasis on making EPA a focal point for the development of new cleanup technologies. "The real game is to shape the technology of the next century in a more environmentally friendly fashion," he said.

While supporting the current administration's emphasis on industrial sectors, he said that EPA needs to develop expertise on "where the sectors are going" technologically. Focusing on technology is a better way to go than continuing the policy of "catch up clean up," he said.

David Gardiner, EPA's current director of Policy, Planning & Evaluation, outlined EPA's priorities and said now that EPA Administrator Browner has her team in place, the agency can really begin to move on programs.

Gardiner emphasized the focus on examining industrial sectors as a top priority, one that will be more easily carried out as a result of the enforcement reorganization. He stressed the administration's themes of having an environmental policy that is economically palatable, making "integrated" environmental decisions and preventing pollution.

He cited the administration's recent commitment on global warming, the recycling executive order and an administrative offer to come up with a reasonable pesticide reduction plan as major early accomplishments.

Ruckelshaus, asked to critique the current EPA administration, said it has a "wonderful opportunity" to make real progress, since the same party is running both the legislative and executive branches. As a result, there should "be a diminishment of the rancor" and an "ability to explain modern environmental problems without depicting them in a way of conflict." EPA can act as educators and lay a better framework for change than currently exists, he said.

Costle added that while the administration has been "extraordinarily slow" in getting EPA's team together, that is not Browner's fault. "This is a generally controlled appointment process I have not seen in prior administrations," he said, handicapping EPA as a result.

He said, however, he likes the team emerging at EPA and was encouraged by certain initiatives, specifically the President's Council on Sustaining Development, which he believes is properly taking a broader, more integrated look. "I'm encouraged. I wish they had gotten started earlier," he said.

PLENARY

Clinton's Report Card:

The Environmental Record So Far

The final plenary of the conference featured Kathleen McGinty, director of the White House Office of Environmental Policy; Ronald Bailey, author of *Eco-Scam: The False Prophets of Ecological Apocalypse* and Warren T. Brookes Fellow in Environmental Journalism at the Competitive Enterprise Institute; and David Hahn-Baker, president of Inside/Out Political Consultants and former political director of Friends of the Earth.

Moderator Emilia Askari reports each was asked: How's the Clinton administration doing on the environment so far?

McGinty, noting that the administration has barely gotten started on its environmental agenda, said that Clinton and his agencies will continue the Bush administration policy of pushing incentive-driven regulations. She cited the recent White House conference on climate change as a model for many future exchanges among leaders of industry, government and the environmental community.

Asked how Clinton's philosophy differs from the market- and incentive-driven approach of former EPA Chief William Reilly, McGinty said, "There are some differences. First, this president is committed to act. ... We have the president of the United States saying there is a problem but there is also an opportunity. This is an important priority for us to achieve."

On the subject of market- and incentive-driven initiatives, McGinty added, "Rather than try to stamp them out, we're

going to showcase them."

Bailey gave the administration an environmental grade of D minus for its first nine months. Arguing that George Bush was an environmental president, Bailey said that Clinton's record does not compare. For example, he criticized Clinton's forest plan as likely to open the way for more destruction of old growth forest while it economically devastates timber communities.

Hahn-Baker gave the administration an environmental grade of five out of 10 saying, "I didn't expect much, and they have not disappointed me." He added that Clinton seems to be willing to do what's possible for the environment, rather than change what's possible.

PANEL

Editors' Focus

The formal title of the panel was "Voices of Experience: Editors Focus. I added a much more realistic title: "They Shoot Editors, Don't They?", writes moderator Rae Tyson.

Indeed, there is a great deal of confusion (and, occasionally, anger) over an editors' role at many newspapers.

Editors get blamed for lousy news judgment. Editors get blamed for favoring sports coverage over environmental news. And editors get blamed for being too heavy-handed with a reporter's finely crafted raw copy.

Are we dealing with a class of sub-humans or what?

I assembled a panel of experienced

editors to try and find out. The panel: Paul Delaney, chairman of the University of Alabama journalism department and 23-year veteran of the *New York Times*; Fannie Flono, former city editor and now editorial writer at the *Charlotte Observer*; and William Coughlin, former editor of the 10,700-circulation *Washington (NC) Daily News*, winner of a 1990 Pulitzer for its coverage of the city's contaminated water supply.

The panel in Duke's spacious Geneen Auditorium was well attended and the conversation was, at times, spirited.

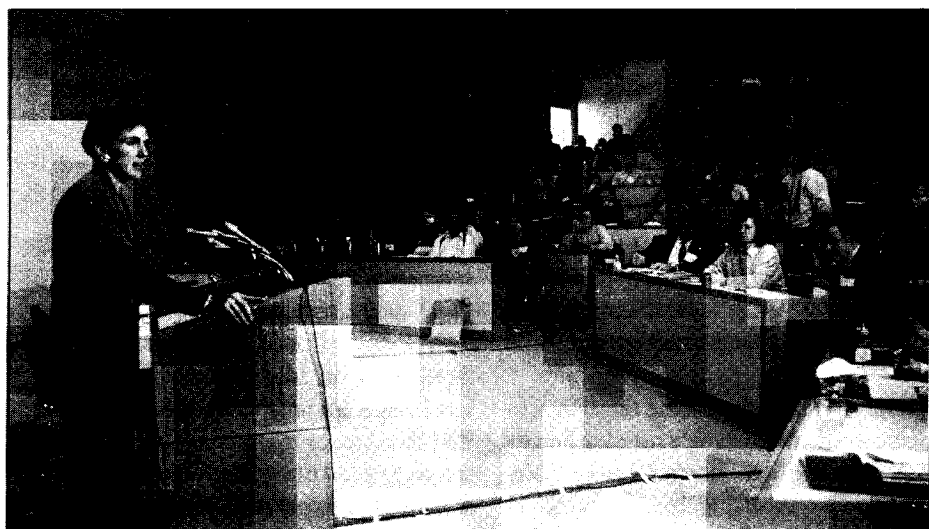
Delaney said the commitment to cover the environment - or any other issue - comes from the top. If the publisher or the top editor "doesn't have a commitment to the issue it won't get covered," he said.

When it comes to decisions about story length and placement, Delaney said strong-willed and/or experienced reporters do get more attention.

For his part, Coughlin talked about an often unknown side to an editor's job: running interference for reporters involved in controversial stories. He urged reporters to be sympathetic because the supervising editor may be deflecting criticism from inside and outside the building. Your editor "may be keeping a lot of people off your back," he said.

He also criticized some reporters because they became too sympathetic to the environmental groups they cover. Coughlin said the resulting stories had advocacy overtones. His advice: "Leave the crusading to editorial writers."

Flono talked about the *Charlotte*



EPA Administrator Carol Browner addresses the conference Oct. 23.

Observer's decision several years ago to boost its environmental coverage - an unusual trend in these light economic times. Her advice to reporters: Work hard to make sure your stories have good photos and graphics because nothing impresses editors — and readers — more than good art.

Perhaps the liveliest interchanges came during the question and answer period when the panel fielded a wide range of questions regarding new judgment, ethics, story placement, newsroom politics and many others.

PANEL Freelance Writing

How do I make the leap from newspaper writing to freelancing? Where do I get a start? I have an idea for a book, what do I do now? How do I grab the attention of an editor?

Those were a few of the questions asked at the "Beyond 800 Words" panel, reports moderator Susan Stranahan. The session drew about 45 SEJ members, some of whom were novice freelancers, some veterans.

Panel members, and those in the audience, offered advice on finding outlets (research your potential market, just as you would the subject you plan to write about); writing query letters (keep it short; make it relevant to the specific focus of the magazine); obtaining advice from experts (join one of several writers' groups), and exploring new publishing outlets (don't overlook the growing number of small regional publishing houses as well as academic presses).

The values of "over-the-transom" submissions were debated, as were the benefits of an agent (risky on submissions and potentially valuable as to agents). The bottom line was this: There are opportunities out there, you just have to work harder to discover them.

PANEL Ethics and the Environmental Journalist

Advocacy-versus-objective journalism, creating an ethics code and covering pollution caused by one's own news organization were among the topics dis-

cussed during a crowded session on ethics and environmental journalism on Saturday, Oct. 23.

Moderator Jim Detjen reports more than 100 people packed the room to hear two journalists, a professor and the member of an advocacy group debate ethical issues. The session was marked by moving personal anecdotes, probing questions from the audience and lively debate.

Casey Bukro, a veteran environmental reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*, described how he wrote the ethics code for the Society of Professional Journalists in 1973 and then tried to get the organization to enforce it. When he tried to prod the society into censuring reporters who violated the code, he was labeled a "loose cannon" and called "disagreeable" and his attempts were blocked.

Bukro argued that SPJ officials were "ethics wimps." He said that even if the Society of Environmental Journalists someday adopts an ethics code, he doubts the organization will ever be willing to enforce it.

Bob Engelman, who now works for Population Action International, described in poignant terms how he made the decision to leave journalism and go to work for an advocacy group. Bob was one of the founders of SEJ and worked for many years as the science and environmental reporter for Scripps-Howard's Washington Bureau. In general, he does not support such crossovers for journalists, but he said each journalist has to make his or her own personal choice.

Mary Beth Regan, now a reporter for *Business Week*, discussed the difficulty she faced in covering water pollution caused by her own news organization when she worked at the *Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel*.

Gregory Cooper, an assistant professor of philosophy at Duke University, attempted to frame, in philosophical terms, the issue of whether journalists should ever be advocates.

Jim Detjen argued it's crucial that journalists be honest with their readers. Journalists spend their careers building their credibility. Reporters who use their positions to push an advocacy position or are motivated by a hidden personal agenda, only hurt themselves and the profession.

PANEL Coastal Development

The expected sparks between developer David Lucas and anti-development geologist Orrin Pilkey came in the opening statements of the panel on coastal development, reports moderator Noel Grove.

Pilkey maintained that beachfront owners slide around coastal management processes to make beaches ugly, and that federal insurance on their property is highly subsidized.

Lucas said he had never heard such poppycock and called Pilkey's comments "communitistic in nature and socialist in tone." If environmentalists want to save beaches they should buy them, not steal them under the constitution, he said. And as for federal insurance, "Why just pick on beach owners? Why not pick on banks?"

Coastal islands are not as fragile as Orrin claims, said Lucas, but he added that some areas are unsuitable for development and should be left alone. The time to stop builders is in the permit-giving stage, he argued.

Panelist and journalist Cindy Schreuder said that hard data on coastal damage is hard to come by and when reporters fail to point that out the public is surprised that the issues are so contentious. She urged digging up available evidence and showing the credentials of those producing it. She also suggested profiling people on both sides: "They are interesting and will make your piece more readable."

PANEL Agriculture as an Environmental Story

There's a saying up here in Wisconsin that, if given the proper touch, just about anything can qualify as an "environmental" story.

Keeping that in mind, the SEJ panel on agricultural issues was geared toward expanding the traditional boundaries of the "farm beat" and urging journalists to explore what is certainly a major environmental issue, reports moderator Mike Ivey.

Panelists included Wayne Falda of the *South Bend (I.N.) Tribune*; Russell

Clemings of the *Fresno (Calif.) Bee*; Sara Starr of the Organic Food Production Association of America; and Gerry Ingenthron of Monsanto.

Falda, a veteran ag reporter, said it was crucial not to overwhelm readers with too much technical jargon. He said it makes little sense to write about government price supports and other complicated subjects unless you explain them.

Clemings said he's working on a story about the dangers of pesticide overuse (see Greenbeat in this issue) and explained that he felt under pressure to "tone it down" because of the strong farming economy in his community.

Starr talked about the growth of organic farming in the U.S. and said there are plenty of stories waiting to be written about alternative agriculture.

Ingenthron implored the assembled journalists to please call an industry source for comment when writing stories about pesticides. He said Monsanto only asks for equal time.

The discussion picked up once it was opened to the audience.

One journalist from Chicago asked how she could convince her editor to accept ag stories. The editor, she said, was convinced that people in the city didn't give a damn about what happens on the farm.

Starr suggested a story on which grocery stores in the Chicago area were selling organic produce and whether customers were buying it.

Another audience member engaged Ingenthron over questions of genetic engineering and asked why Monsanto was investing so heavily in things like bovine growth hormone (BGH) and pesticide-resistant crops instead of more sustainable agricultural technologies.

Unfortunately, time ran short before those issues could be fully explored. Perhaps those subjects are fodder for another panel next year.

PANEL

Genetically Engineered Foods

Genetically engineered foods: A scientific splice or a roll of the dice?

This panel faced a key question, reports moderator **Stuart Leavenworth**: What are the long-term implications for

consumers and natural habitats as genetically engineered foods, fish and plants are introduced into the environment on a broad scale?



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt took reporters' questions on Oct. 22.

Rebecca Goldberg, an Environmental Defense Fund scientist, raised the possibility of more farm chemicals being sprayed as companies develop crops that can survive higher doses of pesticides.

And as foods are engineered with genes from other organisms, consumers may be unknowingly exposed to products that can cause allergies or conflict with their eating habits, said Robin Mather, a food editor for the *Detroit News*.

