

RAISE THE STAKES

Number 29

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\$4

A Deep (ecology) Breath Before 2000

Raise The Stakes Anthology I

*Beyond
Environmentalism*

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Cultural Critiques

•
Issues/Insights

•
Life-Place Education

•
*Organizing
Bioregional Groups*

**Celebrating
20 Years of
Raise The
Stakes!**



WOMAN AND DEER-SPIRIT DANCING / LITHOGRAPH BY DANIEL O. STOLPE

One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

New Year's celebrations are over, but it's not back to business as usual for another year. The end of the millennium has become impossible to ignore. From glossy-eyed Aquarian-Agers to apocalyptic fundamentalists, from flee-to-the-hills Y2K paranoiacs to socialites fretting over which "historic" party to go to, millennial obsession runs rampant. The peculiar weight we give to this circumstance is all in our minds. Consider that probably half the people on the planet don't even follow the Gregorian calendar. Even so, anticipation can have its positive side. The year 2000 has symbolized "the future" and has always seemed so far away, but now it's here, and it's forcing us to think more seriously about change.

What does bioregionalism have to add to this dialogue? In its commitment to articulating a boldly holistic, far-seeing, integrative, and grounded response to the contemporary ecological predicament, it is particularly relevant. Bioregionalism has always been about making connections—with the particularity of landscape, the web of interrelationships, the responsibility of community, and the challenge of real local empowerment. It is about roots and continuity. So where has bioregionalism been, and where is it going? What has it been trying to tear down, and what has it been building?

In celebration of twenty years of *Raise the Stakes*, Planet Drum has taken a moment to pause and look back. This is the first of two anthology issues that will present the best of the articles from *RTS* 1-28. Several past issues are out of print, and this is a chance to unearth some hidden jewels.

The thread begins with "Soft Borders," the opening statement of the first issue of *RTS*. It is followed by five sections, each exploring a particular weave in the tapestry of life-place thought and action.

To some, bioregional consciousness is considered to be a part of what is commonly referred to as "the environmental movement." But this is far from being wholly accurate. Indeed it has, to a large degree, defined itself by what sets it apart from mainstream environmentalism. In *Beyond Environmentalism*, two articles explore this tension. Peter Berg's "More Than Just Saving What's Left" outlines a meaningful alter-

native. Then, "Decolonizing the Language of the Ecology Movement" challenges the notion of "whites only."

The rift between modern society and nature runs deep, so effective activism must reach below the political surface into the realm of culture. **Cultural Critiques** offers two examples of this ongoing inquiry. "Media and Monoculture: An Interview with Jerry Mander" is an exposé of the role of television in our lives. And "Kill the Cowboy" integrates mythology and reality in an analysis of the culture of the American West.

Opposition to centralized political structures has always been integral to bioregionalism, and we have included three representative articles in **Issues/Insights**. Important French thinker Jaques Ellul treats the issue of "Decentralism," and the question of borders is considered in "On Bioregional Boundaries." Finally, "Migratory Routes: Pathways for Interconnectedness" makes a unique proposal for the establishment of bioregional connections that transcend national limits.

The next section addresses the important area of **Life-Place Education**. "Remembering the Instructions of the Land" synthesizes geography, economics, culture, and ecology to create a short guide for learning to reinhabit a place. And "Getting Outside" is a direct testament to the richness of being alive.

Finally, how can communities empower themselves? We end with **Organizing Bioregional Groups**, a reflection on what works and what doesn't by two seasoned activists. First, Beatrice Briggs shares her experiences with Chicago's Wild Onion Alliance in "Organizing in an Urban Bioregion." Then, David Haenke outlines the process of "Organizing Your Own Bioregional Congress."

There is more to come—the next issue of *RTS*, *Anthology II*, will include *Reinhabiting Cities*, *Bioregional Agriculture*, *The Water Imperative*, and *Around the Planet*. In the meantime, we hope you find this *Raise the Stakes* retrospective enjoyable and useful for redirecting discussions of the next millennium from anxiety and hype toward beneficial change.

by Ross Robertson



Soft Borders

RTS I, Fall 1979

Humankind. Our identity as a *species* sharing life on this planet is emerging to break through the political concrete and cultural artifacture of the machine-dominated Age of Production.

We are becoming the peoples of the planet.

Our lives are growing more directly related to each other and to the life of the planet itself.

What "freedom" meant in the 18th century and what "social justice" meant after then has become for us now the spirit of interdependence.

RAISE THE STAKES! will present ideas and information from the opening terrain of humankind identity.

More Than Just Saving What's Left

by Peter Berg

RTS 8, Fall 1983

Anyone who has seen miles of elaborately constructed highway closed by a decontamination crew in full protective gear attempting to clean up a chemical spill, or heard of an entire town being evacuated because of a similar calamity—and nearly everyone has by now—can sense that environmental disruptions aren't just "issues" anymore. They are widespread facts of life that are approaching plague proportions. A deep civilization crisis is underway, one that can cause social suicide. Our greatest threats no longer come from natural disasters but from the means we use to subdue nature.

We need a positive politics that views the Late Industrial crisis as a transition toward a society that is based *in* rather than *on top of* life. There needs to be a full pronouncement of values and thorough implementation of social, economic, technological, and cultural practices that affirm the natural basis of the human species in life-sustaining processes of the planetary biosphere.

Classic environmentalism has bred a peculiar negative political malaise among its adherents. Alerted to fresh horrors almost daily, they research the extent of each new life-threatening situation, rush to protest it, and campaign exhaustively to prevent a future occurrence. It's a valuable service, of course, but imagine a hospital that consists only of an emergency room. No maternity care, no pediatric clinic, no promising therapy: just mangled trauma cases. Many of them are lost or drag on in wilting protraction, and if a few are saved there are always more than can be handled jamming through the door. Rescuing the environment has become like running a battlefield aid station in a war against a killing machine that operates just beyond reach, and that shifts its ground after each seeming defeat. No one can doubt the moral basis of environmentalism, but the essentially defensive terms of its endless struggle mitigate against ever stopping the slaughter. Environmentalists have found themselves in the position of knowing how bad things are but are only capable of making a deal.

Why hasn't there been a more positive political approach to valuing the earth and reverencing life?

One reason is that shocked bewilderment at the massive failures of Late Industrial society is still mounting. Our optimistic attempts to carry out beneficial activities, and our deliberate hope for the future, seem always subject to instant miniaturization by the next Late Industrial avalanche. Can growing a garden, for instance, actually deal with the problem of increasingly destructive and poisonous agribusiness? What are the future consequences of engineering food sources? Suppose nuclear power is finally shut down, what do we do with wastes that have already accumulated? How about other poisons that have been released and could eventually cripple the genetic basis for life? Once considered to be extremist questions about remote possibilities, now they can be heard in classrooms, workers meetings, supermarket waiting lines, and dinner conversations. Disillusionment and even panic will result unless they are seen as central issues in our lives.

Which leads to the main reason why people haven't been able to fully express their priorities for the fate of the human species and the planetary biosphere: the fact that political structures have become welded to the industrial direction of society. Everyone knows that clean water is necessary and that industrial processes inevitably pollute it, but there aren't effective political forums to establish local alternative ways to make a living. Nutritious food is necessary but there are no direct political means to implement organic permaculture policies. Fossil fuel dependency is a losing proposition and nuclear power is a truly dead end, but the established political apparatus rejects strong renewable energy programs as being unrealistic.

It's time to develop the political means for directing society toward restoring and maintaining the natural systems that ultimately support all life. *Bioregions* are the natural locales in which everyone lives. *Reinhabitation* of bioregions, creating

adaptive cultures that follow the unique characteristics of climate, watersheds, soils, land forms, and the native plants and animals that define these places, is the appropriate direction for a transition from Late Industrial society. Environmentalism, at best, reaches its zenith in a standoff. It's time to shift from just saving what's left and begin to assert bioregional programs for reinhabitation.

The first step is to unmask Late Industrial wrappings from issues to show how they are actually based on bioregional realities. "Jobs versus environment" is a typical disguise. Who really wants to work in an industry that will cause one's own death or distribute lethal consequences to others? When workers or managers defend these industries they aren't defining jobs as employment in something they necessarily want to do, they're talking about getting an income to pay their bills. All industries depend, however, on some natural characteristics of the places where they are located. It may be direct exploitation as in the case of mining, or indirect dependency as when a favorable climate or rich agricultural base permits a density of population that can be drawn into high technology or service industries. They all must eventually deal with the consequences of their operations on natural systems: minerals become harder to find so strip-mining craters begin to diminish Allegheny Mountains or High Plains farmland; Los Angeles becomes too smog-shrouded for its automobile-bound population to endure; the computer boom almost instantly overcrowds the natural confines of Silicon Valley. A political response to continuously denuding and fouling life-places is to insist on employment that *recreates* rather than destroys the natural wholeness that invited inhabitation in the first place.

Once issues are read back through to their roots in the characteristics of a bioregion, a reinhabitory political program can begin to take shape. For instance, agricultural and natural resources policies can obviously be linked to restoring and maintaining watersheds, soils, and native plants and animals. Energy sources should be those that are naturally available on a renewable basis in each life-place, and both distribution systems and uses for energy should be scaled in ways that don't displace natural systems. Community development in all its aspects from economic activities and housing to social services and transportation should be aimed toward bioregional self-reliance. Education and cultural activities should teach and celebrate the interdependence of human beings with other forms of life.

There are four different inhabitory zones within every bioregion and each of these warrants a distinct focus for reinhabitation:

CITIES need to undertake programs that reduce their drain on bioregion-wide resources while welcoming back a more natural presence. Green City platforms can, for example, promote neighborhood self-reliance through assisting block-size cooperatives to undertake a range of new activities: retrofitting houses for renewable energy; tilling community gardens; arranging city/country work and recreation exchanges. They could demand new employment in everything from operating small-scale recycling centers to producing goods for civic and

neighborhood use from recycled materials. Most of the street space now occupied by parked cars could be vacated by operating neighborhood-based transportation systems to complement mass transit, and city soil could then be uncovered from asphalt to grow food or support wild corridors of native vegetation.

SUBURBS can adopt Green City proposals and also restore an agricultural presence on the land they occupy by encouraging food production where there are now lawns, and by nourishing it with recycled household water and wastes.

RURAL AREAS are the working life-support foundations for most of a bioregion's population. They urgently require help to remove exploitation threats and to nurture sustainable practices. Country-based information systems that link into urban media should be developed to create greater awareness of an overall bioregional identity. Rural programs can also demand employment of local people as bioregional stewards to undertake restoration and maintenance projects, and as bioregional guides to educate vacationers and oversee their participation in those projects.

WILDERNESS is the enduring source of a bioregion's spirit and regenerative power. It must be maintained for its own sake and as a reservoir for reaffirming natural systems through reinhabitation. Access to wilderness should become a public right on the same level as learning to read and write, with equipment provided freely and instruction carried out by those who can share their respect for wild places.

Constituencies for bioregional programs can be assembled around position statements of short-term and long-term goals that are appropriate to areas of inhabitation. Green City statements would, for example, oppose high-rise condominium apartment construction as a short-term goal and demand decentralized renewable energy housing in the long-term. Suburban groups would block further development of nearby farmland and also insist on water and waste recycling systems for the future. Rural groups would stand against present pesticide and herbicide spraying while proposing support for long-term permaculture and natural resources enhancement projects. Wilderness groups can immediately advocate intensified protection for wild places and future redirection of policies away from tourism and toward education.

Naturally bordered locales provide the best organizational basis for these constituencies; creek watersheds, river valleys, plains, mountain ranges, or estuarial areas. An initial strategy can be to present a statement of positions on issues for endorsement by town councils and candidates for local, county, state, and even federal offices. Eventual recognition of naturally determined districts within larger bioregional political boundaries would continuously be sought as a long-range goal.

Everyone lives within some bioregion, so everyone can gain from participation in the formation of a political platform that represents their life-place. What are the planks for your area? Find out and begin recovering autonomy to lead a reinhabitory life.



ANN BARNARD

Decolonizing the Language of the Ecology Movement

by Richard Grow

RTS 15, Fall 1989

With 1992 drawing near, it is refreshing to hear a few voices being raised that challenge the canonization of Europe's lost son, Chris Columbus. There is a growing understanding that "American History" as taught to our children should reflect the facts that (1.) Columbus didn't know where he was, (2.) he didn't "discover" any place that hadn't already been inhabited for several millennia and (3.) his arrival marked the beginning of an unprecedented ecological onslaught.

Furthermore, it is disheartening to see the spirit of Columbus reflected in so many of the writings and utterances of what might be referred to, for lack of a better term, as the ecology movement. Too much of the writing and speaking found within ecologically-oriented media and gatherings reflects an outlook which is quite unecological and white supremacist, or to put it a bit less provocatively, Euro-centric.

Given that the movement, at least as covered and reflected in the media, is overwhelmingly made up of white (and disproportionately male) voices, this is perhaps not too surprising. One effect of this, however, has been the truncation of the movement—perpetuating its isolation from people of color and indigenous people around the world.

So the consequences are serious, but what is it in the language and expression of the movement which offends? First we'll name some of the tendencies, and then look at the destruction they cause.

GRAMMAR FOR ECOLOGISTS

1. *Sloppy use of pronouns, especially "we."* Statements which start with "if we are to survive, we must..." are usually describing changes which must be made by modern, industrialized, predominantly white, culture. Most of these statements would sound absurd if they were made, for instance, to a South American Indian who for the past 20 years has been defending his homelands, which we (?) refer to as "rainforests." Is the ecology movement just a bunch of industrialized white people talking to each other? And if it's not, then who is this "we" that keeps showing up in the writings of the movement?

2. *White superlatives.* A recent (and otherwise excellent) article in *Raise the Stakes* (RTS) named Gregory Bateson as "the most important thinker of the entire century." Written off in such a statement are all the "thinkers" who don't speak (or haven't been translated into) the author's language, and all the members of cultures who haven't been, or have been unwilling to be, converted (reduced?) to the written word. Who is missed: Roberta Blackgoat for one, A Diné (Navajo) elder from Big Mountain, some of whose very profound thoughts just won't translate into English. What is lost? Roberta Blackgoat's life has been consecrated to living in harmony with the earth, and for the past 15 years has been oriented almost entirely to leading the indigenous resistance to the U.S. government's genocidal attempt to remove her and 20,000 of her Diné Nation relations from the Black Mesa.

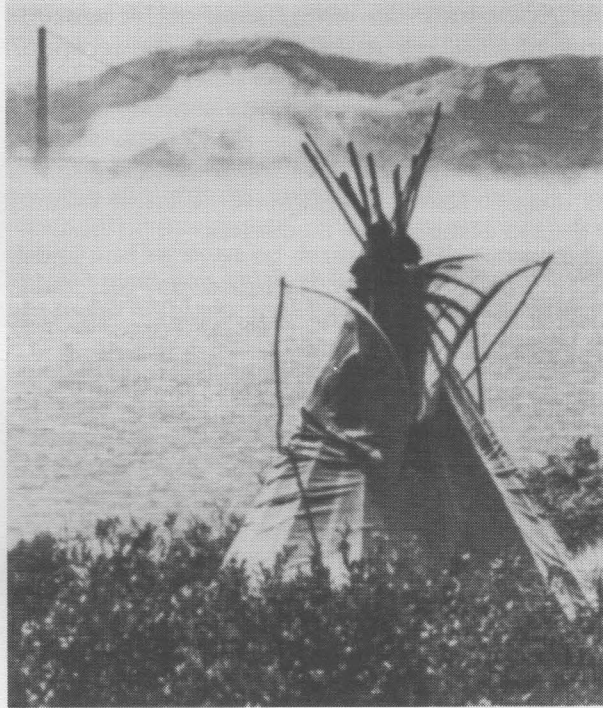
The point is this: most of those on the front lines of the actual resistance to the industrially driven destruction of the earth do not speak English and have never been recorded, yet they are undoubtedly some of the "most important thinkers of this entire century." They are also, more often than not, in direct contrast to those cited superlatively, non-white.

3. *Belabored use of white citations.* The author who cited Bateson in RTS was trying to make a point about Bateson's "discovery" that ritual is essential. Perhaps she appealed to our (whose?) inclination to believe her if she cited such authorities as Bateson and Lorenz ("founder of the entire study of human behavior"). Why not Chief Seattle? Why is it so predictable that the cited authorities will be of European descent?

The basic texts of nouveau "Deep Ecology" (as well as some of the paeans to the bioregional and other action-oriented factions of the ecology movement) reach mightily to assure us that Heidegger, Huxley, Saint Francis, the Greeks, Jeffers, and Brower shared the ecological vision too. There would seem to be some fairly obvious presumptions about who such assurances are aimed at, and who would be impressed by such assurances.

Or in citing these authorities, do the writers and "thinkers" actually believe that Deep Ecology was discovered by white folks? More directly, is it that the authors are racist themselves, or are they simply appealing to our (whose?) racism?

4. *The "disappearing race" presumption.* While a closer (and more tedious) search through these writings reveals that the authors do give some credit to "primal (or native) peoples," obviously these are



Tipi on Alcatraz during Indians of All Tribes occupation.

lesser or somewhat preliminary beings. An analysis of the racial and cultural arrogance required to even use such an expression is beyond the scope of this article.

