



# The Order of the Earth

## News, Views and Musings about our Planet

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### Are Your Cell Phone and Laptop Bad for Your Health?

by Stan Cox, AlterNet, August 20, 2007  
(with permission, abbreviated)

In the wee hours of July 14, a 45-year-old Australian named John Patterson climbed into a tank and drove it through the streets of Sydney, knocking down six cell-phone towers and an electrical substation along the way. Patterson, a former telecommunications worker, reportedly had mapped out the locations of the towers, which he claimed were harming his health.

In recent years, protesters in England and Northern Ireland have brought down cell towers by sawing, removing bolts, and pulling with tow trucks and ropes. In one such case, locals bought the structure and sold off pieces of it as souvenirs to help with funding of future protests. In attempts to fend off objections to towers in Germany, some churches have taken to disguising them as giant crucifixes.

Opposition to towers usually finds more socially acceptable outlets, and protests are being heard more often than ever in meetings of city councils, planning commissions, and other government bodies. This summer alone, citizen efforts to block cell towers have sprouted in, among a host of other places, California, New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, North Dakota and north of the border in Ontario and British Columbia. Transmitters are already banned from the roofs

of schools in many districts.

For years, towers have been even less welcome in the United Kingdom, where this summer has seen disputes across the country.

Most opponents cite not only aesthetics but also concerns over potential health effects of electromagnetic (EM) fields generated by the towers. Once ridiculed as crackpots and Luddites, they're starting to get back-up from the scientific community.

It's not just cell phones they're worried about. The Tottenham area of London is considering the suspension of all wireless technology in its schools. Last year, Fred Gilbert, a respected scientist and president of Lakehead University in Ontario, banned wireless internet on his campus. And resident groups in San Francisco are currently battling Earthlink and Google over a proposed city-wide Wi-Fi system.

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### Report of Cancer Hurts Maker of Chip Plants

by Barnaby J. Feder, excerpt (*The New York Times* September 11, 2007)

Shares of *Applied Digital Solutions* and of its publicly traded subsidiary VeriChip, which makes an implanted microchip for identifying people, fell sharply yesterday as investors reacted to a report this weekend linking the tiny radio device to cancer. The report, by The Associated Press, suggested that VeriChip and federal regulators had ignored or overlooked animal studies raising questions about whether the chip or the process of injecting it might cause cancer in dogs and laboratory rodents.

The report created concern among veterinarians and operators of animal shelters that pet owners would resist the practice, now widespread, of putting similar chips in pets to make it easier to return lost animals to their owners. Most animals who are not reclaimed by owners are euthanized. The radio identification device for which VeriChip is named is a glass-encased chip the size of a grain of rice. The device, which carries an encrypted number, is injected in the upper arm. In medical applications, the chip is linked to medical records stored at hospitals or with a primary-care physician. A low-powered transmitter in the chip emits the identification number when queried at close range by a VeriChip scanner.

## From the Publisher

Dear Readers,

This issue has two special foci: electromagnetic radiation and protest. I've been horrified for many years about the drenching of the world in electromagnetic radiation and now it's getting worse every day with the increasing presence and demand for cell phones, Wi-Fi technology and high-speed Internet.



Just Friday I read in the paper that they're planning to build a 100-foot communications tower at the little Shade Gap Elementary School, just a mile and a half from our home. I immediately sent the environmentalist teacher all of the information I had gathered for this issue of "The Order of the Earth News," even though it was in raw form, so she can lead a battle against it. I warned her it would be hard. It appeared that the decision had already been made without the school's knowledge.

The other part of the paper is about protest. I hope my teacher friend gathers her friends to protest so loudly and effectively that they can stop the damned project all together.

But the people who do other forms of protest are what I've highlighted. Ellen Barfield, whose story you'll see inside was arrested at the protest she attended in Washington, D.C. on September 15th and her trial is on October 30. Let me know if you'd like to attend it and I'll get further information for you. 189 people were arrested but most of them chose to pay a \$100 fine (higher than the usual fine, according to Ellen) and were released. Serious protesters want a chance to educate people by going to trial (see page 25).

With the world in the condition it is today and our government being so unresponsive, I believe we need people in the streets and people working to take down or stop the proliferation of cell towers and other harmful items. We have got to regain our sense of sanity and sacredness of the Earth and all living creatures.

Please write and let us know how you are working on these types of activities.

For the Earth, Iona

## What OE Readers are Saying about Our "Makeover":

Dear Iona,

*The latest OE (Order of the Earth) pdf is safely ensconced on my desktop. It is truly astonishing and beautiful. I have only skimmed it so far, but it is clear that I must find a way to get the color, electronic version. More when I have read it through. Congratulations!*

-Love, Barbara

*Hi, Sooze (the childhood name Iona's sister calls her)*

*This is a real knock-out!*

*Only breezed through it now since we've been gone all day and I've got a dozen things yet to finish. CONGRATS! Your three friends must be very, very special gals!*

*-X O, Jodab (the childhood name Iona calls her sister)*

Dear Iona,

*It looks great!!!!*

*-Thank you, Derrick*

Hi, Iona!

*This is AMAZING -- beautiful, professional, inspiring.*

*-Barb*

Iona,

*Thank you so much, the newsletter looks so good...can't wait to check out the other articles as well.*

*-Hanna*

Dear Iona,

*What a super newsletter. It is definitely a knock-your-socks-off edition! I know that represents a lot of work, and the articles are great, as is the artistry. I haven't read all yet, but I enjoyed reading about green burials, and Ted Glick's article. The photo of you is wonderful!*

*-Tyla*

*Just a note to say how very, very nice the newsletter is. Great work! Thanks for your good work, Iona.*

*-Pat Kepple*

## "The Order of the Earth" is a Monthly Publication

**Our Goal:** To create a hugely successful newspaper that will report the story of people around the world working to protect their land bases and achieve a 90% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030.

**Our Mission:** To inspire and encourage readers to think seriously, act intelligently and be peaceful, compassionate and creative.

**The Dream:** Humans can co-exist with Nature and, once they do, both will flourish again.

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## Are Your Cell Phone and Laptop Bad for Your Health? (cont. from page 1)

### Picking up some interference?

For decades, concerns have been raised about the health effects of "extremely low frequency" fields that are produced by electrical equipment or power lines. People living close to large power lines or working next to heavy electrical equipment are spending a lot of time in electromagnetic fields generated by those sources. Others of us can be exposed briefly to very strong fields each day.

But in the past decade, suspicion has spread to cell phones and other wireless technologies, which operate at frequencies that are millions to tens of millions higher but at low power and "pulsed."

Then there's your cell phone, laptop, or other wireless device, which not only receives but also sends pulsed signals at high frequencies. Because it's usually very close to your head (or lap) when in use, the fields experienced by your body are stronger than those from a cell tower down the street.

A growing number of scientists, along with a diverse collection of technology critics, are pointing out that our bodies constantly generate electrical pulses as part of their normal functioning. They maintain that incoming radiation from modern technology may be fouling those signals.

But with hundreds of billions in sales at stake, the communications industry (and more than a few scientists) insist that radio-frequency radiation can't have biological effects unless it's intense enough to heat your flesh or organs, in the way a microwave oven cooks meat. It's also turning out that when scientific studies are funded by industry, the results are a lot less likely to show that EM fields are a health hazard.

### Low frequency, more frequent disease?

Before the digital revolution, a long line of epidemiological studies compared people who were exposed to strong low-frequency fields -- people living in the shadow of power lines, for example, or long-time military radar operators -- to similar but unexposed groups.

One solid outcome of that research was to show that rates of childhood leukemia are associated with low-frequency electromagnetic exposure; as a result, the International Agency for Research on Cancer has labeled that type of energy as a possible carcinogen, just as they might label a chemical compound.

Other studies have found increased incidence of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (commonly called ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease), higher rates of breast cancer among both men and women, and immune-system dysfunction in occupations with high exposure.

Five years ago, the California Public Utilities Commission asked three epidemiologists in the state Department of Health Services to review and evaluate the scientific literature on health

effects of low-frequency EM fields.

The epidemiologists, who had expertise in physics, medicine, and genetics, agreed in their report that they were "inclined to believe that electromagnetic fields can cause some degree of increased risk of childhood leukemia, adult brain cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, and miscarriage" and were open to the possibility that they raise the risks of adult leukemia and suicide. They did not see associations with other cancer types, heart disease, or Alzheimer's disease.

Epidemiological and animal studies have not been unanimous in finding negative health effects from low-frequency EM fields, so the electric-utility industry continues to emphasize that no cause-and-effect link has been proven.

### High resistance

Now the most intense debate is focused on radio-frequency fields. As soon as cell phones came into common usage, there was widespread concern that holding an electronic device against the side of your head many hours a month for the rest of your life might be harmful, and researchers went to work looking for links to health problems, often zeroing in on the possibility of brain tumors.

Until recently, cell phones had not been widely used over enough years to evaluate effects on cancers that take a long time to develop. A number of researchers failed to find an effect during those years, but now that the phones have been widely available for more than a decade, some studies are relating brain-tumor rates to long-term phone use.

Some lab studies have found short-term harm as well. Treatment with cell-phone frequencies has disrupted thyroid-gland functioning in lab rats, for example. And at Lund University in Sweden, rats were exposed to cell-phone electromagnetic fields of varying strengths for two hours; 50 days later, exposed rats showed significant brain damage relative to non-exposed controls. The authors were blunt in their assessment: "We chose twelve 26-week-old rats because they are comparable with human teenagers, notably frequent users of mobile phones, with respect to age. The situation of the growing brain might deserve special concern from society because biologic and maturational processes are particularly vulnerable during the growth process."

Even more recently, health concerns have been raised about the antenna masts that serve cell phones and other wireless devices. Electromagnetic fields at, say, a couple of blocks from a tower are not as strong as those from a wireless device held close to the body; nevertheless many city-dwellers are now continuously bathed in emissions that will only grow in their coverage and intensity.

**(continued on page 4)**

## Are Your Cell Phone and Laptop Bad for Your Health?

(continued from page 3)

Last year, the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia closed off the top two floors of its 17-story business school for a time because five employees working on its upper floors had been diagnosed with brain tumors in a single month, and seven since 1999. Cell phone towers had been placed on the building's roof a decade earlier and, although there was no proven link between them and the tumors, university officials were taking no chances.

Data on the health effects of cell or W-Fi towers are still sparse and inconsistent. Their opponents point to statistically rigorous studies like one in Austria finding that headaches and difficulty with concentration were more common among people exposed to stronger fields from cell towers. All sides seem to agree on the need for more research with solid data and robust statistical design.

San Francisco, one of the world's most technology-happy cities, is home to more than 2,400 cell-phone antennas, and many of those transmitters are due to be replaced with more powerful models that can better handle text messaging and photographs, and possibly a new generation of even higher-frequency phones.

Now there's hot-and-heavy debate over plans to add 2,200 more towers for a city-wide Earthlink/Google Wi-Fi network. On July 31, the city's Board of Supervisors considered an appeal by the San Francisco Neighborhood Antenna-Free Union (SNAFU) that the network proposal be put through an environmental review -- a step that up to now has not been required for such telecommunications projects.

In support of the appeal, Magda Havas, professor of environmental and resource studies at Trent University in Ontario, submitted an analysis of radio-frequency effects found in more than 50 human, animal, and cellular-level studies published in scientific journals.

She says informative research takes time and focus: "For example, studies that consider all kinds of brain tumors in people who've only used cell phones for, say, five years don't show an association. But those studies that consider only tumors on the same side of the head where the phone is held and include only people who've used a phone for ten years or more give the same answer very consistently: there's an increased risk of tumors." In other research, wireless frequencies have been associated with higher rates of miscarriage, testicular cancer, and low sperm counts.

At the 2006 meeting of the International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety in Benevento, Italy, 42 scientists from 16 countries signed a resolution arguing for much stricter regulation of electromagnetic fields from wireless communication.

Four years earlier, in Freiburg, Germany, a group of physi-

cians had signed a statement also calling for tighter regulation of wireless communication and a prohibition on use of wireless devices by children. In the years since, more than 3,000 doctors have signed the so-called "Freiburger Appeal" and documents modeled on it.