Steve Benoit, an executive with Calgene Fresh, Inc., said his company plans to label a rot-resistant tomato as "genetically engineered" when it is sold in stores next year.

But the panel said it's hard to predict what will happen as biotech expands. Will an engineered plant or animal transfer its traits to other organisms - turning a minor weed into a kudzu, or a clam into another zebra mussel?

The consensus of the panel: Stay tuned.

PANEL

Low Level Waste, High Level Conflict

Thomas Geselbracht, a partner with the Chicago law firm of Rudnick & Wolfe,

and general counsel for the Illinois Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLW) Siting Commission, said during the panel discussion a thorough airing of public concerns through adjudicatory hearings should be a prerequisite to siting a LLW facility, reports moderator **Richard Zuercher**.

But John MacMillan, executive director of the North Carolina Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Authority and participant on the panel, took issue. He said such court-styled hearings would serve only to prolong the siting process with the likely outcome that site suitability decisions would be based on political rather than scientific considerations. The authority is attempting to site a facility for the Southeastern region.

States without disposal access face a crisis on June 30, 1994, as the only LLW disposal facility open to them, located in South Carolina, will close its doors to out-of-region generators. Without disposal access, LLW will begin piling up at the point of generation.

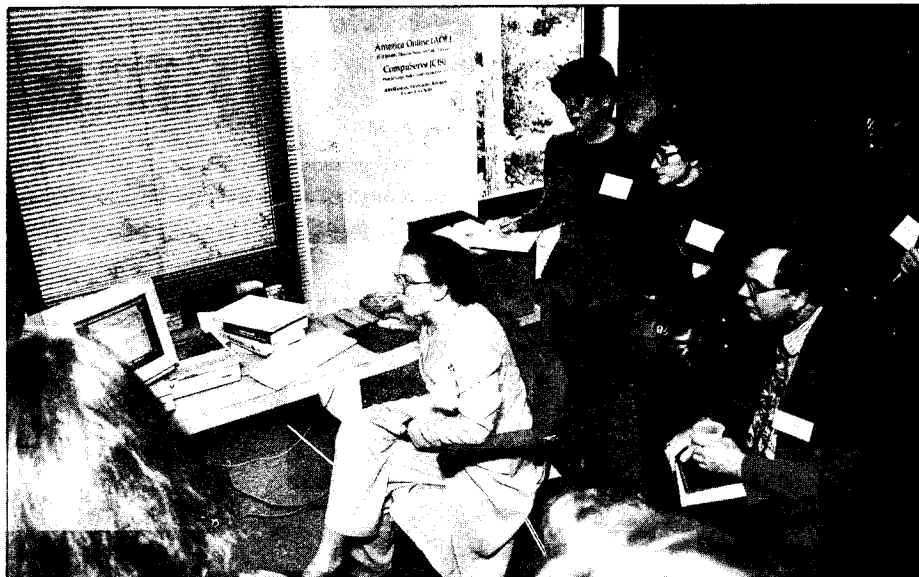
Meanwhile, Constance Nogas, a panel participant who covered the raging LLW siting battle in the upstate community of Cortland, N.Y. for *The Cortland Standard*, said opposition to the proposed disposal facility was so fierce that local residents, at one point, surrounded a car holding state siting officials, preventing them from setting foot on property that was under consideration for a site.

Panel participant William McCartney, M.D., a professor of nuclear medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discussed the impact that loss of disposal would have on the pharmaceutical companies which produce radioisotopes used by physicians. With no place to dispose of the LLW generated by the pharmaceuticals, he said, supply of radioisotopes from U.S. manufacturers could decline, affecting cost and availability of treatment.

PANEL

Covering Incineration

Covering hazardous waste incineration and local opponents was the subject of a panel on Waste Technologies Industries incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio. Discussion centered on difficulties in covering the long-running, hotly contested,



Amy Gahran offers a hands-on demonstration of online computer services.

and complex debate that has torn the small Ohio River community apart and has also led to a re-examination by EPA of its national incinerator policy, reports moderator **Jeff Johnson**.

Panelists included Scott Powers, environmental reporter for *The Columbus Dispatch*; T.C. Brown, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* investigative reporter; Terri Swearingen, a local leader of WTI opponents; and Hugh Kaufman, an EPA engineer and ally of opponents.

Demonstrating the tension in covering this 11-year battle, WTI dropped out two weeks before the panel took place. Its spokesman said the company would not provide a speaker unless Brown was removed from the panel. Local supporters said they would not appear if Swearingen was on the dais.

Finally, a representative of the incinerator industry who had agreed to come never showed up. He said he had missed his flight the morning of the panel because he was supplied incorrect travel information by the airline.

Still the turnout for the panel was good and the questions were constant.

PANEL

Covering the Endangered Species Act

The panel, "Bringing the Endangered Species Act Home," debated coverage of endangered species issues, with much of the discussion centering on the ongoing battle in the Pacific Northwest, reports

moderator **Marla Cone**. Participating were Kathie Durbin of the *Oregonian*, Michael Bean of the Environmental Defense Fund, Steve Quarles of a Washington D.C. law firm that represents forest and mining industries and Bob Ruesink of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The panelists discussed such emerging issues as the trend toward managing ecosystems instead of species, and the difficulty in assessing the economic impact of protecting species such as the spotted owl.

ONLINE COMPUTER WORKSHOP

Judging by attendance of the workshop, "Using Online Information Resources," SEJ members have a fair amount of interest in expanding their electronic frontiers, reports workshop host **Amy Gahran**.

The workshop offered simultaneous demonstrations of America Online and CompuServe, two of the largest commercial online services; the National Library of Medicine's ToxNet system, which includes the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI); the Consortium of International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), which provides detailed, searchable demographic data; and GreenDisk, a compilation of environmental articles published bimonthly on disk. Also, there were special presentations about ProfNet, an online way to locate expert sources; the Internet, a diverse global computer network; EcoNet, a global environmental information net-

work; and some direct-dial bulletin board services, or BBS's.

At any given time there were about 15-20 attendees in the computer lab, and attendees moved from demonstration to demonstration at will. While some attendees are old hands at the online world, most had little or no online experience, so the CompuServe/America Online demonstration had the most traffic because these systems are relatively user-friendly. This demonstration went over the basics of electronic mail; "forums," which are areas where specific interests or topics can be discussed; searchable databases and how to use them efficiently; online clipping services; and bulletin boards. The SEJ private forum, which is available on America Online, was discussed in great detail. There were several lively discussions as members shared their online experiences, impressions, tricks, and frustrations.

Traffic at the CIESIN, ToxNet, and GreenDisk demonstrations was typically lighter, but people who sat down at those demonstrations tended to stay longer and ask more questions. Smaller audiences at these demos meant that highly individualized presentations could be given.

The surprise highlight of the workshop was the Saturday afternoon presentation on the Internet, given by Ken Strayhorne of Duke University. Strayhorne, an "Internet guru" and last-minute addition to the program, spoke for more than a half hour to an audience of about 60 on the basics of understanding and using the Internet, including very practical advice on how to find your own personal Internet guru. Strayhorne fielded many questions and provided advice.

Contributing to SEJournal's conference coverage were: Emilia Askari, Detroit Free Press; Jim Detjen, Philadelphia Inquirer; Julie Edelson, Inside Washington and New York Times; Noel Grove, National Geographic; Mike Ivey, The Capitol Times; Jeff Johnson, BNA's Daily Environment Reporter; Stuart Leavenworth, Raleigh News & Observer; Amy Porter, BNA's Daily Environment Reporter; Susan Stranahan, Philadelphia Inquirer; Rae Tyson, USA Today; Richard Zuercher, McGraw-Hill's Nucleonics Week and Amy Gahran, Energy User News.

Excerpts from 'Trends' panel

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following are excerpts from opening statements made by each panelist on the Trends in Environmental Reporting panel that opened the 1993 SEJ National Conference.

Dianne Dumanoski

The Boston Globe

Since the Earth Summit a year ago last June we have definitely seen a flurry of revisionist pieces on environmental issues. Some might call this healthy skepticism, others call it backlash.

These pieces typically highlight scientific uncertainty, and in some cases suggest that there has been an overstatement of the problems and an overreaction in policy.

I've been reporting on environmental issues for almost a quarter of a century. In general, I've found that environmental issues move through phases that are generally reflected by the kinds of stories we do and that appear in our various media.

The first phase is what I call the discovery phase: scientists identify a possible threat, such as acid rain or ozone depletion, and issue warnings that eventually make it into the mainstream media.

In this phase there is typically a lot of discussion and speculation about possible consequences, and exploration of the worst possibilities.

Once the alarm has been sounded and the issue has captured the attention of the public and policymakers, a new phase inevitably begins, which I think of as the "lost in the swamps" or "backlash" phase.

This phase is marked by confusion, contradictory scientific data and campaigns mounted by threatened business interests, which emphasize the high costs of taking action and the scientific uncertainty. Scientists hired by industry try to highlight the weak spots in the original diagnosis and put forward contradictory evidence.

Even research by independent scientists tends to blur the clear outline of the problem that emerged in the discovery phase. New research almost inevitably indicates that the problem is much more

complicated than originally thought. ...

During this phase it's fair to say that the media adds to the confusion. Our coverage is all too often by our business's appetite for novelty and conflict. We often don't do a good job of reporting on the science of complicated issues.

And we generally do a lousy job of helping our audience understand uncertainty, which is the central dilemma faced in making environmental policy.

The current wave of revisionism we've been witnessing marks the end of the discovery phase regarding global environmental issues. ...

There is much that is familiar in what I've been seeing. But some things suggest that this is a special and unprecedented backlash.

One of the principal differences is the magnitude of the threat to the status quo. Given the stakes, this is likely to be far more bitter, polarized, and nasty than any environmental fight that we've seen. ...

Now if environmental reporter are going to do more than add to the confusion we need to develop a much more sophisticated understanding of what we are reporting on and how we make our stories.

Keith Schneider

The New York Times

[T]he kinds of questions I've begun to ask have been prompted by my reporting in the field, where people are asking what I consider a third wave of environmentalism in the U.S.: and that is, asking the question whether in an era of limits we are doing enough to understand these risks, and to invest the money properly, wisely and get our money's worth out of environmental protection?

That's what's been driving my work in the last couple of years. And what drives me is stories. ...

I've been doing a lot of reporting on dioxin. Dioxin has been said to be the most toxic substance known to man, and because of that it drove political policies, particularly in RCRA.

We now in the U.S. do not allow the burial of dioxin-contaminated compounds

in the ground. We allow incineration of dioxin-contaminated compounds, but at a rate that is destructive efficiency of 99.999 percent.

There is no incinerator in the country that can meet this standard, according to the EPA. Yet we can't bury these wastes in the ground. But we've done very little in the U.S. to reduce the amount of chlorinated compounds that we have to destroy.

So you have a situation that's now developed in Jacksonville, Arkansas. The site of a former 2,4-D — 2,4,5-T Agent Orange factory. Thousands of barrels of dioxin-contaminated wastes. They can't be buried in the ground. The incinerator isn't efficient enough to adequately destroy them.

So for every one barrel of dioxin-contaminated waste that is being burned in Jacksonville, Arkansas, they're getting back two barrels of dioxin-contaminated ash and salts. ...

The debate that has begun in our profession has to do with what are we looking at, what are the risks, what are the costs, and how far are we extending ourselves to get the broad community involved in these issues.

Environmental protection now is affecting more than the old triangle of government, business and the environmental community. There are university scientists, small communities, property owners, many, many more people involved in this debate.

At the *Times* I have tried to open up our stage to those broader interests, to get a richer debate. Because there is a richer debate.

Philip Shabecoff

Greenwire

[T]here has been [a] trend that it seems to me has been a setback to quality environmental reporting. The trend is not widespread but has sprung up among some major news outlets, some of them quite influential. Some have described it as an anti-environmental backlash. I would call it just bad journalism

Cover Package

I think there is room for advocacy journalism about environmental issues—but only when it is done openly and honestly in media that acknowledge their partisanship—not personal or institutional bias—or worse—purporting to be straightforward reporting.

Unfortunately, we have seen of a late a string of such barely concealed advocacy in stories about such environmental issues as global warming and climate change, toxic substances, risk assessment and management, the implications of scientific uncertainty, the economic impact of environmental regulation, and the nature of the environmental movement.

Some of these stories contained out-and-out editorializing—the reporter tells the reader what to think about the facts presented, or adopts a tone that clearly shows what side the reporter is on.

More insidiously, however, the reporters and, I presume, editors, of these pieces have sought to impose their views through inaccurate information, selective use of facts, specious “balance,” setting up and destroying straw men, and asking the wrong questions of the wrong sources....

Reporters, like anyone else, can believe what they want about environmental hazards. But when they write news stories that play fast and loose with the facts about such potentially serious hazards they are doing the public and the profession or journalism a grave disservice....

I have tried to understand what is behind the revisionist reporting about the environment. One reason, I think, is that contrarian journalism is very appealing. Challenging the conventional wisdom allows a reporter to strike macho poses and send the message that he or she has the intelligence, insight and integrity lacking in other reporters.