It is also notable that, almost without exception, these references describe Native Americans *only in the past tense*. "Among such nature-based people there was no separation..." and so on. Thus are Native Americans reduced to (now deceased) references and footnotes, cited in support of white theoreticians, who ignore the fact that these "primal peoples" are still with us, still vital, and have not converted to the new industrial megastate religion.

5. *White people discovered the earth.* This is basically the age-old presumption of white supremacy, which shows up in more forms than can be enumerated here, but in general terms is present whenever somebody proclaims yet another "new" discovery by the ecology movement. A patent office for paradigms might be worthwhile if it would put a halt to various white folks announcing every year or so that they had discovered a new one.

Expressions such as "new paradigm," "new breed of ecologists," and "new perspectives" would be simply embarrassing for their inaccuracy, arrogance and naïveté if they weren't so deadly. All of the tendencies described before come together here. All of them liquidate the centuries-old, but continuing, ecological struggles by land-based peoples all over the world.

But what's the big deal? So what if the environmental media is somewhat ethnocentric, what's the damage beyond some hurt feelings? Aren't we all working for the same thing anyway? No. As Sitting Bull said, "the love of possession is a disease with them."

THE MANIFEST DESTINY OF THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

Finally, it is the use, or even the implication, of the word "new" that offends, because to call these concepts, or even the movement new is neither accurate nor wholistic—it is utterly linear, incredibly arrogant and definitely racist. To use language in these ways, to make the presumptions made in such statements, is a privilege available only to white people. And exercising the privilege requires buying into a particular mentality and vision. This is where we come back to Columbus and the real ecological cost of privilege.

Quite literally, the "environmental movement" is as old as the hills, or at least as the people who have lived in them and understood their relationship to them. The vision of the indigenous peoples, of their own existence on the face of the earth, is inherently ecological and utterly irreconcilable with the industrial exploitative vision. In fact their

removal from their homelands is the predominant human measure of the Industrial Era.

How much damage to the ecology of North America flows directly out of a mentality which continually claims discovery and authorship at the expense of the existence of the culture and knowledge which already occupied the territory? Which claims the right to impose its vision regardless of impact? Which proclaims a boundary between old and new, known and unknown, and then claims to have stepped across it in the name of "discovery" (raise the flag)?

Isn't it the same mentality which persistently ignores and denies knowledge of appropriate ways of living on the earth? Denies the knowledge which has been gathered by prior (and continuing) inhabitants of the place? Denies knowledge of right relationship, defends that denial at all costs and proceeds, therefore, to participate in warfare across the "borders," in the forms of ecocide and genocide?

There is a name for the presumption which has claimed, since Columbus and the Conquest, the right to liquidate the pre-existing peoples, cultures, philosophies, and knowledge, and it is Manifest Destiny. At its roots, Manifest Destiny is a vision and an ideology, even though the costs are quite material and bloody. M.D. is quite literally an outgrowth and accoutrement of the Conquest, a projection (penetration) of the Inquisition into the "other" side of the world.

Of all the movements, one might think the ecology movement might be the most sensitive to the arrogance of the European vision for the Americas as introduced to these lands by Columbus. Yet so many of the expoundings of the movement are completely ahistorical or, at best, reflective of an incredibly truncated sense of history.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Environmental truths seem to have become abstractions, to be "discovered" independent of place or context. Not true. Just as a real ecological vision will not separate people from the natural world, it also will not divorce the "natural" environment and its lessons from culture and history. All learning and knowledge has a place and context—it is not there for the "taking" anymore than "America" was in 1492.

While it is true that ideas cannot be owned, they do have a context and heritage. Hence the very foundation of ecological philosophy in the Americas must take as its starting point the accumulated wisdom of the natives of these lands. It is these people whose philosophies, languages and spirituality have been adapted to the demands of the land over the past millennia. And it is these people who have been all but (but not) exterminated under the heels of Manifest Destiny and its presumption.

So there may be some sensitivity on the part of people of color whose land and labor have already been expropriated when they see their philosophy and spirituality lifted and claimed, owned, by white folks. What would be lost if white writers gave acknowledgment where it is due by checking the genealogy of certain ideas? What would be gained would be integrity, the pursuit of which might give those of us of European descent some hope of understanding our own history and what we are doing in the Americas, what our place is here.

There are writers, white writers, who have managed consistently to write about and describe the historical and ecological relationship between the races and cultures of the Americas with accuracy and integrity: Wendell Berry, Gary Snyder and Malcolm Margolin, just to name a few. In their use of the language, these people are not only articulate, but also scrupulously accurate in attribution of ideas and are selfless of any sense of ownership or discovery other than the wonderful sense of discovery of historical complexity.

The problem of Columbus then is the tendency towards hegemony and predomination. What is most troubling about the ravings of the spokespeople for the ecology movement is the ambition and greed of its reach, its willingness to ignore, deny or obliterate "other" visions and claim to be the best and the brightest. This is the spirit of Manifest Destiny at core, and some of "us" find it alarming. A final offered observation (think it through for yourself) is that it is this exclusionary and supremacist tone which has caused the "environmental" and "green" movement itself to remain predominantly white and, some would say, exclusionary.

MEDIA AND MONOCULTURE:

An Interview with Jerry Mander

by Michael Helm

RTS 4, Winter 1982

Michael Helm: Marshall McLuhan talked about the creation of a kind of electronic global village in which everybody gets the same basic message and therefore has the same kind of consciousness. Do you basically agree with McLuhan in terms of his analysis?

Jerry Mander: I agree with McLuhan to the extent that he said that the world is increasingly beating to the same beat, that people in disparate cultures are now beating to the same beat. He called that tribal, and he called that a global village. I think those words are really wrong, because tribal implies a scale in which a community is unified in its *experience* as well as its information, in terms of its everyday life. It's an integrated life. The tribal village concept is that people live where they are, engaged in activities that are relevant to the place where they are. That they can affect the circumstances of their lives and know all the people in their own community. There's a sense of solidarity around that.

Now, with electronic media, we get everybody vibrating with the same information beat and the same rhythm, but it's based upon information that comes from someplace where people are not. The rhythm is a rhythm which people don't relate to in their immediate existence.

I think the problem with McLuhan is that he didn't have a political perspective to apply. He never made a judgment about any of the things that he was saying. I think that, if you're going to talk about the medium being the message, then you've got to start talking about the *consequence* of that. About what that actually means in terms of people's experience with their lives.

MH: McLuhan talked about print as being "linear" and television being "multi-dimensional." Somehow linear was bad and multi-dimensional was good for him.

JM: That's a confusion again. Because print is linear in the sense that it organizes information, one thought behind the other, that's the way print has to go. You can only do one word at a time, so it's one thought behind the other, so it's linear. Television is non-linear because the information is visual, that is to say you get the information subjectively and you don't have to get the thought to get the information. You get the picture and therefore you've got the information. You get the information even if you disagree with the words or even if the words are foolish and silly. You get hit with information in a subjective realm when it goes into your lower brain. It's experienced as dream information practically. So McLuhan was right to define one as linear and the other as non-linear. But it's not better. Media which is linear just creates a certain mode of understanding; media which is non-linear basically amounts to an implantation system. The images go in, they then remain in permanently, they become your image pool and you slowly turn into the images that you're given. What I'm saying is that McLuhan described the non-linear implantation as if it was creating people who could act in a more flexible creative way. That's what made him say it was good. But he failed to carry that definition all the way out. Because, in fact, the non-linear implantation creates passivity and flaked-out-ness. It creates non-involvement in the world, or a willingness to accept. It doesn't help the ability to *think* about the information that's just moved into you. So I think it's a negative when a mass medium has that quality operating rather than the linear which at least has cognition connected up with it.

MH: We have the sense of linear as being simple, and the non-linear, collage, visual image of television as being complex.

JM: It's complex to the *maker* of the image. It doesn't produce complex people is what I'm saying. The reception of television images has the effect of pacifying and deadening the mind of the receiver. The person who gets the information that way and uses television in

that way, becomes a less alive, less creative, less complex person. Because, even though the information is complex from the point of view of the producer of the information, it goes in whole. Viewers don't go through any process at all to connect up that thing. It just goes in onto the tape, onto the mental tape. So, I think, it produces simpler, duller, coarser people. Even the so-called information is linear. It's only non-linear from the producer's point of view. It's actually linear in the reception when you think about it. It is a series of images that come as a stream. The stream has a chronology to it. One image comes before the next image. So, in a way, there's a certain linearity to the reception of the images. There's not, however, a lot of linearity in the fact of the images themselves.

MH: I think McLuhan was using non-linear in the sense that both place and time could be taken out of context.

JM: See, that's good conditioning for autocracy. That's what happened in 1984, which was the readjustment of place and time, which makes it possible to completely readjust reality. When people live in the world of television, they are living in a world in which there's an incredible intermix of time and place. The camera is indoors and then it's outdoors. It's forward in time, then backwards in time. There's fictional images, so-called real images, recreated dramas, and fantasy images. All of those being mixed in together and cut interactively. The actual natural time sequence is altered, with viewers living in basically a fictional world for an average of four hours a day. There is a complete arbitrariness of information, all the information is arbitrary and up for grabs. Whoever creates that information, you have no way of verifying, of verifying whether anything actually happened, or didn't happen. Since it all has happened someplace else, has been recreated, readjusted. So you're living in an abstract manipulated world. That aspect of non-linearity is a political problem, because it's making people crazy. "Sanity" becomes the ability to accept the readjustment of images in a way that couldn't be done in real life. And you're also in the hands of the creator, the recreator of all those images. Real life isn't like television. You're here in the room, it doesn't whirl around, you don't get intercut to outdoors, or you don't disappear and change your clothes, come back in the next frame. People are "asked" by television to live in an absolutely arbitrary world that has been completely readjusted and created. And the degree to which they are able to do that is the degree to which personal control over one's own experience and existence is diminished.

MH: What would you pose as a kind of alternative media that wouldn't be monocultural in its implications? What kinds of media would be genuinely tribal, in the sense of being based on experience that people themselves participated in and generated rather than consumed, the way it is now?

JM: That's a question of scale. Appropriate technologists and other people who deal with scale as a problem are quick to point out that in a world which is more democratic, in which people have more control over their lives, there will be inefficiencies if you try to organize things along smaller scale units. You may not want jet aircraft in a world where people are living in decentralized ways. You won't necessarily want people to *efficiently* move from here to there. That won't be the value that people will make the most important value. And the same goes for media. The media that will matter in a decentralized world with local control and sovereignty and so on, will be the media that keep you where you are and enhance your knowledge of the conditions where you are, which will probably be very little media indeed. People will get their information in a much more direct kind of way. Society would be scaled, in my ideal world, to a level in which people are involved in most of the important facts that relate to them. The only other fact that could really be important to them is if some other society is attacking them, perhaps. That information would be communicated very quickly among all the people in a small scale system. But mass media, which tends to act like an airplane, moving very fast from one part of the world to another part of the world, would be less valuable, less important, less significant. It would be discouraged in a system in which local control is what was really important.

You could still have exchange of information of whatever is valuable. But that probably ought to be done in a much slower, small scale, direct way. By people actually going other places in time to share whatever information is valuable. I wouldn't think, in any kind of ideal world, there would be any need for mass media at all. The concept of mass would be one which would be itself suspect. . . .

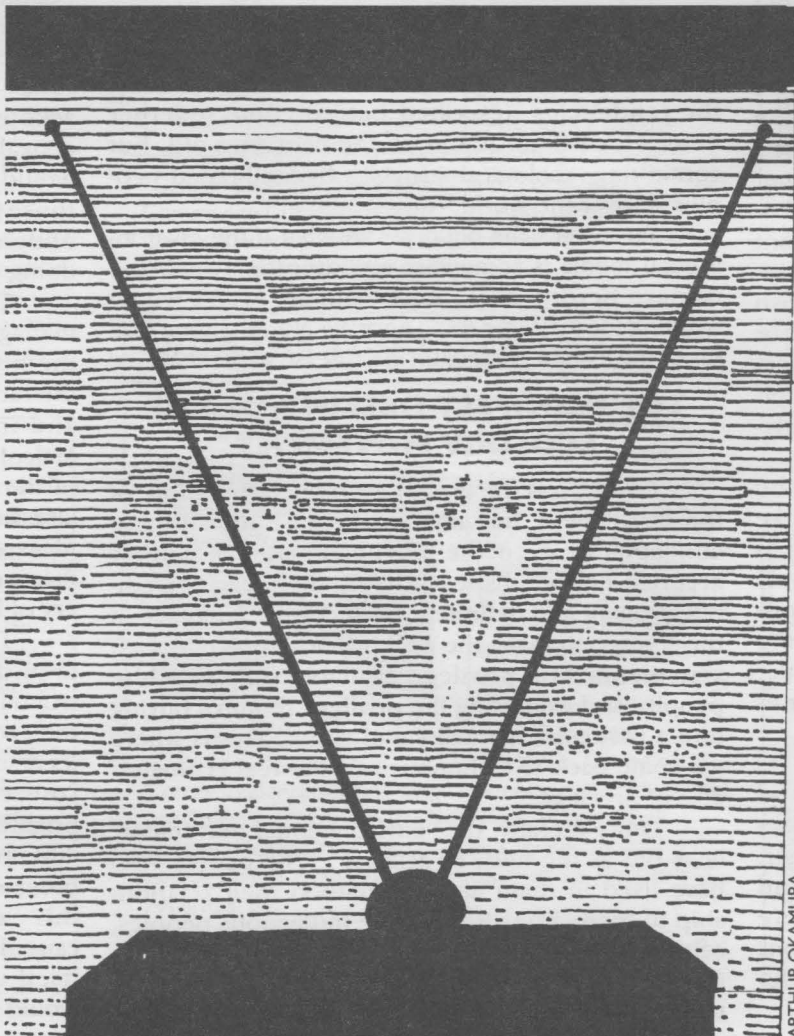
MH: What about the relationship between the syntax of various kinds of languages and technology? Do Indo-European derived and English languages lend themselves more easily to say television as a medium than what the Hopis speak?

JM: That sounds like something you ought to talk about, rather than me, because it's not something I've really investigated. But I do know that the kind of concepts that native people think are important are not the kind of concepts that you can translate through media very well.

MH: Can you give me some examples?

JM: Well, I can give examples from my own research having to do with interviews that I've done for this new book about native people and technological society that I'm working on now. I interviewed one young traditional Indian, a very important sort of activist leader in the east, for several days. I tape recorded the interviews for many many hours in which he talks about the problems of native people and the circumstances that they are having to fight with. He finally said, "Well, if you really want a deeper understanding of where we're really at, I have to go into some spiritual matters that we operate out of, that I operate out of. But to do that, you'll have to turn off your tape recorder." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well because you can't get it that way. When I start talking about that stuff, you're going to have to get it some other way. You're going to have to get it with your whole body and you'll just have to sit and listen to me, and whatever you get out of that is what you get. The tape recorder will miss it all." And I think there are many categories of information that are like that. Part of my television book was largely about what's lost by processing information through a machine in that way. The fundamental matters that are important to Indians are not translatable through media. So they and we are caught in the need to create a society in which media is

See Jerry Mander, page 13



ARTHUR OKAMURA

KILL THE COWBOY: A Battle of Mythology in the West

by Sharman Apt Russell

RTS 21, Spring/Summer 1993

We take a cup of coffee and move into the backyard. Perhaps we live in a town or city. Houses surround our house. We listen to the noises of other people: children not our own, dogs barking, the ubiquitous hum of cars. Our eyes seek the rim of distant mountains. These mountains are volcanic, rugged and bare-boned, gentled only with distance. Something in us flies out to them, subtle and fast, and something returns. For the rest of the day, we may never think of these mountains again. Still, we will seek them out tomorrow or the next day or much sooner. Something in us will fly out to them, and something will return.

Wherever we live, whoever we are, we respond to landscape. Inarticulate, slumbering, distilled into myth and image, the connections are there. The roots are historic and archetypic. We water a houseplant because a farmer lives inside us. We drive a coastal highway, and the sailor begins to sing. We take a walk; the explorer charts the course. We feel fearful when the plain is too vast or the mountains too high. We can feel liberated for the same reasons or for very different ones. Sometimes we look at land as we might admire a painting, moved by the beauty of shape and color. Often, we desire to enter that painting. We want to buy some of that land! We want to live in it! Myths gather in quickly now; images resonate. We seek, as human beings, to find our place in the natural world.

Here in the West, the dominant myth—of course—is the cowboy. Our love for cowboys, in the strict definition of the word, has little to do with reality. So few Americans want the lonely job of herding cattle or sheep at \$800 a month, plus room and board, that foreign workers are hired instead. When the term cowboy, however, is extended to include ranchers and the support system of ranchers—men and women who own feed stores, shoe horses, sell agricultural equipment, truck animals, own a steer, and “cowboy” on the weekend—then it embraces a lifestyle quite real in the small towns and countryside west of the Mississippi. Cowboys are the icon of the rural West. They have much to do with how all Americans think about the West. They have much to do with our cultural dreams of freedom and solitude, of riding a horse across golden fields as thunder clouds roll across the sky, of sleeping alone under the arc of the Milky Way, of waking to the clear light of dawn. In these dreams, we test ourselves on the anvil of self-sufficiency. In these dreams, we know the grandeur of an untrammeled continent. We are intimate with animals. We are intimate with the earth.

Working ranchers and working cowboys touch such heights every day. They do not analyze their connection to the land or, for that matter, to their own bodies. These connections are part of their daily routine. They have found a way to enter the extreme beauty and daunting open spaces of the American West: they work in it.