But in this country, industry has pushed for and gotten exemption from strict regulation, most notably through the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Libby Kelley, director of the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts in Novato, California says, "The technology always comes first, the scientific and environmental questions later. Electromagnetic trails chemicals by about 10 years, but I hope we'll catch up."

Kelley says a major problem is that the Telecommunications Act does not permit state or local governments to block the siting of towers based on health concerns: "We'll go to hearings and try to bring up health issues, and officials will tell us, 'We can't talk about that. We could get sued in federal court!'"

For more information, visit Environmental Health Perspectives; Microwave News; and the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

**[Ed.: A good group working on electromagnetic fields on behalf of public health is EMR Policy Institute; [www.emrpolicy.org](http://www.emrpolicy.org), 802-426-3035 or POB 117, Marshfield, Vermont 05658.]**

### Protect Yourself from EMF with the BioElectric Shield



Now you can easily shield yourself from stress, fatigue and energy-draining radiation caused by the electromagnetic pollution all around you: from cell phones, computers, and other technology — even negative energy from people!

Introducing the **BioElectric Shield™**.

Wearing this medically-proven, all-natural device you will experience increased natural energy, focus and performance.

The BioElectric Shield is a proven way to

- shield you from cell phone and computer EMF or negative energy from people or places
- strengthen your energy & resistance to stress
- increase your attention and ability to focus

Read more about the Bio Electric Shield at  
[www.bioelectricshield.com](http://www.bioelectricshield.com)



## Group Proposes Stricter EMF Exposure Standards

Collaborative on Health and the Environment eNewsletter -- September 2007. [www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/newsletters/1928](http://www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/newsletters/1928)

A major new report on EMF (electromagnetic fields), the *BioInitiative Report*, has been produced and published by David Carpenter and Cindy Sage. Lou Slesin, editor of the authoritative *Microwave News* website, greeted it this way:

August 29... An international group of researchers has thrown down the gauntlet. The BioInitiative Working Group is challenging the EMF power structure to set much stricter exposure standards for power lines, cell phones, cell towers and other sources of electromagnetic radiation.

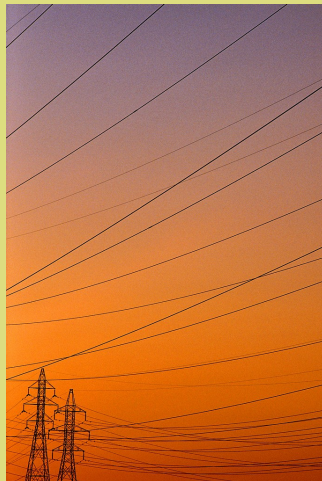
"'Business as usual' is unacceptable," says David Carpenter, the director of the Institute for Health and the Environment at New York's University of Albany, on releasing the working group's extensive report. Its general conclusion is that there are many biological effects at levels that are well below current standards and that the "existing safety limits are inadequate to protect public health." Carpenter and Cindy Sage, a consultant based in Santa Barbara, California, coordinated the BioInitiative group and edited the report.

Among the group's key recommendations are:

- a 1mG limit for homes where children and/or pregnant women live;
- a "precautionary limit" of  $0.1\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$  ( $0.6\text{V}/\text{m}$ ) for RF exposures where "people live, work and go to school."

These proposed levels are on the order of 1,000 times more stringent than current limits adopted by ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) and the IEEE's ICES (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety).

All 21 sections of the report are available as free downloads from the BioInitiative website at [www.bioinitiative.org](http://www.bioinitiative.org).  
Michael Lerner, Founding Partner



## Protect the Appalachian Mountains

From [www.earthjustice.org/](http://www.earthjustice.org/)

The Bush administration has already relaxed Clean Water Act safeguards that protected Appalachian mountain streams from mountaintop removal mining and "King Coal." Now, he is trying to weaken the "buffer zone rule," a Reagan-era protection that prohibits coal mining activities from disturbing areas within 100 feet of streams.



If this new rule goes forward, coal companies will be allowed to dump massive amounts of waste directly into streams, destroying them completely. Already, nearly 2,000 miles of mountain streams in Appalachia have been permanently buried by mountaintop removal waste. Destroying thousands of miles of mountain streams is more than irresponsible; it is immoral.

Now is your chance to say "No" to this latest attempt to weaken or eliminate the buffer zone rule that has protected streams from coal mining activities for decades! Tell the administration to stop trying to diminish the buffer zone rule and start enforcing it!

Earthjustice: Because the Earth needs a good lawyer  
426 17th Street, 6th Floor, Oakland CA 94612



## Edible Films with Superpowers

by Kim Severson

*New York Times*, August 29, 2007

Scientists in a handful of labs around the country are coating foods with an invisible film to protect them from mold and pathogens and increase their shelf life.

## ***Endgame* by Derrick Jensen**

(excerpts from his book, Endgame, published in two volumes--a "must read" if you love this Earth)

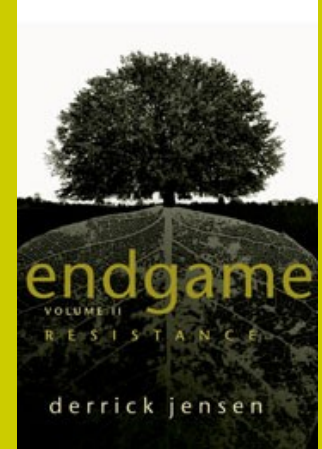
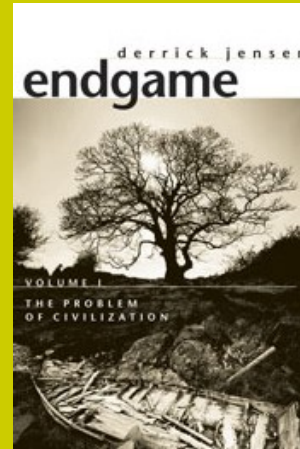
I have two problems...with Mumford's claim that the widening of communication and economic intercourse under civilization benefits people as a whole. (Ed.: Derrick is talking here about Lewis Mumford's *The Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development*, 1966).

The first is that it presumes that uncivilized people do not communicate or participate in economic transactions beyond their local communities. Many do. Shells from the Northwest Coast found their way into the hands of Plains Indians, and buffalo robes often ended up on the coast. (And let's not even mention non-civilized people communicating with their nonhuman neighbors, something rarely practiced by the civilized: talk about restricting yourself to your own community!)

In any case, I'm not certain that the ability to send emails back and forth to Spain or to watch television programs beamed out of Los Angeles makes my life particularly richer. It's far more important, useful, and enriching, I think, to get to know my neighbors. I'm frequently amazed to find myself sitting in a room full of fellow human beings, all of us staring at a box watching and listening to a story concocted and enacted by people far away. I have friends who know Seinfeld's neighbors better than their own.

I, too, can get lost in valuing the unreality of the distant over that which surrounds me every day. I have to confess I can navigate the mazes of the computer game Doom 2: Hell on Earth far better than I can find my way along the labyrinthine game trails beneath the trees outside my window, and I understand the intricacies of Microsoft Word far better than I do the complex dance of rain, sun, predators, prey, scavengers, plants, and soil in the creek a hundred yards away.

The other night, I wrote till late, and finally turned off my computer to step outside and say good-night to the dogs. I realized, then, that the wind was blowing hard through the tops of the redwood trees, and the trees were sighing and whispering. Branches were clashing, and in the distance



I heard them cracking. Until that moment I had not realized such a symphony was taking place so near, much less had I gone out to participate in it, to feel the wind blow my hair and to feel the tossed rain hit me in the face. All of the sounds of the night had been drowned out by the monotone whine of my computer's fan. Just yesterday I saw a pair of hooded mergansers playing on the pond outside my bedroom. Then last night I saw a television program in which yet another lion chased yet another zebra. Which of those two scenes makes me richer?

This perceived widening of communication is just another replication of the problem of the visual and musical arts, because given the impulse for centralized control that motivates civilization, widening communication in this case really means reducing us from active participants in our own lives and in the lives of those around us to consumers sucking words and images from some distant sugar tit.



*Copied with permission from the author. More thoughts from Derrick Jensen's Endgame to follow in our next issue.*



## From Iraq to New Orleans

### Take Action for Justice, Peace and Clean Energy

From October 21-23, 2007, join a global movement rising up against war and global warming by participating in a massive intervention in Washington D.C. or your own community.

Millions of Americans want immediate action on the twin global threats of the Iraq War and Climate Change. But as the violence, chaos and death in Iraq continue and we hit another year of increasing climate disasters, our government is failing, once again, to respond to the will of the people.

It is the U.S.A.'s addiction to oil that drove our country into war with Iraq and could fuel future war with Iran. Climate Change threatens us with new conflicts over resources such as oil, land, and water. Additionally, the US Military is the largest single consumer of petroleum in the country, so as the military grows, so does our addiction to fossil fuels. We recognize this vicious cycle of resource wars and Climate Change and demand that our government take immediate action to bring our troops home and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

The burning of oil and coal is the major cause of climate change. Our addiction to carbon-based fossil fuels is melting the icecaps, raising sea levels, destroying Indigenous land, cultures and peoples and fueling extreme climate events like Hurricane Katrina world-wide. Our window of time in which we can prevent these crises is running out. As people lose access to clean water and eco-systems wither, the Earth and our communities will become less equipped to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Who suffers from war and climate change? In both cases, it is the poorest people, people of color and communities in the Global South, who suffer the most, whether it comes in the form of a poverty draft, the bombing of a neighborhood, the privatization of natural resources, or

military bases, detention centers and oil refineries in communities. Systemic racism remains the underlying abusive foundation of the US drive to control resources. [Ed.: *This does not even include wildlife and the plant kingdom.*]

The U.S. Government enables companies like Exxon-Mobil, Halliburton, Blackwater, Bechtel, and others to reap profits at the expense of the neediest communities. These corporate profits buy our elections and threaten true democracy.

The United States must immediately shift to a clean energy economy and end its addiction to oil, coal, natural gas and nuclear energy. Imagine if we shifted the billions of dollars being spent **every month** on war in Iraq to investment in energy conservation, efficiency, and good, safe jobs in a renewable, clean energy economy. Bring our troops home now and invest in green jobs to rebuild our communities!

#### We Need to Take Immediate Action...

Join the Intervention! Another World is Possible. It is up to us to make it happen! [www.NoWarNoWarming.org](http://www.NoWarNoWarming.org)



## EVENTS CALENDAR

### October 6-7, 2007

#### Green Festival, DC

Enjoy more than 200 visionary speakers and 400 green businesses, great how-to workshops, green films, yoga and movement classes, green careers sessions, organic beer and wine, delicious organic cuisine and live music.

[www.greenfestivals.org/](http://www.greenfestivals.org/)

### October 21-23, 2007

#### Global Warming Intervention

Join a global movement rising up against war and global warming by participating in a massive intervention in Washington DC or your own community To sign up or for more information, visit [www.NoWarNoWarming.org](http://www.NoWarNoWarming.org)



## Faster Change Means Bigger Problems

Center for International Climate and Environmental Research

(Copied with permission from [www.enn.org](http://www.enn.org) (Environmental News Network) August 27, 2007

OSLO, NORWAY — The debate about what constitutes "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate" has almost exclusively focused on how much the temperature can be allowed to increase. But we have perhaps just as much reason to be concerned about how quickly these changes take place.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aims to avoid what is called "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system".

However, there is no guarantee that the level of climate change - how much the temperature increases in the future - is the only thing we should be worried about. How quickly the changes take place can also mean a lot for how serious the consequences will be. This was already acknowledged when the UNFCCC was signed in 1992. It says that we must stabilize the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere within a time period that allows ecosystems to adapt and economic development to continue, and that ensures that food production will not be threatened. This focus on rate of change has, however, not been reflected to any noticeable degree among either scientists or politicians.

There are a few studies that focus on the consequences of the rate of climate change. Most of these are ecological studies. They leave no doubt that the expected rate of change during this century will exceed the ability of many animals and plants to migrate or adapt. Leemans and Eickhout (2004) found that adaptive capacity decreases rapidly with an increasing rate of climate change. Their study finds that five percent of all ecosystems cannot adapt more quickly than 0.1 °C (0.28 °F) per decade over time. Forests will be among the ecosystems to experience problems first because their ability to migrate to stay within the climate zone they are adapted to is limited. If the rate is 0.3 °C (0.48 °F) per decade, 15 percent of ecosystems will not be able to adapt. If the rate should exceed 0.4 °C (0.58 °F) per decade, all ecosystems will be quickly destroyed, opportunistic species will dominate, and the breakdown of biological material will lead to even greater emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. This will in turn increase the rate of warming.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the global average temperature today is increasing by 0.2 °C (0.38 °F) per decade.

