

Race, Poverty & the Environment

A newsletter for social and environmental justice

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The Iraq War Young People on the Front

by Victor Lewis

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the subsequent world response, has dominated the news for the past two months. What has been missing from the reports is an analysis of how the issues of race, poverty and the environment are **central** to and play out in — the Persian Gulf crisis. Also **missing** is any examination of the war's **toll** on children. **As** part of our special issue on young people, this article **attempts** to **fill** some of these gaps. As Thomas **Pynchon** wrote, "If they get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to **worry** about the answers."

War and Children

Young people bear the heaviest burden of war. Because of their small size, physical weakness, and lack of experience at the game of survival, they make the most vulnerable targets. Hunger, a major consequence of **war**, damages and destroys children much more swiftly **than adults**. **Growing up** in the midst of armed conflict might cost a child the loss of one or both parents, or the loss of an eye or a limb. But it also costs them something more — their childhoods.

Young men, ordered by their elders, do the lion's share of the fighting in war. And if they are not killed in combat, they wear the physical and emotional scars for the duration of their lives. The average age of an U.S. soldier in Viet Nam was 19. These vets now have perhaps the

>> see **YOUTH AT WAR**, page 14

For in the baby lies the future of the world. Father must hold the baby close so that the baby knows it is her world. Mother must take her to the highest hill so that she can see what her world is like...

-- Mayan proverb

Lead Poisoning Still Strikes Inner City Youth

by Arthur Monroe

Lead poisoning is killing and maiming our children. More than **three** million children across the U.S. are at risk, **according** to a study by the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services

Lead is one of the **oldest** environmental hazard known to humans. with hundreds of studies demonstrating its devastating

effects on the nervous system. Despite thousands of years of knowledge of the dangers of lead, recent studies show that lead poisoning is still a routine **occurrence**, especially among poor, **inner** city children.

Child lead poisoning became an issue of public concern in the 1960s

and 1970s, spurred by reports of severe poisonings, some resulting in convulsions, comas, mental retardation, **and** even death. Today, more than 20 years later, children across the United States still **face** serious threats to their health and development because of lead poisoning. Several government studies in recent years have focused on the problem, and the U.S. Environmental **Protection** Agency and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry have concluded in policy statements that lead at even **lower** doses than previously thought is a serious **threat** to the **central** nervous systems of infants and children. Children, because of they **are** still growing and **because** of their small **size**, are particularly susceptible to lead poisoning, and their behavior — such as eating lead paint chips and playing in the yard — places them at **greater** risk of poisoning **than** most adults. The children most at **risk** — low-income inner

>> see **LEAD**, page 17

Special Issue on

Youth

Children & War
Lead Poisoning

- Job Opportunities
- Youth Initiatives
- Billboards in the Inner City
- and more...

Welcome to our third issue of *Race, Poverty & the Environment*. This issue is the first of our theme issues, with the topic being youth. We have **tried** to pull together articles and resources that explore and analyze race, **poverty** and the **environ-**ment as they apply to children and youth, to examine the ways that children are most vulnerable to **environmental** hazards, and to show ways that children **are** in the forefront of responding to this nation's environmental crises. We **also** think — not immodestly — that this issue showcases the diversity of approaches to environmental problems. Victor Lewis looks at the war in the Persian Gulf and its effect on youth and the environment, **as well as** many of the real questions around race and class which have been left unexamined by the mainstream press. Arthur Monroe **syn-****opsizes** a-frightening report by the state of California on lead poisoning of **inner** city **kids**. Billboards, which blight our

urban **neighborhoods** and **seem** to target **kids**, **are** critically approached by Ed **McMahon**. Balancing out these looks at hazards are hopeful articles for the **future** — like Marcia Chen's report on the **CEIP Minority Opportunities Study**, which is already raising consciousness

Putting out this issue has not been without growing pains. Responding to the need to be more inclusive in putting **RPE out, as well as** bringing more people of color into positions of responsibility within our movement, we have expanded the editorial **staff** of **RPE**. **Ellie Goodwin**, outreach **coordi-****nator** at the Natural Resources Defense Council, is our new managing editor, responsible for most of the logistics and for **getting** the **newsletter** out on schedule. Victor **Lewis** moves up the

»» **EDITOR'S NOTES, page 18**

Editors' Notes

in the environmental field (special thanks to John Cook of CEIP for allowing us to reprint large excerpts of their report). And we are encouraged by news of **Richie** Havens' Natural Guard, a new way to get **kids** involved in environmental work. Our "Youth Notes" section contains vignettes and tidbits from around the **country**.

We **also** have our **regular** features — four **reportbacks** from events across the **U.S.**, our resources section with **dozens** of listings, and a news item on **EPA's** recent move to look **at** the impact of environmental hazards on poor people and people of color.

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In This Issue...

The Iraq War: Young People on the Front, by Victor Lewis.....	1
Lead Poisoning Still Strikes Inner City Youth, by Arthur Monroe.....	1
People of Color and the Environmental Job Market: Good News, Bad News, by Marcia Chen.....	3
Call in the Natural Guard, by Randall Beach.....	4
EPA Focuses on People of Color.....	4
Billboards: Teaching Kids to Smoke, by Ed McMahon.....	5
Youth Notes.....	19
Departments	
Editors' Notes.....	2
Reportbacks	
Kettleman City, CA, March 10-11, 1990.....	6
Berkeley, CA, March 29-April 1, 1990.....	7
Washington, DC, April 9-10, 1990.....	8
Dilkon, AZ, June 29-July 1, 1990.....	9
Resources.....	10

People of Color and the Environmental Job Market: Goods News, Bad News

by Marcia Chen

"Over the next [11] years, the American workforce and the economy will be shaped by five demographic 'facts':

- *The population and the workforce will grow more slowly than at any time since the 1930s.*

- *The average age of the population and the workforce will rise, and the pool of young workers entering the labor market will shrink.*

- *More women will enter the workforce, although the rate of increase will taper off.*

- *Minorities will be a larger share of new entrants into the labor force.*

- *Immigrants will represent the largest share of the increase in the population and the workforce since the First World War."*

— William B. Johnson and Arnold E. Packer, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century*, Hudson Institute, 1987

"If we're going to maintain a competitive advantage, we have got to be able to tap this labor pool and get the very best people from it we can. To do this is going to be a tremendous challenge for management."

— Kevin Carr, Manager, Minority Issues Development, BP America

The environmental field desperately needs to diversify its work force, which is predominantly white and male. With the majority of the future labor pool being women and minorities, the environmental field is **ill-equipped** to

attract, recruit, **train**, and retain this important human resource. **The** environmental field needs leadership in diversifying its work force, yet there is very little happening to address this issue of immediate strategic **importance**.

These are some of the conclusions of the CEIP Fund's *Minority Opportunities Study*. The study was an assessment of the state of minorities in the environmental field, and an analysis of how the CEIP Fund could improve the participation of people of color. **Over** an eight month period, we **looked at recruitment**, training, and retention methods for minorities, researched other career fields successful at managing diverse **workforces**, examined the educational pipeline that produces environmental professionals, and analyzed what the environmental field was doing to attract minority **groups**.