But if you are going to challenge the conventional wisdom, you better make damn sure it is wrong—and you better not cook the facts to make your case....

[T]here is another phenomenon that I believe is currently influencing media coverage of the environment. More than 40 years ago, the radical right in this country, exploiting public fear of expansive Soviet communism, provoked a witch hunt of government officials, academics, writers and others, whom they branded, usually

falsely, as communists. The shameful plague of McCarthyism disrupted domestic tranquility in this country for years.

It would not have gained the prominence it did, however, without the complicity of many of the country's news media, which, out of cravenness or a propensity for front page sensationalism, gave wide publicity to the lies and excess of the McCarthyites.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the radical right needs to create a new enemy around which to organize its recruiting and fundraising and has quite clearly identified the environmental movement as a likely candidate....

And, once again, part of the media establishment, in its thirst for novelty and front-page prominence, is tacitly complicity in a deception of the public.

Finally, I would say that if there is an environmental backlash, it is a backlash against fair, accurate, and non-ideological reporting....

Let those who charge the media is not asking the tough questions and has given a free ride to the environmentalists back up their charge. If not, let them stop slandering the great majority of honest, hardworking reporters who are trying to do a professional job of covering one of the most important and complex issues of our era.”

Boyce Rensberger

The Washington Post

During the last two decades science writing has undergone the kind of phenomenon that some environmentalists and environment writers are calling backlash.

In the old days science and medical writers used to be very cozy with advocacy groups like the American Medical Association or the American Cancer Society.

Every time they called a press conference we would religiously troop down and write up what they said and put it straight into the newspaper. ...

Nowadays most serious science writers are much more sophisticated. They know that today's so-called breakthrough is very likely never to pay off in any practical sense.

Our stories in science writing have long had a very skeptical tone and we simply don't write a lot of the kinds of stories we used to cover.

We science writers, medical writers, did not consider these changes in our tone to be a “backlash.” We simply felt that we were getting better at our job.

And we got smarter. We learned to ask if a scientist's assertion was just an opinion, or whether it was based on hard data. Then we asked to see the data, and we were impressed only if it was statistically significant.

And then we learned that it was also important that it had been peer reviewed. It could be statistically significant in answers to the wrong questions.

This transition didn't happen simultaneously to all science writers. It's kind of a maturation process that individuals go through at comparable times in their careers.

But over time science writers as a whole have gotten more skeptical of claims made by scientists. And we routinely dismiss assertions made by advocacy groups, unless they have peer reviewed data behind them. ...

Now environment writers, being good reporters in a relatively new field, are going to undergo the same transition that science writers have undergone. Many of you already have. ...

To environmentalists, the people who are our readers and viewers and listeners, to them this may look like a backlash, if we write stories with this more skeptical tone that's more insistent on proving assertions. ...

I don't really have any evidence to suggest that there has been a backlash. What I do see is what I call a “forelash” among environmentalists.

If you define a backlash as a reversal in sympathies about some issue, then a forelash would be a response that pushes ahead even harder in the same direction with the original sympathies that you already had. ...

So what is this tone problem? How can you have the facts correct and outrage people with the “wrong tone?” This puzzled me for a long time and I think I've finally figured it out. And maybe you'll all dump on me for this interpretation, but I think there is a tradition in environment writing of giving an unquestioning alarmist spin to the story. It's so routine, it's been going on for so long, that we don't notice it anymore.

Browner meets with SEJ board

By PAUL SULLIVAN

SEJ's third national conference marked a "first" in the appearance of EPA Administrator Carol Browner, but a private session with the organization's board of directors dimmed the occasion in the eyes of a number of members.

Prior to a packed plenary talk and question session with conference-goers, Browner met with SEJ's directors for an hour of give-and-take.

The preliminary session, in an upstairs lounge at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, made no headlines but did afford the organization's directors a chance for an up-close size-up of the Clinton administration's chief environmental cop.

The meeting itself made more news for members than anything Browner disclosed during the hour and prompted several sharp questions to the board at the yearly SEJ business meeting.

Questions fielded by Browner ranged across the environmental landscape from specific local and regional issues to broad matters of policy and procedure.

In an hour in which she largely held the floor and somewhat steered the agenda, Browner coped with several air quality issues, the Great Lakes Water Quality Initiative, non-point-source water quality problems, risk assessment policy, sluggish appointments to top slots in her agency, as well as heard less-than-flattering comments about agency access.

The access issue may have held more interest for working reporters than many of the more regional problems.

Advised by board member Teya Ryan of CNN that her agency has serious access problems, Browner backed up a pledge of maximum openness by asserting she will provide all SEJ members with home and office phone numbers of all agency information staff, in Washington as well as regional offices.

"My policy is to give out every bit of information we can give out," she said. "Unless there is a prohibition against it, we will err on the side of making it available and the people who know the information available to you."



Browner chats with an SEJ member at Duke's Fuqua School of Business, where she addressed the Society and took questions from members

As for the Great Lakes Water Quality Initiative, Browner vowed that despite delays and allegations it has been watered down, the program is moving forward and will see the light of day.

Browner hailed the initiative as a model for water quality improvement, terming it one of the most significant things done by EPA in that regard.

On the agency's ongoing scrap with California over that state's vehicle emissions program, Browner said the test-and-repair approach favored by the state is inadequate.

Yet she voiced awareness that the federal agency and state must cooperate to make any program a success.

If there are to be gains made in agricultural runoff pollution of waterways, Browner suggested they will have to be made in concert with farm agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, with which the farm community is comfortable.

When board member Julie Edelson asked about the future of EPA's Office of Enforcement, Browner responded that the office will be around awhile.

"The real goal should be not to have an Office of Enforcement," she said, "It should be to achieve compliance." But Browner conceded such a goal is unat-

tainable.

On risk assessment, Browner described it as one of a number of means of assessing relative risk.

"It is only as good as the question that is posed and the analysis that is done," said Browner. "It is absolutely essential that [reporters] ask: What was the question asked? The information looked at."

Asked about the slow pace of getting appointive personnel on board at EPA, Browner said four well-qualified people had just been sworn in. In some instances, she said nominees for the jobs have been employed as consultants pending finalization of their appointments.

"This is a fundamental change in our government right now: you haven't had anything like this in the last 12 years. It's important to take the time to do it right."

Paul Sullivan, a charter SEJ member and veteran reporter, writes for The Free Lance-Star in Fredericksburg, Va. He was asked to cover Browner's meeting with SEJ's Board of Directors and serve as a pool reporter, if necessary. In keeping with the guidelines set for all journalists attending the meeting, he was offered an opportunity to ask Browner a single question.

Society of Environmental Journalists Minutes of the third Annual Meeting of the membership of SEJ October 23, 1993, Durham, N.C.

SEJ'S THIRD ANNUAL MEETING, held at the Fuqua School of Business, Duke University campus, was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Jim Detjen, SEJ president.

In introductory comments, Detjen noted that the meeting's main order of business was to be completion of an election to fill four positions on the SEJ board of directors and to determine whether to amend the SEJ Bylaws. Detjen then turned over the floor to Kevin Carmody, SEJ secretary, to explain the election procedures.

Carmody noted that more than 100 active members had already voted absentee via the new, mail-in proxy ballots. Those ballots were counted a few hours before the annual meeting by Carmody, board member David Ropeik and SEJ employee Chris Rigel, with the results sealed until live balloting was completed.

In response to a question from the floor, Carmody noted that due to the new voting procedures it was not necessary to certify the normal 10 percent quorum, at least for purposes of the election. The 1993 annual meeting quorum was 51 active members. But, in the opinion of SEJ's legal council, the 100-plus proxy ballots cast amounted to an automatic quorum. In the event that other matters requiring a quorum were brought to the floor, a quorum would have had to have been certified — and could have been because more than 54 active members were present to cast ballots at the meeting.

The board candidates were introduced and each given 2 minutes to make a candidacy statement. The six candidates present who offered statements were Steve Curwood of National Public Radio's Living on Earth, Randy Lee Loftis of *The Dallas Morning News*, Mike Mansur of the *Kansas City Star*, Roger McCoy of WKBD-TV in Detroit, Sara Thurin Rollin of BNA's *Chemical Regulation Reporter*, and Rae Tyson of *USA Today*. The sev-

enth candidate, Bobbi Ridlehoover of the *Arkansas Democrat & Gazette*, was not present at the annual meeting. Carmody noted that the bylaws amendment on the ballot was a house-keeping matter that would correct ambiguous language, thereby making it clear the board could appoint a committee, an officer or paid staff to determine whether a person qualified for SEJ membership.

The ballots, which had been distributed using a list of active members who had not voted by proxy, were collected after the candidates had finished their statements. An election committee consisting of Ropeik, Rigel and SEJ member Jay Letto then retired to count the ballots.

Returning to non-election matters, Detjen introduced SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke, Program Assistant Chris Rigel, SEJ legal counsel Elaine English, staff member Amy Gahrn and contract employee Jay Letto. Detjen also introduced the officers who would deliver annual reports.

Treasurer Noel Grove reported that SEJ had a very good year, would finish with the same cash reserves as it started the year, and expected to operate on a budget of \$247,300 for 1994. Grove, who noted he would be leaving the board, said SEJ had reached a new level of sophistication in accounting for its monies. SEJ had hired a bookkeeper, and a CPA would audit the books at the end of the year. He said that from the organization's start, the SEJ board was fiscally conservative, refusing to spend money the organization didn't have, and that approach appears to have paid off. He thanked the members for the experience of serving as treasurer.

Rae Tyson, vice president and membership chairman, reported that SEJ membership just before the conference stood at almost 820 members — 67% active, 18% associate, 15% academic and 2 honorary members. Tyson said that membership is healthy

but had leveled off, so the board had been discussing a new membership drive. He invited ideas from members on how the society could reach journalists it had so far missed.

Tyson also offered an update on the system of 14 regional coordinators put into place to help develop regional conferences or programs. Although regional conferences are a goal in some areas, Tyson said initial programs don't have to be elaborate or full-day events. For example, members in Washington, D.C., are planning dinner gatherings with guest newsmakers, while members in Columbus, Ohio, are meeting on Fridays over drinks to discuss common concerns, Tyson said.

Other announcements and briefings were offered by:

- SEJournal Co-Editor Adam Glenn, who appealed for volunteers, including editors to handle a variety of new features being considered for the journal.

- Board member Marla Cone, who explained the preliminary plans for the 1994 national conference in Utah. The conference would be somewhat decentralized, with lodging split between Provo and Sundance and panels to be taken on the road one day.

- Detjen, who said four candidates had emerged for the 1995 conference, which would likely return to the East Coast. The candidates are MIT (Boston), Cornell University (Ithaca, N.Y.), University of Florida at Gainesville and University of Wisconsin—Madison.

- Detjen, who reported on the meeting of about 100 journalists in Dresden, Germany, that led to the formation of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists, to be headquartered in Paris. Detjen, who represented SEJ, was elected a vice president of the new organization. He said SEJ might offer assistance in developing an international directory of environmental journalists, but beyond that, he is not sure yet what SEJ's role should

be. While SEJ will expand into some International areas, Detjen said he believes SEJ's emphasis should remain domestic.

At this point, the election committee delivered the ballot results to Carmody. Carmody certified that the proxy ballots had been counted and passed the names of the winning candidates to Detjen, who announced that Steve Curwood, Randy Loftis, Mike Mansur and Rae Tyson had been elected to the board, and that the bylaws amendment was approved by a vote of 123 to 7.

Detjen opened the floor to questions or comments by members.

Carol Mouche of *Environmental Protection* magazine offered congratulations on the quality of the conference program.

One member asked whether dues and conference fees were high enough to meet the financial needs of the society. Parke noted that charging say, \$400, instead of \$80 to \$100, to attend the conference would limit attendance. That's counterproductive because the society wants as many journalists as possible to be able to attend, she said. Tyson said he was not equipped to fully respond to the question regarding dues. Although there is no plan to increase dues, he noted that the \$30 rate was set at a time the board thought the society might someday have as many as 250 members, and now 1,000 members is possible. Glenn said that if it became necessary to increase fees, perhaps a substantial increase in conference fees for non-members could be an alternative to dues or fee increases for members.

Melissa Ballard of CNN expressed concern about how non-journalists managed to dominate some of the question-and-answer sessions with key speakers and panelists. Her comment touched off a wide ranging discussion of how to assure that journalists get the access they need to newsmakers such as EPA administrators, while not shunning non-journalists to the point of being rude. Jeff Johnson of BNA's *Daily Environment Report* got applause when he suggested treating non-members the

same way journalists are treated at conferences sponsored by advocates or industry. "Do what they do to us — put a big red dot on their badge," Johnson said. Ropiek added that such an ID method would allow moderators to take journalists' questions first.

Peter Dykstra of CNN noted that some advocacy representatives are worth having at conferences, but they can become a problem when they interfere with reporters being able to ask questions at news conferences, so a reasonable method of limiting their participation is needed. Scott Bronstein of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* questioned whether one day of the conference could be limited to journalists.