In the course of this job, they see sunrises, mud puddles, hoarfrost, willows, aspens, junipers, pines, rimrock, slickrock, ponds, stream banks, meadows, gullies, sunsets, and stars. They touch horsehair, cowhide, horns, bones, wounds, rope, and fence posts. Centaur-like, they can run thirty miles an hour, cover fifty miles a day, and have a great view all the while. They are physically alert and competent because they must be. They learn to endure. They live with their own company. They feel at home in the dark.

There are those who would argue that we need the cowboy now more than ever. We need every man, woman, and child who has found a way to slip into the land that rolls past our car windows. As our last frontier urbanizes, we need the psychic ballast of people who make their livelihood directly from soil and grass and water. We need people who understand, rather more than the rest of us, that our society—our houses, our VCRs, our cereal boxes—depends on a base of natural resources. We need cultural diversity. We need dreams.

Thirty years ago, that might have been a concluding sentence.

Today there is a lot more to say about the cowboy. Dreams, as we discover again and again, are half seduction. And the cowboy, the seductive cowboy, has his dark side.

For a growing number of critics, the cowboy's connection to the land is clearly skewed—in favor of production. Over seventy percent of the West is grazed. To the cowboy, this is good, for the land must be used. You can't eat scenery. Although he would not admit it, the cowboy's job is to transform the wild West into something that resembles, provisionally, a feedlot.

To this end, even the wild animals of the land become competition. Predators like bears, coyotes, mountain lions, wolves, and eagles eat cows and sheep, and so must be destroyed. Elk compete for grass. The tunnels of prairie dogs trip livestock. The cowboy is intimate with wildlife in the sense that he must control its activity and growth. He is intimate with the horses he breaks and castrates. He is intimate with the cows he protects in order to market. He is intimate with the land he seeks to tame. His—critics say—is the intimacy of oppression.

The West is still recovering from its own history. Some places will never recover. Today, the health of our rangeland is unclear.

But more and more people are questioning the grazing of cattle in the West. Suddenly, it is not the cowboy on the open plain who is so seductive, it is the open plain itself. We want, not the Marlboro man, but what he stands in front of. Many Western environmentalists have made this a priority, and a modern range war is being fought—in every national forest and on every piece of BLM land, in every small Western town, and in every Western city.

Perhaps, optimistically, our battle over the public lands includes this transition, from commodity to community.

It must as well include a healthy sense of doubt. What is the purpose of a national forest? What will it be in a hundred years? What defines a wilderness area? What does the word *community* mean?

We know much less than we thought we knew. We should be careful of knowing too much now.

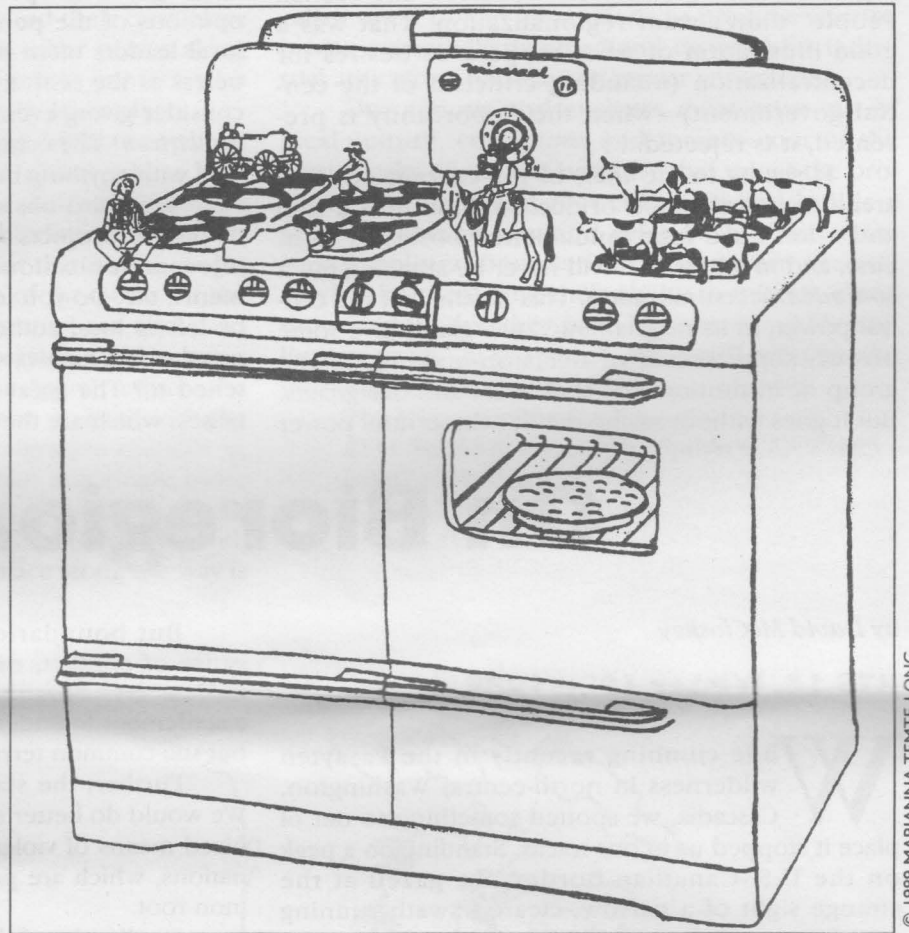
My own family has a marginal ranching history, of which I am secretly proud. My mother's grandparents came to Arizona from Texas at the turn of the century. My great-grandmother homesteaded in the Chiricahua Mountains. She lost her land during the Depression and later retreated into the hills to prospect a small mining claim. My grandfather worked as a ranch-hand up and down the Southwest. I have the requisite great-aunt who got married on horseback. None of this had much to do with cows. Ranching and mining and horsemanship were simply the ways my relatives knew to anchor themselves to the land. Although I grew up in Phoenix, I have chosen deliberately to live my life in rural New Mexico. When my husband and I came here to the Mimbres Valley, the first thing we did was buy twelve acres of waving grama grass, scrub oak, and alligator juniper. We also spent more than we could afford for the right to irrigate one acre from the Mimbres River. We, too, wanted to work the land. We wanted to be at home.

I have lived in the Mimbres Valley now for eleven years. Ninety percent of the ranchers here have grazing permits on the nearby Gila National Forest, Gila Wilderness, Aldo Leopold Wilderness, or BLM land. Many of these ranches are small “heartbreak operations,” run by people whose families came to New Mexico generations ago. The older ranchers, particularly, are a bitter breed. Their com-

munity is dissolving as more ranchers fail to make a living and as more sons and daughters turn the family ranch into a subdivision. Their sense of place in society is threatened. They have always felt proud of what they did and of who they were. They have, in truth, even felt righteous. Now, suddenly, they are the bad guys.

Here in this valley, there are more houses every day, more trailers, a new grocery store, another gas station. People move here and then commute to nearby Silver City, thirty miles to the east. People retire here. Non-country people like myself come to live in the country. Rather quickly, the Mimbres is changing from a small ranching community to a kind of rural suburbia.

The conflicts, between ranchers and environ-



Cowboys on the Range

mentalists, are very real. On both sides, there is fear and anger and a deep sense of loss. For those of us who balance ecological concerns with our own desire to ride a horse across a golden plain, the question is painfully immediate. If we “kill the cowboy,” who will we replace him with?

Out of our fear and anger, much is lost and not enough is gained if we only find new laws and management plans. We need, as well, new ways to live in the West. We need new myths and new role models—ones that include heroines as well as heroes, urbanites as well as country folk, Indians as well as cavalry, ecologists as well as individualists. Ranchers need these things as much as anyone if they are going to be ranchers in the twenty-first century.

“For a long time, I thought that being a cowboy was the wildest, most wonderful life a person could lead,” a neighbor once told me. “But a cowboy has to dress a certain way. He has to talk a certain way. He has to think a certain way. It’s a dead end. Finally, I didn’t want to be that confined. I didn’t want to be just what a cowboy is supposed to be.”

On my part, the future of the cowboy is not entirely academic. My five-year-old son has identified himself as a cowboy ever since he could ride a rocking horse. He has played with innumerable herds of plastic animals. He dreams of the freedom of riding his pony in the hills behind our house. He believes that he will grow up to ride a larger horse, to wear a six-shooter, and to chase cows.

The bitter polarization between environmentalists and ranchers is striking because in many ways they share the same needs and the same values. They are both seeking connection. They are both seeking ways to enter the landscape.

If there were no cowboys, my son would have to invent them.

Connection. Invention. Reinvention. This may be the real work of the West.

Decentralism:

Is It Possible as a Central Government Policy?

by Jacques Ellul

RTS 3, Summer 1981

Everyone recognizes the disastrous nature of extreme centralization in our modern states and their administrations: it is worse in France than anywhere else. It would seem that decentralization is desirable, that decision-making powers should pass to regional or local levels, and that power should return to citizens who have become subjects. But desirable as they may be, is it possible to realize these good intentions? We must be clear, and not let ourselves be trapped by rhetoric. We must remember the failure of President de Gaulle with the regionalization referendum in 1969: "the French People" didn't want regionalization. That was a good illustration of what happens to desires for decentralization (including criticism of the central government)—when the opportunity is presented, it is rejected. . . .

It seems to me that, in the current political arena, any declaration of decentralization is a trap and a lie. I see four fundamental obstacles to it. First, and in all cases, it will never be anything but a *conceded* decentralization. This means that the central power, in its magnanimity, will gladly give some power, some sector of decision-making, to the group or institution that *it* chooses and designates. But it goes without saying that it's the central power

which outlines the limits and jurisdiction of power, and which always remains able to revoke it.

In the second place, who gets the power over decentralized decisions? Presumably the local political elite. Local representatives and representatives of the central power (deconcentration of power perhaps but the difference becomes even more fictional). However, in the current situation and in view of new problems (for example, forest management, nuclear plants), it's not at all certain that the leaders, even the local elected ones, represent the real sentiments and opinions of the people. On the other hand, these local leaders often become small potentates as valueless as the central government. One would never consider giving even *one decision-making power* to the *citizen!* The central government doesn't want to deal with anything but existing institutions.

The third obstacle comes from the explosion of public projects in our society: electrification, telecommunications, the highway system, armaments, etc. Do you imagine that these decisions will be left to local authorities? If a town isn't in agreement with a highway construction plan, will it be listened to? The great technical and economic enterprises, which are the only ones that have any impor-



tance in our society, can never be decided by decentralized processes. There is one last unfortunate point. Nothing is more uncertain than the person at the bottom. Are common citizens willing to assume their responsibilities and enter the arena of real decentralized decision-making? It's so much easier to call on the government for everything and still retain it as a scapegoat. Before the revolution which is essential to achieve a true decentralization, regionalization, or at best, autonomy, each of us must first say his "mea culpa."

GRAPHIC EXCERPTED FROM BRUCE MCGILLIVRAY'S MAP *DEVOLVING EUROPE* THAT APPEARED IN *CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY* #32, WINTER, 1981. THANKS TO THE *WHOLE EARTH REVIEW* (SUCCESSOR TO *CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY*) FOR PERMISSION TO USE THIS GRAPHIC.

On Bioregional Boundaries

by David McCloskey

RTS 14, Winter 1988/1989

While climbing recently in the Pasayten wilderness in north-central Washington, Cascadia, we spotted something so out of place it stopped us in our tracks. Standing on a peak on the U.S.-Canadian border, we gazed at the strange sight of a narrow, cleared swath running straight up and down 8,000-foot peaks. On the visible summits there were boundary markers. A twenty-foot-wide swath cut through the forest, across sheer slopes and valley floors, straight-lined like a rifle shot. Why would two nations at peace, we wondered, expend herculean efforts to clear-cut such steep and hazardous slopes? Why keep the vista open with herbicides, in order to literally inscribe the 49th parallel in the heart of the wilderness? Why, in the days of satellites that can pinpoint location down to a foot either way, is it necessary to maintain this cleared boundary line?

I wrote to the International Boundary Commission and asked them. I learned that old treaties between the two countries mandate a clear line-of-sight vista along the 5,526-mile border, with over 8,000 numbered monuments and reference points. In order to mark legal jurisdiction over their respective territories, the U.S. and Canada not only clear-cut the longest unguarded border in the world, but poison the ground itself!

This is the kind of arbitrary political "line on a map" that bioregionalists abhor. Surely the winds aloft and the fires in the earth below, as well as the trees, birds, salmon, and native peoples, do not acknowledge such arbitrary boundary lines as significant.

Borders and boundaries in general have a bad name among some people. Are all boundaries necessarily bad? What sense does it make, ask the critics, to replace political boundaries with bioregional ones if the old nemeses of conflict and war are not diminished? Perhaps it's boundaries themselves that are the problem.

This critique of boundaries suggests that they are inherently negative not only because they are often arbitrary, but also because in and of themselves they imply a kind of jealous exclusivity which inevitably leads to conflict. Driven by power games and armed to the teeth, political entities draw borders and constantly fight over them, drawing us all into the maelstrom.

But boundaries are not in themselves the cause of conflict, only its expression. They stand forth as crystallizations of old attempts to negotiate a settlement to endemic conflict, a way of parcelling out the common territory so as to live and let live.

Further, the state does not equal the nation. We would do better to critique the state as the organized means of violence in a territory, and save the nations, which are peoples descended from a common root.

Finally, the globalists who would sweep away all boundaries as bulwarks of petty, provincial, backward-looking traditional cultures in favor of "world-order structures" as the foundation of a lasting peace and global civilization need to explain how those are possible without increasing standardization, concentration, bureaucratization, and technical rationalization—in short, centralization.

What is needed to ensure the fate of nations and the earth is to decrease scale: to decentralize to smaller regional entities so as to localize inevitable

conflicts and keep them from irredeemably endangering the whole.

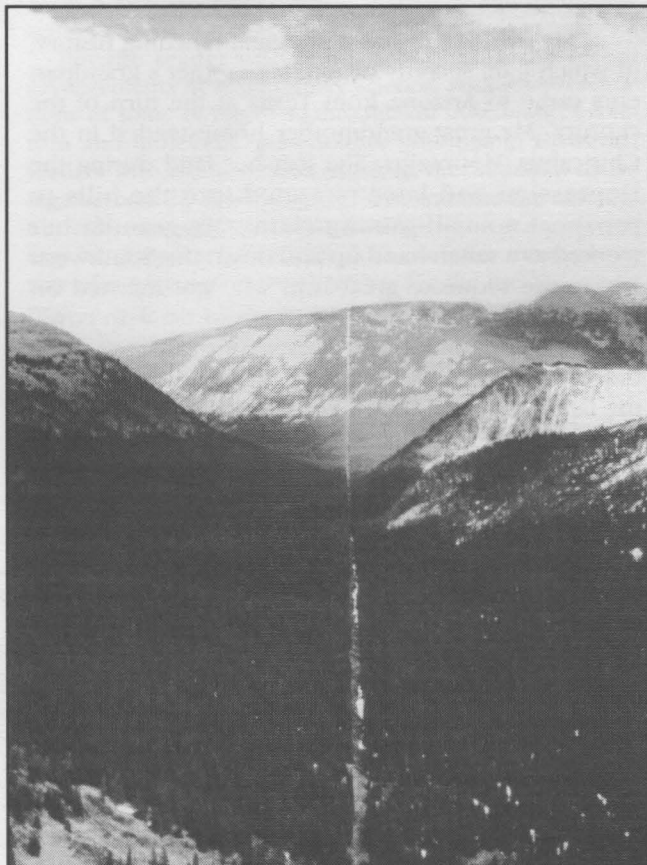
It is the bioregion that is uniquely suited for this role as it mediates in many ways between local and planetary life. Bioregionalism seeks to preserve ancient freedoms and protect ecological and cultural diversities on more appropriate scales. Without a rich diversity of peoples and places, species and habitats, there can be no freedom, no right to be for species, persons or communities. The human spirit is not the product of a monolithic world-culture; rather, it is the expression of freedoms that have emerged through a great and changing diversity of peoples, regions and their cultural traditions. Indeed, the human spirit is rooted precisely in all those mysterious ties that bind people to place and to one another over time.

In struggling with the thorny problem of boundaries, many bioregionalists have opted for replacing "hard," fixed, political boundaries with "soft," flexible ones. This means in theory that boundaries are not barriers, implying a transition or marginal zone, as in an ecotone (where prairie meets forest or where forest meets the sea). However, "soft" borders too often mean in practice fuzzy boundaries that are unable either to articulate the diverse character of an ecoregion or to give needed voice to a people in the place.

"Soft" versus "hard" borders are misplaced metaphors; the problem is really whether the boundaries "speak" or not. Bioregional boundaries are neither necessarily soft nor fuzzy; while there are few straight lines in nature, there are many definite and powerful edges—various ecotones, watershed divides, climatic zones, fault-lines, and scarps. Careful attention should be given to such beginnings and endings, for these dramatic turnings in the earth serve as clear and powerful articulations of diversity.

Taking our clues from nature, the bioregional vision leads us to recover a more positive sense of the nature of boundaries. Whether it be cells, organisms, ecosystems, communities, persons, or cultures, there is nothing in nature that does not generate and recognize boundaries. A border is the margin or edge, where something begins and ends, opens and closes. A border sets a frame to perception, identity and action, and links us to larger contexts.