There is also a risk that rapid climate change will increase the likelihood of large and irreversible changes, such as a weakening of the Gulf Stream and melting of the Greenland ice sheets. Rapid change also increases the risk



of triggering positive feedback mechanisms that will increase the rate and level of temperature change still more.

We know far less about the consequences of rate of temperature increase than we do about the level. Nevertheless, we know enough to say that if we are to avoid dangerous climate change, then we should also be concerned about how quickly it occurs. This can have important implications for which climate measures we should implement. If we set a long-term climate goal - such as 2 °C (3.6 °F) - there will be many different emissions paths we could take to reach this goal. But these emissions paths can differ to a relatively large degree with respect to how quickly the changes will take place - especially over the next few decades.

Focusing on the rate of climate change can imply that we should concentrate more on the short-lived greenhouse gases - such as methane and tropospheric ozone - and particles with a warming effect, such as soot (black carbon). It can also imply a greater focus on the medium-term (the next few decades), since the fastest changes could occur around that time.





## Stop Reckless Oil & Gas Drilling

[www.fseee.org](http://www.fseee.org).

The Spring 2007 issue of *Forest Magazine* is devoted to the most important environmental threat of this or any generation: global warming. We at FSEEE (Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics) have a profound concern about this issue. Our country's addiction to fossil fuels will unravel the essential fabric and intrinsic value of the ecosystems upon which we depend.

The Bush Administration has a comprehensive plan for global warming: **they plan to make it worse by accelerating the production and consumption of fossil fuels.** In addition to maintaining the terribly destructive relationships with oil producing states in the Middle East, the administration's plan to satisfy our oil fix takes aim squarely at the national forests in our backyards.

**We need your help to stop the Bush Administration from turning our national forests into unregulated oil fields.**

The administration's 2005 Energy Bill is a green light for oil and gas companies to exploit public lands. It directs the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to work together to expedite development of new oil and gas resources, regardless of environmental consequences. It exempts much oil and gas exploration from the Clean Water Act. It provides for tens of thousands of acres of federal forest to be cleared to create new power transmission cables. And it gives out \$85 billion worth of subsidies that will make previously uneconomic drilling in the backcountry profitable for big oil and gas companies.

### WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR NATIONAL FORESTS?

The effects are already dramatically evident on the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania, which currently has more than 8,000 active oil and gas wells. Under a new forest management plan set to be released next month, an additional 7,500 wells would be drilled, clearing more than 10,000 acres of forest and building 1,600 miles of road. Requirements to protect sensitive soils and water quality, once mandatory, are now optional. Incredibly, the Forest Service has determined that oil and gas drilling is not a "significant issue" for the Allegheny National Forest Plan.

### WHAT OTHER FORESTS WILL BE AFFECTED?

Let us introduce you to the national forests of southern Mississippi—the DeSoto, Homochito and Bienville. They rarely grace nature calendars, but they are lands of striking beauty—and biodiversity. Certain types of long-leaf pine forests here are among the rarest forest types in North America, and provide habitat for endangered species like the red-cockaded woodpecker and the gopher tortoise. Oil and gas companies have recently leased almost 30,000 acres for oil and gas drilling on these National Forests—with absolutely no environmental review whatsoever. The environmental impacts will be extreme and irreversible. Spills and leakages will happen, and when they do they will introduce toxins like **benzene, toluene and xylene** into forest streams.

Drilling pads, access roads, pipelines, pumping stations and processing plants will destroy native vegetation and displace wildlife. Drilling wastes, including volatile organic compounds, oils and biocides will also contaminate sensitive habitats.

FSEEE filed an administrative appeal of two hard rock mineral exploration proposals on the Superior National Forest in Minnesota that had been authorized without environmental review. The



Evidence of the damage from just one of the thousands of drilling fields on the Allegheny National Forest. Photo © Bill Belitskus

Forest Service admitted their error, withdrew the projects, and is now preparing an environmental assessment of hard rock mining on the Superior.

On February 26, 2007, FSEEE sent a formal inquiry to the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management offices in Mississippi asking why the agency has not prepared the required environmental analysis for the 30,000 acres of National Forest it has recently leased for oil and gas drilling. On March 8, 2007, we filed comments that outlined the proper scope of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed oil and gas exploration and requested that the Forest Service stop issuing leases and approving exploration plans until the EIS has been completed.

As the next step, FSEEE will prepare administrative appeals formally challenging the oil and gas exploration on the Bienville, DeSoto and Homochito National Forests in Mississippi. But it is going to take more than administrative appeals to prevent oil companies from recklessly tapping into the liquid wealth that resides beneath these National Forests.

**We need your help to pay for a legal challenge of these drilling proposals.**

There are enormous profits to be made, and the full weight of the Bush Administration is behind plans to turn southern pine forests into the next oil patch. Kicking the oil habit is not going to be easy. Those of us who care about national forests have an opportunity to act locally, right here at home, while thinking globally about the consequences of reckless oil consumption. It's time to make a start.



## Gas Explosions Rock Kushequa Water Well by Ted Lutz

**KUSHEQUA, Pennsylvania (email from Allegheny Defense Project, September 19, 2007)**--Drilling is blamed for causing natural gas to seep into the Kushequa community water well and explode. Several blasts have rocked the well since early Friday morning, according to residents who gathered at the well site Monday to confer with representatives of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The explosions sent a vent cap flying more than 10 feet and flipped a half-inch thick steel lid off the opening of the well. The lid weighs about 120 pounds. No one was injured by the explosions, which apparently were triggered by a spark from an electrical pump switch inside the manhole at the well. The 96-foot deep well on the Tony Zippo property at 65 Church St. serves 14 residential customers, including six permanent homes and eight camps. Residents have been advised to buy bottled water for drinking.

"We didn't have this problem until they started drilling," John Verolini said in blaming Kushequa area oil and gas drillers for the volatile situation at the water well. He wonders whether the community well will "ever be back to normal." He believes the drilling companies should be "made to pay" for the expenses incurred by Kushequa residents for buying drinking water. Verolini has lived in Kushequa his entire life. He is president of the Smethport School Board.

Bob Maykowski, water quality specialist with the DEP oil and gas office in Warren, advised the residents to "keep your receipts" for bottled water. He said the DEP would "put pressure" on the drillers to provide Kushequa with a "temporary" water supply until the DEP completes its investigation. "We know we have a problem here," Maykowski told the residents. "Give us a chance to see what we can do. Unfortunately, we've been down this road before."

Gas and oil drilling has been taking place at several sites in the Kushequa area. Tim Curry, a DEP oil and gas inspector from the Warren office, joined Maykowski at the meeting Monday with Kushequa residents. Two other DEP workers also were at the scene. Curry advised the residents to keep vents open on the community well along with private water wells to keep migrating gas from building up. Zippo, who has his own well just a few feet from the community well on his property, taped up electrical wires as a precaution. He also placed a screen over an opening to allow gas to escape.

Gas vapors were visible on the interior concrete walls of the manhole at the community well. Gurgling noises could be heard coming from the community well and Zippo's well, indicating that gas was still present.

A DEP test showed a reading of 64 percent gas inside in the manhole at the community well.

"There's definitely gas in it," Maykowski said after testing

the well. He said there are no known health risks associated with drinking water containing natural gas. He said he is "more concerned" about the risk of more explosions. [*Ed.: Do you believe there are "no known health risks?"*]

Other Kushequa residents also have reported gurgling noises in their wells. The DEP took water samples from the community well and also tested several homes in Kushequa for the presence of gas. Curry said the venting of the wells to allow gas to escape "could be for a long time." He warned that even a small amount of gas could create a dangerous situation in the wells and in basements of nearby homes.

The DEP plans a thorough investigation of the active gas and oil wells in the Kushequa area, but this alone may not pinpoint the exact cause. DEP officials said the gas may be entering natural crevices in the mountainous terrain. Gas also may be migrating through uncharted oil wells drilled perhaps a century ago and long since abandoned.

The community well in Kushequa was drilled in 1992. At the time, the well was operated only occasionally as a backup for a nearby spring-fed reservoir, which holds 6,500 gallons of water. About two years ago, the well replaced the reservoir as the community's water source. Because of the current problem with gas entering the well, the reservoir could be re-activated as the Kushequa water source, at least temporarily. However, the reservoir and certain connecting lines reportedly would need to be tested to make sure bacteria is not present.

Steven Watts of 90 Church St. said he moved to Kushequa in 2006 in part because "the water was great. The water is delicious," the Bradford native said. Watts is one of the residents who heard the first explosion at the well at 1:35 a.m. Friday. "It shook my whole house," he said. He claims he heard three more blasts. When he and Zippo inspected the site Friday morning, they initially thought vandals had removed the lid and vent cap from the well. Zippo said at first they "didn't connect" the explosions with gas in the community water well. "The whole house shook," Zippo said in describing the first explosion at the well. He said the jolt was similar to "a loud clap of thunder." The explosions at the well have caused adjacent grass to turn brown. Water from gas-infiltrated wells appears to be opaque with a "rotten egg smell," Kushequa residents claim. The water also has "bubbles," they point out.

Both oil and gas have infiltrated other water wells in the Kane area, according to the DEP. In citing one example, Curry said a woman at an area home turned on a water spigot and "out came oil." In Smethport, gas seeping into a water well caught fire and burned with a large plume, Curry said.

[www.alleghenydefense.org](http://www.alleghenydefense.org)



## Now Is Time for Non-Violent Earth Revolution that Begins by Stopping Ancient Forest Logging, Ending Burning of Coal and Restraining Growth in Aviation by Dr. Glen Barry

Earth Meanders, <http://earthmeanders.blogspot.com/>  
September 6, 2007

There are times in human history where obligations to truth, humanity and being take precedent over personal safety, consumption and comfort. Now is one such moment. The time has come for non-violent, direct societal and personal revolutionary action to save the Earth.

For the Earth, humanity and our sister species to survive and flourish, awareness-raising and reformist green-washing must give way to wide scale civil disobedience adequate to peacefully bring about sufficient social change to save the Earth and all being. This meander calls for all bright green environmentalists to emphasize aggressive ecological truth telling, non-violent direct action and a life of rich voluntary simplicity.

These are not new ideas. The world is rife with small groups strategically placing their minds and bodies between faltering ecosystems and predatory Earth destroyers -- sitting in trees, occupying and shutting down coal plants, aggressively and truthfully petitioning and confronting governments, and taking other meaningful and effective direct actions. These must be built upon and intensified to actually end Earth-destroying activities with long and damaging histories.

I propose that an initial revolutionary strategy to save the Earth, and maintain ecological patterns and processes required for all life, should focus upon protecting and restoring ancient natural ecosystems, ending the use of coal, and stopping the growth in aviation. These actions are needed as a minimum urgent response to avoid cataclysmic global ecological collapse.

Tactics at this point should be based upon non-violent direct mass action. More specifically, the Earth revolution must initially seek with all haste to **stop all ancient forest logging, prevent the construction of new coal plants that emit into the atmosphere, and close down the private jet business.** This is not to suggest that there are not other shifts in policy required to live sustainably within the biosphere's constraints, or that these alone are sufficient. However, use of coal and loss of forests are the two greatest historical causes of climate change and ecological decline, and aviation the fastest growing.

As you peacefully battle for the Earth, prepare yourselves and loved ones for the difficult times of ecological collapse and desired regeneration ahead. Even as you commit your being physically to defending Gaia, buy a remote piece of land to love and be one with. Educate yourself and begin to practice homesteading, permaculture, animal husbandry, composting,

organic gardening, ecological restoration, agrarian democracy and more.

Oh Goracle, lead us into action. Oh Titanic play actor, demonstrate sacrifice. I am speaking truthfully to you in a manner that these well informed leaders ensconced in climate changing luxury will not: to the streets in disciplined direct action, as you live well and simply, sacrificing for the Earth!