Mary Beth Regan of *Business Week* asked for a breakdown of conference attendance, which was later provided as being 214 SEJ members, 132 non-members (including scientists and invited panelists such as journalists who aren't members), and 50 Duke faculty and students.

Russ Clemings of the *w* seemed to sum up the consensus position that at future conferences, non-journalists be identified somehow via name badge, and the journalists get priority for asking questions during news conferences and panels.

Peter Page of the *Trenton Times* suggested that SEJ offer programs to train general assignment reporters in handling basic environmental stories, especially regarding transportation hazards and waste disposal. Mouche said that the environmental reporting mini-conference presented jointly by SEJ and the Society of Professional Journalists in Baltimore last fall served as a good outreach program and primer for generalist reporters. Clemings suggested that the fundamentals of environmental reporting could be a topic of some regional conferences.

Regan questioned why the SEJ board met privately with EPA Administrator Carol Browner prior to Browner's public remarks and news conference. At that point, other members raised concerns about what they saw as an abuse of privilege.

Parke and board member Julie

Edelson responded to the criticism, noting that the board was not trying to hide anything — that SEJ members learned the board met with Browner because the board arranged for a tape of the meeting to be available for purchase immediately after the meeting in the same way that tapes of all panels were available. That meant that if Browner said anything newsworthy, any reporter was in a position to get the tape and report her comments. Also, member Paul Sullivan of the *Free Lance-Star* in Fredericksburg, Va., was asked to cover the session for the *SEJournal*.

Edelson said that the board had no plans to meet privately with Browner, but that Browner changed her schedule a few days before her appearance. That left her with extra time before her appearance but during which concurrent panels were running. Thus, Browner offered to meet briefly with the SEJ board. "What were we to do, say no and leave her sitting by herself. It offered a chance to explain the organization" in addition to asking some issue questions, Edelson said.

Several members continued to voice anger over the arrangement. One noted that at least one board member left early from the panel he was moderating to attend the Browner meeting. Eric Greenberg of the *New York Daily News* said he felt like board members got caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

Another member suggested that the board should have asked Browner to use the extra time to start her news conference earlier. Parke said that would have meant cancelling the afternoon panels, throwing away all the preparation the moderators and panelists put in, some over a period of six months or longer.

At the close of the meeting, the board presented long-time SEJ member and staffer Amy Gahrn with a certificate recognizing her for dedication and faithful service to the society.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

— Submitted by Kevin Carmody,
SEJ secretary.

Minority fellows take step into national scene

By **ROGER BROWN**

For most of those who descended upon Duke University in Durham, N.C. in October, the 1993 SEJ national conference represented a chance to renew debates and rejoin discussions about the growing issues facing environmental journalists.

But for the 13 participants who came to Duke as winners of SEJ's Minority Journalists Travel Fellowships, the conference represented something else: a chance to enter the debate, a chance to join the discussion.

Thirteen people surely have 13 different ways of viewing things. But none of the minority fellows would likely disagree that attending the SEJ conference was a uniquely valuable experience — one that should eventually benefit both the 13 members individually, and SEJ as a whole.

The minority fellowship journalists were a diverse group: they ranged from a network radio reporter from chilly Saskatchewan to a network television reporter in sunny Miami; from students at schools in Arizona and Missouri to print journalists from Texas, California, Michigan, South Carolina, Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Coming into the conference, many of the minority fellows shared some similar concerns regarding the challenges facing environmental journalists — namely, the need to become more aggressive and informed in finding ways to make readers aware and educated about the growing

issue of environmental justice.

Many of the fellowship winners noted that they covered environmental issues in communities with significant minority populations — whether African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American or Native-American — and where it could be questioned whether the concerns of the residents in those communities were being adequately addressed.

Clearly, that issue remained a major concern among the fellowship participants throughout the conference. During a roundtable discussion on the last day of the conference, many of the members talked about the ongoing need for the environmental media to note the growing trend among minority communities to organize and offer well-planned resistance to actions taken by companies or individuals that may have an environmental impact on those communities.

In essence, the fellowship members felt environmental journalists as a whole must recognize that groups of people who once felt powerless or voiceless on issues involving the environment no longer feel that way, and there must be a greater sensitivity to seeking their story in a thorough fashion.

Some fellowship members said they hope to raise the profile of environmental justice in future SEJ dialogues, and some suggested the best way to accomplish this was to become active members of the organization by seeking offices and offering input.

Clearly, this was a dominant issue among the minority fellowship participants, but it would be inaccurate to state that members lacked interest or enthusiasm for other activities.

Several marvelled at the efforts being made by North Carolina environmentalists to establish greenways in urban areas — an effort that, while requiring ever-vigilant attention, appears to be successful.

Other participants were impressed by the wide range of knowledgeable and articulate speakers that populated the conference's panel discussions and lunch sessions — minority fellows were in attendance when issues were discussed ranging from hazardous waste incinerators in Ohio to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's view of private/public cooperation on environmental problems. As session after session unfolded, many fellowship members would get together afterwards to discuss what they had heard, and a sense of collegiality was clear.

The SEJ conference at Duke represented a first step for the 1993 minority fellowship winners — a step that allows them entrance into the national circle of environmental journalists. Given the enthusiasm and passion shown by the fellowship members, that first step of involvement will surely not be the last they make in SEJ.

Roger Brown is editorial writer and general interest columnist for The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, OH.

Warming knowledge ... (from page 1)

sources of knowledge; 2) to identify and evaluate acquired knowledge about global warming and determine where ignorance and/or confusion is most prevalent; 3) to measure the efficacy of individual sources (television, print, and classroom) to educate by evaluating differences in this acquired knowledge based on the source of that knowledge.

The Student Survey

The good news is that 94 percent of 649 University of Colorado-Boulder students were "familiar" with the term global

warming.

Cognitive knowledge was measured in five content areas—greenhouse gases, sources of increased greenhouse gases, scientific debate, scientific context, and predicted effects.

Large numbers of students recognized certain greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide (60 percent) and CFCs (59 percent), and their sources, automobile emissions (87 percent) and aerosol propellants (83 percent).

There was broad ignorance, however, about other important greenhouse gases,

such as methane (40 percent) and nitrous oxide (28 percent), and their sources, rice agriculture (14 percent), cattle production (45 percent) and fertilizers (33 percent).

As a group, the student population tended to inflate the scientific predictions of increased drought and hotter summers in the United States, while seriously underestimating the scientific consensus about increased global precipitation and cloud cover. Only 15 percent of the students acknowledged the scientific distinction between global warming and the greenhouse effect.

As a group, the students were very concerned about global warming, believed they could do something about it, but were uncertain or ignorant about appropriate responses to global warming.

Students who relied on television had significantly less global warming knowledge in all five content areas than did students who said they primarily relied on print or classroom sources.

No statistical differences were noted among the three sources (television, print, and classroom), but an important distinction was discovered *within* the television cohort.

In nearly every case, students who said their primary source of global warming knowledge was public television specials scored on the opposite side of the mean from local television news viewers.

Students in this sample who relied on public television had significantly different (and more accurate) attitudes and values about global warming than did students who said they relied on local television news.

Students also highly valued public television as a source of global warming knowledge, while remaining neutral about both local television and newspapers.

Results from the student survey indicate that the media, especially television, are important sources of knowledge about global warming. This is likely the case with other global environmental issues as well.

So to lump "the media" into one all-inclusive category as previous research has done is a serious mistake. This study has shown that the few students who read newspapers (especially national newspapers) had more contextual and cognitive knowledge about global warming and a more accurate view of the scientific debate and predicted effects.

Viewers of public television were more aware of the attitudes and values surrounding global warming. Local television news viewers were more victims of the "dueling scientist" scenario often presented in television.

The Reporter Survey

In October 1992, a second survey of global warming knowledge and sources

of knowledge was conducted. Five hundred forty-five surveys were mailed to SEJ members. Two hundred forty-nine were returned, for a response rate of 46 percent. This is an extraordinary response for a mail survey without follow-up reminders.

The excellent response rate reflects the high interest in the topic by SEJ members, but once again potential bias exists. These reporters are not reflective of all reporters who cover global warming.

Reporters who relied on scientists as their primary sources of information about global warming were much more technically literate than were reporters who relied on newspapers.

Members of SEJ are likely more interested in global warming, and other environmental issues, than the reporter population in general, and the results are interpreted in that context.

Respondents averaged 12 years of reporting experience and six years of reporting on the environment, suggesting that the environment is a relatively new beat with seasoned reporters covering it.

The population was highly educated—two-thirds of the respondents had a bachelors degree and 30 percent had earned a masters degree. These factors of high education and high reporting experience are further evidence that this population should be more knowledgeable than the general population of reporters.

A third of the respondents majored in journalism, 14 percent majored in the environmental sciences, and 6 percent majored in communications.

Some reporters had prescient views of the results, and their comments provide an insightful backdrop for a summary discussion of the findings.

The most common comment among SEJ respondents was summed up by a female radio reporter who works 50-75 percent of the time on the environment—"Your survey made me see how ignorant I really am about global warming; and I know *so* (her emphasis) much more than do my listeners."

She was right. This population of SEJ reporters was much more informed about global warming than was the student popu-

lation, and there were still large gaps in reporter knowledge.

As expected, 100 percent of the respondents were "familiar" with the term global warming. A surprising number, however, were ignorant of important greenhouse gases such as CFCs (less recognition than among the student population) and nitrous oxide, as well as many sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Many reporters were confused about the science of global warming and the scientific debate about predicted effects—confusion that could be passed on to the public and affect the learning about global warming.

Some reporters had much more knowledge of global warming than others. Reporters who covered the environment full-time had the best global warming knowledge.

Based on their own comments, some reporters would not be surprised at these results. "What reporters need most is time, and most editors are unwilling to give this," said one freelance reporter. "Few reporters are provided the time and/or resources to cultivate effective, reliable sources on global warming," lamented a reporter for a large daily newspaper.

This reporter brings up another important finding of the study—differences in reporter knowledge were also related to the use of sources.

Reporters who relied on scientists as their primary sources were much more literate than were reporters who relied on newspapers.

A few reporters complained that scientists need to leave their ivory towers and not use such technical jargon, but results strongly support the value of using scientists as sources and a general reluctance on the part of these reporters to blame scientists for miscommunications between the two.

Only a minority of SEJ members (20 percent) said they used scientists as primary sources of global warming knowledge, with most respondents using newspapers (37 percent).

These results confirm previous findings about the news "food chain"—that is, the perpetuation of news previously covered by other sources, primarily newspa-

pers, but these findings clearly suggest that scientists are a preferred global warming knowledge source.

Unlike the student population, few SEJ members (3 percent) used television as a source of global warming knowledge.

Having the opportunity to report on environmental issues such as global warming full-time was reflected in higher cognitive knowledge in all five content areas.

This was especially evident with the nuances of the science of global warming, such as identification of more obscure greenhouse gases and their sources, understanding the science of global warming and where the scientific debate occurs, and a clearer comprehension of the predicted effects of general circulation models.

Unfortunately, there are not many full-time environmental reporters employed in the U.S. media, especially in television.

A pattern of less cognitive knowledge among television reporters, especially small-market television reporters, was noted, but due to the small numbers could not be statistically validated.

Finally, respondents with a college science background also had more global warming knowledge than did reporters with college journalism and communications degrees. Many reporters also suggested a better science education for their producers and editors so that these gatekeepers would recognize the importance of environmental stories such as global warming.

Recommendations

A well-informed public is essential to promote awareness and provide guidance on climate change. This research has shown that both students' and reporters' knowledge about global warming was limited, and that sources of their knowledge, and reporters' working environment affected their knowledge.

I would make recommendations for improving environmental reporting about global warming in three areas:

1) Students, and the public, should rely on multiple sources of knowledge about global warming. Even when I was a television news director and anchor I always encouraged viewers to read the newspaper as well.

Reliance on television news provided a distorted view of global warming—a lack of context, poor understanding of the science of global warming, and inflated estimates of the debated, dramatic predicted effects.

Results from this study showed that print sources provided valuable contextual knowledge that television didn't. The very nature of television news may act as a barrier to contextual knowledge transfer, instead favoring sensational, short-term, dramatic, visual images that convey little background or context to interpret and understand a story like global warming.

Global warming is a difficult story for commercial television. It is future-oriented, long-term and complex—factors that work against “spot news” reactionary coverage that permeates local and national news coverage.

2) First and foremost for reporters, training in science, geography, and other related topics is recommended in order to accurately report on global warming and other environmental stories.

Knowing how to write well, to communicate, is one important aspect of good environmental reporting. Results indicated that another equally important criterion was content knowledge in environmental sciences.

A second college degree is not necessary, rather reporters should pursue specialized training and workshops that educate about the scientific method and focus on one or many pertinent environmental topics.

Such training may help reporters avoid two critical errors in their global warming reporting. First, I urge a modification of the journalistic tenet to find “balance” to every story.