In my ecoregion, for example, driving over Stevens Pass from Everett to Wenatchee is like pass-



Defoliated borderline—U.S.-Canada

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ing from one world to another. The Cascade crest separates the wet, green, lush west side from the arid, brown east side—the two halves of that larger unity called Cascadia. This boundary is self-evident to anyone passing over the threshold.

Passing over and back across the crestline becomes an exercise in reversibility—it implies coming to know your other side. It involves a conversation between the front and back of things, windward and leeward sides. The Skykomish and

Wenatchee rivers, for instance, are sisters, silver threads rising from the same source. Our east side is their west side, and vice versa.

It is the bioregional boundary as a reversible threshold that we share in common, for the divide also joins what it separates. The other side of the familiar is not strange, but new. Instead of ignoring the other as alien or distorted, we need to imagine the other side of our place as an extended part of our own bodies; or, rather, each side as a contiguous part of that larger, extended body we call earth.

Bioregional boundaries are natural and holis-

tic. They are found where key levels overlap, forming a distinctive pattern. Look to the special ways in which the face of the land, tectonic forces below, weather patterns above, the flow of the waters, flora and fauna, native peoples, and cultural identities converge and reinforce one another. In emerging from the life of the land as a whole, a bioregional boundary stands forth as a convergent threshold.

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PHOTO BY DAVID McCLOSKEY

Migratory Routes: Pathways for Interconnectedness

by Chris Desser

RTS 26, Fall 1996

Proponents of globalism say that the world is getting smaller—that our global economy and an ever-expanding global media and communications system are bringing us closer together as a global family in a global village where everyone can achieve the American Dream. But the fact that IBM says this is so does not make it true. We know that it is not. In our own lives, in our own communities, we are experiencing tremendous fragmentation. We are more and more disoriented and dislocated. We have lost our sense of place—we have lost our place.

We need a new unifying narrative to orient our lives and guide our actions. A new narrative must embrace a global view but be woven out of local perspectives. It must comprehend the importance of this place, our place, as well as the importance of all places. Rather than arising out of the fallacy of unlimited economic growth, it must be grounded in an understanding of the systematic, interconnected, ecological nature of our existence (indeed, of all life) on this planet. In short, it must correspond with reality, it must make sense.

The Migratory Species Project is an attempt to discover a new narrative that will revitalize our relationship to place, reorient our ecological, political, social, and economic decisions, and enable us to redesign the social and governmental structures that so profoundly affect our lives—to reinvent government in a meaningful way. The project began to take shape a couple of years ago as I stood by Lake Yam Drok Tso, one of the most sacred lakes in Tibet, and watched ongoing construction of an adjacent Chinese hydroelectric power plant. This plant is expected to cause the lake to drop about seven inches a year over the next fifty years. A Tibetan story holds that if and when Yam Drok Tso evaporates, the whole of Tibet will perish. The Tibetan prophecy is well-founded, since the lake drop is likely to result in lower rainfall in the area, which would imperil the barley crop, the staple food of Tibet.

I considered what could be done to prevent the Chinese government from continuing with the project. China has demonstrated its immunity to arguments that involve desecration of sacred places or preservation of human rights, and it has no record of concern about environmental preservation (quite the opposite). It struck me, however, that many of the ducks and birds that are seasonal residents of Yam Drok Tso live in other places at other times of the year and are integral to those ecosystems. I wondered how this power plant would affect these species and their migrations. It occurred to me that the various places along the migratory route might form a coalition to stop the project, arguing that, regardless of issues of national sovereignty, the Chinese government has no right to harm the environment beyond China's borders. I began to see the migratory routes as the threads, the narratives, connecting life, places and cultures, and as paths of organizing for the preservation of all three.

In addition to understanding the ecological importance of a particular migratory species, the project also emphasizes the role of that creature in a larger social context. It encourages people to investigate and understand the cultural, artistic and economic significance of a species in the various communities along the route. How does that bird or that butterfly or that fish appear in the art, music

and stories of a people and a place? How does that creature fit into the local economy? The project then invites people to look beyond their own place and ask those questions of the other places along the route. This necessarily involves contact with other people and other cultures in other places.

The new narrative should invite people to become reacquainted with the places where they live, to see the intrinsic value of their community as a nexus of people, culture and biodiversity. Whether it is whales or butterflies or birds that pass through, they comprise an integral part of the place. At the same time, however, those creatures are also parts of and integral to the other ecosystems and cultures along the migratory route. The "part" nature of a particular place becomes evident, and so does the understanding that the entire migration corridor is, in a sense, more significant than any single place along its way, because the route encompasses more as a system, and at a more comprehensive level, more depends on it. But each place along the way is more fundamental because it is essential to the health and integrity of the total route. Such a narrative emphasizes the intrinsic value, the wholeness of every place along the route, as well as the extrinsic value, the necessary "partness" of every place to the rest of the route. No place is as important as this place, my place, except...every other place.

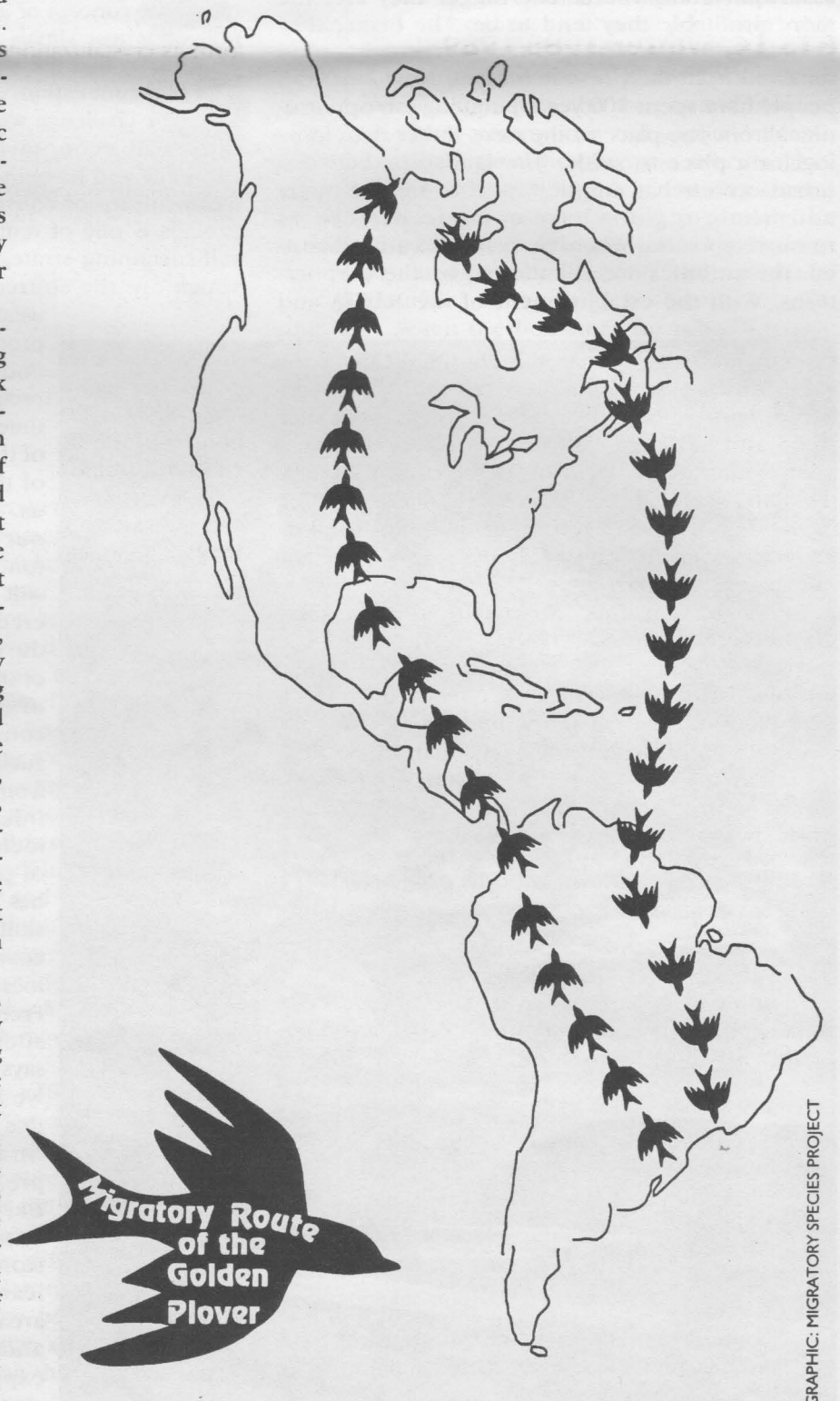
In the Costa Rican community of Tamarindo, along the route of the leatherback turtle, organizing along migratory routes may begin with fighting the deforestation of the jungle, which is replaced with banana plantations that threaten the viability of turtle nesting grounds. This fight would be joined by other people along the migratory route, from French Guyana to New Jersey. At other places along the route, local action would be based on local destructive activity including dredging, trawling nets, sport fishing, boating, and the consequences of urban development. All along the route, the unsustainable practices that define economic globalization can begin to be stopped.

In Cabo San Lucas, preservation of migratory routes may entail enlisting people from Vancouver, the Quinalt Indian Reservation at Point Grenville, Washington, and Coastal California from Mendocino to Monterey, Los Angeles and San Diego in the fight to defeat a particular harbor development project that threatens the habitat of the gray whale. In Lincoln, Nebraska, along the central flyway traveled by the sand-

hill crane, communities from southern Mexico through the U.S., Canada and up to Siberia may be called upon to join local efforts to preserve riverine habitat repeatedly dammed and diverted for industrial agriculture and electric power generation.

Our actions and answers must arise out of local culture, conditions and threats—out of the particularity of place. A narrative that values the protection of place and that cultivates and builds a sense of community and relationship that transcends political boundaries could ensure species' survival by preserving their ability to migrate along the corridors that they have been traveling for millions of years—at the same time, it will enhance the likelihood of our own survival.

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GRAPHIC: MIGRATORY SPECIES PROJECT

Remembering the Instructions of the Land

by Freeman House

RTS 27, Summer 1997

I. Forgetting

Maps are magical icons. We think of them as pictures of reality, but they are actually talismans which twist our psyche in one direction or another. Maps create the situation they describe. We use them hoping for help in finding our way around unknown territory, hoping they will take us in the right direction. We are hardly aware of the fact that they are prescribing the way we think of ourselves, that they are defining large pieces of our personal identities. With a world map in our hands, we become citizens of nations. We become Americans, Japanese, Sri Lankans. With a national map in front of us, we locate ourselves in our home state; we become Ohioans or Californians. Unfolding the road map on the car seat beside us, we become encapsulated dreamers hurtling across a blurred landscape toward the next center of human concentration. Even with a topographical map, the map closest to being a picture of the landscape, we are encouraged to describe our location by township, range and section—more precise, more scientific, we are told, than describing where we are in terms of a river valley or mountain range . . .

In the late nineteenth century, in the same decade that Frederick Jackson Turner proclaimed the end of continental frontiers, the corporation was born. Laws were passed that allowed states to license corporate entities. Now personal identity and responsibility that had been tied to a landscape, however fragmented by industry or ownership, could be assumed by an entity that relieved its participants of responsibility for their actions. Corporations have an address, but they don't necessarily live anywhere. The bigger they are, the more profitable they tend to be. The bigger they get, the further their headquarters become removed from their resource bases. Now American people have spent 100 years pursuing job opportunities from one place to the next, rather than looking for a place to settle. The landscape between urban centers has emptied itself of small farmers and whole regions have come to be seen as resource colonies. When the resources are exhausted, the colonies are abandoned by the corporations. With the establishment of the NAFTA and

GATT treaties, corporations have become global and their power has begun to replace the power of national states. The jobs we've been chasing around are disappearing as richer resource colonies, untapped markets and cheap labor are discovered abroad. Any one place can be understood as remote and expendable by entities that live nowhere.

The lines on the map have little meaning now except in real estate deals, but they remain engraved in our minds. The process of forgetting our connectedness to our landscape has left us stranded—surplus people in hurt places, in bioregions we have allowed to become severely damaged without taking the time to know what they require of us if our children are to continue living here.

II. Remembering

Commerce itself is not necessarily evil. To assume that it is would be a denial of the fact that trade seems to be as old as human history. Excavated mounds in the Mississippi basin reveal trade items arriving from places as widely separated as northern Wisconsin and the Yucatan Peninsula. The urge to travel and to exchange goods seems to be as old as human mobility. What is evil is the concept that has

“Environmental restoration is one ideal path along which to pursue our remembering because the situation demands it, and because it is by nature a community endeavor.”

engulfed us in the last 25 years called The Economy, capital T, capital E, a manufactured reality with the end goal of convincing us that our primary role as humans is that of consumer. The Economy is code for “you'll never be happy until you have unlimited access to stuff.” It is code for “you are the center of the world; the Earth exists to provide for your most elaborately imagined needs.” The Economy has raised the concept of individualism to the status of a religion whose rituals are advertisements constantly assuring us that the way to heaven is by way of the path of accumulation.

The challenge we face is the task of reclaiming our local economies and cultures from The Economy and its built-in strategy to create a global monoculture of consumers. The first step in this process is one of remembering the processes and self-sustaining strategies of our local ecosystems which are the sources of any real definition of wealth. Once we have begun this process of remembering, we will find that the instructions for the reclamation of our human destinies lie in our direct perception of the self-regenerating processes of the landscape that surrounds us. If we are to gain control of our destinies as inhabitants of functional ecological systems, it will be because we have empowered ourselves as we remember the opportunities and constraints of our living places—and learned to resist their sacrifice to global consumerism. The initiation of such a transformation can come from nowhere else than from the inhabitants who extend their identity to living regions, lovers of place. Writer Stephanie Mills has great faith in the vernacular skills of peoples who have discovered their imbeddedness in locale. She has deconstructed the French word *amateur* to describe such people—*amateur*, she says—practitioners of love. Once we have committed ourselves to this sort of remembering, we will find ourselves engaged in a process that social activist Peter Berg and ecologist Raymond Dasmann have called *reinhabitation*. “Reinhabitation means learning to live in place in an area which has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation...It means understanding activities and evolving

social behavior that will enrich the life of that place, restore its life-supporting systems, and establish an ecologically and socially sustainable pattern of existence within it. Simply stated it involves becoming fully alive in and with a place.”

Because human comprehension of the ambient landscape is limited to its sense organs (and will continue to be no matter how glamorously our electronic networking capabilities grow), it is useful to seek smaller increments of creation as the context for remembering. The watershed lends itself to these limitations of human perception perfectly; it is a visible hydrological container of all our co-existent life-forms; it is what lies between our eyes and the horizon. As if to accommodate the varieties of human skills and energies, the watershed breaks itself into ever-smaller increments—river to creek to swale. One may pursue one's remembering on any scale that fits.

Environmental restoration is one ideal path along which to pursue our remembering because the situation demands it, and because it is by nature a community endeavor. For those engaged in it, restoration work has meant the ineffable growth of a deeply felt sense of the regenerative

powers of nature. And if we stay at it long enough we gain an experience of the particularities of natural succession in our home place that is as much a part of our lives as is the growth of our children. Over time, this experience can lead us to understand ourselves not so much as crisis managers—or managers of any sort—but more like what Aldo Leopold called “plain citizens of the land.”

We have discovered that the magic of maps can be used for our own purposes, which are to relocate ourselves in our actual habitats. When we use maps as a tool for remembering, we find ourselves in watersheds, on estuaries, in mountain ranges, rather than in townships and sections. We can use maps in the same way that aboriginal cultures used stories. Our handmade maps of natural plant and animal habitat, land use history, and watershed configurations, when distributed to every resident and landowner, have the effect of ritually reanimating a native landform that had become totally abstracted. Such mapping can also translate into a real element of local self-empowerment. By re-organizing available data in the context of natural areas and adding the element of vernacular observation, in a surprisingly short time you can know more about your home than either extractive industries or regulatory agencies do.

Our North American landscape is so fragmented and our threads of cultural continuity have been cut so often that we will need to establish methodologies and tools, largely through education, to accelerate the collective memory of our lost landscapes and our places within them. We are going to need a generation of helpers whose job it is to help us find our way.