As the pendulum naturally swings and the climate and forest destruction apologists temporarily regain the upper hand, now is the time to re-intensify our efforts. Tremendous inroads have been made by Mr. Gore, Greenpeace and other establishment reformists; yet the momentum has stalled because they are unwilling to fully speak and personally act upon inconvenient truths. There are too many of us, consuming too much, that will need to sacrifice and dramatically change our ways of living if there is to be a future Earth for our children.

This personal essayist has previously considered and rejected revolutionary violence at this time in the struggle for Earth being. Upon reflection, I do not believe that such an approach would now be effective and indeed may be counter-productive. Mass non-violent action must first be given a real chance. Should this fail, other options may later be necessary.

Our era lacks meaning beyond oneself, close family and friends, and our immediate experiences and consumption. I believe this is why we see such high levels of personal and Earth destructive activities. How much stuff is enough? Virtuous global citizens that truly understand and incorporate into their life the urgency of the global ecological crisis are called upon to make sacrifices including living more simply and risking their physical selves to resist ecocide.

Let the media remain impartial in the face of planetary death. Let the politicians putz and whine as they feed themselves from the fossil fuel industry's trough. Given the failure of existing institutions and leaders to sufficiently respond to the ginormous global ecological crisis, let's you and I and our brothers and sisters join together to do what must be done to stop the Earth destroying growth machine and return to oneness with the Earth's land, air, water and sea. I implore you to be the change required for planetary survival.



Dr. Glen Barry



## Extinction is Forever

### Animal Extinction--The Greatest Threat to Mankind, Part II

by Julia Whitty, *Mother Jones magazine*

We now understand that the majority of life on Earth has never been—and will never be—known to us. In a staggering forecast, E. O. Wilson (*world-famous Harvard biologist specializing in biodiversity*) predicts that our present course will lead to the extinction of **half** of all plant and animal species by 2100.

You probably had no idea. Few do. A poll by the American Museum of Natural History finds that seven in 10 biologists believe that mass extinction poses a colossal threat to human existence, a more serious environmental problem than even its contributor, global warming; and that the dangers of mass extinction are woefully underestimated by almost everyone outside science. In the 200 years since French naturalist Georges Cuvier first floated the concept of extinction, after examining fossil bones and concluding “the existence of a world previous to ours, destroyed by some sort of catastrophe,” we have only slowly recognized and attempted to correct our own catastrophic behavior.

Some nations move more slowly than others. In 1992, an international summit produced a treaty called the Convention on Biological Diversity that was subsequently ratified by 190 nations—all except the unlikely coalition of the United States, Iraq, the Vatican, Somalia, Andorra and Brunei. The European Union later called on the world to arrest the decline of species and ecosystems by 2010. Last year, worried biodiversity experts called for the establishment of a scientific body akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to provide a united voice on the extinction crisis and urge governments to action.

Yet, despite these efforts, the Red List, updated every two years, continues to show metastatic growth. There are a few heartening examples of so-called Lazarus species lost and then found: the wollemi pine and the mahogany glider in Australia, the Jerdon's course in India, the takahe in New Zealand, and, maybe, the ivory-billed woodpecker in the United States. But for virtually all others, the Red List is a dry country with little hope of rain, as species ratchet down the listings from secure to vulnerable, to endangered, to critically endangered, to extinct.

All these disappearing species are part of a fragile membrane of organisms wrapped around the Earth so thinly, writes Wilson, that it “cannot be seen edgewise from a space shuttle, yet so internally complex that most species composing it remain undiscovered.” We owe everything to this membrane of life. Literally everything. The air we breathe. The food we eat. The materials of our homes, clothes, books, computers, medicines. Goods and services that we can't even imagine we'll someday need will come from species we have yet to identify. The proverbial cure for cancer. The genetic fountain of youth. Immortality. Mortality. The living membrane we so recklessly destroy is existence itself.

Biodiversity is defined as the sum of an area's genes (the building blocks of inheritance), species (organisms that can interbreed), and ecosystems (amalgamations of species in their geological and chemical landscapes). The richer an area's biodiversity, the tougher its immune system, since biodiversity includes not only the number of species but also the number of individuals within that species, and all the inherent genetic variations—life's only army against the diseases of oblivion.

Yet it's a mistake to think that critical genetic pools exist only in the gaudy show of the coral reefs, or the cacophony of the rainforest. Although a hallmark of the desert is the sparseness of its garden, the orderly progression of plants and the understated camouflage of its animals, this is only an illusion. Turn the desert inside out and upside down and you'll discover its true nature. Escaping drought and heat, life goes underground in a tangled over-exuberance of roots and burrows reminiscent of a rainforest canopy, competing for moisture, not light. Animal trails criss-cross this subterranean realm in private burrows engineered, inhabited, stolen, shared and fought over by ants, beetles, wasps, cicadas, tarantulas, spiders, lizards, snakes, mice, squirrels, rats, foxes, tortoises, badgers and coyotes.

To survive the heat and drought, desert life pioneers ingenious solutions. Coyotes dig and maintain wells in arroyos, probing deep for water. White-winged doves use their bodies as canteens, drinking enough when the opportunity arises to increase their body weight by more than 15 per cent. Black-tailed jackrabbits tolerate internal temperatures of 111° F. Western box turtles store water in their oversized bladders and urinate on themselves to stay cool. Mesquite grows taproots more than 1,600 feet deep in search of moisture.

These life-forms and their life strategies compose what we might think of as the “body” of the desert, with some species the lungs and others the liver, the blood, the skin. The trend in scientific investigation in recent decades has been toward understanding the interconnectedness of the bodily components, i.e. the effect one species has on the others. The loss of even one species irrevocably changes the desert (or the tundra, rainforest, prairie, coastal estuary, coral reef, and so on) as we know it, just as the loss of each human being changes his or her family forever.

[Ed.: This article is reprinted with permission from **Mother Jones** (©2007, Foundation for National Progress). These folks are very comprehensive in their views and coverage of major social and environmental issues. You can subscribe to the print or online version for \$10 a year by visiting [www.motherjones.com](http://www.motherjones.com). You can also pick up hard copies of the magazine at major bookstores and independent book sellers (preferred). Author Julia Whitty's latest book, **The Fragile Edge: Diving and Other Adventures in the South Pacific**, was released this year by Houghton Mifflin.]

## University Fences In a Berkeley Protest, and a New One Arises

By **JESSE MCKINLEY** *The New York Times*, September 13, 2007. **BERKELEY, California, Sept. 7** — In many ways and for many months, the protest outside Memorial Stadium at the University of California has been business, and Berkeley, as usual

On one side are the protesting tree lovers who have been living Tarzan-like since December in a stand of coastal oaks and other trees. On the other is the university, which wants to cut down the trees to build a \$125 million athletic center, part of a larger plan to upgrade its aging, seismically challenged football stadium.

The two sides disagreed. They bickered. Lawyers were called. Then came The Fence. Before dawn on Aug. 29, building crews and the university police erected a 10-foot-high fence around the grove, effectively cutting off the tree dwellers from their supplies. The university called the fence a safety measure, meant to protect protesters from football fans descending on the stadium for the season opener.



Photo by Darcy Padilla for *The New York Times*

Instead, the fence has united many of the city's fractious constituencies and unleashed years of frustration with the university that made the city famous (or was it the other way around?). "I am appalled," said Michael Kelly, who leads a group opposing the stadium plan. "I cannot believe that the institution that gave birth to the Free Speech Movement has done this."

[The university recently ratcheted up pressure when it sought a court order to end the protest, arguing that the tree community contained several health and safety threats, including propane tanks and plywood structures. On Sept. 12, Judge Richard O. Keller of Alameda County Superior Court declined to rule immediately, scheduling a hearing for Oct. 1.]

The stadium showdown has energized many in Berkeley's graying antiestablishment set who cherish the city's activist past, including the famous 1969 battle over nearby People's Park. In that case, university and state authorities sent the police and the National Guard to clear the university-owned park and build a fence, a move that led to violent clashes in which one person was killed and dozens were injured. The land remains a park today.

"A lot of people who have been here a long time have seen this as a potential rerun of that problem," Mayor Tom Bates said. "The abruptness of it, in the middle of the night, and the mobilization of the police."

In retrospect, they didn't need the police," Mayor Bates said, "but I'm just glad it didn't escalate."

The city has sued the university, arguing that the athletic center should be built away from the stadium. The stadium sits over the Hayward fault, which scientists say is overdue for a large earthquake. The university says that it has thoroughly considered safety issues, and that the athletic center needs to be near the stadium to allow athletes easy access to classrooms and training facilities near the playing fields. Arguments in the lawsuit will be heard Sept. 19 and 20.

[On Sept. 11, the City Council rejected a settlement offer from the university, to the joy of its assembled opponents, including a group of football fans who say the stadium plan will rob them of a free view of the action from a nearby hillside.

[Shirley Dean, a former mayor who says she knows well the animation with which various opinions can bounce around her hometown, said she was impressed by the turnout. "Many of these people I knew from previous times, many people — I'm not going to name names — that I would have preferred not to be in the same room with, and we were all of the same side," Ms. Dean said. "It was absolutely amazing."]

Shortly after the fence appeared, dozens of protesters formed a human chain around the chain-link fence and began tossing supplies over the top. Soon after, the editorial board at *The Daily Californian*, the independent student newspaper, called the fence a public relations disaster and suggested that it might "encourage martyrdom."

Zachary Running Wolf, an American Indian activist who has been living in the grove for nearly 300 days, agreed. "I think they blew it with the fence," Mr. Running Wolf said. "They showed their desperation. In the city of Berkeley, on a public campus, a starve-out program? A Guantánamo Berkeley? It's ridiculous."



## Latin America's Surprising New Eco-Warriors, excerpt

by Marilyn Berlin Snell, with permission from *Sierra Magazine*, September/October 2007

I hear Father Jose Andres Tamayo Cortez before I meet him, his voice crackling over a public-address system, warning a young groom that in the 21st century it is not OK to come home drunk and abuse his new wife. It's a steamy day, and the small cinder block church is packed with wedding-goers. Women fan themselves. Babies wriggle and fuss. The priest's camouflage-clad bodyguards stand at the chapel door and windows, their M-16s pointed at the dirt.

I've traveled to Olancho, a lawless logging region known as the Texas of Honduras, because Tamayo has an international reputation for standing up to the logging interests, legal and illegal, that have been chain-sawing their way through mountains rich in pine and tropical hardwoods. He and a growing number of Catholic clergy throughout Latin America have come to see protection of the land and water as God's work, their duty to the region's 500 million Catholics.

Although few North Americans seem to have noticed it yet, in the past few years a "liberation ecology" movement, with the church at its spiritual heart, has been taking shape from Chile to Mexico. Will the Vatican, I wonder, encourage or stifle it? Latin American Catholics have, after all, taken on what they saw as forces of injustice before.

The liberation theology movement that began to gain strength in the 1970s sided with the poor during a time when military regimes, supported by the region's oligarchs, ruthlessly suppressed social reform -- killing more than 200,000 people in Guatemala alone, most of them indigenous.

Critics of that Catholic activism, including Pope John Paul II, feared that some in the clergy were flirting with godless Marxism. Rome assigned an enforcer, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, to rein in what it saw as renegade priests and bishops. Ratzinger's policy helped derail the

movement and gave his career a solid boost. In 2005, the Roman Catholic Church elected him its Supreme Pontiff, Pope Benedict XVI.

Logging is big business near Olancho, Honduras, center, and efforts to fight destructive practices there have been met with violence. Since 1998, six environmentalists have been killed, and Father Andrés Tamayo must now travel with armed bodyguards.

Today both Guatemala and Honduras are embroiled in particularly contentious struggles over resources. I arrive in the spring, during the otherworldly ceremonies of *Semana Santa* -- Holy Week -- and just ahead of Benedict's highly publicized visit to Brazil, his first as pope to this part of the world. Drumbeats echo from village walls and tangy incense clouds the streets, along with an air of danger and possibility.

I've been in the region two weeks and traveled more than 1,500 miles on rough and scary roads by the time I visit Tamayo. A confession he makes confirms my impression that the stakes are high in this place where fragile economies and ecologies intertwine.

Tamayo, 51, is short and wide-shouldered and reminds me of the images of Mayan warriors chiseled into vine-covered temples. Yet his hands tremble as he speaks.

"Sometimes I get so scared I can't think at all," he says. "I get paralyzed. I just wait for death to come."