By creating an ersatz balance to the global warming story, the scientific debate has been accentuated and public education has suffered.

The tenet I speak of is the unwritten, but internalized belief that no matter what one source says, a contradictory viewpoint must also be offered in order to present a “fair, objective, and balanced” media portrayal.

I'm not advocating the disintegration of dissenting opinions, but rather that in the coverage of stories such as global warming in which scientific certainty is

elusive, and may never be achieved entirely, that reporters present a story that measures the *weight* of scientific evidence.

Very few reporters, and even fewer students were knowledgeable about the certainty of the greenhouse effect and that most scientists in the field accept the theory of global warming.

If every story about global warming follows the traditional “he said, she disagreed” format the basic understanding of the science of global warming gets obscured.

Lost in the contentious debate is the scientific consensus on increased greenhouse gases, a temperature record indicating a warming, and predicted *global* temperature increase with a doubling of greenhouse gases.

This is not to suggest that disagreements about predicted effects should not be presented in that context—predicted effects are strongly debated and that is exactly the way they should be reported.

What I am suggesting is that news reports on global warming should not be limited to the “pro/con” stories that typically happen each time a new study on predicted effects is released (and of course disputed in the name of “balance” without any discussion on how models work and why regional predictions are not accurate).

The debate on predicted effects should not be covered in isolation. Why not consider a five-part series? Predicted effects are only one of many topics that could be covered.

Also discussed could be the scientific method, the science of global warming and the greenhouse effect, and greenhouse gases and their sources.

The misunderstanding of the scientific debate is exacerbated by many reporters' use of terminology. The greenhouse effect is one of the most well-established theories in all of science. There is no scientific debate about the greenhouse effect, but approximately half of both the students and reporters thought the concept was debated, and even more students and reporters were confused about the theory of global warming.

A recent newspaper headline screamed, “Scientists say there is no greenhouse effect.” Without a greenhouse effect, life on earth would not exist in its present form. The news story was actually

Features

about the latest research suggesting that a negligible increase in the United States' temperature record had occurred.

Certainly the scientists, and probably even the reporter (who is a full-time environmental reporter) were aware of the distinction between the two terms, but perhaps the headline writer was not. Ultimately the reader was the recipient of yet another round of the confusing scientific debate.

Perhaps the terms "enhanced greenhouse effect" or "global climate change" are suitable synonyms for global warming. "Global warming" and "the greenhouse effect," however, are not interchangeable terms and their use should be carefully monitored to avoid ambiguity, confusion, and illiteracy.

Finally, for reporters I would recommend news coverage that focuses more on responses and possible solutions to potential global warming rather than just the debated predicted effects.

Students and reporters thought global warming was a serious threat, but were ignorant or uncertain about appropriate individual responses. In many cases reducing greenhouse emissions has the synergistic effect of improving the economy

as well, which is seldom highlighted or understood.

An individual reporter can only do so much within the confines of the institutional structure and managerial support. That is why a third area of recommendations is directed at the television industry itself.

3) **First and foremost, television must honor its commitment to entertain and educate.** Education has been left to public television, and results indicated that those students who relied on public television were significantly more knowledgeable about global warming than were their national and local news counterparts.

Like newspaper readership, however, PBS viewership is much lower than commercial television. Commercial television has the opportunity with its reach and influence to truly educate the public.

The recent grandstanding by commercial television stations that cartoons represent "educational" programming is just one example of this medium's reluctance to honor this commitment to education.

Educating reporters on the use of scientists as sources, and providing special instruction and training in science are things that can be learned by all reporters. What media managers must be willing to

do is to give reporters the time and resources to accurately cover stories such as global warming.

By far the most knowledgeable reporters were those who worked on the environment full-time. Television stations are notorious for hiring full-time reporters in many other areas (politics, entertainment, law, consumer affairs, education).

I would argue environmental stories are the most important stories of our time and commercial television must be willing to take the lead in this education effort.

The rewards for this kind of commitment are huge, but perhaps difficult to measure for an industry based on economics and ratings. Research consistently indicates that the environment is among the most important stories to audiences. A loyal audience will be created with high quality environmental reporting.

Such prestige is hard to quantify, but is not unusual for television stations that sponsor a wide variety of events for the purpose of community involvement and name recognition. A station that justifies the expense of an entertainment reporter (or a sports department for that matter) should be held accountable for the same kind of commitment to the environment.

New Members

The following list represents new SEJ members recorded from August 25 through November 19. Memberships recorded after November 19 will appear in the SEJournal Vol. 4 No. 1.

CALIFORNIA

- Frank Clifford (Active), L.A. Times, Los Angeles
- Joel Grossman (Associate), Santa Monica

CONNECTICUT

- Lynn M. Bonner (Active), The Day, New London
- David Gurliacci (Active), The Hour, The Hour Publishing Co., Darien

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Marianne Lavelle (Active), National Law Journal

GEORGIA

- William F. Griswold (Academic), College of Journalism, University of Georgia, Athens

ILLINOIS

- Todd Buchanan (Associate), Glen Ellyn
- James Glanz (Active), R & D Magazine, Chicago
- David Miller (Academic), Buffalo Grove

MASSACHUSETTS

- Jennifer Goren (Academic), Boston University, Brookline

- Holly Kaufman (Academic), Center for Science & Int'l Affairs, Harvard University, Somerville

MISSOURI

- Teresa K. Taylor (Academic), Springfield News-Leader, Springfield

NORTH CAROLINA

- Carla B. Burgess (Academic), Coastwatch, University of North Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh
- Jeannie Faris (Academic), Coastwatch, University of North Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh
- Kathy Hart (Academic), Coastwatch, University of North Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Jill Schwartz (Academic), Publications Dept., Antioch New England, Keene

NEW YORK

- Maria Gemma Castineira (Academic), Northwestern University, New York
- Karl Grossman (Academic), American Studies Prog./Communications & Media, SUNY/College at Old Westbury, Sag Harbor
- Beth Hanson (Associate), The Amicus Journal, Natural Resources Defense Council, Brooklyn
- Walter Levy (Academic), Pace University, Brooklyn
- Kathryn V. Sagan (Active), Family Circle,

New York

OHIO

- Roger Brown (Active), The Plain Dealer, Cleveland
- Thomas B. Henry (Active), Toledo Blade, Toledo

PENNSYLVANIA

- Peter Page (Active), Times of Trenton, Morrisville

SOUTH CAROLINA

- Ron Nixon (Active), Southern Exposure, Institute for Southern Studies, Columbia

UTAH

- Laura Martin Bühler (Active), The Gentle Survivalist, St. George

WISCONSIN

- Dawn Thomas (Active), Kalihwisaks, Oneida Communications, Oneida
- Stephen Wittman (Academic), Sea Grant Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison

CANADA

- Bill Doskoch (Active), The Leader-Post, Regina, SK

NEPAL

- Prakash Khanal (Active), Nepal Press Institute, Kathmandu



Application for Membership

Society of Environmental Journalists

Instructions:

1. Fill out application as completely as possible. Attach additional pages if necessary.
2. If available, attach a current resume or brief biography.
3. Mail to: **Society of Environmental Journalists**
9425 Stenton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Please enclose a check for \$30 for annual dues payable to Society of Environmental Journalists.

A. To be completed by all applicants.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Employer: _____ Work Phone: _____

Title of Publication/Show/Dept.: _____

Work Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Fax Number: _____ Home Phone: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City State Zip

VERY IMPORTANT: SEJ mail should be sent to your (Home) (Work) address.

(Note: Students should provide address and phone during school year and date of graduation.)

Primary Area of Employment (Check only one):
 Magazine Television Radio Freelancer Newspaper Educator News Service Student Newsletter Photographer

Describe duties (students may describe goals): _____

When did you start current position (date)? If less than two years, summarize work history: _____

If you own or have access to a computer, is it: Apple/Macintosh PC-compatible Windows
Disk drive size: 3.5-inch 5.25-inch Does it accept high-density disks? Yes No

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

- Active** Persons primarily engaged in the gathering, reporting, editing, photographing, producing or cartooning of news for dissemination by regularly published, general circulation newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, as well as radio and television stations and networks, news services, and other media available to the general public.
- Academic** Persons on the faculty or enrolled as students of an accredited college, university, or other school who have an interest in environmental issues.
- Associate** Those individuals, such as part-time freelancers, who do not qualify for Active or Academic membership but who, in the majority opinion of the SEJ board, will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the SEJ. (See section "C" of application.) Applicants must be substantially engaged in journalistic pursuits.

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

A. (continued)

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: _____

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

If yes, for whom? _____

B. To be completed by applicants for active or associate membership.

Is your employer or organization 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 supported by: advertising paid subscriptions membership dues other

If "other", please specify: _____

C. To be completed by applicants for associate membership.

How would your membership in the Society of Environmental Journalists contribute to attainment of the Society's goals(i.e., enhancing the quality and accuracy of environmental reporting)?

D. To be completed by all applicants.

I hereby apply for membership in the Society of Environmental Journalists. I understand the Board of Directors retains sole authority in determining eligibility for membership in any category.

Signature Date

Do you know someone who should be a member of SEJ? We'll send them details and an application:			
Name: _____		Organization: _____	
Address _____			
Street	City	State	Zip

For use only by SEJ Membership Committee or Board of Directors	
Date reviewed by committee: _____	Recommendation _____
Membership category granted _____	Date of action _____

Ethics and the education of environmental journalists: an international perspective

By ANN FILEMYR

Since attending the first North American conference for environmental journalists sponsored by *Utne Reader* in May 1990, I have been thinking about what this new kind of reporting requires from journalists.

In Fall 1990, I began teaching at Antioch College and conceived of a course to begin to discuss and present the issues of environmental journalism with students. I had no idea then of anyone anywhere else teaching a similar kind of course.

An article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in March 1991 interviewed Michael Frome, another professor/journalist developing such a class.

He states, "I'm very definitely teaching advocacy journalism. I don't teach objectivity because I don't believe it exists." His goal is to instill in students a strong pro-preservation and conservation ethic that they can infuse in their stories.

Others feel that the traditional investigative approach and the familiar Code of Ethics put forth by the Society of Professional Journalists will serve the purpose and do not expect students of environmental journalism to question their underlying ethical positions.

After joining the Society of Environmental Journalists in 1992 I have met other academics concerned with these issues.

My perspective on this question may be a little different as I have been increasingly involved in researching environmental journalism from a cross-cultural and international perspective.

This research began with assistance from an organization in Washington, D.C., called Partners of the Americas.

I was able to spend a month in Brazil interviewing environmental journalists in November 1991 prior to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

While there, I found out about the plans for the first international gathering of environmental journalists. I kept in touch with environmental journalists in Brazil and joined them in May 1992 for the *Imprensa Verde* (Green Press) Conference.

Some 950 journalists from 28 coun-

tries, including Russia, India, Japan, Europe, Africa, North and South America gathered in Belo Horizonte before attending the Earth Summit in Rio in June. We debated, shared resources and stories, and struggled with ethical questions to create a tri-lingual (Portuguese, Spanish, English) manifesto or statement of ethics to help guide and frame the issues for journalists worldwide covering environmental issues.

I was disappointed by the very small presence of U.S. environmental journalists at this conference, and hope that perhaps I can help serve as a link between U.S.-based environmental journalists and

Viewpoints

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

our associates around the planet. There is no doubt that in this age of global reporting we need each other.

In addition, direct governmental control of many foreign presses prevents our colleagues from telling the stories they have. They may be able to use our assistance in getting the story out.

In April 1993, I was invited to attend another international gathering of environmental journalists co-sponsored by UNICEF and the Global Forum in Okayama, Japan. This one had as its single focus the question of the role of the media in value change for sustainable development and planetary survival.

Many journalists resist the idea that we are involved in values change, but the undeniable influence of the press in communicating with the public is obvious in every nation on earth.

Are we as journalists going to continue to pretend that we do not play a significant role in communicating and educating the public about environmental issues? Can we wash our hands of our responsibility?

The poet Robert Duncan said, "Responsibility is the ability to respond." Can

journalists respond to the needs of our time and exercise our ability to influence policy makers, politicians and the public in order to make a contribution to the health of our communities? These are some of the questions I try to raise in my course.

Through travel and discussion with environmental journalists in other parts of the world, I have been able to gain a unique perspective.

One thing I have discovered are profound differences in how we define environment, how we approach environmental issues, and how deep we are willing to go in questioning the current status quo. These differences mark us as being from North or South, the richer nations or the poorer ones.

One basic difference is that journalists in Brazil, India, the Philippines, etc. look at environment and development issues as inseparable.

Hunger and homelessness are considered critical environmental issues. International debt and the pressure it puts on small domestic economies to use up natural resources at an unprecedented rate is viewed as a significant environmental issues. In the U.S. we often fail to make these kinds of connections.

In the developing nations, social issues are seen as intertwined with environmental concerns. Thus population pressure is seen to be not simply a ticking bomb out of control but the direct result of women's unequal status, of poverty and inadequate health care, of lack of choice and lack of access to opportunity.

The solution then is not simple sterilization or increased use of birth control, but better education for women and their increased participation in community decision-making. Studies have shown that women with more education and better opportunities choose to have less children.