The study concludes that the current supply and demand for minorities in the environmental field is critically **unbalanced**. Adjustments in the human **resource** management of environmental employers, increased **recruitment** and retention of minority students in higher educational **institutions** (particularly in math and science disciplines), and greater outreach into the minority communities about **opportunities** in the environmental field are necessary to correct this.

In the future, hiring minorities and women will no longer be a matter of law or morality but one of competitive necessity. As Henry Cisneros, mayor of

San Antonio, Texas, notes. "It seems this **whole** question of ethnic transformation is no longer a question of doing right by someone else, exhibiting **Judeo-Christian** compassion, observing civil rights, or upholding constitutional ideals. It becomes an issue of how America functions, and how America, not to put too **strong** a phrase on it, 'survives.'"

The environmental profession is one of the fastest growing career fields. Since the formation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the early seventies, there has been an explosion of jobs in conserving, protecting, monitoring, testing, litigating about and researching the environment. The passage of the Superfund Act alone has generated thousands of jobs in corporations, government agencies, consulting **firms**, nonprofit organizations, and community groups. Corporations have moved from a small number of environmental consultants to large internal divisions that deal with regulatory compliance and other environmental concerns.

Environmental awareness is at an all time high. From presidential elections to the national media, the environment has become one of the most pressing issues of our **day**. **Global warming/** ozone, **hazardous waste/toxic** substances, and air and water pollution are no longer **terms** used by environmental specialists alone, but have become common **to the average** citizen. Environmental organizations are finding membership and donations increasing rapidly. Governmental agencies are increasing staffs and budgets with corresponding growth in industry. While issues, **awareness**, and employment opportunities are all on the **rise**, the people and the talents needed to fill **these** jobs are becoming scarce.

Simultaneously, **there are** dramatic changes happening in our populations and our work force. *Workforce 2000* reports that in the **21st century**, the labor pool **will** have more women, **Blacks**, Hispanics, and Asians than ever before. White males, thought of only a

»» see CAREERS, page 12

Call in the Natural Guard

by Randall Beach

Richie Havens' idea is simple and basic — get information to kids about their environment, give them a few resources and watch them change the world. Havens, a popular folk singer and longtime peace activist, is calling his new organization The Natural Guard. He has been meeting with local officials and activists, and expects to have chapters operating in about ten communities by next year.

The Natural Guard's first two environmental centers, offering a variety of scheduled programs for kindergarten through high school kids, opened this summer in Connecticut and Maryland. Others are being set up in Arizona, New York, New Mexico, Florida, Maine, California and Washington, D.C.

Havens says an important benefit of the Natural Guard will be to bring more blacks into the environmental movement, although the group is not consciously aimed at doing so. "The places where minorities live have the greatest lack of environmental programs, yet need the greatest care," he notes.

Natural Guard will stress hands-on, community-based activities, including recycling, litter and pollution patrols, community gardens, constructing nature trails, planting trees and protecting wildlife. "My personal initiative," says Havens, "is to reach the entire next generation with information. Kids are already interested in this. When it comes to the environment, adults are the ones that need to be re-educated." Given the proper resources, Havens says, "Youths can regain access to and become involved in cleaning up their own

community. Once they learn the natural environment won't harm them, we hope this will lead to careers for these kids."

Havens knows it's tough starting a new urban project while budget cutbacks are bleeding our cities, but feels the chapters will be inexpensive. Each office will have one full-time environmental educator paid by the Natural Guard, and if possible, another paid by the community. The Environmental Protection Agency helped the recently-started chapters obtain materials, and the United Way has also expressed an interest in helping out.

Havens, who grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, New York, remembers how he used to escape urban realities: "I had a nice park near my house. I spent a lot of time hanging out in the tops of trees in the '50s. That's how we connected with the environment"

Havens says the full flowering of his consciousness came at the Woodstock festival in 1969, where he was the first performer, capturing the event's spirit with the Beatles song, "Here Comes the Sun." "It was a gathering of like-minded people," recalls Havens. "A lot of people in the environmental movement today were at Woodstock" Twenty-one years later, Havens warns, "We are now at the point of no return. If environmental work isn't done now, it never will be."

For more information, contact Randall Snodgrass, The Natural Guard, 1400 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, 2021797-5473. Reprinted courtesy of E Magazine. Call 1-800-825-0061 for subscription information.

EPA Focuses on People of Color

An EPA workgroup on the impact of environmental problems on low-income and minority populations has been formed, and met for the first time on August 21, 1990. The group was created as a result of the lobbying efforts by environmental justice advocates known as the "Michigan Coalition."

Mandated by a memo from EPA Administrator William Reilly, the group will be doing "a review and evaluation of evidence that minority and low-income people bear a disproportionate risk burden," according to a memo to members of the workgroup from its chairman, Robert Wolcott, Director of the Water and Agriculture Policy Division of EPA's Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation. Wolcott said, "Although there are numerous anecdotes to suggest the placement of a disproportionate risk burden on minority and low-income communities, the agency's careful review of the evidence is needed. Clearly, a robust finding of inequitable burden will hasten us to identify remedial measures that the agency and states could take. Less clear findings will, on the other hand, suggest other approaches."

Other tasks for the workgroup are:

- A review of current EPA programs to identify factors that might give rise to discriminatory outcomes and to develop approaches to correct any such problems.
- A review of institutional relationships, including outreach to and consultation with minority and low-income organizations on matters before the agency.

Instead of waiting for the generalized statement of the first task, Wolcott suggested that the workgroup proceed with the second and third tasks immediately. He cited subsistence fishing, multiple-dwelling-unit pesticide use, farm-worker safety and exposures to lead in general as areas in which members should develop approaches to correct problems.

As part of the EPA's efforts, on September 13, Reilly met with the Michigan Coalition, a group of advocates for environmental equity — including Robert Bullard, Bunyan Bryant and David Hahn-Baker — who will serve as advisors to the agency's project.

— Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News, Aug. 15, 1990

What tobacco ads are big, intrusive, and uniquely harmful to children?

You guessed it: billboards.

Billboards are spreading like a pox across our land, the largest number plugging cigarettes and booze, products that have been channeled off the **airwaves** by federal law, only to drop onto our landscape.

Cigarettes are the single most advertised product on billboards. In urban areas as many as half of all billboards push cigarettes. In inner-city black neighborhoods, the problem is even worse. There are more billboards in these neighborhoods, and a much higher percentage of them plug cigarettes.

Just over a year ago, St. Louis inventoried its billboards and found nearly three times as many in black neighborhoods as in white. Of those in black neighborhoods, 62% advertised cigarettes and booze, compared to 36% in white neighborhoods. Surveys in San Francisco, New Orleans, and Detroit have found similar results.

All tobacco advertising is harmful. So what makes billboards worse than these other ads? Plenty!