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Preparing for this trip, I consulted an old friend, a former priest who had lived for years in Mexico and now works at a parish in North Philadelphia. He sent me essays by American poet and farmer Wendell Berry.

In one, Berry contrasts the disembodied "rational mind" of industry and economy with a "sympathetic mind" that is moved by "affection for its home place, the local topography, the local memories, and the local creatures." The sympathetic mind believes that "landscapes should not be used by people who do not live in them and share their fate." [Ed.: Long piece here about mining's horrid effects.]

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...On the day I visit, I bring Tamayo a gift of chorizo, but he declines the sausage, giving it instead to his security detail. When I ask why, he tells me that as an orphan in El Salvador, living with a neighbor, he noticed that the priest was the best-fed person in his small village. This seemed wrong, and when Tamayo decided to follow his calling, he vowed never to eat better than the poorest in his parish.



Before our dinner of beans and rice, Tamayo takes me into the forest. The logging concession we see is relatively small and "legal," meaning the permit holders have permission to cut. But their techniques -- bulldozing steep hillsides to get at the pine, cutting right to the banks of the creek, and felling everything except diseased or crooked trees -- violate the law.

The loggers stop working when we arrive. They seem to know of Tamayo but say nothing as we walk by, two of his bodyguards flanking him while the third, the commander, hikes above us on the hillside to keep the entire scene -- loggers, priest, visitors, potential sniper -- in his sight.

"The company is supposed to leave a 150-meter buffer around water sources before it cuts a tree, but who is here to make sure the law is respected?" Tamayo asks. "There is no future view on sustainability."

In a forest once dense with pine, the closest trees on this concession are far enough apart to string a hammock. A logger now sleeps in one, surrounded by stumps and parched ground. Already, half of Olancho's 12 million acres of forest have been destroyed.

In his essay "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," Wendell Berry writes that our destruction of nature "is not just bad stewardship, or stupid economics, or a betrayal of family responsibility; it is the most horrid blasphemy. It is flinging God's gifts into His face, as if they were of no worth beyond that assigned to them by our destruction of them."

After I left Central America, the pope would strike a similar tone in Brazil, echoing remarks from his New Year's talk. He again criticized the socialism experiencing a resurgence in parts of South America, but he also blasted the environmental impact of unbridled capitalism and spoke specifically in support of people's rights to protect their water, timber, and land. He sounded, in short, like Tamayo, who in 2005 won the Goldman Environmental Prize. [Ed.: More on the pope next time—good news!]

I can't know for certain what prompted the pope to speak out so forcefully for stewardship. I do know what has driven Tamayo. One day, the priest says, he was passing through a mountain village during a funeral. A timber company had just secured a concession that allowed it to take massive quantities of wood from the area. The deceased's brothers, sisters, uncles, and cousins were so poor they didn't have money for a pine box. They buried their beloved in plastic.

"This really touched me," Tamayo says. "In a land so rich in natural wealth, in a village once surrounded by lush forests, "people couldn't afford a coffin."

Marilyn Berlin Snell is Sierra's senior writer and directs the Sierra Investigative Journalism Project. This article was made possible in part by a grant from Chuck and Debbie Frank. For more information on the project, go to [sierraclub.org/sierra/investigative](http://sierraclub.org/sierra/investigative).

## Tuvalu about to Disappear into the Ocean



SEOUL (Reuters) - The tiny Pacific island state of Tuvalu on Thursday urged the rest of the world to do more to combat global warming before it sinks beneath the ocean.

Reuters via Environmental News Network, September 13, 2007

The group of atolls and reefs, home to some 10,000 people, is barely two meters on average above sea-level and one study predicted at the current rate the ocean is rising could disappear in the next 30 to 50 years. "We keep thinking that the time will never come. The alternative is to turn ourselves into fish and live under water," Tuvalu Deputy Prime Tavau Tei told Reuters in the South Korean capital where he was attending a conference on the environment.



## An Arresting Cause:

### Lou Rimbach about his December Protest of the 2006 Budget

The next thing I knew I was being arrested, led off by two very large Capital police officers, one on each side, leading me by controlling my arms. I was being walked down the steps of the Cannon Terrace Executive Office Building, feeling confused by the emotions that were running through my head..

Why was all this happening? Why had I put myself in a position in which I knew I would be arrested, handcuffed and taken away. It certainly was not for fun, kneeling on those cold marble steps blocking the entrance of the Federal Government's building for over an hour on that very cold morning, being led away with the plastic hand cuffs cutting into my flesh making it extremely uncomfortable to sit on the bus, and waiting to be taken to jail.

There comes a time when we have to admit that this administration's budget is immoral and it is time for people of faith such as myself, to speak out and be counted. There were 115 of us there on those steps trying to be heard through our actions. What we were trying to say was that we were not going to accept a budget that would mean that some 330,000 children in low-income working families (not receiving cash assistance) will not receive child care as a result of work hour increases and TANF under-funding, 220,000 people will lose food stamp benefits, including 185,000 mainly from working class families just over the poverty line, and 70,000 legal immigrants, 17 million low-income people, including 6 million low-income children, who receive health care through Medicare, will have co-payments raised and access to doctor's visits, medicines, and other care reduced. 24 billion will be cut from student loan programs, increasing loan costs for the average college student by almost \$6,000.00. Poverty has risen in each of the past four years, and food insecurity has risen in each of the last five. Plus, 9.2 million working families are on the brink of poverty. These cuts had to be challenged !

At the same time this budget specified that over 80% of benefits from the capital gains and dividend tax cuts would go to the top 3% of households who earn over \$200,000 a year, those making more than \$1 million would receive \$32,000 in capital gains and dividend tax breaks in 2009. Forty-five percent of the benefits from these tax cuts will go to those making over \$1 million a year.

We have been told that the budget cuts amounting to \$50 billion are needed to balance the budget and yet the TAX CUTS proposed would amount to \$56 billion which actually increase the deficit.

We are the richest nation on the planet and yet we cannot find the funds to take care of the least, the last and the lost? In the USA hunger and food insecurity levels have been rising for the past five

years. Today, more than 38 million people live in households that struggle to put food on the table. Yet the Hunger-Free Communities Act recommits the country to reducing hunger and supports local organizations working to end hunger in their communities. We need to contact our Senators Mikulske and Cardin at the U.S. Senate in Washington D.C. 20515, or Representative Roscoe Bartlett at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. You can reach them by phone at the Capitol Switchboard, 202-224-3121. They are waiting for your call. Direction from us, their constituents, will let them know how important we think the outcome of this budget process is!

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" Matthew 25: 40-41.

So what did the arresting of 155 church people really accomplish? Does it really make a difference? This time it did. Before the 2006 budget was passed most of the cuts in the area of children's benefits and food stamps were restored. Somehow the cuts were restored without impacting the tax breaks for the wealthiest 3% of our tax payers ... must be a miracle

I should also add that we were treated very well through the whole process. While it is true that we were booked, processed and fined \$50.00 for our civil disobedient actions, the officers were very easy on us. It may have helped that most of us arrested were clergy. We sang religious songs and joked with the officers as much as possible. It was our intention to let them know that our actions were not against them in any way. We even cheered and clapped when the commanding officer left his office somewhere in the back and entered the large room where we were being held. This action brought a smile to his face and I think softened his heart toward us, and hopefully, our cause as well.

This was a very interesting experience that I will never forget. Will I put myself in the position to get arrested for a cause again? If the cause is just, and I believe that my being arrested would make a difference, I would do it again in a heart beat !

"No, no, I never despair, because George Bush is not running the universe. He may be running the United States, he may be running the military, he may be running the world, but he is not running the human heart. A higher power is yet to be heard in this regard, and I'm not sure that we haven't already heard, we just haven't been listening. I still believe in the nonviolent Jesus and the basic goodness present in all of us."  
--Martin Sheen





## Back to School, Back to the Great Outdoors

by Kathleen Paul and Ruth Roperti

**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette NOW, August 24, 2007—**

Summer is quickly coming to a close and children will soon return to schools across Pennsylvania. For many of them, summer was spent indoors, glued to televisions, video games and computer screens -- and not outside.

The trend is clear: Our young people are losing touch with the environment. One national study found that young people can identify 1,000 corporate logos but fewer than 10 plants or animals native to their backyards. More broadly, many of us in the environmental education field are deeply concerned that we are not doing enough nationally to educate our children about their natural environment and the immense challenges it faces, everything from climate change to the loss of sensitive habitats, whether it's along the Allegheny or the Amazon.

This situation requires immediate attention. We cannot expect the next generations to overcome the environmental problems being left to them without a solid understanding of the environment. Instilling environmental literacy and a love for the outdoors will produce many benefits. Children enjoy hiking, swimming and canoeing, and many of them need the exercise to counter the nation's childhood obesity crisis.

We're proud to say that Pennsylvania is a leader in environmental education, one of the few states that have created specific instructional standards related to the environment. Teachers are taught to weave important concepts, such as biodiversity, into the existing curriculum of reading, science, math and other subjects. Beginning this academic year, schools will include these environmental lessons on assessment tests. State policymakers deserve kudos for taking these important steps.

Nationally, though, environmental education is at a critical crossroads. Quite simply, America is not doing enough to support **high-quality instruction in the environment**. Congress has a chance to address this problem with pending legislation that would help all states make progress in environmental education.

The *No Child Left Inside Act* would increase funding for teacher training and the development of model programs. And it would give states new funding to develop environmental literacy plans to make sure their

graduates have a basic knowledge of environmental concepts. Given the environmental challenges this country faces, we can't think of a more important goal.

The legislation has the support of large environmental groups such as *Audubon* and the *National Wildlife Federation*, as well as the National Education Association, which recognizes the importance of environmental education.

The results of a new focus on environmental education can be profound. We will prepare students to be environmentally literate. But we also know firsthand that environmental education can serve as a wonderful

catalyst for young people. It engages them in their world and gives them a personal connection to what they're learning, whether it's examining wildlife in a nearby stream or learning to think about where their trash will end up if they don't recycle it.

Not surprisingly, studies have shown that students in schools with environmental instruction tend to do better on tests and in the classroom.

It's important to do more to help our young people reconnect with nature. On average, children spend six hours a day in front of the TV and computers, but less than four minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play, according to one study.

Unless we take action, complicated environmental concepts will become more and more foreign to our children. Environmental education should be a priority for both Pennsylvania and the nation. No child should finish school without a basic understanding of the natural world and the challenges it faces.

(With permission from Kathleen Cowles Paul, Director of Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education, and from Ruth Roperti, President of Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators.)





## DCNR Considers Lifting Moratorium on Shallow Oil and Gas Leasing Potential Conflicts with Pennsylvania Wilds Initiative

**Allegheny Defense Project.** The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is considering lifting a moratorium on shallow oil and gas leasing on state lands that has been in place since 2003. The DCNR is currently soliciting public input regarding the proposal and is holding meetings around the state. Conservation groups claim the proposed lifting of the oil and gas leasing moratorium is the result of industry pressure and contradicts the DCNR's own Pennsylvania Wilds Initiative.

"In 2003, the DCNR spearheaded the Pennsylvania Wilds Initiative to increase recreation and tourism in the state's northern tier," said Ryan Talbott, Forest Watch Coordinator for the Allegheny Defense Project. "Now, the DCNR is entertaining allowing oil and gas drilling to take place on these treasured state lands, threatening the very experience it is trying to promote through Pennsylvania Wilds. It really is unconscionable."

"After weighing considerable public input," states the DCNR proposal, "the [Bureau of Forestry] proposed in the 2003 [State Forest Resource Management Plan] to discontinue shallow gas leasing due to the potential negative impacts of forest fragmentation associated with well sites and access roads. This proposal was met with opposition from both the Legislature and the oil and gas industry."

"It is clear from the DCNR's own statements that it is bending to the will of the oil and gas industry," said Cathy Pedler of the Gaia Defense League. "The public made it clear in 2003 that these lands should be protected from oil and gas drilling. The DCNR should not change course just because oil and gas prices have increased since then, thus making it more profitable for oil companies to drill on our lands."

The DCNR is holding public meetings to discuss the proposed lifting of the oil and gas leasing moratorium and other updates to the state forest management plan. Please plan on attending at least one of these meetings to let the DCNR know that you oppose leasing state lands for oil and gas drilling. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm. Some have already occurred.