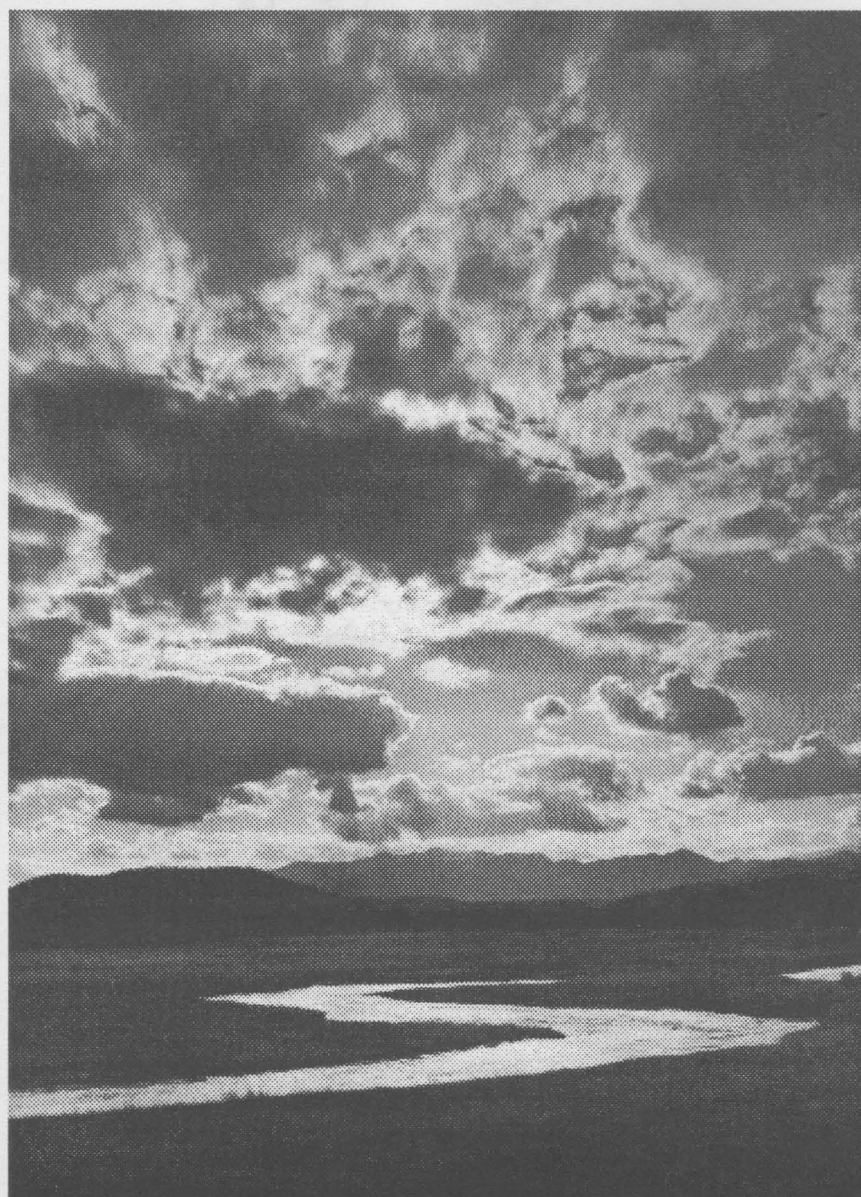
This article is an excerpt from the lecture, Forgetting and Remembering the Instructions of the Land: The Survival of Places, Peoples, and the More-Than-Human, given on April 24, 1996 at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Has Biodiversity Come to This? (A Satire)

“WASHINGTON, DC—According to an EPA study conducted in conjunction with the U.N. Task Force on Global Development Impact, consumer-product diversity now exceeds biodiversity. According to the study, for the first time in history, the rich array of consumer products available in malls and supermarkets surpasses the number of living species populating the planet.”

Piqued your interest? This is the introduction to a longer piece—to get a copy, contact Andy MacKinnon at the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Research Branch 3rd Floor, 712 Yates Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1L4 or email andy.mackinnon@gems1.gov.bc.ca



ROBERT BUELTEMAN © 1997 "ARCULARIUS RANCH"

Getting Outside: Notes on an Elementary Bioregional Education

by Jim Dodge

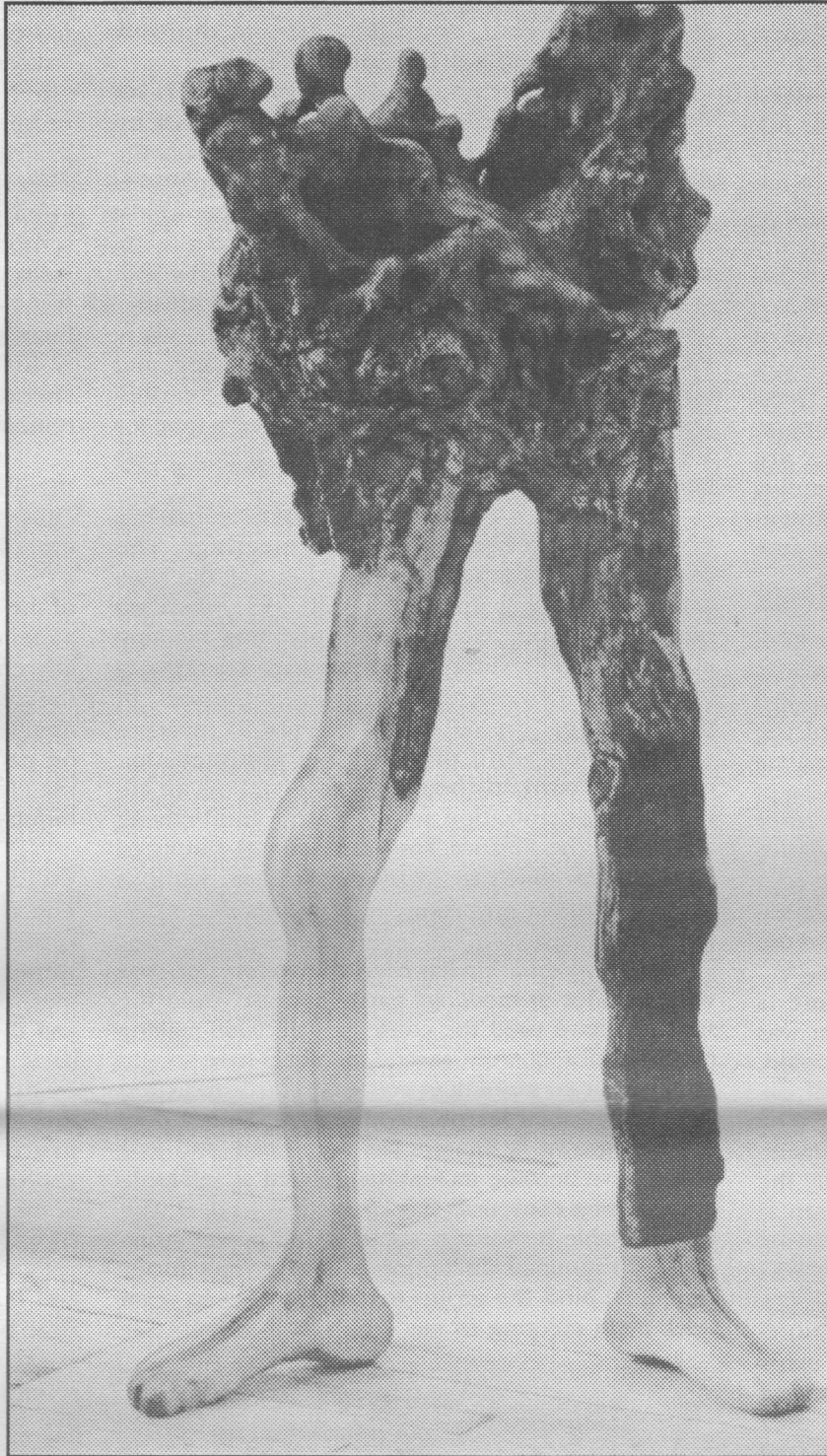
RTS 23, Summer 1994

According to the old-line alchemists, the path of learning is marked by increasingly dense thickets of complexity to crack through, steeper mountains to climb, colder rivers to swim. The path, which is not linear, wends something like this: the senses gather information; the intellect sifts, integrates, and extends the information into knowledge; knowledge is transformed through the heart into understanding; and, with the experienced application of soul/imagination/spirit, understanding is refined into wisdom. Wisdom, understanding, and most of knowledge are far beyond the purview of these elementary notes, not to mention my grasp.

Bioregionalism, deep ecology, and other "radical environmental" notions are basically pantheism dressed up for school and taking some science classes. I don't mean that disparagingly. If you accept the pantheist precept that everything from starfish to star is imbued with spirit (or even admit the possibility), and adopt the ancient view—now called ecology—that humans are part and parcel of natural cycles and chains, that our lives and our living are inextricably linked to other beings, to natural processes, and to the larger figures of regulation (like solar income and gravity), it seems reasonable that you might question the prevailing cultural/political/religious values that allow the destruction of natural systems, and that you might even take it personally. Of course, values are learned, and since learning starts with information, the best way to inform yourself about the natural world—the nature of Nature—is to get out in it and draw your own conclusions.

I mean "get outside" in the dirt-simple sense of open the door and go. Twentieth century American culture has been dominated by industrialism, which has generally moved to work ("jobs") inside buildings and lately turned homes into electronic entertainment centers. Simultaneously, the prevailing religious belief—Christianity—has demonized the natural world and its urges, set humans apart as a special creation, viewed the planet as dominion instead of domicile, and located paradise in Heaven rather than Earth, thus available by transcendence rather than immanence, by dying rather than living, leaving rather than remaining. We twentieth century industrial humans spend too much sheltered time, most of it looking at dot patterns on screens and listening to disembodied voices through chunks of plastic stuck in our ears. Indeed, many of us have become essentially burrowing animals, holed-up and hunkered down in what we assume is the safety of our individual space—which, if you've ever land-surfed a large earthquake or hauled ass away from an erupting volcano, is a stunningly vulnerable assumption. Naturally enough, an elementary bioregional education requires literally getting out in the elements where you live, out in the rain, wind, snow, and heat of it, the loam and mud and rock, the ponds, streams, rivers, ocean, getting wet, dirty, blown and burned—attending, as completely as you can, the astonishing welter, weave and tangle of associations that compose life: mine, yours, alders, and mayflies.

I find four compelling pedagogical benefits in getting outside, the first of which is sheer pleasure. Just as discipline falters without honest desire, learning flounders if it doesn't deliver some basic satisfactions. These creaturely pleasures, to cite Carlo Rossi, include "light, air, the joy of having a body, the voluptuousness of looking." The best modes of transport are walking, crawling and standing still. (Crawling is a much neglected mode; for a spirited introduction, see Gary Snyder's "Crawling"



About to Go by Victor Klassen

in *Tree Rings*, the Yuba Watershed Institute's journal. Thoreau's "Walking" remains an excellent guide to the art of that movement. And if you think radical environmentalism was invented in the 1970's, consider Thoreau's first sentence from that essay: "I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness...to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society.") Some of the better advice I've received—not that I'm an able practitioner—is shut your mouth, empty your mind, and open your senses, which I suppose is just a version of what a young man from British Columbia told me he'd discovered about walking in the woods: "The more I put between me and the land, the less I sense it." John Muir explored the Sierras with little more than a heavy coat, its pockets full ofhardtack. And while it may not be your idea of pleasurable edification, there are those who find walking a few miles naked in a Pacific coast rainstorm the pinnacle of moral instruction.

Getting outdoors also offers the opulent opportunity to practice the First and Last Principle of Learning: Pay attention. As most of us learn by surviving the lessons, paying attention is an exacting practice. Many consider it the art of consciousness, and liken it to dancing, often with thousands of partners at once, often to different songs. To wildly simplify, paying attention requires complete awareness in the here and now, beginning with the senses but immediately involving a dynamic perception of the connections among things, the transactions and transformations, flows, cycles and center-

less mysteries. Paying attention is not only the way to avoid fatal or damaging mistakes, but also the primary gesture of respect for what sustains us.

When we get outside and pay proper attention to the natural world, we're immediately rewarded with a heartfelt understanding of both our ignorance and our relative insignificance in the grand concord of existence. Such humility is the most fertile state of mind for learning, and the best temper for teaching.

The final benefit of getting outside is the quality of information. As an old western homily has it, "The closer you get to the source, the less likely someone's crapped upstream." As I've noted elsewhere, high-quality information is direct, resonant and durable. If you seek an authoritative source on whether Stellar jays are imbued with spirit, go out and look for yourself. The quality of our intelligence ultimately depends on the quality of our information, and in this purported age of information, far too much is programmed and screened for us, and comes from fewer sources. The Information Superhighway is a fitting metaphor for what seems to be coming, a prospect as exciting as rush hour in L.A. When they can program the information directly available on a starry summer night in the Klamath mountains, when they can communicate the nuances of breeze and capture the sifting intensity of the azalea's fragrance, I'd still prefer the original.

For a bioregional education, there are two other senses of "getting outside" that bear mention. The first is getting outside the perceptual sets imposed by a culture inimical to nature, the screens and blinders of inbuilt assumptions and implicit values—like the hegemony of reason over imagination, or the "right" to own land. The second is getting outside the self, especially the egocentric models advanced by modern psychology with their cramped notions of identity.

When the bell rings for school, please hurry to leave your seats and walk out the door.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Being Ecological Now Means Having More Fun

Want to enliven your palate while staying bioregional? Here's a group that thinks local is better and slow is better still. **Slow Food**, the "International Movement for the Defense of and the Right to Pleasure," was founded in Italy in 1986 and has since grown to over 70,000 members in 35 countries. According to their Manifesto, "real culture is here to be found" if only we can free ourselves from the "mania of velocity" and the "monotony of 'fast food.'" Therefore, they advocate savoring and sharing good food and wine, supporting local agriculture, and promoting local culinary traditions.

Slow Food organizes gastronomic celebrations around the world, from the mammoth "Salone del Gusto," which drew over 100,000 people to Turin to experience 3000 wines and taste 350 foods from 30 countries, to smaller events planned in Germany and the United States for 1999. They also coordinate other efforts: the Ark Project, an initiative which benefits local farmers and preserves varieties and produce threatened by "supermarket culture"; the Fraternal Tables project, supporting kitchens for those in need (like children in Bosnia and hospital patients in Brazil); and education programs focused on taste and sense education for students, teachers, and parents.

For more information or to get involved with Slow Food, call 1-877-SLOWFOOD or web-surf to www.slowfood.com.

Organizing in an Urban Bioregion

by Beatrice Briggs

RTS 23, Summer 1994

It never occurred to me that applying the basic tenets of bioregionalism to Chicago and its sprawling suburbs would be perceived as a daunting, difficult, probably doomed task. On the contrary, if bioregionalism is to fulfill its promise as a lifeway for an ecologically sustainable, socially just future, then it must make as much sense in urban areas as in the hinterlands. Furthermore, Chicago has been my home for more than twenty years. Where else could I do the work?

What follows is a brief description of some of the things that have worked for the Wild Onion Alliance, a bioregional group started in 1990. These ideas, some of which were inspired by work in other bioregions, continue to evolve. They are offered here as a focus for reflection and a stimulus to action, and are applicable to places very different from Chicago. The gift must always move. So take what you can use, make it better and pass it on.

Naming a bioregion and a bioregional organization are powerful first steps along the reinhabitory path. I (because there was no "we" at first) chose "wild onion" because the name Chicago is derived from a Potawatami word meaning "place of the wild onion." Botanists, historians and linguists debate the accuracy of this translation (che-cau-gou might have referred to wild garlic or some other source of strong smells), but wild onions are native to this area and, equally important, have taken root in the popular imagination. People are intrigued and amused by the name. Once they hear it and the explanation of its derivation, they remember it.

In addition to being catchy, the name is grounded in ecological reality. The problem was that, at the beginning, I had never seen a wild onion, making it unclear which of the several kinds of allium that grow in this area was the "right one." The more botanically informed of the early Alliance members helped sort out this confusion. Eventually the nodding wild onion, *Allium cernuum*, was chosen as our totem plant and an anatomically correct drawing of this handsome tallgrass prairie native was obtained for the letterhead and newsletter logo.

For the first three years, the map of our bioregion existed only in our minds. The "real" maps stopped abruptly at state or county lines, ignoring the natural and cultural features that spilled over these political boundaries. The map finally created now cries out for overlays, thicker descriptions, more historically informed, nuanced elaboration, and wider distribution.

The Wild Onion newsletter, called *downWind*, gives the organization visibility and a voice. It challenges us to articulate bioregional theory and practice in an inviting, comprehensible manner. In the beginning, to cut through the misperception that there was "nothing going on" of ecological significance in the Chicago area, a lot of newsletter space was devoted to a calendar listing of field trips, lectures, workshops, conferences, seasonal celebrations, and work days, all sponsored by other organizations in the bioregion. This was a good way to connect with these sister groups, support their work and illustrate the many ways in which people were "being bioregional" without necessarily calling it that. In the interim, other sources for this information have emerged—and we were getting dragged down by the quarterly effort to collect, cull and collate the data. The calendar was recently redesigned, making it more visual, less linear, more seasonally impressionistic, and less event-specific.

The newsletter is sent to every environmental organization, nature center and ecologically-oriented interest group in the area, whether they formally subscribe or not. This helps circulate bioregional ideas and language among natural allies and friends. As time goes on, we keep enlarging the scope of the mailing list, adding more of the human-centered citizens and action and peace-and-justice groups, since an important part of what "grows" in an urban area like Chicago is resistance to oppression and injustice.

Field trips are among the trademark activities of the Wild Onion Alliance. Suggestions for where to go arise from the group members. The help of a local guide is always enlisted, someone who lives in

the area we plan to visit, or who knows it well. We've looked at practically invisible, pre-historic earthworks, seen blue herons on the Chicago River, visited prairie restoration sites, wandered the Indiana dunes, explored the highest elevation in this very flat land, and hiked around the only remaining quaking bog in northern Illinois.

In September '93, as hosts of the Great Lakes Bioregional Congress (GLBC), the Alliance set up lots of field trips to show Congress participants the urban face of bioregionalism. We went to community gardens, homeless shelters, city parks, a hydroponic garden growing herbs for AIDS patients, and a cemetery. Everyone returned from these adventures with stories to tell, a transformed sense of the possibilities and problems of city life and new friends. The key is going together as a community. Keep it simple and cheap (our trips are always free except for contributions of gas money to the drivers), and leave time for socializing over coffee, cider or other refreshments before you head home.