For one thing, billboards are impossible to ignore. No one is forced to read ads in magazines or newspapers, but tobacco ads are unavoidable when displayed on billboards. The American public is a captive audience to billboards that can't be turned off.

What's more, children are particularly susceptible to the ill effects of billboards. Even before they can read, young children enjoy looking at the world around them. They cannot avoid seeing the giant cowboys and athletes that associate smoking with good health and pleasure. Every year, two million children start smoking at the average age of 13. These children are the replacement smokers who allow the tobacco industry to maintain sales despite the millions of Americans who quit or die of cigarette-induced diseases.

Unlike other media, the billboard industry exercises no meaningful controls on the placement of its ads. Most magazines primarily aimed at readers under 18 will not accept

BILLBOARDS: Teaching Kids to Smoke

by Ed McMahon

tobacco ads, but there are no restraints on the billboard industry. They put billboards anywhere and everywhere, including next to elementary schools, homes, churches, parks, playgrounds, health centers, sports stadiums, literally everywhere.

For example, when students at the Rafael Hernandez Elementary School in Boston recently posed for a class picture, a giant billboard loomed behind them. The students had learned about the dangers of smoking in health class, but the billboard over their playground equated smoking with sophistication and success.

The ubiquitous nature of billboards makes outdoor advertising unique in its ability to reinforce smoking with the cue to smoke for those already addicted. Ironically, while billboards are the only tobacco ads the public is forced to look at, the warning labels on billboards are impossible to read.

Apart from health worries, many people say they are offended by the sheer size and number of billboards. This is why four states and more than 1,000 cities have totally prohibited all billboards. In just the past three years, more than 500 cities have enacted new laws to limit or eliminate billboards.

If your community wants to do something about public health and urban blight, it should start with billboards. Billboard controls would benefit those interested in seeing an uncluttered view of our cities and countryside. They are also a meaningful and constitutional way to curb advertising for a product that causes disease and death.

For information on what you can do to curb outdoor tobacco advertising in your community, contact the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, 216 7th St., SE, Washington, DC 20003, 202/546-1000.

Ed McMahon is the Executive Director of the Coalition for Scenic Beauty.

These children are the replacement smokers who allow the tobacco industry to maintain sales despite the millions of Americans who quit or die of cigarette-induced diseases.

REPORTBACK...

California Communities Against Toxics
Conference, Kettleman City, CA. March 10-11,
1990.

Empowerment Through Coalition Building in California

More than 125 anti-toxics activists from 30 California communities gathered in **Kettleman** City in California's San Joaquin Valley for the second California Communities Against Toxics (CCAT) Conference on March 10-11, 1990. The conference, hosted by the **Kettleman** City community group *El Pueblo para el Aire y Agua Limpia* (People for **Clean** Air and Water), was a chance for **grassroots** leaders to learn skills, share strategies, and come up with a common agenda for anti-toxics work.

The first sessions focused on **learning** about toxics. **Speakers** discussed the *real* solution to our toxics problems: toxics use and source reduction, and pollution prevention. In a report to the group on "Toxics in California: Where Do We Stand," Michael Picker of the National Toxics

Campaign pointed out that while most pollution and toxics disposal is **decentralized**, most decisions — such as what products will be produced, using which chemicals — are **centralized**, being made by just a few chemical companies. Citizen activists need to increase pressure on these companies, as well as fighting **decentralized** battles at the

local level, if we are to win in the long **run**.

Breaking into two groups to discuss fighting proposed facilities and how to deal with existing problems, **participants** came up with a list of demands on the state of California, which were later sent to the director of the state Department of Health Services. **These** demands included: allocating significant funding to toxics use and source **reduction/pollution** prevention plans; funding specialists chosen by affected **communities** to **do research** in and for the communities; identifying **state** agencies which use and create hazardous waste and requiring them to reduce that waste; and rewriting the state's hazardous waste Capacity Assurance Plan to include the public in the planning process. CCAT also called for

While most pollution and toxics disposal is decentralized, most decisions — such as what products will be produced, using which chemicals — are centralized, being made by just a few chemical companies. Citizen activists need to increase pressure on these companies, as well as fighting our decentralized battles at the local level, if we are to win in the long run.

a five-year moratorium on the siting of new toxics facilities. "We view the siting of facilities as a violent assault on the collective health and well-being of our communities," said the resolution passed by CCAT. (The state has met the activists' request with silence.)

Skills such as working **with** the media, organizing a protest, research for

action, and building and maintaining a community group **were** taught at workshops on the second day, with long-time anti-toxic5 activists such as **Lew** Dunn of **Casmalia**, Marylia Kelly of the Tri-Valley Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment in **Livermore**, Robin Cannon of Concerned Citizens of South **Central Los Angeles** and Henry Clark of the West **County** Toxics Coalition of Richmond providing insight and examples of successful organizing drives.

On the second **day** of the conference, participants put their theories into action, holding a rally at the **gates** of Chemical Waste Management's Class I hazardous waste dump at **Kettleman Hills** to protest Chem Waste's proposal to build a massive hazardous waste incinerator at the site. The dump, located

just three miles from the low-income, 95 percent Latino **farmworker** community of Kettleman City, is already the largest hazardous waste dump west of the Mississippi, and **has** a history of violations of environmental laws. *El Pueblo para el Aire y Agua Limpia* has **been** fighting the proposed incinerator for the past **two** years, and hosted the conference to draw statewide **attention** to their **struggle**. Mary Lou Mares of *El Pueblo* emphasized the importance of holding the conference in her community: "It shows that we are not alone — if we can unite all these people, we have a much better chance of winning."

The conference, hosted and **run** by *El Pueblo*, was funded by and **organized** with help from Greenpeace and the California Communities at Risk Project of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation. For more information on California Communities Against Toxics, contact Bill Buck, CCAT, 2269 Chestnut, Suite 270, San Francisco, CA 94123.

— Luke Cole

First International **EcoCity Conference**, Berkeley, CA, March 29-April 1, 1990.

Urban Ecology Conference Highlights Social Justice

Over 700 attendees from around the world convened in Berkeley, CA, March 29 through April 1, 1990 to discuss reshaping cities based upon ecological principles. The event, the First International **EcoCity Conference**, was organized by Urban Ecology, Inc. and **stressed** the importance of healthy patterns of urban land use as a foundation for environmental protection and restoration. "The aim of the conference," according to Richard Register, **President** of Urban Ecology, "was to put awareness of cities on the environmental agenda for the **1990s**."

"There are many things missing in American cities today," noted Dennis Hayes, Director of Earth Day 1990, in his keynote address to the conference. "But I think the most important of them is vision. What we need is political courage and creativity in sensing what our cities ought to be like to meet genuine needs we have as people, and to live within the resource constraints we'll face in the years **ahead**." Three important themes emerged from the 130 **speakers** on 85 panels.