This crucial linkage should be made common knowledge so that we can no longer present the growing number of babies in nations in Africa and South America as a threat unless we are willing to address women's status and the reasons

for the impoverishment of women and children at home and abroad.

The idea that social systems of privilege need to be challenged has been foreign to most U.S. environmental journalists. There appears to be a tremendous reluctance to connect any issues of gender, race or class to environmental issues.

The almost complete silence from environmental journalists regarding the recent information concerning environmental racism — i.e. the targeting of communities of color who often have less financial resources, less political influence, and less visibility — as sites for toxic waste dumping and incineration of hazardous waste, is greatly disturbing.

Why aren't journalists willing to talk about the relationship between privilege and exposure to environmental hazards? Is it partly because fewer journalists come from these communities, and so we overlook their problems?

In class discussions, I try to encourage students in making connections between their own identities, their own access to privilege, and the issues they think are important.

I try to enlarge the circle of connection so that we are able to see how the environmental impact on one group, neighborhood, or nation, is connected to the entire ecosystem.

We all live downstream, downwind, upstairs, or next door. How can we use our privilege as journalists who are able to speak to large numbers of people to increase knowledge and respect between groups?

It seems crucial to me that we begin to educate ourselves and others about the inter-relationships between power and privilege on the one hand, and powerlessness, poverty and environmental degradation on the other.

We have been presented with the information that in today's world, 20 percent of the people consume 80 percent of the resources. We can no longer hold on to the out-dated concept that everyone will be able to "raise their standard of living" to meet ours. It's a mathematical impossibility.

If even 40 percent of the world's people live at our current rate of consumption it would require more than half of another planet to be at our complete disposal so that 40 percent could consume 160 percent.

Therefore environmental journalists in the developed world need to be willing to connect consumer issues to environmental issues. We need to be educated about the relationship between economic and ecological issues. We need to become informed about our choices and the impact of our choices. We need to be ready to advance systemic change.

I know that many journalists find this line of reasoning distasteful. It crosses the line between serving the public as a courier of information and suggests journalists become advocates for change.

I do not believe journalists have the answer, and I am not suggesting we become propagandists for any single right way. We need the lively debate of scientists and social scientists, of activists and just plain folks.

As journalists, we are trained to listen to experts and victims, to witnesses and decision-makers; I suggest we also learn to listen to ourselves.

I believe environmental journalists, those individuals who have chosen to work on this kind of reporting, have an unusual responsibility. As a messenger of issues which directly affect our present and future health, even our survival, it is essential that connections be made.

I think journalists worldwide share unanimous agreement that it is our role to inform people. We might also agree on journalistic standards, such as to strive for fairness, accuracy and the best available truth.

I want to suggest we go one step farther and push for a "deep journalism," a willingness to ask deeper questions, to challenge fundamental assumptions about our societies, and make clearer connections.

In a college course on a liberal arts campus, many students are simply curious and beginning to explore various disciplines. Environmental journalism is a unique interdisciplinary study which incorporates the natural sciences with the social sciences and challenges students to think about the world they live in with a deeper appreciation for the complexity and inter-related nature of our lives.

Ann Filemyr is assistant professor of journalism and chair of the communications and media arts program of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Oh. She is a member of SEJ.

JANUARY

9-11. **Estrogens in the Environment: Implications for Global Health** (sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, meeting will focus on the growing number of hormone-like pollutants, and on their possible role in a range of disorders, from infertility to cancer). Washington, DC. Contact: Vicky Engelbright, NIEHS, Ph:919/541-3337; FAX:919/541-0696

FEBRUARY

10-12. **Symposium on Health Research and Needs to Ensure Environmental Justice** (sponsored by National Institutes of Health, it will focus on federal policies and research agendas to deal with environmental equity issues). Washington D.C. Contact: Symposium Coordinator, NIEHS, MD B2-08, P.O. Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

12-16. **Managing Radioactive and Mixed Wastes** (sponsored by the Health Physics Society). Marriott Hotel, Albany, N.Y. Contact: William Condon. Ph:518/458-6495, or Health Physics Soc., 8000 Westpark Dr., Ste. 130, McLean, VA 22102. Ph:703/790-1745; FAX:703/790-9063

MARCH

3-6. **Nat'l Wildlife Rehabilitators Assn. Annual Conf.** Wilmington, DE. Contact: NWRA, St. Croix Nature Center, 12805 St. Croix Trail, Hastings, MN 55033

3-6. **Ecotech '94** (conference aims to highlight business strategies that integrate environmental concerns with economic growth, featuring sessions on industrial ecology, environmentally friendly technology, and retooling the defense industry to help the environment). Leesburg, VA. Contact: Michael Whitacre, Dir. Ecotech '94, P.O. Box 881457, Steamboat Spgs. CO 80488. Ph:303/870-9798; FAX:303/870-9799

7-10. **Fourth Int'l Zebra Mussel Conf.** (sponsored by numerous federal and industry organizations, it will cover everything from ecological impacts to chemical control options and the economic

Calendar

impacts of such biological "pollutants"). Holiday Inn-Madison West, Madison, WI. Contact: Clifford Kraft Ph:414/465-2795; FAX:414/465-2376

13-17. **Society of Toxicology annual meeting** (conference includes sessions on effects of electromagnetic fields, aging and environmental neurotoxins, environmental tobacco smoke, and health effects of prenatal metal exposures). Dallas. Contact: SOT, 1101 14th St., NW, Ste. 1100, Washington DC 20005-5601. Ph:202/371-1393; FAX:202/371-1090

14-16. **1994 EMF (Electromagnetic Field) Seminar** (sponsored by Electric Power Research Inst., it will focus on technical and scientific issues, including new look at its possible role in breast cancer). Marriott Hotel, Santa Clara, CA. Contact: Robert S. Banks Assocs. Ph:612/623-4600; FAX:612/623-3645

22-25. **Cost-Efficient Acquisition and Utilization of Data in the Management of Hazardous Waste Sites** (sponsored by Waste Policy Inst., and Air and Waste Mgmt. Assn., the meeting will focus on focus on improving monitoring of wastes prior to and following cleanup activities). Washington DC. Contact: Robert A. Lewis, Ph:301/990-3014; FAX:301/990-6150

22-25. **Indoor Environment '94** (sponsored by Indoor Air Quality Publications, sessions will deal with safety, health, and management issues pertaining to sick-building syndrome). Sheraton Washington, Washington, DC. Contact: IAQ Pubs., 4520 East-West Hwy, Ste. 610, Bethesda, MD 20814. Ph:800/394-0115

23-25. **Five Years After the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill** (this conference will focus on what improvements have been made regarding oil-shipping reliability and liability since the Valdez spill, and how they might affect the potential for future spills). Regal Alaskan Hotel, Anchorage. Contact: Brenda Baxter, Alaska Sea Grant College Program, Univ. of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK. 99775-5040 Ph:907-474-7086; FAX:907/474-6285

APRIL

5-8. **Global Climate Change: Science, Policy & Mitigation Strategies** (sponsored by Air and Waste Mgmt. Assn.,

sessions will include new data on greenhouse-gas emission trends, effects of these gases on the ecology, potential impacts of climate change on the economy, and strategies for disposing or sequestering carbon dioxide) Phoenix. Contact: C.V. Mathai. Ph:602/250-3569

WORKSHOPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) is currently accepting applications to its media fellowships program for print journalists at publications with a circulation of 200,000 and above. Your employer must pick up travel costs and salary for the week or so you'd be at a university. The school will provide room and board. Contact the school directly to set up arrangement, some fellowships "sell out quickly," CASE warns.

Signals of Global Change, Univ. of Mich.: 5-day program will focus on extent and effects of ozone depletion, how species ranges shift in response to climate and habitat change, relationships between population pressure and climate change, and impact of rising carbon dioxide levels on plants and soil. Contact: Walter L. Harrison, Univ. of Mich., 2064 Fleming Bldg., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340. PH:313/763-5800

Conservation Biology, University of Washington: week program helps reporters understand why species become endangered, how big a population is necessary to survive, what is the economic value of keeping an ecosystem intact, and what are the hidden costs—and who pays—when it is damaged? Contact: James Karr, Dir., Inst. of Envir'l Studies, Univ. of Wash, Inst. for Environmental Studies, FM-12, Seattle, WA 98195. Ph:206/543-1812

Business and the Environment: Profit, Policy and the Planet, Washington Univ. This week-long program allows journalists to explore the social, political and economic ramifications of the environmental movement. Contact: Judy Jasper, Exec. Dir. of Univ. Communications, Washington University, Campus Box 1070, 1 Brookings Dr., St. Louis, MO 63130. Ph:314/935-5408

Green Engineering, Virginia Tech:

week here offers media insight into how engineers are infusing environmental sensitivity and pollution prevention strategies to new manufacturing processes. Contact: Lynn Nystrom, Dir. News and Info., Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State Univ., College of Eng., 315 Burruss Hall, Blacksburg; VA 24061-0253. Ph:703/231-4371

Jan. 31. **Deadline for U.S. journalists to apply for the Nieman Fellowship for Environmental Journalists**—a year of academic study at Harvard University. Candidates must have: three years media experience, their employer's consent for leave during the academic year beginning in Sept. 1994, and be employed as staff or freelance journalists working for broadcast, wire-service, or print news organizations "of broad public interest." Fellowships include tuition and a stipend to cover living expenses. (Foreign journalists have until March 1 to apply for a related Nieman environmental fellowship.) Interested applicants should contact: Program Officer, Nieman Foundation, 1 Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Ph:617/495-2237; FAX:617/495-8976

Feb. 28. **Deadline for application to Ted Scripps Fellowships in Environmental Reporting**—a year of academic study at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources. Open to all print and broadcast journalists with three years of full-time news experience—not necessarily in covering the environment. Focus is on helping people early in their career obtain a solid grounding in scientific, political and economic issues surrounding environmental topics. The program offers free tuition and an \$8,000 stipend. Contact: Jonathan Friendly, Scripps Fellowships, Dept. of Communication, 2038 Frieze Bldg, U. of Mich., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285

March 1. **Deadline to apply for Knight Science Journalism Fellowships**—a year of academic study, twice-weekly seminars with experts, and journalism workshops at MIT. Open to full-time staff and freelance journalists who have a minimum of 3 years experience in science and/or technology print or broadcast work. Includes \$26,000 stipend and up to \$2,000 relocation allowance. Contact: David Ansley, Acting Director, Knight Fellowships, MIT, Bldg. 9, Rm 315, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307. Ph:617/253-3442

On-line service operated by SUNY-Stony Brook

ProfNet offers link to experts

By DAN FORBUSH

How many times have you needed — in a hurry — an expert on an environmental or science topic?

If you're like many reporters, you might have called your local university and talked to the first professor who answered the phone. Or you might have pulled out an "experts list" from one or more nearby universities, and rummaged for someone whose credentials sounded appropriate.

Maybe you found someone good. More likely you didn't — simply because you didn't know where the best experts were located.

Now, you can do better, using a new service called "ProfNet" that links you — on deadline, if necessary — to experts at 320 universities and other institutions across the nation.

Short for "Professors Network," ProfNet is a cooperative of college and university public information officers linked via the Internet, a world-wide computer network, to give journalists and authors quick and convenient access to expert sources.

Created and operated by the Office of University Affairs at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, ProfNet enables journalists — even those without computers — to send an electronic-mail query to 700 public information officers representing colleges, universities and a wide range of academic, government, and corporate entities oriented to scholarship and research.

The public information officers, or PIOs, respond directly to the journalist by e-mail, fax, phone or regular mail — whatever route the journalist specifies.

There is no fee for ProfNet searches, nor is there a limit to the number or frequency of searches a journalist may conduct. Your query will be delivered to public information officers representing 320 colleges, universities, industrial laboratories, government-sponsored scientific institutions, and other organizations.

The list includes:

- Nearly 270 colleges and universities,

including most of the Ivy League and Big Ten, and such institutions as Stanford, Berkeley, MIT, Cal Tech, Johns Hopkins, the University of Chicago and the University of Virginia;

- Federal entities, including the National Science Foundation, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, National Research Council, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Office of Naval Research, Smithsonian Institution, Argonne National Laboratory, and several divisions within the National Institutes of Health and U.S.

Reporters' Toolbox

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

Department of Agriculture;

- Corporate research labs, such as AT&T Bell Labs and IBM's Thomas J. Watson Research Center and Almaden Research Center;

- Medical centers, such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and centers at Stanford, University of Michigan, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Vanderbilt, University of Utah, and the University of Texas at Houston;

- Schools of business and public policy, including the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business, Dartmouth's Amos Tuck School, Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

- Other resources, harder to categorize, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Brookings Institution, the MacArthur Foundation, the National Opinion Research Center, the Scientists' Institute for Public Information, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, and the OCLC Online Computer Library Center.

ProfNet member institutions also in-

clude some from Canada, Germany, Australia, Finland and the United Kingdom. To make a ProfNet query, specify your news organization, the nature of your project, the nature of the expertise you seek, your time frame and the manner in which you wish PIOs to respond. The more detailed your query — and the more lead time you have — the more successful your search will be.