- Oct. 1, Genetti Hotel, Williamsport;
- Oct. 2, Holiday Inn/Dunmore, Scranton; and
- Oct. 4, Hotel Carlisle and Embers Convention Center, Carlisle.

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### NEW YORK TIMES EXPOSES USDA SABOTAGE OF ORGANICS

**Organic Consumer Association website,**  
[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_6710.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6710.cfm)

On August 19, *The New York Times* exposed the USDA for shortchanging organic programs. Journalist Andrew Martin pointed out that the National Organic Program, which regulates the entire organic industry, has just nine staff members and a puny annual budget of \$1.5 million. In contrast, *The New York Times* went on to describe how chemical-agribusinesses have individually received more than that in subsidies, including \$1.7 million in subsidies given to a single mega-farm in Florida.

The article points out that the USDA (whose annual budget is \$100 **billion**) spent \$28 **million** on organic agriculture programs last year, which may sound like a lot, but, in comparison, the agency spent \$37 million subsidizing farmers who grew dry peas last year. As a note of reference on those numbers, consumers spend only \$83 million a year on dry peas, whereas consumers spent almost \$17 **billion** last year on organic food. *The New York Times* noted, "It's not entirely surprising that organics are such a low priority at the department and in Congress. Both the agency and farm-state members of Congress are reliable cheerleaders for industrialized agriculture, and Big Ag has often viewed organics with suspicion, if not outright disdain."



## **ACORN Leaders Request Investigation of Police Brutality in Harrisburg's Neighborhoods**

### **Neighborhood Wants Answers to Recent Military-style Aggressions**

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania (email from Harrisburg ACORN, September 10, 2007)—South Harrisburg is still distraught after witnessing an episode of what seemed like “Martial Law” on South16 Street the evening of September 1. Dozens of officers armed with pepper spray and dogs, interrupted a festive back-to-school neighborhood celebration, turning it into a quagmire of panic and fear by the overt show of force delivered by the Harrisburg Police Department. This incident, which happened around 9 PM as the block party was winding down Saturday night, prompts us to once again reevaluate the treatment of our citizens by the Harrisburg Police Department.

The 4<sup>th</sup> year organizer of a community block party, community activist, and Harrisburg ACORN Southside Chapter President Diane White, was accosted, pepper sprayed, and arrested as she joined the neighborhood in cleaning up at the end of another successful back-to-school block party. Many neighbors and crying children watched in shock as she was pepper sprayed, knocked to the ground, handcuffed and blindly guided to the police wagon - where she was taken to night court, held for several hours, and charged with numerous offenses; then released to walk home in her battered state.

The annual community celebration is held to give the children and families an opportunity to say goodbye to summer and hello to the new school year. Many in this low-income neighborhood cannot afford to attend the City sponsored Riverfront Festival that is held at the same time. Resourceful members of the neighborhood and the community donate the games, food, back to school supplies and free prizes to the children and the neighborhood. Members of the community, clergy, artistic groups, public office holders, even candidates currently running for public office, visited and participated in the carnival-style event throughout the day.

September 3, people in the neighborhood affected by the altercation, representatives from local and national advocacy groups, and ACORN met at Ms. White's home to discuss what happened. This was a press event, and the only media that came did not air the story because they could not find anyone from the police department to verify the arrest - there was never a police report filed.

“The filing of an incident report is just as much their duty as patrolling our streets. If they neglected to do their rounds, they would be reprimanded for dereliction of duty. The non-filing of an encounter with one of our citizens should also be just cause for reprimand, if not more so.” said Loretta Barbee-Dare from Harrisburg ACORN, “How can the Captain and Chief know what's really going on in our neighborhoods if it is not being reported by their officers? It is our right to have competent police patrolling our streets. Not putting it down on paper does not mean the incident didn't happen - it means you are unable to do your job properly.”

ACORN requests a full investigation, including:

- explanation as to why dozens of officers were called to a back to school block party, displaying such overt behavior in front of young children;
- clarification as to why NO POLICE REPORT was filed by the officer nor information on the arrest was available in the police computer;
- disciplinary action against the officer for not filing a timely police report of the incident, and other violations as charged;
- cooperation by the Harrisburg Police with the media, and release of the videotape by Fox43;
- release of the findings of bias-related incidents concerning the Harrisburg Police by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Task Force on Civil Tension;
- review of each complaint filed by the residents and visitors to the block party, and satisfaction of their requests; and
- a formal written apology to the residents of South 16<sup>th</sup> street, their children, and their guests for the terror instilled by the officers and police dogs that chased these residents into their homes.

In addition, officers discharging mace should be the same as discharging a firearm, stun gun, or any aggressive use of force. Just as the officer is suppose to say “Stop or I'll shoot”, they should also be required to notify the person that they will use pepper spray. Ms. White is asthmatic - what if she had a seizure and died? This entire incident warrants an investigation, and a policy change - if this warning is not part of police policy, it should be made policy immediately to protect not only our citizens, but also the police department from potential litigation.

*ACORN is the nation's largest community organization of low-and moderate-income families, with over 350,000 member families organized into 800 neighborhood chapters in over 100 cities across the country. [www.acorn.org](http://www.acorn.org)*



## Garden Ramblings: Let Go of Me, Summer: A Fond Farewell

by Christine Maccabee

When late October comes, so does the frost. It is an inevitable and sometimes unwelcome reality of life. Tonight the cosmos, marigolds, dahlias, and even some morning glories are still blooming profusely. I will miss their cheerful colors when they are gone. The tiny flowers of the wild asters wink and blink at me as I walk through the garden before sunset, laden with sheets of various sizes with which I will cover my parsley, chard, late limas, spinach, and lettuce. If the frost is not too heavy, some of the flowers will survive another day, but tonight I've neither time, nor sheets, to cover them all.

Suddenly I find myself singing loudly, the poignant words of a song I decided just this week I must learn. It is a seasonal song which speaks deeply of the emotion of change, of the inevitability of the passing of all the beauty of summer. I sing it lustily, as tho' to convince myself that it is okay, and to strengthen my heart against the cold front and the losses that follow. I sing it out to the valley, to the garden, to the memory of open windows and doors and the easy flow of breezes and bodies from house to garden. I sing...

*Let go of me, Summer, let go of me, please.  
I love your slow music, I love your green trees.  
But I've miles for to go now and promises to keep,  
So let go of me, summer, let go of me please!\**

True, the gardens, as well as the gardeners, need and deserve a rest. Changes brought by the cold and grey of winter are necessary, and frequently welcomed. Finally we have time to write those letters, do some cross-stitching or wood-working, read that book, or clean those places we neglected while we were out in the garden weeding between the rows of strawberry plants, etc.

Still, I will miss the wonderful colors, smells, and sounds of summer. I sing out...

*When the roses have opened, when the bee hums  
again,  
Wait for me by the ocean, when old June comes  
again.  
Only say to me, Summer, that you'll always come  
true—  
Then go 'way from me, Summer, let go of me, do!*

Yes, there is a sentiment that runs deep in the soul of many a person at this time of the year. It cuts to the very core of all that is precious in life. It is to be valued, perhaps even mourned, but then put aside as we breath deeply of the crisp, invigorating air of November. Enjoy the season!

*\*The verses quoted in this article are from a song written by Jean Ritchie, a Kentucky songwriter and performer.*

Christine is a Master Wildlife Habitat Naturalist. She was trained through the Windstar Wildlife Institute located in Myersville, Maryland. Christine is available for telephone consultations about making your property more wildlife and wildflower friendly. Call her at 301-271-2307. For information about Windstar call 301-293-3351 or email [wildlife@windstar.org](mailto:wildlife@windstar.org).



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## The World Needs Simplicity Circles

by Kim Stenley, Taneytown, Maryland

It's been documented that Americans consume 25 percent of available global resources. That's 300 million of 6 billion people worldwide using one-quarter of the world's finite cache. It's also well documented that this activity, brokered mainly through government agencies, multi-national corporations and PR firms, has caused depression, death and destruction on all continents.

So, what are we doing in the face of climate change and dwindling water and fossil fuel supplies? We're looking for more. Shouldn't we be using our energies to learn to live more simply with less? Instead of working to retool communities and plan mass transportation systems that would move people and necessary goods more efficiently across town, the nation and the globe, our leaders are looking for the magic fuel that will allow for an increase in the fleets on the ground and in the air. They are developing elaborate schemes to trade carbon credits and setting low reduction targets even though scientists are telling us that climate change is here to stay and can only be mitigated to the extent that we learn to slow down and live leaner. They are talking about impending water shortages without considering that maybe it's not the water that's in short supply, there's too many of us greedily using too much of it too fast. For example, Manchester is admittedly using more water than it should. But instead of focusing energy on figuring out how to decrease water consumption and maintain town balance sheets without relying on an influx of development, it's working on a deal to buy water from a company in York, Pennsylvania, while it continues to build.

This isn't a special case; it's happening in modern communities all over America.

What the world needs now is simplicity circles. Like AA groups, quilting bees or Bible study groups, people need to start coming together and helping each other forge more sustainable lifestyles. Think of them as 12-step recovery programs from overconsumption. Their forms are taking shape. *Citizens for a Green Mount Airy* has been working with town leaders to brainstorm ways for residents to use less water and energy and generate their own power from the wind and the sun. It's these kinds of discussions that are needed in every community, big and small.

The majority of government and corporate leaders aren't looking for ways to power down and simplify our lives. They are looking for ways to make money maintaining the status quo. They want to keep energy-inefficient suburbia alive at all costs, since our financial markets depend on it, instead of creating new markets that thrive on sustainable practices and re-energize local economies. Who cares about the effects of biofuels and water depletion on food production or soils; we'll worry about that later.

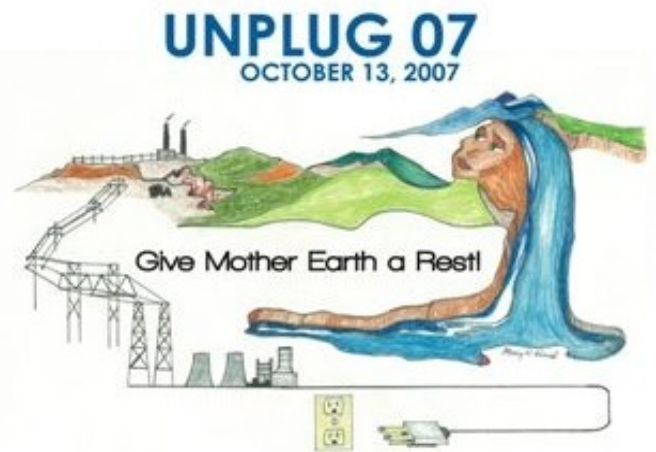
Let's continue generating and wasting electricity, regardless of the resources used or pollution created in the process. If our leaders were genuinely serious about solar and wind energy, they'd be working hard to get costs down fast enough to allow for a quicker nationwide move to alternative energy.

We can't wait for our leaders to do the right thing. We need to roll up our sleeves and start moving ourselves to more sustainable lifestyles.

Anyone want to start a simplicity circle?



Kim Stenley has been studying the web of life, and humans' complex relationships in it, for as long as she can remember. She's a wife, mother and activist, currently working to promote sane, sustainable solid waste management practices in Carroll and Frederick Counties. She also has a fourth job and lives in Maryland. Email her at [kstenley@mcDaniel.edu](mailto:kstenley@mcDaniel.edu).



[www.jp petitions.com/petition/unplug\\_day/](http://www.jp petitions.com/petition/unplug_day/)



## Harmful Pollutants are More than Just a Problem Outdoors

by Cheryl Wihelm

When we talk about air pollution, we usually think about things like vehicle and power plant emissions. But we need think about indoor air quality, too. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Web site warns that "the air within homes and other buildings can be more seriously polluted than the outdoor air."

The Web site discusses indoor pollutants that many people are aware of, such as radon, smoke, pesticides and mold. But the site also discusses a pollutant many people may not be familiar with: volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

While some VOCs are not known to cause adverse health effects, others are considered highly toxic, says the EPA. For some people, VOCs cause immediate symptoms such as headache, dizziness or respiratory irritation. Some organic compounds are known or suspected to cause cancer.