First, continued expansion of sprawled suburban development and our subsequent dependence on the automobile must be reversed. **Mixed-use**, higher-density developments with **pedestrian** access to goods and services are needed to reduce energy **use** and output of pollutants. New affordable housing should be built near existing **transit** services. Urban agriculture, creek restoration, urban **forestry**, effective source reduction and **precycling** programs would help establish a new balance **between** human habitat and nature. Instead of sprawled suburban development, cities would be bounded

by greenbelts, woodlots and local farmlands.

Second, unless the international community adopts a new standard of ecological responsibility to guide urban economic growth at this watershed in history, our **already** critical global environmental problems will worsen dramatically. In plenary talks, Berkeley Mayor Loni **Hancock**, physicist Fritjof Capra, **astronaut** Edgar Mitchell, and veteran environmentalist David Brower **referred** to major political and ecological changes at a global level. International development along the lines of the current American model is already having disastrous environmental consequences. Dependence on petroleum is a threat to national security and global survival. Unless the U.S. and other wealthy countries **reverse** their dependence fossil fuels, developing countries cannot be expected to **make** a priority of minimizing their dependence on non renewable resources. **The** result will be an unbearable strain on an already over burdened biosphere.

Third, and perhaps most important, **principles** of social and economic justice must be at the heart of any efforts to **restructure** our urban environment to protect and restore precious natural resources. Within the U.S. people of color must be **prepared** to assume leadership in helping to establish new urban **priorities**. **Chapell Hayes**, **Lilly Mae Jones**, **Karl Linn**, **Cathy Sneed Marcum**, **Charlotte Kahn**, **Arthur Monroe**, **Running Grass**, **Rachel Baker**, **Isao Fugimoto**, **Eleanor Walden** and **Carlos Vialva** were among panelists stressing these principles. But the **theme** of social justice was most forcefully focused in a **forum** introduced by Earth Island Institute's David Brower, featuring four **African American** speakers.

Carl Anthony, a planner of the conference, stressed that attempts to rebuild the city in balance with nature is both a threat and an opportunity for poor people, working people and people of color. "It is a **threat**," he said.

"**because** it risks unleashing the forces of **gentrification**. It risks obscuring, minimizing and **distracting** attention **from** arrangements which keep people oppressed. The claims of the poor and homeless may be buried under an avalanche of new urban priorities. It is an opportunity, however, because its goals are life **affirming**, based on a vision of health and ecological diversity in the human habitat"

Victor Lewis, a faculty member at the Institute on Culture and Creation Spirituality, delivered a stinging critique of green politics in the U.S. The U.S. Green **movement**, he said, "fails to adequately identify itself with many of the human victims of **ecocidal** ideology. It lacks **commitment** to needs and interests of people of color and working class people."

Sharif Abdullah of Portland revealed personal injuries of class and race. "I stand before you, a poisoned individual," he said, explaining that he had grown up in the Black **ghetto** of **Camden, NJ**, downwind from an oil refinery and chemical plants. If we hope to make big changes in our environment, he warned, "We're not going to do it on whales."

A high point in **the** symposium came when **Cordell** Reagon, veteran of the civil rights **struggle** in the early 1960s, a **former** member of the Student Nonviolent **Coordinating** Committee, and founder of the Freedom Singers, introduced his **remarks** by leading the crowd, already overflowing into the hallways, in song: "Where have all **the** flowers gone?" **Reagon forcefully** reminded the mostly white audience. "**You** can't have a movement without the teeming poor in the cities. You just ain't **gonna** have a movement without **us**."

Brower, long recognized as the Martin Luther King of the **environmental** movement, added concluding **remarks**. "**The** effort to bring African Americans and Latinos into the movement is one of the most important things we need to do, and one of our greatest

>> see **ECOCITY**, page 8

<< from *ECOCITY*, page 7

lacks. White environmentalists have a lot to learn. They must **learn** to 'listen eloquently' to Third **World** people."

Although most attendees at the conference were from the U.S., participants came from Austria, West Germany, the USSR, Norway, Mexico, France, Australia, India, Canada and Denmark. The Conference Summary Statement summed up the challenge of the **Ecocity** Conference: "Now that we have met internationally, we must go back and act locally. Each person here must make a **commitment** to their communities to inform and inspire others."

— *Carl Anthony*

For a 128-page Conference Report send \$695 each, or \$495 each for orders of 10 or more, to Urban Ecology, PO Box 10144, Berkeley, CA 94709. Prices include third class postage within the US; please add \$1.85 per copy for first class US postage; for international postage add \$2.00 per copy for air mail.

National Minority Environmental Careers Conference, Washington, DC, April 9-10, 1990.

Environmental Careers for People of Color

The **CEIP** Fund, Inc. held its National Minority Environmental Careers Conference at Howard University in Washington, DC on **April** 9-10, 1990. The conference was preceded by two **days** of orientation sessions, sightseeing, and a reception. The conference began with a keynote address by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Reilly. Mr. **Reilly** expressed his need to increase the numbers and presence of people of color at the Agency. As **Reilly** put it, "I am an employer of some 17,000 people across the United States, and I very much hope that among you there are more than a few who will take seriously the opportunities offered by EPA and state and local organizations concerned with the environment and **commit** yourselves to careers to

improving the environment for the American people." **Reilly** went on to describe the various recruitment activities that the Agency is involved in, concluding that "the most **important** contribution EPA can make to improving minority representation in environmental affairs is by **setting** a good example."

The conference continued with a series of panel sessions on different areas of environmental careers. Topics included **Grassroots** Environmentalism, Hazardous Waste Management, Environmental Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health, Safety and Environmental Quality, Environmental Law and Economic Public Policy. Then the **participants** attended workshops on the "nuts and bolts" of an environmental career. Discussions were held on the value of internships, **graduate** schools, applying for government jobs, and consulting.

CEIP identified and brought environmental professionals of color from as far away as Seattle to participate in the Washington meeting. Finding panelists was **easy**, as **there** are **people** of color doing **great** things in every area of the environmental field. The challenge was to get them together to serve as role models for aspiring environmentalists. It is necessary for people of color to realize that working in the environment is as important as being a doctor or lawyer, and that we have already done some **great** things out there with few numbers and **little** support.

The environmental professionals of color represented all areas of the field. There were representatives from the **mainstream** environmental organizations such as Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council and World Wildlife Fund, but there were also representative from **grassroots** minority organizations such as the Southwest Organizing Project, Citizens for a Better America, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and the Center for Environment, Commerce and Energy. It was very unusual to get all of these groups together, but the cause is one that breaks down boundaries.

The conference also featured a plenary panel session with environmental professionals of color **speaking** about **their experiences** in the field from a cultural **perspective**. This panel also **broke** down **boundaries**, with members of the corporate, **mainstream** environmental and **grassroots** communities together. The panelists were Marcia Chen from California Tomorrow, Jeanne Gauna from the Southwest Organizing Project, Gerry Stover from the Environmental **Consortium** for Minority **Outreach**, Cora Tucker from Citizens for a **Better** America and John R. **Cooper** from the E.I. Du Pont de **Nemours**, with John R. Cook, president of the **CEIP** Fund, moderating.