One of the ways to keep a group sustainable is not having too many organized meetings. The exception to this practice occurred during the year-and-a-half leading up to the GLBC '93, when we met every month. Now one big planning meeting every quarter is sufficient, and other business is taken care of by telephone or sub-committees. In the beginning, the Alliance chose not to incorporate as a non-profit organization, although that question is currently being reconsidered. As an all-volunteer organization with no large fund-raising ambitions, the Alliance has been content simply to do the work and play of bioregionalism, without the apparatus or reporting requirements that incorporation entails.

The organization has been able to function well without a lot of meetings partly because, from the start, we have used the consensus decision-making process. Subsequently, several members have sought out specialized training in consensus facilitation and have shared their learning with others. Thus a pool of home-grown facilitators has developed, and as a group have become increasingly skilled at self-facilitation. Using consensus has enabled us to deal with the inevitable personality conflicts and power struggles with minimal disruption of the group's focus. Decisions bind the group together and keep it on track from meeting to meeting. Good process has

helped build an organization with integrity and heart that also gets a lot done.

Hands-on work days keep people from just being tourists in their own land. Since our bioregion covers most of northeastern Illinois, we have not confined ourselves to a project at a single site. Instead, the Alliance offers services, as a group, to other organizations. Functioning as a kind of environmental SWAT team, we have cut buckthorn at prairie restoration sites, bagged pasta at a food depository, picked up trash on the shores of Lake Michigan and the banks of the Chicago River, scrubbed public sculpture in the Loop, mulched trees in Lincoln Park, and pulled weeds at the Wooded Island in Jackson Park. These work days build community among members, provide visibility for the Alliance and its ideas and provide a chance to understand and celebrate the scope of reinhabitory activity in our area.

In the interest of right-brain/left-brain balance, the Alliance recently started adding salons, or discussion groups, to its mix of activities. These evening events, held once a quarter, give members a chance to explore the intellectual underpinnings of the heavily experiential work they do. Meeting in a member's home, we discuss a topic which is usually chosen at the previous salon. Someone leads the discussion, based on readings which are recommended in advance, but not required. Emphasis is on participation and thoughtful reaction, not dueling ideologies. Food to share, guests and a spirit of inquiry are all brought to the occasion.

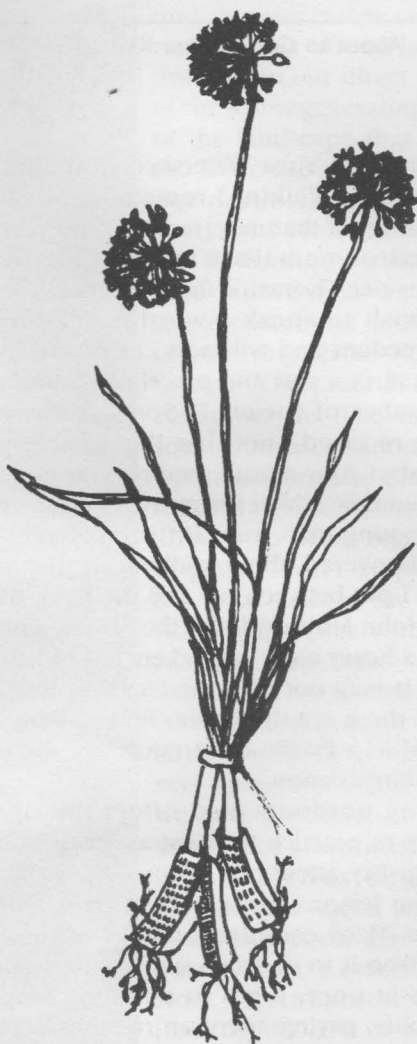
The solstices and the equinoxes are celebrated with a ceremonial circle, music and (of course) food. The rituals always have some sort of seasonally appropriate, local focus, such as frogs or mud in the spring, wildflowers, berries or butterflies in the summer, prairie fires or harvest abundance in the fall, and the deep, dark silence in winter. We follow the basic principles of other earth-based traditions to create our sacred space, but invoke only local ancestors and spirits of the land, rather than the pagan pantheon. Even this non-sectarian, place-based approach is too much for some orthodox followers of more mainstream western religions, so they don't come. That's OK.

Over time, a small group of ritual planners and leaders has developed, as well as a relatively large body of people who look forward to these celebrations. A "welcome, newcomers" part was recently added to every gathering, which is an effective way of continually opening the circle to new people, while reinforcing a sense of community among those who have been together before. Re-inventing rituals so that they meet the spiritual needs of those exploring the brave, new, ecological world is one of the most valuable services a bioregional group can perform.

To borrow a phrase from Peter Berg, one of the first things we did was to design "Bioregional and Wild" buttons. Recently, the Alliance created "Bioregional and Wild" awards, certificates given to people we wish to recognize for "fostering the ecological values of joy and justice for all in the Wild Onion Bioregion." These buttons and awards allow us to promote our message without being preachy or disgustingly self-serving.

Banners, flags and good graphics have also been important elements in our organizing efforts. People respond to beauty, wit and style. Cliché-ridden imagery is boring. We make our graphics as visually rich as a medieval cathedral, as colorful as a carnival, as celebratory as a feast. Bring on the artists and musicians, mix them with the scientists, policy wonks and just plain folks and let the good times roll.

The Wild Onion Alliance is not a large organization. It has never had more than about 100 dues-paying members. Field trips, salons and work days regularly attract 10-20 people; the rituals, 20-30. Planning meetings draw a hard-core of 8-12. We mail out about 500 newsletters each quarter, and rarely have more than a few hundred dollars in the bank. We have excellent name recognition, a reputation for good ideas, followed up by solid work and an enviable esprit de corps. Our organizational structure exists to serve its members, not the other way around. The unofficial motto is "if it's not fun, we don't do it."



Allium chicagoum (wild chicao)

CHARLOTTE AVANT

Organizing Your Own Bioregional Congress

by David Haenke

RTS 6, Winter 1983

Organizing a congress is not that hard, and it doesn't take much money. It does take some time. Here's a simple outline of how to do it, based on my experience with Ozarks Area Community Congress, Kansas Area Watershed, and others in formation.

STEP ONE: Define the Region

In defining the region there are two main questions.

1. How large an area do you want to cover? If you want to begin organizing a whole bioregion the area may be enormous (like the Great Plains). In this case you may choose to begin by organizing a large watershed like the KAW Council did with the Kansas River watershed which lies within the Great Plains bioregion. There are advantages to beginning on a large scale, however. The Great Lakes bioregion is huge, covering parts of seven states and Canada. But a Great Lakes Bioregional Congress can bring together the essential energies of that vast area, which then can generate watershed organizing within the bioregion.

2. What, and where, are your resources and potential invitees to the congress? In checking out where the individuals and organizations representing sustainability are located you may find the outlines of the region you want to organize: bioregion, watershed, or even state. Indeed the most effective area to organize within may be a state. In that case it would be a sustainability congress, e.g., the New York Congress on Sustainability.

STEP TWO: Form A Congress Organization Committee

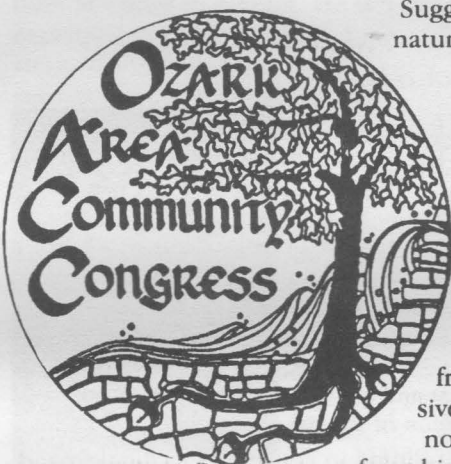
STEP THREE: Identify the Representatives You Are Going to Invite From Within the Region

The suggestion is that they come from the areas of political ecology, bioregionalism, and the movements working for sustainability under ecological law. Do they have some fundamental referent to environment and ecology? If they don't have some ecological awareness or won't ever have one, don't invite them to be in the representative body. Suggested areas of sustainability from which to invite representatives: renewable resources, cooperative economics, safe energy, appropriate technology, organic agriculture, land trust, environmental/ecological groups, environmentally aware holistic health, and education.

STEP FOUR: Send Out the Invitations

Idea: In the invitation, list the organizations you are going to invite. Highlight confirmations if you can get them in time. Also make it plain in the invite that this is a *congress, not a conference*—the congress being a fully participatory event, unlike a conference where you sit around and listen to keynote speakers, workshop leaders, and other entertainers.

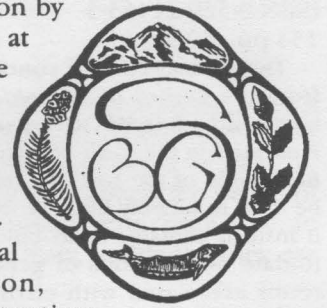
STEP FIVE: Convene the Congress



Suggestions on the nature of the event, which should also be announced in the invitation:

1. Try to keep the cost low. Outdoor sites in beautiful places can be free or inexpensive. Serve simple nourishing foods from big pots. You can end up with

extra money at \$15/person by staying basic, break even at \$10, depending on site costs.



2. Form congressional committees to deal with energy, agriculture, health, education, economics, political action, communication, environmental protection (defense), and whatever else is major in your region. Suggest that these committees write resolutions/mission statement/action plans to be presented and ratified by the full congress. These become the framework of the congress. This committee work should be given ample prime time, with priority over workshops, plenary sessions, etc.

3. Full group time is valuable. Suggest that any plenary presenter be limited to 15 to 20 minutes during any given plenary session.

4. Don't overschedule. Leave plenty of open time for free-form networking and caucusing. Emphasize participation among equals over events like workshops which set up a presenter/audience relationship. Workshops are important, but they get lowest priority for prime time in a congress.

5. Entertain yourselves. There will be plenty of talent among your participants without bringing in outside entertainment which can cost a bunch of money.

6. Suggest that the congress not get too ambitious right off by loading itself and its committees with all kinds of demands, goals, and objectives to be done in a few months. Emphasize sustained effort at comfortable levels over a lifetime or more. Though it's deep and vital work, it has to be fun and nonstressful or it won't work. The bioregional congress is the ecopolitical analogue of permaculture. Sustain.

You Can Say That

Grassland

valleys

daytime ponds

large temporary rain pools

lakes

slowly flowing streams

creeks

brooks —

when someone says there are too many

of us

the covered bridge

explodes

into flaming pieces

they collapse

into a river so cold

and swift you'd think the

glacier's still melting.

That old bridge had been there two hundred years

offending none

yet its location acquired an unjust history

which got into the blood

of the landform

the only way that bridge had endured was denied it.

open woodland

You asked for justice

instead of satisfaction

of raw power

equal proportions

equal portions

I see a preserve

populated sparsely

a refuge

an estate

but I imagine

the pure

products anyway.

So we are bent

by some regret,

so what?

Nothing has begun

to seek its own level:

go stand on the roof.

Which ones of us,

specifically

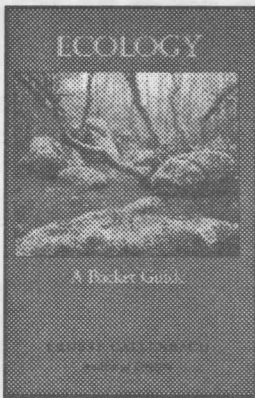
are the too many?

Name one.

—Duncan McNaughton

READS & Reads & Reads & Reads & READS & REELS & Reads &

ECOLOGY: A POCKET GUIDE
Ernest Callenbach
University of California Press
ISBN 0-520-21463-3
154 pp., \$9.95



This valuable kit of concepts from the author of *Ecotopia* is both novel and necessary. Presented in the form of a handy field guide of the sort that might be used to identify birds or trees, it instead contains short but up-to-date descriptions of general terms associated with environmental thought and practice. *Ecology: A Pocket Guide* seems to be designed for readers to take wherever they go, providing a quick reference for sixty subjects ranging from "air" to "zoos" with stops along the way in "carrying capacity," "energy," "interdependence," "microbes," and "sustainability."

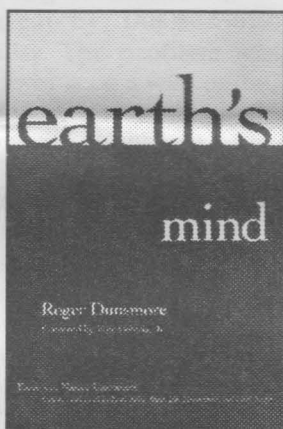
Ecological thinking is becoming so pervasive that it can now enter nearly every area of endeavor. Callenbach's convenient pocket book should therefore prove to be indispensable. It can be taken out of a briefcase or knapsack with equal ease, carried on a bus or a trail, and referred to while having a conversation, reading an article, or making a solitary observation. Don't look for dry definitions, however. The reason that ecology has become so prominent is that we are alarmed about the degree of natural and environmental destruction that is taking place, and most of the author's descriptions bear on how present conditions should be improved.

Ecology: A Pocket Guide can be used by someone who is new to the lingo as well as a long-time activist. Some academics and professionals may wring their hands at the lack of footnotes and quoted sources, but they will be missing the point. Ernest Callenbach has actually created a long essay in the form of a glossary, and most readers (especially those with the curiosity to read it straight through) will be encouraged to become more positive about the natural world around them as well as their ability to live in harmony with it.

—Peter Berg

EARTH'S MIND: ESSAYS IN NATIVE LITERATURE

Roger Dunsmore
University of New Mexico
Press
ISBN 0-8263-1798-7
225pp., \$17.95



There's a radical message beneath this book's plain textbook cover. Vine Deloria's foreword almost gives it away; he points to "a new turn of events here"—remarkably, this book asks us "to consider what various messages from Indians might actually mean."

Still, the first essay, on Leslie Silko's *Ceremony*, reads like traditional critical exegesis, guiding the reader through some hallucinatory passages of a complex novel. But then we are asked to regard the setting of the book—the land—as its principal character. And then the issue of how to unravel one's story is treated as a matter of survival—not just of "meaning," and not just for the hero. The path of Tayo's final recovery, it turns out, "also is the path of recovery for a people, and for their land." We begin to see that the chapter's title, "No Boundaries," is to be taken seriously.

So we're only a little disoriented when the second "chapter" turns out to be a poem by the author, re-telling the Lushootseed (coastal Salish) story of how Sucker got all those different bones in his soft head. He speaks from the country of the Bitterroot Salish, up in Western Montana where for many years he's taught American Indian Literature. "Frances [his Salish teacher] says she can understand the coastal people, though their dialect is different." Another reaching across boundaries.

Now we're ready for the title piece. Taken from a speech by Chief Joseph at an 1877 council between the United States and the Nez Perce—"the earth and I are of one mind"—Dunsmore wants us not just to understand, but to see how to *live* the meaning of his text. He insists: "I take such ethical redirection to be imperative."

Breaking down boundaries between criticism and poetry, between the objective scholar and the passionate partisan, Dunsmore is calling attention to the unreal lines and borders that "Native American Literature" (talk about putting safe boundaries around something) has been urgently pointing out to us. That you can't divide land with property lines, that you can't divide land from people, or human from animal, body from mind—and that ignoring this ancient wisdom has meant the terrible destruction of native peoples and the land. And of ourselves, because finally we also are not separate:

We will begin to take up the task of massive social/political change when we realize that the ongoing destruction of Indian people(s) is a direct reflection of what we have done to ourselves, to the first, original person in ourselves.

So the deeply moving essay on Nicholas Black Elk is about *living* his vision, about the essential difficulty of acting it out, communally and personally, and even giving it away to an alien culture. The chapter on Simon Ortiz's "For Our Brothers: Blue Jay, Gold Finch, Flicker, Squirrel" informs us of the likeness between the speaker and these roadkilled creatures—"the same thing is happening to us"—but also between the creatures and Pueblo ceremonial life, and the damage done to both. "The soul is composed of the exterior world." This recurring phrase, borrowed from Wallace Stevens, keeps reminding us that separating inner and outer lives—like damming the Flathead River—is destructive and ultimately futile.

This is indeed a teaching book. Like all good teachers, Dunsmore instructs by example, by taking personal and professional risks—not all of his trickster subversions will work for every reader—and by personally going across boundaries and bringing the lessons home.

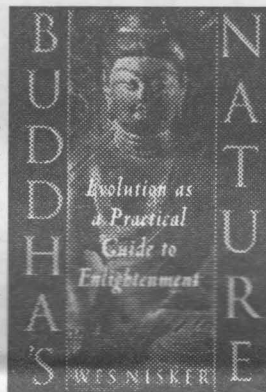
The final chapter, "Columbus Day Revisited," recounts his time as scholar in residence on the Navajo Reservation. In both prose and poem, he recounts the cultural conflicts of trying to do what shouldn't be that difficult—introduce American Indian literature into the largest Indian high school in the U.S. Like a good teacher again, he perseveres, and he is rewarded with a student's insight that could well apply to this book:

*Of course it is difficult
to learn these things.
But we can endure that pain
because they are the truth.
That's all we need to bear from our teachers,
the truth.*

—Jerry Martien

BUDDHA'S NATURE: EVOLUTION AS A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Wes Nisker
Bantam Books
ISBN 0-553-10601-5
242 pp., \$23.95



In highly accessible and personal prose, Wes Nisker contributes to the ongoing conversation on the contemporary relevance of Buddhist teachings to evolutionary science. Particularly cogent and convincing is his description of the rise to primacy of the concept of the "self" in Western thought and practice, and its roots in both cultural and biological evolution. He traces the path whereby "our feelings of separateness and individuality seem to have increased over the course of human history" and points to some of the consequences of our sense of "human supremacy." Nisker asserts that we have come full circle in our quest to discern our place in the world; both scientific and Buddhist teachings regarding the interconnectedness of all things are increasingly finding their audience.