VOCs are emitted as gases by a wide variety of products used in our homes. The EPA found many VOCs exist at higher concentrations indoors than outdoors. On the Maryland Department of the Environment Web site, consumer products ranked No. 4 in the top 10 sources of VOCs for 2002. Paint was ranked No. 7. According to the EPA, not much is known about the health effects of household VOC levels.

Through reading, talking to people and trial and error, I have gradually found no- and low-VOC options that work for my family. For example, Sherwin Williams sells both low- and no-VOC paints. Duron, Home Depot and Lowes said they sell low-VOC paint.

According to Martin Wolf, director of product and environmental technology at Seventh Generation, the company's household cleaners and detergents contain no more than 0.5 percent VOCs, and their unscented products contain no VOCs. A variety of Seventh Generation products can be found online and at natural food stores such as Roots in Clarksville, Maryland. Static Eliminator advertises reusable, chemical-free dryer sheets. I don't use air fresheners, opting instead for airing out the house when possible or using products that absorb odors.

The EPA Web site recommends not accepting dry-cleaned clothes that have a strong odor and not using a dry cleaner that frequently returns clothes in that condition. The EPA says products can release some VOCs even when stored, so I keep my few VOC-containing products in the garage.

Addressing a wide range of indoor air quality issues is Jerry Spratt's job. As the Carroll County Public Schools' coordinator of school safety, Spratt is responsible for the schools' indoor air quality. In 2004, Spratt spearheaded CCPSS' implementation of the EPA Tools for Schools program, and he shared with me how the program works.

Each school has an indoor air quality team including a school nurse, building supervisor, administrator, teachers, and sometimes, parents.



After being trained, each team performs walk-through inspections of the school at least three times per year. The teams check for problems that could create an indoor air quality problem, such as an improperly operating HVAC system or water intrusion that might lead to mold growth.

The carpets in portable classrooms are being systematically replaced with vinyl\* ceramic tile as funding allows. Spratt estimates that 75 percent to 80 percent of the portables now have tile. If there is a concern that can't be detected visually, Spratt may call an outside environmental company to test the air. In addition to the school teams, there is a district committee chaired by Spratt and made up of people from different areas of the school system.

Spratt said that before starting this program, the school system had 26 registered indoor air quality concerns. A couple of years after starting the program, he said, the number dropped to five. Spratt attributes the program's success to the collective efforts of everyone involved.

"We are passionate about providing a safe environment for employees and students," Spratt said. He recognizes that the schools are not absolutely perfect, but he believes a proactive approach to preventing problems will make the schools safer for everyone.



This article first appeared in "The Carroll County Times." Cheryl Wihelm writes from Eldersburg. E-mail her at [Cheryl.Wilhelm1@verizon.net](mailto:Cheryl.Wilhelm1@verizon.net).

\*[Ed.: Vinyl monomer, from which vinyl chloride is made, is a known human carcinogen. Bamboo is an up-an-coming alternative for wood.]



## Earth & Word: Classic Sermons on Saving the Planet

by Michael Ochs

My monthly column (9 times a year) began ten years ago with the purpose of encouraging readers to avail themselves of resources for service to God's creation. Known as eco-justice, environmental ministry is embraced throughout ecumenical and interfaith institutions.

A new book, *Earth & Word: Classic Sermons on Saving the Planet*, edited by David Rhoads (Continuum Int'l. Publ., 300 pages, paperback, \$24.95), is derived from an impetus from the very useful web site <http://webofcreation.org>. Some three dozen sermons, each scripturally based, help us think religiously and ecologically. What is our dominion of the earth? Surely we may not endorse or condone the destruction of the environment in the name of God.

The book should serve as a wonderful introduction to the many points-of-view by well-known writers in the field. Consider: Passionist priest Thomas Berry, Lutherans Joseph Sittler and Paul Santmire, Episcopalians Sally G. Bingham and Barbara Brown Taylor, Presbyterians Dieter Hessel and William Sloan Coffin, poet/farmer (and once-resident scholar at nearby Bucknell University) Wendell Berry, environmental activist/United Methodist layman Bill Mckibben. Also included are other contributors to the theological literature on ecology and nature: Peter Bakken, John Cobb, J. Ronald Engel, Sallie McFague, and Larry Rasmussen. Among the other twenty-two authors are representatives of ethnic communities (Latino, Black, American Indian), feminist perspectives and those of other faith traditions (Greek Orthodox, Reformed, etc.). Each sermon is a mere few pages in length, so each can be read "on its own" separately in a brief period of time, and then can be reflected on. It is a superb reading resource for learning and teaching.

*Earth & Word* follows, by eleven years, an evangelical collection, *The Best Preaching on Earth: Sermons on Caring for Creation*, edited by Stan Lequire (Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pa, 1996). And it precedes a forthcoming volume of essays, now being solicited by the Paulist Press, that will examine ecological theology in context of the statement *God's Earth is Sacred: An Open Letter to Church and Society in the U.S.* from the National Council of Churches of Christ "Eco-Justice Program: Justice for God's planet and God's people". The statement is at <http://www.ncccojustice.org/openletter.html> and can also be found as the appendix to *Earth & Word*. To offer an essay, see <http://www.nccusa.org/news/070502ecoessays.html>.

A brief review of *Earth & Word* may be read in the "Values and Visions Review Service" of Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, at [www.spiritualityandpractice.com](http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com).

Michael Ochs is a member of the UCLC Committee for Christian Social Concerns and chair for the environmental task force for the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## the seeker©

by Barbara Knox

There was beatitude in the white-bearded face of the Imam.  
The old man had surely seen Allah. Longing to see God,  
the child studied the Koran, prayed faithfully, obeyed sacred laws.  
But he could not see.

He saw wretched children, spare, hopeless,  
and his rich life troubled him. Frowning,  
he said nothing, asked for less. Away at school,  
he ground his teeth at the sacrilege of the foreigners.  
Like geometric patterns that decorate mosques,  
mathematics intoxicated him. One day at dawn  
he left his formulas, hurried to the harbor,  
stepping over a sleeping beggar.

Waves slapped rhythmically against the dock;  
crisscross patterns of water calmed him. Sunlight  
ricocheted off water into his eyes.  
As if struck by an assassin he fell.  
He felt a divine hand touch his shoulder.

Emptiness and fierce yearning followed.  
He sought Osama. Drawn to the tall, soft-spoken man,  
he began training. Nights, sleepless on a hard, narrow cot,  
rage, craving coalesced. He resolved to see God in Paradise.

In America he scorned prostitutes, sneered at mansions,  
large cars, opulent dining, while homeless starved outside.  
On TV he watched white buttocks plunging rhythmically,  
a woman's face contorted, moaning.  
He vomited.

He decoded, memorized and destroyed instructions,  
studied training videos, bought utility knives, tickets,  
read the Koran, prayed.

Approaching the tower, intense sunlight  
ricocheted off the plane's wing, so bright  
his eyes burned. Coldly, calmly he flew into his target,  
hurling himself into the fires  
of paradise.

*Barbara Knox is a retired psychologist who draws inspiration for much of her writing from her farm near Shade Gap, PA. She has reclaimed its 1850s house and is an enthusiastic organic gardener. An environmental activist and amateur naturalist, she has begun to restore her 150-acre farm to native forests, wetlands and meadows. Barbara's book of poems and illustrations, "the limberlost," was copyrighted and published in 2005 and is available for \$10. Send check payable to "Barbara Knox," 17305 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860.*



## Grassroots Coalition for Environmental & Economic Justice: A New Society

by John Conner, grassroots1@pa.net

American society today is controlled by a few thousand people in major corporations and the federal government, whose primary objectives are to maximize wealth and power for themselves, with no concern for the great damage they do to the majority of the population and to the environment. Short-term self-interest is their watchword.

Periodically, movements have arisen to instill greater measures of justice in our society – the workers' rights movement, anti-war movements, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the women's movement, to mention a few. All have had limited success, but none has been strong enough to fully achieve its goals in the face of the wealth and power and total ruthlessness of the establishment.

All of these movements have been content to leave the basic, unjust structures of society in place, effecting only minor adjustments. The problem is that while reformers and their followers come and go, the leaders of the establishment never go away; they are always at work, day after day, year after year, ever faithful to their mission of preserving their role of governing society in the interests of their class, stopping at nothing, and utilizing in various ways and at various times effective means to:

- Globalize the economy, rendering American workers powerless.
- Destroy organized labor, using any means, legal or illegal, violent or non-violent.
- Destroy the environment whenever and wherever they find it profitable to do so.
- Secure legislation that promotes their goals by their 'ownership' of legislators.
- Hide the truth from the public through their ownership and control of the media.
- Repress opposition by their use of the police at home and the military abroad.

All of the reform efforts leave the rulers of society in place, determined to regain as soon as possible any control diminished by popular struggles. Moreover, many of the leaders are co-opted into the system. And many burn out after years of struggle against such powerful forces. Which leads to the conclusion that reform from within does not work, at least not in our times. Our only hope lies in reform from without, by creating a New Society, one in which justice, democracy and care for humanity and the environment reign. Such a society can start with just a small number of people, operate alongside the conventional society and gradually grow, continually attracting more and more members, until it is in a position to reshape all of society.

There are communities of people whose lives are characterized by a quest for justice, democracy and caring for others, but their numbers are so small that they have virtually no effect on society as a whole. We envision therefore a New Society that will involve, as soon as possible, great numbers of people, enough to reshape the world in accordance with our values of justice, democracy and care for all living creatures. The stark alternative to this radical societal change is a continuation of the present imbalance of power and wealth, producing a constantly accelerating downward slide into unprecedented suffering and death for the human and non-human population of the planet.

Unfortunately, today there is something new on the scene, compelling this radical change in society, something which is threatening much of life on Earth. That something is Climate Change. Many mainstream scientists are now telling us that unless we initiate radical changes in our way of life within the next few decades, we will see the start of environmental processes that will run out of our control and will render much of the Earth uninhabitable and cause much of life on Earth to vanish. This danger is so great that half-measures will accomplish little or nothing. We have no choice: our only hope lies in creating an entirely New Society.

The elements of this New Society are:

- **Chapters.** The New Society is divided into chapters, each of which consists of a small enough number of people to make a close relationship among them possible.
- **Spiritual growth.** Members of each chapter operate as a Small Faith Community which nurtures their understanding of and commitment to their core beliefs and values.
- **Understanding of the workings of society.** Members utilize appropriate processes to obtain a valid understanding of the major economic, political and financial facets of society that affect everyone.
- **Political democracy.** All members have an equal share in decision-making regarding the regulations that govern the life of the Society, and everyone is encouraged to participate in the broader political society, in order to bring its structure and activities ever closer to those of the New Society.
- **Economic democracy.** To the extent that resources permit, members establish manufacturing and service-providing cooperatives, modeled on the worker-owned cooperatives centered in Mondragon, Spain, begun in 1956 by a Spanish priest with only 5 workers, but now having a workforce of over 35,000. Until the transition from autocratic corporations to democratically-run, worker-owned cooperatives is completed, members use conventional means to bring greater justice to the operations of the major corporations that currently run the world.

Continued on page 25



**A New Society** (continued from page 24)

- **Possession of the basic necessities of life by all members of the New Society.** All share their resources sufficiently to ensure that every member obtains adequate housing, food, health care, education, economic security, transportation, community life, recreation and a safe environment.
- **Respect and care for the environment.** Members seek to restore the environment, with a strong emphasis on mitigating the present and future effects of Climate Change.
- **Cooperation with others.** Members work with any and all groups in society that operate according to their basic beliefs and values and that work to achieve our objectives.
- **The primary mission of the New Society.** Members work to inform the rest of the world about Climate Change and to assist people to act effectively to mitigate its effects. Each chapter, however, may have additional focuses besides Climate Change, such as economic injustice or the war in Iraq or the lack or political reform.

If you are interested in learning more about the New Society, contact us at any time. We can provide ample documentation to support the above.



**Grassroots Coalition for Environmental & Economic Justice**  
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**With Peace, from Ellen Barfield**

I am 51 years old and proud of it. Perhaps it is impolite to ask, but I think the cult of youth and youthfulness is silly and oppressive. I have earned my gray hairs and stiff joints!