On the last day, a **Career** Fair was held, and students from the Washington **metropolitan area** were also invited to participate. Thirty-three exhibitors set up displays on career opportunities in their organizations. Some came with handfuls of job announcements, and others simply wanted the students to have a better sense of their organization and what it is like to be an environmental professional **working** for them. As a **result** of the Career Fair, over fifty **students received** offers for permanent placement or internships.

Students then **attended** a Mentor Luncheon. This provided an **opportunity** for **informal** interaction with **D.C.-area** professionals. At the luncheon, **CEIP** presented three environmental achievement awards to organizations and individuals that have been on the forefront of the **struggle** for environmental and racial justice. The recipients were:

- The **Congressional** Black Caucus, for having the best environmental voting record of any legislative organization in Congress;
- California Tomorrow, for its work in synthesizing and promoting the causes of workforce diversity, environmentalism and **multi-culturalism**; and
- Cora Tucker, **founder** and president of **Citizens** for a Better America, for a lifetime of fighting for a clean environment as a matter of social justice for people of color.

— *Lavatus Powell III & John R. Cook*

"Protecting Mother Earth: The Toxic Threat to Indian Lands." Dilkon, AZ. June 29-July 1, 1990.

Native Americans Fight for Their Lands

From June 29 to July 1, 1990. Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment (CARE) hosted a conference in Dilkon, Arizona, where over 200 representatives of 26 tribes from throughout the United States gathered to discuss the threat of toxic dumping and environmental hazards on Native American lands. Companies have increasingly turned to reservation lands for the siting of incinerators and dumps due to growing state and local opposition and because tribes often lack strict environmental regulations. As a result, a number of tribal councils are tempted by the promises of economic development while ignoring the cost of permanent destruction to their sacred lands.

The conference was held in Dilkon because the community has successfully fended off a multimillion-dollar corporation which wanted to locate an incinerator there. Since success stories are few at present, the citizens group in Dilkon, CARE, decided that their town would be an ideal location to host a gathering where native peoples could work together to face toxic threats. Although the local tribal chapter offered no support, sponsorship by Greenpeace enabled CARE to provide not only camping and shower facilities, but also free meals and drinks throughout the conference.

The conference opened Friday, June 29 with introductions from the various groups in attendance and an overview of the toxics problem. After lunch, tribal representatives shared case studies from their areas to further explain the issues at hand and how the tribes were dealing with them.

A representative of the Mohawk Tribe explained how the Mohawks had become the first tribe to work directly with the EPA to set up environmental regulations to deal with the problems of PCBs in their fish and wildlife. After

studying local marine life, the Tribe discovered alarming levels of PCBs and mercury, levels five to ten times above allowable standards. Armed with such data, the Tribe was better able to negotiate regulations that met their needs.

Winona LaDuke, president of the Indigenous Womens' Network, spoke of environmental problems in her homeland in Canada. Uranium production has doubled in Northern Canada as mining companies move from the U.S. to continue their work. Since LaDuke's Tribe lives on an island and cannot easily haul away their waste, they are acutely aware of how fragile their ecosystem is. Her discussion reminded us of our own island, Earth, and how the mining companies don't stop when they are forced out of one area. These companies simply seek a new location with less resistance, making it imperative that indigenous peoples throughout the world work together to keep mining out or safely regulated on all their lands. Otherwise they are only forcing the peril from their own sacred land to mothers'.

Thomas Banyaca, a Hopi, spoke to us of ancient drawings which prophesized the coming of Christianity and the dropping of the atomic bomb. These drawings show that we are presently at a crossroad, with paths which lead either to self-destruction or a return to harmony with the planet. After Banyaca's talk, dinner was ready and it was near dark, so we ate with the setting sun and broke into small groups for drumming, the sweat lodge, or casual conversation.

Saturday's activities began with opening prayers by White Thunder, followed by traditional teachings from different tribes. The Seminoles of Florida spoke of their struggle to preserve their language, since they presently number just 200. A Navajo woman spoke of the four sacred mountains and the importance of daily prayer. All of the speakers emphasized the need to preserve their own traditions and heritage in order to maintain their place as a link between the Creator and Mother Earth.

We then broke into discussion groups on issues such as incineration, sovereignty, and the protection of religious freedoms and sacred lands. I attended the sovereignty discussion, which focused on uranium mining in the Grand Canyon and the problems Alaskan Indians were facing as areas of the permafrost thaw and an earthquake which has occurred every 30 years nears its arrival time.

Much debate centered on how tribal activists could be most effective. Some suggested direct action such as non-violent protest to get media support. Others encouraged more conventional methods that would remain within the governmental structure. After hearing members from throughout the U.S. tell stories of their own battles, it became painfully clear that all tribes are under tremendous pressure to develop their resources, and that the ensuing problems of toxics and environmental damage are remaining unaddressed even after widespread and vocal protests to numerous agencies. These problems highlight the importance of the coalitions built at these conferences. "It doesn't make any difference what tribe we are, we're all one," said Vickie McCullough, a Cherokee from Tahlequa, Oklahoma. "The positive thing is, we're all networking."

The sovereignty workshop centered around a Federal bill sponsored by Senator McCain of Arizona, which would provide up to \$8 million to each tribe for the creation of environmental regulations. The Senate bill, #2075, was recently passed by the full Senate and is presently pending before the House's Interior Committee on Insular Affairs. We discussed the (in)adequacy of such a bill and how the money might be monitored to avoid misuse of the funds. We also analyzed the effectiveness of lobbying political representatives and the importance of calling elected officials to let them know what is going on. Again, we listened to more stories of unheeded protests and serious environmental hazards.

The third workshop sessions were interrupted by a severe dust storm

Resources

Articles & Reports of Interest

• Youth Related

"Environmental and Conservation Programs That Work."

Description of an award-winning New York City-based program established in 1979 to train students to organize environmental improvement projects in the city's schools and neighborhoods. *Science Books and Films*, Sept/Oct 1990, or write: Michael Zamm, Council on Environment of New York City. 212/566-0990.

What's Gotten Into Our Children, by Dana Hughes. A series of essays on children and hazards they face in the environment: what they eat, where they live, where they learn, and where they play. For a copy of this excellent report contact Children Now, a California-based Children's advocacy organization in any of their offices: 10951 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064, 213/470-2444; 663 13th Street, Oakland CA 94612, 415/763-2444; or 926 "J" Street, Suite 413, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916/441-2444.

Contaminated Classrooms: An Investigation of Pest Control Practices in Washington, D.C. Area Schools, by Michael McCauley. Public Citizen's Congress Watch, 215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20003. 202/546-4996. \$8.00.

"Unexpected Psychological Bonus: How Pets Teach Children to Care," by Daniel Goleman. *New York Times*, January 11, 1990, p. 31.

• General

"The Right to Breathe Free." Reverend Jesse Jackson. The full text of a speech from the Jackson Earth Day Environmental Justice Tour. March 30-April 3, 1990. *National Rainbow Coalition, Inc.* 1110 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 410. Washington DC 20005, 202/728-1180.