The major portion of Nisker's book is devoted to a series of meditation exercises called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which serve as the path of practice towards a deeper sense and experience of interconnectedness in our individual and collective lives. For Nisker, meditation provides the most compelling personal encounter with evolutionary enlightenment. For further information on the subjects of Buddhist philosophy, meditation practice and related areas, see Nisker's excellent "recommended reading" section at the conclusion of the book, which lists psychological, ecological and philosophical references.

For the reader who is not schooled in the recent advancements of evolutionary science, Nisker's presentations of some of the breakthroughs in cosmology, evolution and molecular genetics are tantalizing. However, readers who are interested in taking the Buddha's teachings beyond the meditation cushion and into the realm of our daily struggle to lead an ecologically sustainable life may be disappointed. Nisker does not offer much in the way of suggesting the implications for the greater awareness of nature that his method affords. Still, this criticism is not meant to undermine the value of this book, but to point to the fruitfulness of Nisker's inquiry, and to serve as an invitation for greater exploration of these issues.

—Philippa Strelitz

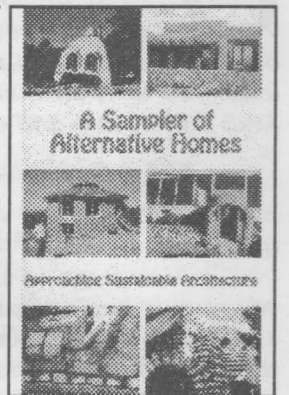
A SAMPLER OF ALTERNATIVE HOMES: APPROACHING SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

by Kelly Hart
VHS: 1 hr., 55 min.
Available from Hartworks, Inc.
(800) 869-7342

Junk mail and old newspapers mixed together with cement and water makes a durable, strong, highly-insulating building material. Sound implausible? Watch "A Sampler of Alternative Homes," a two-hour-long video produced by Hartworks, Inc., and you will learn the basics of five different sustainable architecture techniques: adobe (including rammed earth), strawbale, earth sheltering (such as Earthships), papercrete, and sandbag building.

This video is an excellent introduction for people who

are uninformed about the different options available for home building, yet it contains more than pretty pictures to woo the unconverted. Film-maker Kelly Hart takes you to visit different home sites where he interviews builders about their methods. You'll learn the composition of adobe, how to cure concrete, ideas for waterproofing strawbale structures, and how to shape an arched roof. You will see a giant mixer in action, stirring water, concrete and paper into a slurry to be made into papercrete bricks. Imagine one man shoveling adobe, plop plop plop, into one gigantic cone, which will one day make his bedroom, while another plasters his strawbale and smoothes it into soft, round shapes and curves, carving out special places in the wall that will later hold a candle, or a statue. Perhaps it is this aspect of creativity, spontaneity, which is so closely tied with the earth-building experience, that appeals most to me (I dream of constructing my own space that has round windows and curved doorways and rounded corners, mandalas in the wall). The freedom of building with earth is tremendous.



"A Sampler of Alternative Homes" makes it all appear so simple, something that anyone could do. But this is no instructional video: you won't find yourself ready to break ground tomorrow. And it won't prepare you for any post-construction difficulties that you might face. However, all methods of construction meet with complications, and so the value of building with lower environmental impact in mind just might outweigh any potential drawbacks of these methods.

Building sustainably embodies advantages for both the earth and the home owner. For example, adobe (a dirt, sand and clay mixture with a high thermal mass) keeps the ambient temperature inside the structure comfortable year-round, and can be found directly on the building site in certain areas of the country. Using adobe on-site reduces costs, and it reduces environmental impact by eliminating transportation, thus cutting petroleum usage and air pollution. Papercrete, on the other hand, is the recycler's dream because it utilizes old paper products (found in wasteful abundance) mixed with water and a shovel-full of cement. Building with these "paper blocks" can greatly reduce wood harvesting otherwise needed for your home's frame. By getting back to the basics (mud, water, sand, straw), you can minimize your reliance on manufactured products such as plywood and glue which cause waste and pollution in their production stage, and which outgas chemicals long after installed, increasing your home's toxicity.

Whether or not you intend to build your own home, this film is inspiring, as it suggests that our assumptions about "the perfect home" ought to be challenged, and our vision expanded. As Kelly Hart says at the end, "Perhaps you can be a part of the solution that will move us towards living sustainably."

—Laura Hartzell

ANNOUNCEMENT

Guard Fox Watch Recommends

International Supporters for Australian Native Title, a group based in London, coordinates a global post card campaign targeting the Sydney Olympics and the Australian government's continued discrimination against Aboriginal people. The cards read "Sydney 2000. Will the rules for the races be fair? Just two years before the Sydney 2000 Olympics the Australian Government is passing laws that racially discriminate against the rights of Aboriginal Australians. Where's the Olympic spirit in that?" Tens of thousands of the cards, which contain further messages for the Australian Federal Treasurer and the CEO of the Sydney Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, have been distributed by human rights groups in Europe and Scandinavia. If you would like to participate, the cards are available through the European Network for Indigenous Australian Rights (ENIAR), Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Rd., London SW9 9TL, England.

JERRY MANDER— *continued from page 4*

not the main communication form. In other words, in order for their culture to remain alive, then it's absolutely required that we not have mass media. Otherwise, they're dead. So the relationship between mass media and them is a failed relationship.

MH: *That raises an interesting question about social movements and social change. There are people who are of the opinion that the minute the media touts something, it destroys it.*

JM: No. Some movements can be purveyed well on television, other movements cannot be.

MH: *Well I'm thinking about movements that are basically incompatible with the way that society's organized right now. Everything from religious communities, Native American communities, "bippies," countercultural type movements, and so forth. Where the conditions for their existence are such that they can't function in the context of mass media publicity, the glare, the observation, and the voyeurism. They become a kind of consumer item for other people to play with and exploit. On the basis of your thought and your experience, could you talk about social change and how it does or doesn't relate to media?*

JM: A lot of the television book is devoted to that, to an explication of which movements work on television, which movements don't work on television. Unfortunately, the movements that I care the most about are the most difficult to convey on television, except the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement is an example of a movement that did work well on television because it had a lot of violence, a lot of action, a lot of very specific kind of activity which was content-oriented and sort of objective. Certain kinds of war and military activities can also be reported well on television, because they are good visual information and their content is clear and objective. But when you get down, for example, to the environmental movement, it's my position that the environmental movement has in many ways been destroyed by television. Because, even though more information about environmental problems is conveyed on television now than used to be, the kind of environmental information that is conveyable on television is a more gross sort. It's all about pollution, about death, about environmental catastrophe, and breakdowns in ecosystems. I'm not saying that that kind of information is not useful to convey. But what it doesn't convey is the kind of experiential feeling

and understanding that the environment itself conveys to people—which would develop caring in the hearts of people, which would develop feelings of relatedness to the environment. When people see Borneo forests on television, they think they're seeing Borneo forests. Actually what they're seeing is television. If the mass of people in this country were stimulated to love and experience the environment, then they'd have an emotional reaction to the death of species, or the death of marshes, or the death of tidepools, the places where life starts. People don't care about those very much on a mass scale because the environmental information presented on television is of the gross sort, that they think is solvable by laws. When actually the real environmental problem today is that people have lost attunement to nature and therefore are not in opposition to many of the things that are coming down. Conveying subtle environmental information on television is very very difficult to do.

MH: *Apart from direct experience is there any form of the media that you think is effective that way?*

JM: Well, all media is difficult for the translation of that kind of material. But I think the print media is the best for subtlety, for complexity, and much better than television. But basically you've got to have direct experience, you've got to be there, to know what it's about. You've got to have the aura of the place to experience it as a feeling.

MH: *It seems to me that part of the problem is that we've all been colonized by mass media into believing that doing something on a small, intimate scale is ineffective.*

JM: I think that's true. It seems to me that people interested in bioregionalism, in the breakdown of the large scale system, have got to deal with the breakdown at every moment of crux. That is to say, that at any moment where you're up against dealing with the large scale form, you've got to choose not to deal with the large scale form. If possible you've got to break it down into something smaller, to something with which you can deal. For a bioregional concept to be disseminated effectively people must be changed by their experience of the difference. I don't think that people will get the experience of the difference through a medium that turns everything into artificial tomatoes.

When people see Borneo forests on television, they think they're seeing Borneo forests. Actually what they're seeing is television.

Planet Drum PULSE

The past year has been filled with diverse projects here at Planet Drum. As usual, we hosted visitors from all over the world in the office, and our international membership grew, with new members from England and Japan. We are glad to see these connections growing, as it was generally a year of extensive planet-wide efforts to promote bioregionalism.

Peter Berg continues to be grateful for the Gerbode Fellowship, received from the UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare's Gerbode Professional Development Program. This generous funding has allowed repayment of bills accumulated during Guard Fox Watch's monitoring of the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, and bioregional organizing trips to Germany and Italy that followed. Peter and Judy Goldhaft made stops in Dusseldorf, Berlin, Heidelberg, and elsewhere, presenting workshops and performances. Peter continued on to Italy to meet with Italian Bioregional Network members and make presentations for Green City Milan.

Guard Fox Watch plans to attend the Sydney,

Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, which are already under fire on other fronts. We hope that Guard Fox Watch has had something to do with increasing suspicion about the Games.

Our international outreach has expanded through dialogues with the Borneo Project and the Pacific Environmental Resources Council about environmental destruction in Kamchatka, Russia. Peter is also collaborating with several Japanese groups and local Ecuador activists about eco-city planning for Caraquez, Ecuador, and will attend an Eco-Gathering there in February-March. We continued our relationship with the International Forum on Globalization by sending Planet Drum publications to use as resources and by collaborating on various issues. (The Northwest Earth Institute also requested Planet Drum articles for reprinting a book of educational resources.)

We are extremely pleased that Planet Drum Foundation has an outstanding new Board of Directors member in Jerry Martien, Northcoast poet and author. Jerry attended his first Board meeting in

Australia Summer Olympics this year in the person of Kimiharu To (see aboriginal protest announcement on page 12). In addition, Peter will develop a strategy for the

October of 1998.

Locally, Peter gave talks in San Francisco at the First Unitarian Church, SF City College Earth Day, New College of California San Francisco, and the SF Japan Society. He also keynoted the California Re-Leaf conference with a speech entitled "Vision of Local Greening into the 21st Century." And he spoke on Berkeley radio station KPFA regarding the Nagano Olympics. You can hear Peter (along with other thinkers) on the New Dimensions Radio program entitled "Deep Ecology for the 21st Century," and in an hour long personal interview, both of which will be broadcast throughout the country on independent radio. And if you miss it, the program and interview are available on audio tape from New Dimensions.

Planet Drum did a full-scale bioregional workshop in November, which included a tour of natural features in San Francisco and a mapmaking workshop, and we led a California Poppy seed-harvest workshop. Extensive discussions with the Orion Society regarding a Forgotten Language Tour in San Francisco this fall resulted in an agreement to see how this event might coincide with some Planet Drum event.

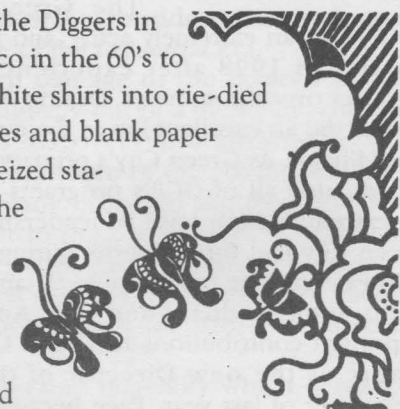
Finally, we are amazed at the volume and quality of responses to our new website. To see it, go to www.planetdrum.org and get connected!

—Ross Robertson

Memoriam

Luna Moth Robbin always found ways to inject light and design into community activism.

She initiated free workshops with the Diggers in San Francisco in the 60's to transform white shirts into tie-died masterpieces and blank paper into marbled stationery. In the 70's she designed a silkscreen of the endangered



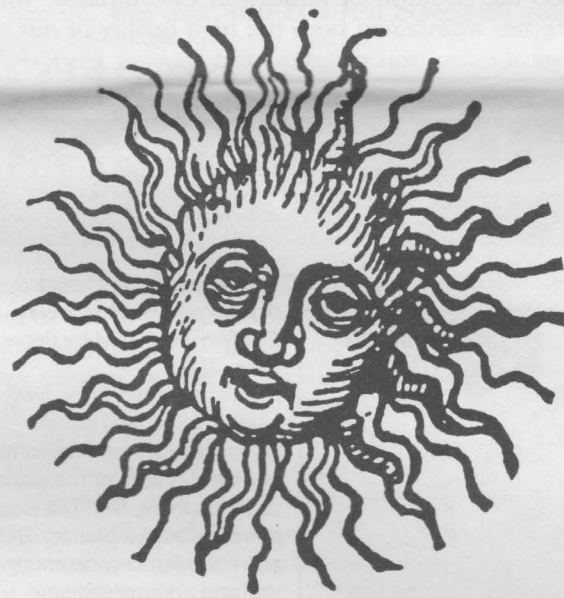
Mission Blue Butterfly and helped people make t-shirts and banners at celebrations to support the Committee to Save San Bruno Mountain. In the 80's and 90's she worked with community groups and children in Hawaii using art to educate about the environment.

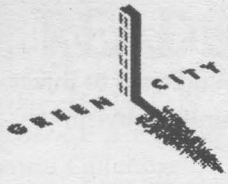
She was a premier recycling artist. The envelopes she sent to Planet Drum were collaged and redesigned—they were't just reused; they were transformed. And they were stuffed with information and drawings about environmental and native rights issues. She designed and silkscreened Rain's poem *Li Po's Daughters* onto muslin for the first Planet Drum Bundle. As a teacher she drew out and expanded the creativity of her students both young and adult.

This past year, she set up an outdoor art installation in Alaska.

Just after the Winter Solstice, Mother Earth reclaimed her.

A glorious soul.





Green City Report

The Green City Project (GCP) had an extremely active and productive third quarter in 1998 after experiencing some staff turnover over the summer. During the summer, Page Hersey did an excellent job as the interim Green City Coordinator. As Green City's primary staff person she coordinated all of GCP's programs and maintained an extremely high level of leadership. Fortunately, Green City had three interns during the summer to help Page run the organization. Thanks again to Greg Gallo, John Stoddard and Julie Amerian for their important contributions to Green City. I began my tenure as the new Director of the GCP in late September of last year. Page became our Education Coordinator, which is her particular area of interest and expertise.

During the second half of 1998, Green City's programs provided quality services to the Bay Area environmental community.

The Green City Calendar is still the Bay Area's only comprehensive listing of urban environmental events and volunteer opportunities. The Calendar continues to connect our readers with the emerging issues around urban sustainability and with others working in their community to help make a difference. Recent topics for the calendar have included green businesses, neighborhood murals and an overview of the Green City idea. We reintroduced the Project Focus section of the calendar, which highlights organizations working on issues related to the calendar's topic. Recent features have spotlighted the Precita Eyes Mural Arts Center and The Franciscan Wildlife Corridor Alliance.

The Volunteer Network (VolNet) remains a valuable asset to the Bay Area environmental community. The VolNet now provides volunteer and information referrals to more than 450 Bay Area environmental organizations.

Green City's Education + Action (E+A) Program is still providing hands-on ecological education to Bay Area students. Page Hersey made a smooth transition into the position of Education Coordinator, where she has maintained both the high quality of our ecological education program and a heavy workload of

three classroom visits per week.

Green City's Workshop/Workdays bring neighborhood groups and volunteers together to implement hands-on ecological projects that both fill a community need and change people's perceptions about their community and the environment. Recent projects have helped create a solar greenhouse at an Oakland school and maintain a rooftop garden in the Tenderloin.

As we enter 1999, Green City is poised and ready to enter a new era in our organizational development.

Our primary emphasis in the third quarter of 1998 was to shore up our membership, financial system and all four GCP programs in preparation for our transition to independent non-profit status in 1999. Our board of directors was put into place, and GCP's paperwork for independent non-profit status has been submitted to both the Secretary of State and the IRS. We anticipate that the GCP's independent status will be secured by January 31, 1999.

Additionally, we began looking for a new home that will also serve as the **Green City Center**. This will be a community center for organizations and individuals working on sustainability in the Bay Area. The Center will expand our ability to link Bay Area environmental efforts by creating a regional center for them. It will be located in one of San Francisco's central, transit-accessible neighborhoods. The Center will provide a place to create an ongoing dialogue on issues related to socially and ecologically healthy cities. We will host forums and presentations, and our meeting space will be available to other community organizations. In addition, the Center will serve as a clearinghouse for all of the latest information on urban sustainability. We have been invited to submit a proposal to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors that requests logistical and financial support with the task of finding a spacious, affordable home for the new Green City Center. Supervisor Gavin Newsome is our point person on this proposal.