How many protests have I marched in, spoken at, helped organize? That would be quite hard to say. Many hundreds at least, likely thousands. Since 1985, when I attended my first demo, an anti-nuclear weapons peace camp, or since 1988 when I became a full-time peace and justice activist. Over 20 years, one a week would total approximately 1000, and only one a week would be a scant count, especially if you include regular vigils, and teach-in type events, providing radical info but not directly acting on the issue.

Except for one year as the paid manager of the *Peace Farm* across from the Pantex Nuclear Weapons Plant outside Amarillo, TX, it has all been volunteer work. I have had the tremendous good fortune to have met my second husband Lawrence Egbert in the *Red River Peace Network* in Texas. As a now mostly-retired physician, his income and retirement funds have been sufficient to support both our activist habits!

There are so many things in the world that need fixing, and so many standard jobs in our wasteful violent culture are so pointless or downright damaging, that I am very glad to be out of the labor market. And as an over 50 woman with no employment history for many years, I am probably pretty much unemployable anyway.

The primary issues of my activism have been resisting nuclear weapons, and war in general, and of course specific wars-Gulf War, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, racism, the environment, plus countless other causes. I lost count of exact numbers of arrests long ago. I had to do a compilation of all arrests from 1994 to 2004 for the city of New York in their deposition-taking regarding the activist lawsuit challenging the mass arrests and abusive conditions at the *Republican National Convention* in 2004, and that total was 42, so I would assume about twice that for my life total so far.

I have served on many national and local boards of directors. Currently, I am on the national *Veterans for Peace* and *War Resisters League* boards, and still on national committees of the *School of the Americas Watch* and *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* after recent board service.

Veterans for Peace is a particularly important part of my activism. A military veteran has an important role to play in influencing public opinion on war. Many people are surprised to meet veterans who oppose war, the erroneous assumption being that former warriors still support war making. In fact, being confronted with the reality of killing under orders becomes a turning point toward serious questioning of authority for many.

Peace, Ellen

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## Grassroots Power

### Community-Supported Agriculture Serves As Counterexample to Market Demands Of Globalization

(*University of Chicago Press Journal via Science Daily August 9, 2007*)—A compelling new paper from the August issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research* explores the community-supported agriculture movement and its survival in the face of economic globalization. Organic food was once an economic haven for small farms who distributed their goods predominantly through local channels such as farmers' markets and food co-ops.

### M.T.A. Makes Deal for Cellphones in Stations

by William Neuman, excerpt

NEW YORK CITY, New York (*The New York Times*, September 20, 2007)—All 277 underground stations in the subway system are to be wired for cellphone use, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced yesterday. But riders may have to talk fast, because the subway tunnels will not be wired, out of consideration for riders who do not want to be stuck in a subway car full of chattering cellphone users. The cellphone network will start in six downtown Manhattan stations in two years. Once it is shown to be working properly, Transit Wireless will have four more years to outfit the rest of the underground stations.

### Germany Warns Citizens to Avoid Using Wi-Fi

(excerpt)

(*The Independent on Sunday* September 9, 2007)—People should avoid using Wi-Fi wherever possible because of the risks it may pose to health, the German government has said. Its surprise ruling--the most damning made by any government on the fast-growing technology--will shake the industry and British ministers, and vindicates the questions that *The Independent on Sunday* has been raising for the past four months.

And Germany's official radiation protection body also advises its citizens to use landlines instead of mobile phones, and warns of "electrosmog" from a wide range of other everyday products, from baby monitors to electric blankets.

The German government's ruling--which contrasts sharply with the unquestioning promotion of the technology by British officials--was made in response to a series of questions by Green members of the Bundestag, Germany's parliament.

### European Union Watchdog Calls for Urgent Action on Wi-Fi Radiation

by Geoffrey Lean, excerpt

(*The Independent on Sunday* September 16, 2007)--Europe's top environmental watchdog is calling for immediate action to reduce exposure to radiation from Wi-Fi, mobile phones and their masts. It suggests that delay could lead to a health crisis similar to those caused by asbestos, smoking and lead in petrol.

The warning, from the EU's European Environment Agency (EEA) follows an international scientific review which concluded that safety limits set for the radiation are "thousands of times too lenient," and an official British report last week which concluded that it could not rule out the development of cancers from using mobile phones.

Professor Jacqueline McGlade, the EEA's executive director, said yesterday, "Recent research and reviews on the long-term effects of radiations from mobile telecommunications suggest that it would be prudent for health authorities to recommend actions to reduce exposures, especially to vulnerable groups, such as children."

### U.S. Court Backs States' Measures to Cut Emissions

by Felicity Barringer

BURLINGTON, Vermont (*The New York Times* September 13, 2007)--A federal judge in Vermont gave the first legal endorsement yesterday to rules in California, being copied in 13 other states, that intend to reduce greenhouse gases emitted by automobiles and light trucks.

Ruling in a lawsuit against Vermont's standards on those heat-trapping gases, the judge, William K. Sessions III, rejected a variety of challenges from auto manufacturers, including their contention that the states were usurping federal authority. The ruling follows a decision by the United States Supreme Court in April that the *Environmental Protection Agency* has the authority to regulate heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide as air pollutants. The ruling in Vermont explicitly endorses the idea that California has the right to set its own regulations on the gases, and that other states, like Vermont, have the right to follow its lead.

Judge Sessions ruled that the auto manufacturers had not proved their claims that compliance with the rules in Vermont — clones of the groundbreaking standards adopted in California — was not feasible. "Nor," he wrote of Vermont's regulatory framework, "have they demonstrated that it will limit consumer choice, create economic hardship for the automobile industry, cause significant job loss or undermine safety."

## Grassroots Power

### Juniata Signs Presidential Climate Commitment

In February, Tom Kepple, President of Juniata College, became one of the first 100 college presidents to sign the Presidents Climate Commitment. To date, 325 college and university presidents have signed. Under the terms of the commitment, Juniata will need to develop a plan to achieve climate neutrality. They completed an inventory of their greenhouse gas emissions at the end of the 2006 academic year and are developing specific plans to reduce their emissions. One of the significant projects will be the restoration of Founders Hall which was constructed in 1878-79 and housed the entire College community. For nearly a century, the building was the hub of Juniata, as students, faculty, and administration shared classrooms, dormitories, chapel, the library, and the cafeteria. The most recognizable and enduring symbol of Juniata, Founders remains the College's signature building. The Founders restoration will be a LEED certified project and will include a geothermal system for heating and air conditioning as well as many other environmentally friendly features.



Juniata is also pursuing grants for solar power and composting, and has significantly increased the amount of recycling on campus from 36,000 pounds through the first 6 months of 2006 to over 52,000 pounds over the first 6 months of 2007. Juniata has been purchasing 10% of their electric use from wind power for the last several years and is developing plans to increase that amount to 20% through reductions in consumption over the next several years.

In late September, Juniata will be hosting the first meeting of a consortium of schools that have signed the Presidents Climate Challenge. They will be working together to develop plans to achieve climate neutrality on each of their campuses. These schools include Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, Allegheny and Washington and Jefferson.

For more information about the Presidents Climate Commitment, go to <http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/>. For more information about Juniata's efforts to achieve Climate Neutrality, contact Rob Yelnosky, VP for Finance/Operations at 814-641-3707 or [yelnosr@juniata.edu](mailto:yelnosr@juniata.edu).

### The World's Fourth-Largest City Outlaws Billboards, Calls It 'Visual Pollution'

by David Evan Harris, *Adbusters* (*alternet.org* August 21, 2007)--In 2007, the world's fourth-largest metropolis and Brazil's most important city, São Paulo, became the first city outside of the communist world to put into effect a radical, near-complete ban on outdoor advertising. Known on one hand for being the country's slick commercial capital and on the other for its extreme gang violence and crushing poverty, São Paulo's "Lei Cidade Limpa" or Clean City Law was an unexpected success, owing largely to the singular determination of the city's conservative mayor, Gilberto Kassab.

As the driving force behind the measure, mayor Kassab quelled the rebellion from the advertising industry with the help of key allies amongst the city's elite. On many occasions, Kassab made the point that he has nothing against advertising in and of itself, but rather with its excess. He explained, "The Clean City Law came from a necessity to combat pollution ... pollution of water, sound, air, and the visual. We decided that we should start combating pollution with the most conspicuous sector -- visual pollution."

Since then, billboards, outdoor video screens and ads on buses have been eliminated at breakneck speed. Even pamphleteering in public spaces has been made illegal, and strict new regulations have drastically reduced the allowable size of storefront signage. Nearly \$8 million in fines were issued to cleanse São Paulo of the blight on its landscape.

### Biologists Bring Puffins Back to Maine

**EASTERN EGG ROCK, Maine** (*Environmental News Network* August 27, 2007) --It doesn't seem to matter to one puffin waddling over to join another of the birds that his chosen companion is a one-legged, wooden decoy. Puffins love company.

The deception is one of the techniques that Stephen Kress has used to lure the colorful birds back to this rocky island. "I used an old hunter's trick, something that hadn't been done with seabirds before," Kress, director of the National Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program, whispers as he watches from a blind about 20 yards away.

Puffins, which resemble half-pint penguins except that they can fly, were heavily hunted along the Maine coast for their meat and feathers, and by 1901 only one pair remained, researchers said. They remained plentiful elsewhere, however, and Kress set out three decades ago to bring them back to Maine's islands, on the southern end of their range around the North Atlantic.

In 1973, with backing from the National Audubon Society and help from the Canadian Wildlife Service, Kress began transplanting 2-week-old puffin chicks from Great Island off Newfoundland, 1,000 miles to the northeast. These days there are 90 nesting pairs on Eastern Egg, among more than 700 nesting pairs on four Maine islands, Kress said.



## Grassroots Power

### New Crop of Farmers Takes to the Fields

by Joann Loviglio, Associated Press

PERKASIE, Pennsylvania (*Environmental News Network* August 27, 2007)--Tom Murtha studied English at Penn. Tricia Borneman majored in journalism at Shippensburg University. Like most college graduates, they finished school with a good idea of where they wanted their career paths to lead. But unlike most, it was a dirt path.



So on a recent summer day, instead of working in an air-conditioned office building 40 miles away in Philadelphia, the pair were tending to kale, collard greens and broccoli in Bucks County. "It's been so dry, we're really hoping for rain soon," said Ms. Borneman, squinting in the hot afternoon sun under a straw hat, weeding impossibly straight green rows with a long-handled stirrup hoe. Several yards away, Mr. Murtha tilled new rows for more plantings on a temperamental red tractor. And before dusk, there would be drip tape to unroll for irrigating the soil, and yellow squash to harvest in an adjacent plot.

"We went to college, we were on track to have some sort of professional careers, but it just didn't resonate," Mr. Murtha said. "The thing about farming is it engages you on all levels, which doesn't happen with a lot of jobs." Mr. Murtha, 34, and Ms. Borneman, 32, are among a new crop of farmers sprouting up around the country who weren't raised on farms, have college degrees, and in some cases have left other careers behind. "Agriculture has been so subsidized, corporatized and globalized," Mr. Murtha said. "There's definitely an interest and desire for younger folks to get involved in agriculture."

### Organic Farming More Productive Than Traditional Methods

(Organic Trade Association newsletter, Summer 2007)--

Organic farming can yield up to three times as much food as conventional farming on the same amount of land, according to researchers from the University of Michigan. In addition to equal or greater yields, the authors found those yields could be accomplished using existing quantities of organic fertilizers and without putting more farmland into production. Their article, entitled "Organic agriculture and the global food supply," appears in *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* (2007).

### New York State Issues Subpoenas to 5 Companies Building Coal-Fired Power Plants

by Felicity Barringer and Danny Hakim

ALBANY, New York (*The New York Times* September 16, 2007)—The attorney general of New York has opened an investigation of five large energy companies, questioning whether their plans to build coal-fired power plants pose undisclosed financial risks that their investors should know about... The companies, which have projects in various states, are AES Corporation, Dominion, Dynegy, Peabody Energy and Xcel Energy.

It is rare, if not unique, for a securities law to be used for an environmental purpose, in this case the fight against new coal-fired power plants. The plants' main emission, carbon dioxide, has been linked by scientists to global warming. In letters accompanying the subpoenas, the attorney general's office asked whether investors received adequate information about the potential financial liabilities of carbon dioxide emissions...

"Selective disclosure of favorable information or omission of unfavorable information concerning climate change is misleading," the letters said.