Buzzworm Environmental Journal has run three excellent articles as part of a series on poor people and environmental degradation, each with powerful photos by J.C. Leacock:

- "Of Pollution and Poverty, Pan 1: Reaping America's Unseemly Harvest," by Conger Beasley. *Buzzworm Environmental Journal*, May/June 1990, p. 40. A look at pesticides' bitter legacy in California's San Joaquin Valley.

- "Of Pollution and Poverty, Pan 2: Keeping Watch in Cancer Alley," by Conger Beasley. *Buzzworm Environmental Journal*, July/August 1990, p. 39. An examination of citizen action against toxics in Louisiana

- "Of Pollution and Poverty, Pan 3: Deadly Threat on Native Lands," by Conger Beasley. *Buzzworm Environmental Journal*, September/October 1990, p. 39. Exploring the effects of dumping of radioactive mine tailings on Navajo lands.

"Bury Your Waste at Wounded Knee," by Alex Varela and Arthur Ray. *Howard University Hilltop*, April 9, 1990. Critique of EPA's lack of attention to environmental issues adversely affecting minority groups and the poor, by two EPA officials.

"Labor and Ecology," by Chris Clarke. *Ecology Center Newsletter*. September 1990. 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702. 415/548-2220.

Status of Minority Farming Today: A Report on the Well-Being of Minority Farms in the US. This 34-page report provides incisive analysis on the condition, location and racial make-up of minority farms in America today. Charts, graphs and maps provide very usable data for targeting efforts to improve policies aimed at helping maintain the valuable resource base inherent in minority land ownership.

Bay Area Green Pages: The Local Handbook for Planet Maintenance. Combines about the Bay's key environmental issues with a directory to environmentally sensitive products, services and organizations. 400 pages. \$15.00. P.O. Box 11314, Berkeley, CA 94701. 415/521-0884.

Breaking Old Patterns, Weaving New Ties: Alliance Building, Margo Adair and Sharon Howell. A short pamphlet with insights about our constricted culture, guilt and privilege, and practical suggestions for nurturing our relationships. Tools for Change. PO Box 14141, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Organizations

• Youth Related

Wildcat Canyon Ranch Youth Program. The program provides inner city youth with knowledge in agriculture, ranching, basic animal maintenance, nutrition, food preparation for domestic livestock, yard and ground maintenance. Kenneth L. Wesley, Program Director, Harvey Smith, Operations Director. 6833 Del Monte Avenue, Richmond, CA 94805. 415/237-8392.

Happy Trails Stables Bronx, NY. Carlos Foster uses horses to teach urban youth ages 8 to 20 the history of the cowboy. The inspiration of the program was Foster's 13 year battle against his son's drug addiction. We read about this in a newspaper article. "NY Cowboy Teaches City Kids Drugs and Horses Don't Mix," by Anne Marie Calzolari, *Contra Costa Times*, January 2, 1990. We were unable to locate the address and telephone number at the time we went to press.

Crowing Connections, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona. Its goals are to teach children and their families an appreciation for the nutritive value of garden fresh vegetables and a concern for nurturing and protecting the earth; to decrease the incidence of diet related illnesses such as stroke, heart disease and diabetes; to empower children and their families to take actions to improve the environment; and to encourage healthy choices in eating and living. Looking for multicultural gardening information P.O. Box 26525, Tucson, AZ 85726. 602/624-7963.

Inner City Outings. An outreach program of the Sierra Club. Volunteer leaders, trained in recreational and safety skills, provide wilderness adventures for people who wouldn't otherwise have them — including urban youth of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, seniors, hearing or visually impaired individuals, and the physically disabled. ICO Subcommittee. Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

M.O.M. **C.A.R.E.S.** — Mothers of **Maryvale** Concerned About Real **Environmental** Safety. Focuses on local environmental causes of sickness in children. **Projects** in progress on cancer clusters, air pollution, **land/soil** pollution, food supply. Documentation on **Maryvale** leukemia deaths and incidences of children **0-19** year years of age at twice the national average. Contact Melody Baker, P.O. Box **23496**, Phoenix, **AZ**, **86063**. **602/247-1326**.

The Video Project — **Films** and **Videos** for a Safe & Sustainable World. The primary purpose of the Video Project is to provide affordable, quality, video and film programs of the issues and ideas critical to our future on our planet. The series of Earth Science Videos for the **Classroom** includes a number of award winning features suitable for elementary, middle school and high school use. Several feature children of different ethnic groups, entertaining use of music and graphics **presenting** a wealth of information about topics such as recycling, **deforestation**, global **warming** and ozone depletion. **using settings** and perspectives familiar to multicultural audiences. For more information contact Diane **Saunders**, Outreach Project Coordinator. The Video Project, 5332 College Avenue, Suite **101**, Oakland, CA **94618**.

• General

Data Center. At Oakland's Data **Center**, authors and activists **track down** hard to find **information** on **everything** from toxic wastes to Soviet **dissidents**. Clipping **files** from **350** periodicals. **Several** publications monitor major daily **newspapers** on Latin American issues, corporate responsibility, and plant **shutdowns**. Contact: **Fred Goff**, Executive **Director**, 464 **19th Street**, Oakland, CA **94612**. **415/835-4692**.

Highlander Research and **Education** Center. Highlander was the first integrated institution in the South. Near the heart of every **progressive** social **change** movement, from the unemployed, to labor to the civil rights **movement** has made history for **50 years**. This fall Highlander is operating **STP** Schools (Stop the Poisoning/ Save the Planet). These schools are weekend **gatherings** in different parts of the **country** to **bring together members of grassroots** organizations dealing with **environmental** problems, from toxic waste dumps to lead poisoning to paper mills and destruction of **our forests**. Gatherings will be held at Highlander Nov. 2-4 and Nov. 30- Dec. 2; Blue **Mountain** Center, Upstate N.Y. Nov. 8-10; **Southern** Illinois Nov. 16-17; in Oregon Dec. 7-9. Highlander is **especially determined** to make these schools available to working **people**, young people, Latinos, African **Americans** and Native **Americans**. For information contact Paul de Leon, The Highlander **Center**, 1959 **Highlander** Way, New Market **TN** 37820. **615/933-3443**.

<p>Send for Adair and Howell's Breaking Old Patterns Weaving New Ties: Alliance Building</p>		<p>Also available, these pamphlets: The Subjective Side of Politics An excellent resource, I use it in my race, class, and culture class. —Remar Scott send \$5 for each pamphlet, or \$9 for both, to: Tools for Change P.O. Box 14141 S.F., CA 94114</p>
<p>For those of us who prefer to move forward rather than run around in circles until we fall exhausted. —Holly Near</p>		

Newsletters

The African American Environmentalist, a **newsletter** of the Center for Environment, Commerce and Energy. The newsletter covers environment activities of special interest to the black community, including **inner city creek** restoration, weatherization **projects**, as well as environmental violations. Published quarterly. \$25 donation includes **four** issues and annual membership in the African American **Environmental Association**. Contact Center for Environment, Commerce and **Energy**, 733 Sixth Street, SE, Suite **#1**, Washington, DC. **20003**, **202/543-3939**.