We are looking forward to an exciting year in 1999, and we welcome and encourage your partici-

BANA Update

From October to December the Bioregional Association of the Northern Americas (BANA) held elections for new board members. There was an excellent slate of seven people. Several groups noted that they were reluctant to choose between such qualified candidates. Some suggested that the current board choose the best people and that the groups just ratify the selection. To encourage everyone's continued involvement, the five who received the highest number of votes have been elected to the board, and we have asked the remaining two to serve as alternate members. This should ensure that there will be enough members to make a quorum at the board meetings this year. The newly elected board members are Doug Aberley, Betsy Barnum, Acasia Berry, Debra Giannini, and Art Goodtimes. The alternate members are Ernie Reed and Mary Myer. The continuing board members are Peter Berg, Bea Briggs, David Levine, Jeanne-Marie Manning, Judith Plant, Whitney Smith, and Frank Traina. The next board meeting will be in March or April.

The Continental Resources database is successfully compiling entries. If you would like to be listed, request a registration form from BANA.

The creation of a website with text and graphics was given to a designer who had previously offered to create a BANA website. Unfortunately, the *pro bono* designer has been too busy to make progress on the project. If you know someone who would like to design the website and who has spare time to devote to the project, please contact Judy Goldhaft at the BANA office (at Planet Drum).

A revised brochure is in the works, and the BANA office continues to respond to numerous information requests.

—Judy Goldhaft

If you have any questions, need more information or have any ideas for us, please contact us at (415) 285-6556.

—Brian Block, GCP Director

PLANET DRUM PUBLICATIONS

Reinhabiting a Separate Country: A Bioregional

Anthology of Northern California, edited by Peter Berg. 220 p.

Essays, natural history, biographies, poems, and stories revealing Northern California as a distinct area of the planetary biosphere. \$7 "The Book serves as both a pioneer and genre model ...representing a vital and widespread new ethos." —*New Age Magazine*

A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area

and Beyond by Peter Berg, Beryl Magilav and Seth Zuckerman. 90+ p. This book is the culmination of two years' work with more than 100 Bay Area organizations, has both visionary ideas and practical applications and is in its second printing with a new chapter on Green City Realities. It addresses ecological, socially responsible and sustainable topics ranging from Smart Transportation to Recycling and Reuse. \$7

Discovering Your Life-Place: A First Bioregional Workbook

by Peter Berg. Have you ever had a hard time explaining bioregionalism to others? This Bioregional Workbook is based on interactive workshops that Peter Berg has led with thousands of participants at community forums, schools, and universities. In a light-hearted, storytelling fashion, the workbook teaches about bioregionalism and leads the reader through a practical map-making exercise. It allows everyone to realize their relationships with local natural systems and makes understanding environmental issues and natural sciences tangible, real and exciting. The workbook is perfect for all classrooms—kindergarten through adult education. For one workbook send \$10 (Planet Drum members send only \$7.50) plus \$2 shipping and handling. Contact us for larger orders.

RAISE THE STAKES

Reinhabitation or Global Monoculture?

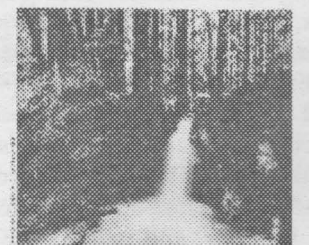


Postcards from the Underside of the Nagano Olympics

"Guard Fox Watch Statements," and "Localizers: The Community Currency Alternative." Also, Circles of Correspondence, book and film reviews, PD Pulse, BANA Update, and Green City Report.

RAISE THE STAKES

MAINSTREAMING WATERSHEDS



also MEXICO: Gathering of the Americas

Correspondence reports range from Alberta to Hawaii and the Colorado Plateau to Italy's Po River Valley. Book reviews, Planet Drum Pulse, Green City Report, and update on the Bioregional Association of the Northern Americas. \$4.

3 R's and a B: Bioregional School, *Raise the Stakes* 26 (Fall 1996). This issue focuses on alternative education practices, specifically bioregional school programs, urban eco-education, and folk learning. Articles include "You Are

RAISE THE STAKES BACK ISSUES

Reinhabitation or Global Monoculture?, *Raise the Stakes* 28 (Spring 1998). Explore bioregional responses to our planet's rapid globalization with this international issue. Articles include "Bioregionalism vs. Fascism," "Bringing Back Mangroves," "Postcards from the Olympics' Underside,"

Mainstreaming Watersheds, *Raise the Stakes* 27 (Summer 1997). Articles on International Rivers Network, Freeman House about the importance of restoration ecology, how to create a Green City Calendar, preserving restoration culture, and bioregional spirituality. Special articles on Mexico Gathering of "the Americas" by Peter Berg and Starhawk. Circles of

RAISE THE STAKES

3 R's and a B: Bioregional School



Reports, *Raise the Stakes* 25 (Winter 1995/1996). Find out how local bioregional activities are becoming prevalent on a global scale. This issue includes a comprehensive interview with David Suzuki by Peter Berg on local grassroots activism, planetary and ecological awareness; reports from South of the Alps, Rhineland, Spain, Scotland, Japan, and the U.S.; a review of Stephanie Mills' *In Service of the Wild* by Jim Dodge; Peter Berg on the role of bioregionalism in United Nations policy, and more. Also, Remembering Franco Beltrametti, Circles of Correspondence, PD Pulse, and bioregional directory updates. \$4.

Bioregional Directory & Map

RAISE THE STAKES



produced by Steven Holloway. Perfect for bioregional

Where You Eat," "Interspecies Lessons," "Bayou Boat-building," "School in a Wild Preserve, an interview with Doug Tompkins," and others. Perfect for teachers, students and everyone. Also, Bioregional Association of the Northern Americas (BANA) report, Circles of Correspondence, book reviews, and poetry. \$4.

Connecting Our Species: Planet

Reports, *Raise the Stakes* 25 (Winter 1995/1996). Find out how local bioregional activities are becoming prevalent on a global scale. This issue includes a comprehensive interview with David Suzuki by Peter Berg on local grassroots activism, planetary and ecological awareness; reports from South of the Alps, Rhineland, Spain, Scotland, Japan, and the U.S.; a review of Stephanie Mills' *In Service of the Wild* by Jim Dodge; Peter Berg on the role of bioregionalism in United Nations policy, and more. Also, Remembering Franco Beltrametti, Circles of Correspondence, PD Pulse, and bioregional directory updates. \$4.

Bioregional Directory and Map

Reports, *Raise the Stakes* 24 (Winter 1994/Spring 1995). A listing of more than 200 bioregional groups and publications in the Northern Americas as well as in Europe and Australia. This issue is a useful way to find bioregionally-minded groups and individuals in your area. Also included is a centerfold map of the represented bioregions of the Northern Americas

PLANET DRUM PUBLICATIONS

organizers or contacts on the road. Planet Drum Pulse; Green City Report. \$5.

RAISE THE STAKES

The Planet Drum Review



Things That Really Work, Raise the Stakes 23 (Summer 1994).

Chronicles some of the tools and practices that have proven to be effective when bioregionally conscious individuals apply them to their lives. Articles include "Teach Local," Peter Berg's "Putting 'Bio' in Front of Regional," "Making a Garden of Consequence," and "Where Poems Come From: An Interview with Jerry Martien."

Also included is a Circles of Correspondence section with reports from Southern Australia and Mexico, Reads, PD Pulse, Green City Report, and a Planet Drum Publications page. \$4.

RAISE THE STAKES

The Planet Drum Review



Food As Place: Bioregional Agriculture, Raise the Stakes 22 (Winter 1993/1994).

This issue focuses on agriculture as a multinational business and provides alternatives which directly relate to bioregionalism. Methods and benefits of locally-grown foods and gardens. Features include "A Garden Growing Wild," "Eating Our Teachers: Local Food, Local Knowledge," and "Linking Plant Homelands and Human Homelands."

Juan-Tomas Rehbock's report on organic agriculture in Argentina; book reviews, Circles of Correspondence and PD Pulse. \$4

Bioregional Culture, Raise the Stakes 21 (Spring/Summer 1993). Take a look at several unique bioregions in the articles within this issue, from India to Silverton, Colorado. What bioregionalism means to different people and its significance in determining one's own place. Circles of Correspondence: Oak Ridges Moraine, Aquaterra, Mexico, Intertribal Indian Park. Reads & Reads; Green City Report; PD Publications. \$4.

Eco-Governance II: The Anatomy of the Shasta Bioregional Gathering, Raise the Stakes 20 (Fall 1992) An in-depth survey and exploration of the first Shasta Bioregional Gathering in northern California from conception to realization including highlights, participant reports and musings. Also samples bioregional gathering observations/outlines from Toronto's first Bioregion Week and the fifth TIBC held in Kerrville, Texas. Inspirational accounts and provocative critiques of the bioregional movement, questioning rhetoric and processes of congressing. A companion issue to RTS #18/19; together they provide an important tool for those planning a gathering in their home

region. \$4.

Eco-Governance: Bioregional Gatherings, Raise the Stakes 18/19 (Winter 1991/Spring 1992). Informative accounts of bioregional gatherings in British Columbia, the Cascades, the Great Prairie, Ozarks, Detroit, the Great Lakes, Ohio River watershed, northcentral Pennsylvania, and Italy. Also features special reports from indigenous groups in the Dakota Black Hills, Mexico, Costa Rica, and San Francisco in response to the quincennial of Columbus' arrival; Peter Berg on "Post-Environmentalist Origins"; reviews, including educational magazines; bioregional directory updates; PD Pulse; and news of the Green City Project. \$5

Europe Now: The Bioregional Prospect, Raise the Stakes 16 (Spring/Summer 1990). Articles by George Tukul on "Reinhabitation in Hungary," Thomas Kaiser's "The Difficulty of Discovering Eastern Europe," Green discussions for reorganizing along bioregional lines rather than as nation-states; new social inventions in P.M.'s "Planetary Wednesday Liberation Movement;" Ruggero Schleicher-Tappeser's "Ten Theses for Regional Ecological Development;" reports on the restoration of prehistoric sites in Catalunya and a glimpse of sustainable agriculture in Neolithic (New Stone Age) France by Marc Bonfils. Includes reports from Seitland, Ireland and the Italian Alps, directory updates, reviews, and poetry. \$4

Borders, Raise the Stakes 14 (Winter 1988-89). Explores the importance of the concept of boundaries from a bioregional perspective. Features include an interview with Malcolm Margolin on "Walking the Border Between Native and Non-native Culture," Judith Plant's account of crossing a national border for the first extra-U.S. NABC, Dolores LaChapelle's "Boundary Crossing" as a way of reconciling wilderness and civilization, Beryl Magilavy on returning nature to art, and Stephen Duplantier on "Distance Disease." Reports feature the Dominican Republic, a bioregional manifesto from the Mediterranean Basin and Josep Puig's argument for a new border there. Poetry by Jerry Martien. \$3

Nature in Cities, Raise the Stakes 13 (Winter 1988). Urban areas don't have to be diametrically opposed to natural systems. Beryl Magilavy discusses "Cities within Nature," urban policy issues and ecological practices are further pursued in David Goode's "The Green City as Thriving City" and Christine Furedy's "Natural Recycling in Asian Cities." Doug Aberley discusses Native American reinhabitation in "Windy Bay Journal," Brian Tokar reports on the Gulf of Maine Bioregional Congress, and Peter Garland looks at the musical tradition of Michoacan, Mexico. \$3

Open Fire: A Council of Bioregional Self Criticism, Raise the Stakes 10 (Summer 1984). From about seventy persons, guest editor Jim Dodge selects representative gripes from Marni Muller, Bill Devall, Gary Snyder, Kelly Kindscher, and others. The centerfold is Peter Berg's "Amble Towards A Continental Congress." The insert: A Bioregional Directory. Also: Slocan Valley, New South Wales, and Alaska reports. Networking news and reviews. \$3

What's Happening to the Water Web?, Raise the Stakes 7 (Spring 1983). Highlights "The Water Web" special section with Donald Wooster's histor-

ical look, "The Flow of Power," and articles about the Columbia River Watch and terminal lakes. Plus reports from Euskadi and the Australian Big Scrub, and in North America from the Connecticut River area, the Slocan Valley, the Gulf of Maine, and the Triple Divide. Centerfold photo essay, "Songs of the Outback." \$3

Cities—Salvaging the Parts, Raise the Stakes 3. Contains regional updates from the Black Hills and Samiland as well as in depth reports from Aboriginal Australia, the Rockies, the North Atlantic Rim, and the Klamath/Trinity, Passaic, and Sonoran Watersheds. Other features include Bioregional Comics by Leonard Rifas, Aesthetics by Michael McClure, Renewable Energy to Renew Society by Peter Berg, Cities: Salvaging the Parts by Gary Snyder, Ernest Callenbach, Murray Bookchin and Morris Berman, Decentralism by Jacques Ellul, No Guarantees by Tom Birch, and poetry by Peter Blue Cloud. \$3

Issues 1,2,4,5,6,8,9,11,12 15 and 17 are sold out. We will, however, make complete sets of Raise the Stakes available to libraries and archives.

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Water Web is a 20 minute performance by Judy Goldhaft with words and movement that celebrate water and describes our complex relationship to it. Live performances can be arranged through Planet Drum. Script is available for \$4.

Proceedings from North American Congresses (NABCs) II, III, IV. Includes essays, illustrations, poetry along with resolutions from the proceedings. NABC II-\$9; NABC III-\$8; NABC IV-\$10.

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Help Build a Bioregional Group in your area. We can help by sending a list of Planet Drum members there. To introduce your friends to bioregional ideas, send us their names and we'll forward a complimentary issue of *Raise the Stakes*. Send us ten names and we'll mail you a copy of *Reinhabiting a Separate Country* for your effort.

Send a report from your region to *Raise the Stakes*, for publication in the Circles of Correspondence section.

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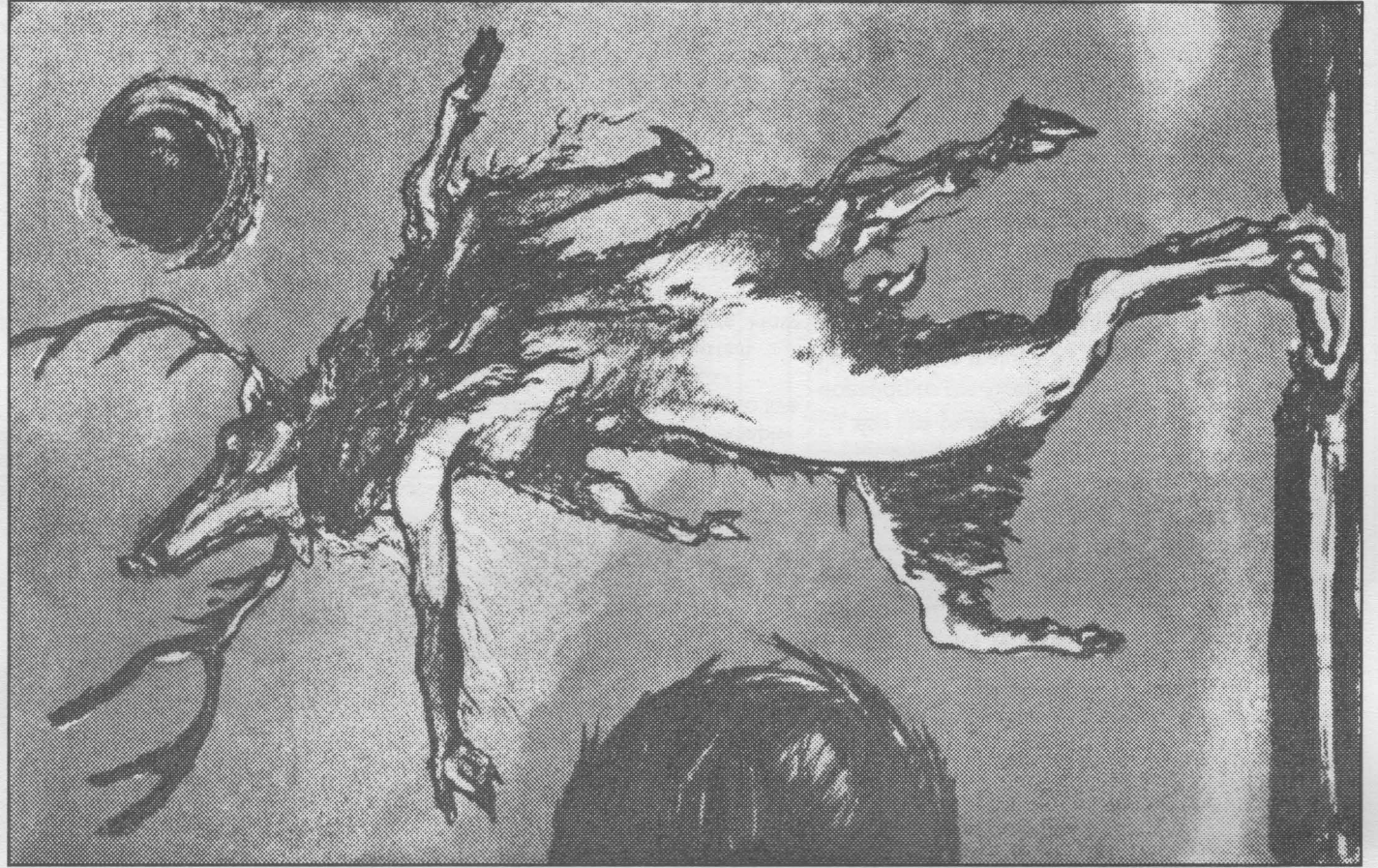
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