You may send queries to ProfNet:

- by CompuServe: 76550,750
- by Internet: ProfNet@sunysb.edu
- by America Online: ProfNet@

sunysb.edu

- by fax: (516) 632-6313

- by phone: (800) PROF-NET (776-3638)

Three to five days is the ideal lead time for a ProfNet query, but ProfNet can do same-day "rush" queries if they are phoned to (800) PROF-NET before 11:30 a.m. eastern time.

If a reporter is concerned about losing an exclusive story, ProfNet can also do "cloaked" queries in which the reporter's name and news organization are concealed from all public information officers except those who indicate to ProfNet that they have an expert or information to provide. Cloaked queries do, however, take an extra day or so to process and may reduce the numbers of responses generated.

What sort of queries are journalists submitting to ProfNet? Recent examples include a query from CNN on the environmental damage caused by flooding in the Midwest; from *Garbage* magazine on the top 10 global environmental problems, from the *Waterbury Republican-American* on global warming theory, and from the *Boston Globe* on the development of electric cars.

Dan Forbush is associate vice president for university affairs, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York 11794-0605. He can be reached by phone at (516) 632-6308, via CompuServe at 76550,750, and through the Internet at Daniel.Forbush@sunysb.edu.

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 and Mississippi — Sharon Ebner at the Sun Herald, P.O. Box 4567, Biloxi, MS 39535-4567, (601) 896-2355.

Alaska — Richard Mauer at the Anchorage Daily News, Box 149001, Anchorage, AK 99514, (907) 257-4200.

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 — Bobbi Ridlehoover at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Capitol & Scott Sts., Little Rock, AK 72201, (501) 378-3596.

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 — Susan Sullivan at Riverside Press-Enterprise, P.O. Box 792, Riverside, CA 92501, (714) 782-7541, fax (714) 782-7572.

Colorado — Jan Knight, at the Fort Collins Coloradoan, P.O. Box 1577, Fort Collins, CO 80522, (303) 224-7757, fax (303) 224-7726.

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

District of Columbia — Gwen Moulton, Bureau of National Affairs, 1231 25th St., N.W., Room 361-S, Wash., DC 20037, (202) 452-4583, 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 — Denise O'Toole at the Daytona Beach News Journal, P.O. Box 2831 Daytona, FL 32120, (904) 252-1511.

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

Idaho and Montana — Stephen Stuebner at 1010 E. Washington St., Boise, ID 83712, (208) 345-4802.

Iowa — Cynthia Hubert at the Des Moines Register, P.O. Box 957, Des Moines, IA 50304, (515) 284-8000.

Hawaii — Peter Wagner at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, P.O. Box 3080, Honolulu, HI 96802, (808) 525-8699.

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

Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont — Kathryn Clark at the Dartmouth News Service, 38 North Main St., Hanover, NH 03755, (603) 646-2117, fax (603) 646-2850.

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

Michigan — Vacant.

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

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

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

New Jersey — Todd Bates at the Asbury Park Press, 3601 Hwy 66, Neptune, NJ 07754, (908) 922-6000, ext. 4361, fax (908) 922-4818.

New York — Tom Andersen at Gannett Newspapers, 1 Gannett Drive, White Plains, NY 10604, (914) 694-5060 or Daniel Markham at Environmental Communications Consultants and Appletree Press, 245 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Mamaroneck, NY. 10543 (914) 698-2427

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, (702) 885-2023.

Ohio and Indiana — Dan Trevas at Gongwer News Service, Inc, 175 South Third St., Ste. 230, Columbus, OH 43215, (614) 221-1992, fax (614) 221-7844.

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

Pennsylvania — Bill Roberts at The Philadelphia Business Journal, 400 Market St., Ste. 300, Philadelphia, PA 19106, (215) 238-5141, fax (215) 238-1466.

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

Tennessee and Kentucky — Tom Charlier at The Commercial Appeal, 495 Union Ave., Memphis, TN 38103, (901) 529-2381.

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 The Austin Chronicle, P.O. Box 49066, Austin, TX 78765, (512) 473-8995.

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

ARIZONA

► Ruben Hernandez of the Tucson Citizen has spent two months interviewing and writing about residents of Nogales suffering from unusually high levels of cancer and lupus, possibly because of exposure to toxic chemicals spewed into the air and dumped into the ground by the Maquiladora (twin plant) industries along the U.S.-Mexican border as well as problems from inadequate sewers and contaminants in a major wash. Keith Bagwell of the Star reported on studies by a University of Arizona researcher showing that lupus rates in Nogales were three times as high as ever recorded anywhere. Hernandez can be reached at 602-573-4592, P.O. Box 26787, Tucson, 55725; Bagwell at 602-573-4195, Box 26807, Tucson 66726.

► The Tucson Weekly has reported on a big controversy over a proposed low-level nuclear waste dump outside Needles, California, that some environmentalists fear could lead to pollution of the Colorado River water that furnishes Phoenix and Tucson with drinking water. It also has reported on inefficiencies and rip-offs in the local recycling programs run by trash giants Waste Management Inc. and Browning-Farris Industries. Contact managing editor Dan Huff at the Weekly at 602-792-3630 or at P.O. Box 2429, Tucson 86702.

► Reporters Doug Krautz and Ric Volante of the Arizona Daily Star have written extensively about the continuing woes of the \$4 billion Central Arizona Project, one of the nation's worst water project boondoggles in recorded history. They have documented the efforts of already subsidized Central Arizona farmers to receive CAP water at even more heavily subsidized rates, and the problems that the Tucson Water system had with rusty, discolored CAP water going into peoples' homes. Originally, CAP was to serve the entire 400,000-plus person city, but so far barely 15% of the residents are hooked up, while the rest continued to drink ground water, pumped from the city's declining ground water aquifer. Krautz can be reached at 602-573-4192.

CALIFORNIA

► Reporters at three McClatchy Newspapers — the *Sacramento Bee*, *Modesto Bee*, and *Fresno Bee* — examined more than 1 million federal and state computer records, and interviewed dozens of people for their four-part series on air pollution in California's Central Valley. Chris Bowman, Russell Clemings, and Alvie Lindsay found in their series that the health of the Valley's 5 million residents is at risk from pesticides and lax enforcement of air pollution control laws. In a survey of local enforcement officers, who often double as county supervisors, the reporters found in part two of the series that the low fines levied against violators make it more practical for industries to violate the laws and pay the fines than to comply. In part three, the reporters examined data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory and the California Environmental Protection Agency's Pesticide Use Reports to determine that in 1990 Central Valley growers used 14 times more toxic chemicals than manufacturers released into the air. In addition, the pesticide users discharge chemicals with much higher toxicity than manufacturers, according to the groundbreaking computer assisted reporting in the series. Meanwhile, little pressure is being put on the growers to regulator their pesticide use. In the final part of the series, the reporters found mounting evidence to suggest that the state's Smog Check program, which requires biennial vehicle tailpipe emission checks, is doing little to clean up the air at a great cost to consumers. The series, which ran Nov. 14-17, marks the first time the three McClatchy papers have worked on a cooperative series. For more information, contact Chris Bowman of the *Sacramento Bee* at (916)321-1000.

CONNECTICUT

Fifty years ago the U.S. military doused thousands of its own soldiers with mustard gas in secret experiments to determine how much exposure a man could take and continue functioning. *Hartford Courant* staff writer Daniel P. Jones wrote a two-part series in October, focusing on two Connecticut men who are petitioning

the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation for the injuries they suffered in the experiments.

FLORIDA

► Alachua County officials are scrutinizing the disposal of construction and demolition debris in unlined dump sites. County officials report finding hazardous waste and other code violations at all of the county's six existing sites. More than 300 tons per day is received from Jacksonville, more than 70 miles away, because of the lower tipping fees in Alachua County. A citizens group, citing concerns of possible contamination of the Floridan aquifer, has formed to oppose a planned 640-acre site south of Newberry. The county is considering adopting a countywide code that would require dump operations to separate and store hazardous waste in a separate area and to monitor groundwater for contamination. A state environmental official said stronger protection is needed at the state level but has not been sought because of opposition from the construction industry. For more information, call Bruce Ritchie at *The Gainesville Sun*, (904)374-5087.

► A *St. Petersburg Times* report detailed how state officials who administered Florida's underground fuel tank cleanup program have joined or created cleanup companies after leaving state government. Big oil companies that helped write the state's tanks law also are now profiting under the cleanup program, which pays 6 percent interest if reimbursements are not paid within two months. Meanwhile, the top official in the Florida Petroleum Marketers Association resigned in September after his organization challenged a cleanup payback rule that threatened to delay the program. Several FMPA members told *Florida Environments* the challenge was filed without their approval and to protect one company facing possible criminal indictments. For more information, call Dave Newport at *Florida Environments*, (904)373-1401.

IDAHO

► The *Idaho Falls Post-Register* carried an exposé recently on the proposed

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Superfund listing of the old mining town of Triumph, near Sun Valley, Idaho. Although the EPA scored Triumph as the most toxic site in the nation, residents charge the EPA botched drinking water tests and challenge the merits of listing. Blood-lead and urine arsenic tests seem to show that residents have no acute health problems. Triumph may become one of the celebrated cases that shows how the Superfund scoring system and testing process are flawed. Reporter Stephen Stuebner has written two other stories on the subject for the Colorado-based *High Country News* and *Portland Oregonian*. The *Wall Street Journal* also did a front-page feature on Triumph. For copies or more information, call Stuebner, (208)345-4802.

► *The Post Register* also carried a story on environmental degradation at the San Felipe Ranch in Eastern Idaho owned by William Hewlett and David Packard, the Hewlett-Packard of the computer industry. Environmentalists complain that overgrazing at the ranch is inexcusable, considering H-P's normally proactive environmental stance and the owners' financial well-being. The BLM's efforts to improve stewardship at the ranch have been blocked since 1979. For more information or copies, call reporter Rocky Barker, (208)529-8508.

INDIANA

► A nine-member jury in Newton County, Indiana, will decide if a group of nearly 200 residents in Whiting were harmed by the release of 16.8 million gallons of oil in the past 100 years from Amoco Oil Company's Whiting refinery. Claudine Chamberlain, staff writer for *The Times* of Munster, Indiana, reports on the lengthy lawsuit, which seeks \$500 million to cover damage to properties and the long-term care of residents claiming impaired health from oil that has allegedly seeped underneath their homes. The debate centers on the differing opinions by experts on the risks to the residents' health posed by the refinery leaks. For more information contact Claudine Chamberlain, *The Times*, (219)933-3200.

► When the state was unable to raise fees to cover a \$4.76 million budget deficit in

the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana became the first state in the nation to ask U.S. E.P.A. to take over major regulatory programs. *Indianapolis Star* reporter Kyle Niederpruem detailed how the pressure of statewide environmental groups helped prod Governor Evan Bayh into forming a task force to seek a state solution to its environmental protection department's economic woes. For more information, contact Kyle Niederpruem at (317)633-9385.

MASSACHUSETTS

► Citing findings from researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, WCVB-TV 5 reporter Dave Ropeik did a piece in a Boston train station on the dangers of air pollutants that are so small they aren't regulated. A growing body of scientific evidence suggests particles below 10 parts per million, all of which are manmade, may be causing more dramatic health effects than other air pollutants, such as smog, Ropeik says. The smaller particles get deeper into your lungs, and are more difficult for your body to dislodge. For more information, contact the public affairs office at the Harvard School for Public Health, (617)432-3863.

MISSOURI

► People for the West, a wise-use group that grew out of the logging controversy in the Pacific Northwest, has targeted Missouri as fertile ground for its movement. Organizers first showed up during rallies to save a band of feral horses in the Ozarks after the National Park Service attempted to have them removed. But lead mining, not horses, appears to be the group's main objective. Doe Run Company wants to locate a mine in the Mark National Forest and an executive for the company is the head of the Missouri steering committee for People for the West. In addition, five of the six chapter presidents work for mining companies. Contact Roger Pryor of the Mo. Coalition for the Environment at (314)727-0600 or call environmental writer Tom Uhlenbrock, at (314)340-8128.

► The Flood of '93 generated many stories with an environmental theme. In one, scientists who best know the

Midwest's rivers and their surrounding ecosystems said that despite an initial period where some creatures had to flee advancing floodwater, flooding generally had a positive impact on plants and animals native to the region. In fact, most thrived, as they always do in major and minor floods. The news may not be so good for birds that use the Mississippi River as a migration route. There may not be enough natural food for fall and spring migrations, as the flood may have finished off food sources already depleted by intensive farming and river engineering. Contact Chuck Theiling, river biologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, in Alton, at (618)259-9027, or Gordon Farabee, a biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation, in Jefferson City, at (314)751-4115.