Link Gene Exchange. Updates on **biotechnology** issues, **legislation** and related **citizen's** action. Published four **times** a year by the National **Biotechnology** Policy **Center** of the National **Wildlife** Federation, 1400 16th **Street**, NW, Washington, DC. **20036-2266**.

Green Letter: In Search of Greener Times. The current issue has **several articles** which should be of **great interest** to **RPE** readers. Sharon Howell's essay "Building a Green Movement," suggests ways that the harsh realities of **inner city** Detroit are **linked** to other environmental issues. "The **Long Haul**," is an excerpt from the autobiography of Myles **Horton**, founder of Highlander Center (*see Organizations, above*); "Race and Environmental Organizing: Pulling Down the **Barriers**," by Clay **Carter**, describes ten obstacles to integrating the environmental **movement**. "Against Celebrating the **Fifth Centennial** of the Discovery of **America**," by **Mercedes Pardo**, describes the **response** of **30** indigenous organizations to the Fifth Centennial the Discovery of **America** by Columbus planned in **1992**. "Food and Politics," by Rick Whaley, **discusses** whether vegetarian food preferences of **Greens** reflect ideological purity or respect for cultural **diversity**. For subscriptions or information, contact: **Green Letter**, P.O. Box **14141**, San Francisco, CA **94114**.

Regeneration, Building Healthy Communities. Community **Regeneration** is an initiative of the **Rodale** Institute that focuses on community revitalization through individual action and practical proven procedures. Using **capacity** building techniques. Community **Regeneration** motivates and **trains** public and private individuals to **renew** their **communities**. **Regeneration** is published monthly by **Rodale Institute**, 222 Main Street, **Emmaus**, PA **18098**, **215/967-5171**. Thanks to **Regeneration** for a great review of **RPE**, too!

New Enclosure, Midnight Notes. The current issue of this periodical contains **10** essays based on the **proposition** that the common denominator **unifying** the history of **all working** people is "the loss of our land and of the rights **attached** to it." Topics covered include the debt crisis, conflict in the Middle East, **struggles** in **China**, **Africa**, **Northeastern** cities in the US, and **Zurich**. Write: **Midnight Notes**, Box **204**, Jamaica Plain, MA **02130**.

"The March. Where **Will Inequality End**," **World Magazine** No. **38**. An imaginary scenario of the outcome of global inequality based on a BBC television drama screened in England on May **20, 1990**. What if Africa's hungry millions came walking **down** our **streets**? What if they could **see** us shopping and we could **see** them dying? Would we think differently then? Would we act differently then? **World Magazine**, 27 **Kensington Court**, London **W8 5DN**.

← from CAREERS, page 3

generation ago as the mainstays of the economy, will comprise only 15% of the net additions to the labor force between 1985 and 2000. The ability to recruit, retain, develop and promote all of the best talents available will be critical.

The environmental profession will experience a labor shortage as in other career fields. With the rapid demographic changes and the expansion of the environmental field, there must be changes in the approach of employers, particularly in attracting and retaining minorities and women. Since the environmental field has done so poorly incorporating these groups in the past, it must begin planning and adjusting for the future now.

Minority Opportunities

CEIP's study was designed to explore minority opportunities in the environmental field. Our study confirmed some of our own experiences in managing minority programs, and generated several new facts about why there is a lack of human diversity in the environmental profession.

The fifteen primary findings of the Study are:

1. Minority children lack environmental exposure. Minority children are concentrated in large urban areas where they have very few opportunities to experience nature, to receive exposure to environmental issues, to meet environmental professionals, or to learn about the career options in the environmental field.

2. College enrollment of minority students is low. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, high school graduation rates for most minority students have improved dramatically. During the same period, minority college attendance rates have remained disproportionately low. The Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1988 reports that in 1986, 20.1% of whites over 25 had completed four years of college or more. The rate for Blacks was 10.9%, and for Hispanics only 8.4%.

3. Minority students are concentrated in community colleges. In the fall of 1986, over 55% of the Hispanics

and just over a 43% of the Blacks attending college were enrolled in two-year institutions. Few of these students ever go on to attend or graduate from four-year institutions. Also, very few two-year institutions offer classes or degrees related to the environmental profession.

4. Unequal distribution of minorities across the academic disciplines. There are heavy concentration of Blacks and Hispanics in the liberal arts fields, particularly in education, social sciences and communications. There are still not enough Black and Hispanic students majoring in science, mathematics and engineering to satisfy the needs of the environmental community.

5. High drop out rate for minorities in four-year colleges. The U.S. Department of Education reports that although Blacks were 9% of all undergraduate students in 1984-85, they received only 6% of the baccalaureate degrees conferred that year. Hispanics made up 4% of enrollees, but received only 3% of the baccalaureate degrees. By contrast, 80% of the undergraduate students in 1984-85 were white — but they received 85% of the baccalaureate degrees.

- Approximately 65% of minority students leave in the first semester of their first year in college. The causes of this high attrition rate are reported as isolation, racism, family obligations, financial and academic difficulties.

- From high school and beyond, studies show that, of 1980 high school graduates, a large majority of minority students leave without degrees (71% of the Black graduates, 66% of the Hispanics, and 65% of the Native Americans).

6. Few minorities are in the environmental educational pipeline. In certain critical fields of study, the minority presence is nearly nonexistent. For example, in Earth, Atmospheric and Marine Sciences, only one Black received a doctorate out of 589 awarded in 1986. In Life Sciences, Mexican-Americans received only 0.3% of the 5,720 doctorates awarded in that year.

7. Most colleges with high concentrations of minority students have no or limited environmental curriculum.

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities make up 175 higher education institutions in this country and yet only a handful of these institutions offer formal Environmental Study majors.

8. Minority college students are not as likely to have an intern experience as white students. Representatives of surveyed college intern programs expressed difficulties in recruiting minority students. The program advisors cite that most white students accept internships as part of their college experience, while many minority students are not aware of the opportunities or are unable to participate in an internship due to financial constraints and other obligations. Since many minority college students do not have the luxury to take on an internship without pay to gain work experience, they often work in jobs unrelated to their studies.

9. Most minority college students in the science and technical fields choose traditional career tracks. High concentrations of the best and the brightest minority science and technical graduates pursue careers in medicine, health, law, and the computer/high-tech industry. Many college advisors say the environmental field is not known to minority students. College advisors suggest that minority students tend to follow career paths where the profession has minority role models, guaranteed job opportunities, financial stability, and social status.

10. Few minorities and women are in the environmental profession. There is a severe deficiency of minority groups in all sectors of the environmental field. For example, the U.S. EPA, the largest employer of environmental professionals, reports that at present, just 335 of EPA's scientists and engineers are women and minorities and all indications show a decline in the influx of these groups.