► In a related flood story, river biologists say "levee anarchy" and massive loss of wetlands, backwaters and other natural features on the Mississippi and other rivers are to blame at least as much as heavy rain for the flood. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, human activities have taken away the natural flood-carrying capacity of the rivers. Levees and other attempts to constrain the rivers make it possible for the same amount of water to produce greater and greater floods. Contact Norm Stucky, river biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation, (314)751-4115; Steve Havera, ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, in Havana, Ill., at (309)543-3950; or contact science writer Bill Allen at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, (314)340-8127.

► The zebra mussel invasion of U.S. rivers and lakes has reached a new intensity. The destructive European shellfish has spread on the Mississippi River to New Orleans — much farther south than thought possible, scientists said in September. The zebra mussel, in the Great Lakes region for several years, has been working its way southward. The Flood of '93 has widened the mussel's travels. Contact the Zebra Mussel Information Clearinghouse, New York Sea Grant, in Brockport, (716)395-2516, or Doug Blodgett or Richard Sparks, biologists with the Illinois Natural History Survey, in Havana, Ill., (309)543-3950.

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NEVADA

► Reform of the 1872 Mining Law was headed for a showdown in congressional conference committee. The Senate passed a bill backed by the mining industry. A bill backed by environmentalists was making its way through the House. At the same time, *High Country News* reported on the polarized debate and a search for common ground by an environmentalist and gold miner in Nevada, the state with the most mining on federal lands. Their story and compromise proposal appeared Oct. 4. Contact Jon Christensen, Great Basin regional editor, *High Country News*, 6185 Franktown Rd., Carson City, NV 89704, (702)885-2023.

NEW JERSEY

► The "wild and scenic" Delaware River was an open sewer 50 years ago. Today, thanks to many pollution-control efforts, it's one of the planet's cleanest industrial rivers. But the Delaware and its rich estuary still face some serious threats, including development, nonpoint source pollution and potential oil spills, according to a four-day series in *The Times* of Trenton in June. For more information, call Peter Page at (609)989-5701.

► *The Asbury Park Press* of Neptune published a three-day series in September on the environmental risks of dumping dioxin-tainted dredge spoils into the ocean and the economic risks if future ocean dumping is blocked. A federal judge allowed the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to dump contaminated spoils six miles off Sea Bright last summer. Yet he ordered the authority to conduct more tests to pinpoint how much dioxin accumulates in marine organisms. Future rulings may affect about 20 dioxin-related dredging projects in New York and New Jersey that want permits to unload at the "Mud Dump Site." For more information, call Todd Bates at (908)922-6000, Ext. 4361.

► Hundreds, if not thousands, of North Jersey anglers frequent the heavily polluted Newark Bay area. But government warnings not to catch and eat highly contaminated fish and shellfish are invisible or ignored, according to a compre-

hensive story in *The Record of Hackensack* in October. For more information, call Sari Harrar at (201)646-4337.

NEW MEXICO

► Eileen Welsome of the Albuquerque Tribune broke the scoop of the year in New Mexico. She pieced together the story of how the federal government injected 18 people with plutonium during the 1940s, without their informed consent, using everything from interviews with survivors to library literature to aging government documents. She tracked down the identities of five of these human guinea pigs on her own after the Department of Energy refused to cooperate with her information requests. After Welsome's three-part series appeared, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary announced that she was horrified by the experiments and that she would release as much information on them as she could. Call Welsome at 505-823-3653 or write c/o the Tribune at P.O. Drawer T, Albuquerque, NM 87103

► Tony Davis of the Tribune and John Fleck of Albuquerque Journal covered the death of DOE's efforts to open the Waste Isolation Pilot Power Plant nuclear dump outside Carlsbad for testing of nuclear wastes. DOE now plans to use wastes at laboratories away from the WIPP site for the experiments, and won't open the WIPP repository until 1998 at the earliest. Fleck also has reported on Los Alamos National Laboratory's efforts to resume operations of a mixed hazardous-radioactive waste incinerator. Davis can be reached at 505-823-3625 and Fleck at 505-823-3916, or write him at the Journal at P.O. Drawer J, Albuquerque 87103.

► Rene Kimboll of the Journal has reported extensively on the public lands were between ranchers and environmentalists, including the grazing fee dispute that goes on and on. Her phone is 505-823-3958

NORTH CAROLINA

► *The (Raleigh) News & Observer* published stories about leaks from four oil

company terminals in North Carolina. The newspaper reported that at least five million gallons of oil have leaked into creeks and underground water supplies. A state health survey found that people living near a Charlotte terminal have a leukemia rate twice the county average, a finding that prompted other health studies. For more information, call Stuart Leavenworth at (919)829-4859.

OHIO

► When billions of gallons of water flooded a mine in Meigs County, mine owners and union officials pushed for exemption of environmental laws to pump untreated water into nearby streams so the mines could be quickly returned to working conditions. State and federal regulators fought each other over jurisdiction of the cleanup and environmental organizations and some nearby landowners pushed for stream and land protection. In the *Columbus Guardian*, freelance writer John W. Frees detailed how the local mining interests were able to transform the event into a "job versus environment" debate in order to loosen environmental regulations. For more information, contact *Guardian* editor David Smigelski at (614)486-1010.

► Two foundry slag heaps contaminated with radioactive thorium and uranium in eastern Ohio illustrated a confounding problem for state and federal regulators. Scott Powers, environmental reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch*, reported on the heaps created over 40 years on property now owned by Shieldalloy Metallurgical where the radioactive waste is only a small portion of the 10 million cubic feet of waste in the heap. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission considers the waste low-level radioactive, and Ohio regulators have urged off-site disposal. Rather than face \$400 million in off-site disposal costs, the company has proposed capping the piles. For more information, contact Scott Powers at (614)461-5233.

RHODE ISLAND

► Paul Brodeur, the *New Yorker* magazine staff writer who has written

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extensively about the cancer hazards created by electromagnetic fields, was the surprise witness at a state Energy Facility Siting Board hearing on a proposal by Narragansett Electric Company to erect new power lines. The town of East Greenwich is bitterly fighting the new lines because many residents fear cancer rates already have been hiked by existing power lines. Brodeur testified power lines have raised health concerns around the country. But electric company lawyers argued that Brodeur is not qualified to be an expert witness at the full hearings scheduled for this winter. Contact Peter Lord, environmental writer at the *Providence Journal*, (401)737-3000.

TEXAS

► A four-day series on Texas wetlands was published by the *Houston Chronicle* in October. In a broad consensus, experts believe wetlands of diverse types are still being lost in the state, despite the federal "no net loss" policy. The series examined ways in which efforts to protect wetlands have been less aggressive in Texas than in some other states. Separate articles focused on concerns about losses of seagrass beds and tidal flats in South Texas, forested wetlands in East Texas and prairie wetlands west of Houston. Contact Bill Dawson at (713)220-7843.

► In October, the *Houston Chronicle* published a project, "Living on the Edge," that examined environmental, health, economic, educational and other issues affecting the Mexico-U.S. border. The project included a six-day series and 12-page special section. The section — "River to Ruin," published in both English and Spanish — assessed the status of the Rio Grande, concluding that the 1,800-mile waterway is abused by too many people and industries. But it also found that some in the public and private sectors are working on strategies to clean up the river. Contact Chris Shively at (713)220-7491.

UTAH

► Utah Governor Mike Leavitt has launched a major state-federal-local initiative to deal with increasing contro-

versy over development in the fastest growing area of Utah. The southwestern portion of Utah, centered around St. George, is the fifth fastest growing area in the nation yet also contains 46 current or proposed threatened and/or endangered species. Leavitt's plan is to create an information clearinghouse which will coordinate planning at all levels of government and provide input by environmental organizations. The controversy hit emergency status when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service threw out a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Desert Tortoise, calling the locally developed plan "pro-development." For further information, contact Rod Jackson, KTVX-TV, Salt Lake City, (801)975-4418.

► State and local governments in Utah are seeking to overturn a Nuclear Regulatory Commission decision approving a dump-site for Uranium Mill Tailings near Uravan, Colorado. While the disposal site would be located inside Colorado, Utah officials believe the tailing buried there will contaminate groundwater on the Utah flows of the San Miguel and Delores Rivers. Their contention is based on a Colorado lawsuit filed against the operators of the dump for contamination of nearby creeks and streams in a similar operation. The argument is just the latest in a series of squabbles between state officials and federal agencies over plans to bury or re-locate uranium mill tailings, mining wastes and Superfund debris. For further information, contact Mike Gorrell, *Salt Lake Tribune*, (801)237-2045.

► A Utah environmental group is proposing creation of the state's first "fish refuge" in an effort to protect the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. Cutthroat trout are Utah's only native trout species, and of three subspecies, one is extinct and two are proposed for endangered species status. The proposal, which would prohibit stocking of non-native species and limit fishing to catch and release only, faces an uphill battle with state wildlife managers. They have fought previous attempts by Utah environmental groups to establish wildlife preserves and/or refuges. For further information, contact Tom Wharton, *Salt Lake Tribune*, (801)237-2045.

VIRGINIA

► *The Roanoke Times & World News* published stories about Jefferson National Forest in western Virginia, where loggers and outdoorsmen are at odds over its future. The U.S. Forest Service must wade through these special interests and draft a 10-year management plan for the forest. For more information, call Cathryn McCue (703)674-5325.

WASHINGTON

► "They're not asking, 'Are you going to repeat the conference,' they're asking 'when,'" says Michael Frome, organizer of "Northwest Media and the Environment." Highlights of the October gathering included talks by former Washington Governor Dan Evans, who said environmental journalists need not be scientists, but should be able to read *Scientific American* without moving their lips; and Forest Service biologist Jack Ward Thomas, who was given an award for his excellence as a communicator "without fear or favor." A summary of the proceeds will be published, says Professor Frome, who can be reached at the Huxley College for Environmental Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

► Federal woodlands in Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho and Western Montana have quietly amassed environmental crises that may surpass the coastal "spotted owl" forests. The problems and possible solutions were explored in a series titled "Our Failing Forests," published on Nov. 21, 25 and 28 by *The Spokesman-Review*. Stories by Todd Foster, Jim Lynch and Julie Titone were illustrated by photographer Blair Kooistra. Copies are available from the newsroom, P.O. Box 2160, Spokane WA 99210, (509)459-5430.

WEST VIRGINIA

► Residents in the town of Minden still live with the fear of PCBs left from the storage of leaky electrical transformers. *Charleston Gazette* reporter Robert J. Byers told the story of their fight with local, state and federal authorities for help cleaning up the problem. Call Byers at

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(304)348-1236.

► Contract coal companies that worked for industry giants like A.T. Massey go out of business by the dozens, leaving behind a legacy of debt that includes multi-million dollar environmental problems. Paul Nyden of *The Charleston Gazette* details the story in the series of articles, "Coalfield Contracts: Mining at What Price?" For copies, call Nyden at (304)348-5164.

► Environmental activists and other citizens in West Virginia's Kanawa Valley are upset about a series of fires, explosions and other accidents at Rhone-Poulenc Ag Co.'s Institute plant. For more information, call Ken Ward, Jr., at (304)348-1702 or Pat Sanders at (304)348-4836.

WISCONSIN

► Exxon Coal and Minerals Co. and Canadian-based Rio Algom Ltd. have announced their intent to seek permits for a major zinc and copper mine in Wisconsin's northwoods. Exxon was interested in the Forest County site in the early 1980s, but suspended its permitting effort in 1988. Environmental groups are criticizing the new venture, arguing a mine could threaten

local water supply and public health at nearby Indian reservations.

► *The Milwaukee Journal* highlighted problems with the nation's drinking water in a week-long series entitled, "Fatal Neglect." Environmental reporter Don Behm led a journal team that looked at the presence of waterborne microorganisms such as cryptosporidium. The mid-September series also analyzed apparent government failures to protect the water supply. For copies of the series, call *The Milwaukee Journal* at (414)224-2000.

► The U.S. E.P.A.'s plan to reduce discharges of dioxin and other toxic pollutants from pulp and paper mills generated a mixed response in this paper-making state. Some mills said they'd have little problem meeting the new guidelines, because their companies have already reduced the use of chlorine in their paper-making process. Other mills predicted large expenses and possible layoffs. And some Great Lakes environmental groups argued the federal plan is not tough enough.

WYOMING

► Controversy continues over a pro-

posed mine near Yellowstone National Park. The project has been proposed by Crown Butte Mines of Montana, but concerns arise over its links to Canadian based Noranda Mining. The proposal is controversial because the mine sits in the headwaters of three major watersheds which feed the Yellowstone Ecosystem. Additionally, reclamation proposals made by the company have been found ineffective at the altitude at which the mine would be operated. The project is currently in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement phase. The DEIS is expected to be released mid to late 1994. For further information, contact Michael Milstein, Cody Bureau of the *Billings Gazette* at (307)527-7350.

► A fight is shaping up in the Wyoming Legislature in 1994 over efforts to wrest oversight of the state's hazardous waste program from the EPA. Supporters say giving oversight to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality will give more local access and control over the program. Critics say the program would be underfunded and undermanned, and could be at the beck and call of industry. For further information, contact Hugh Jackson, *Casper Star Tribune*, (307)266-0500.

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