- According to *Changing America: The New Face of Science and Engineering*, "...Blacks are 12% of the American population and 2% of all employed scientists and engineers. The U.S.

» see CAREERS, page 13

<< from CAREERS, page 12

Hispanic population is the fastest growing minority group. They comprise 9% of our population and constitute only 2% of all employed scientists and engineers."

11. Nonprofit environmental organizations lack minority participation. In 1988, an informal survey of eleven national environmental organizations by the Human Environment Center found only six minority persons serving on the boards and only 222 (16.8%) minorities employed out of a total of 1,317 staff members. Only 24 (1.8%) of those were professionals. Recently, the nonprofit environmental community formed The Environmental Consortium for Minority Outreach to begin addressing the problem.

12. Minority communities are most affected by environmental hazards. An alarming report by the United Church of Christ, Commission on Racial Justice, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*, found that three out of the five largest commercial hazardous waste landfills in the U.S. were located in predominantly Black or Hispanic communities. These three landfills accounted for 40% of the total estimated commercial landfill capacity in the nation. Although socioeconomic status appeared to play an important role in the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities, race proved to be more significant.

13. Minorities are not linked into environmental programs. There is not one national, comprehensive and successful program attracting minorities into the environmental profession. However, there are a variety of environmental programs and opportunities sponsored through the private, government and nonprofit sectors. Unfortunately, this information is often circulated among existing environmental communities and is not easily accessible to minority communities.

14. Environmental awareness is growing in the minority communities. Minority communities directly affected by environmental hazards are forming neighborhood and community groups to safeguard their environment. This is especially true for the communities in the southern states. Unfortunately, there is little collaborative effort between the traditional environmental organizations and the newly formed minority environmental groups.

- In 1988, a conference, "Americans for the Environment," was held in Atlanta, Georgia. The event was planned for 500 people and close to 1,000 people attended. A majority of the speakers were minorities. Unfortunately, there were some demonstrations and heated discussions, and rifts developed along racial lines rather than environmental ones.

15. The environmental community is beginning to realize the diversity issue. There are an increasing number of employers who realize the necessity and advantage of having a diverse work force. Environmental employers at corporations and governmental agencies alike are planning for the 21st century, making policy changes and seeking out ways to diversify their work force.

(Excerpted from the Minority Opportunities Study. For more information about CEIP Fund, see sidebar at right.)

Upcoming Events

Environmental Career Conference

The CEIP Fund Inc., "The Nation's Environmental Careers Organization," will be holding the National Minority Environmental Career Conference in Oakland, CA, March 2-5, 1991. The Conference will bring together college students from across the country to learn about opportunities in the environmental field. 150 students will be selected from a pool of 600 nominated by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Tribally Controlled Colleges and other major academic institutions.

In addition to providing career guidance, the Conference is also important for the practicing environmental professional of color. Conference activities highlight the environmental activities of communities of color, provide a forum for environmental professionals of color to support each other and express common concerns, build bridges between the environmental community and communities of color and renew the traditional environmentalism of communities of color.

The conference is a major component of CEIP's Minority Opportunities Program, a comprehensive five-year initiative to increase the representation of people of color throughout the environmental field. The Program has three basic goals: broaden career exposure, increase career opportunities, and build support services. The program has eight Founding Partners, donors that have made grants of \$125,000 over the period of the Program. The Founding Partners are BP America, the San Francisco Foundation, Ford Motor Company, Arco, the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, Du Pont, Chemical Waste Management/Waste Management N.A., and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The 1991 Conference will follow a similar format to the successful 1990 Conference at Howard University (see Reportbacks, page 8).

CEIP is continuing to develop other components of the Minority Opportunities Program, and in 1991 will also be running a Minority Environmental Summer Associate Program. All nominees to the Conference will be eligible for paid internships during the Summer of 1991 with sponsors in all sectors. The process of developing projects has already begun, and continues through November 23rd.

If you would like additional information on the National Minority Environmental Career Conference or Minority Environmental Summer Associate Program, contact the CEIP Fund Minority Opportunities Program, 68 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02111-1907, or call 617/426-4375.

«« from DILKON, page 9

which topped tents and kept us all busy holding down the main tarp. Clearly, nature was joining us as an active participant in the events. The storm halted all cooking, so we dined on sandwiches and fruit as the wind settled. Later, I joined the women for the evening's first sweat while an inter-tribal pow-wow began. We were blessed with a heavy rainstorm during the festivities and we all welcomed the cooling showers as a sign of good tidings. Some participants later left for a nearby Native American Church ceremony which lasted until dawn.

Sunday, we opened with traditional prayers and a late breakfast. I then began my drive back to Window Rock while the groups formed to close out the conference. I'm sure each of us left with a renewed sense of the importance of the struggle to preserve these sacred lands and a heightened hopefulness that our battles are not fought alone.

A few issues emerged from the conference as underlying themes. First, it appears that tribal governments are generally in favor of development and much of the opposition and education of the risks is occurring at a grassroots level. This is aggravated by the strong family ties which pervade many Native American political systems, so that lines are drawn not only between constituents and officials, but also between parents and children and brothers and sisters.

Second, one must remember that indigenous people are also a proud people and may not be anxious for intervention on their behalf, good or bad, especially when in the past so-called "assistance" has caused more devastation than help.

Third, it is vitally important that tribes create their own regulations, and not merely install Anglo versions of what others believe is needed. This presents a challenge to us as environmentalists who wish to help, but it is one we can, with heightened consciousness, begin to meet.

— Mary Madison

For more information on the anti-toxics network set up at the conference, contact Paul Rodarte, 702/827-5511.

«« from YOUTH AT WAR, page 7

highest suicide rate of any identifiable sociological grouping in the nation.

Young people are never seriously consulted by policy-making elders on the desirability of war. Children of war learn discouraging and distorted messages about the nature of life and the basic friendliness of the world. The childhood terrors of today's young war survivors will continue to haunt them as they become tomorrow's leaders.

Since World War II, the nations in which military conflicts have been fought have overwhelmingly been desperately poor nations in the Third World. The U.S. hasn't had a war on its own soil since the Civil War, and as quiet as it is kept, this was a war from which the we have yet to recover. We cannot imagine the trauma of living in a country in a state of perpetual war, except perhaps by picturing the plight of our somriest ghettos and magnifying that anguish. War is bad. It is always waged on the poor -- and the largest and most vulnerable section of the poor in this country and abroad are children.

The Race Question

A number of issues of race have not gotten their share of attention in the recent debate over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The present conflict in the Persian Gulf has a long and complicated history in which race plays a major role.

During World War I an army of nomadic Arab tribesmen, under the leadership of Lawrence of Arabia, helped the allies topple the Ottoman empire. They were promised a united Arab sovereign state as a reward for their efforts. Like so many promises made to people of color by whites in the last few hundred years, this promise was as empty as a broken jar.

The political landscape of the modern Middle East was shaped by European colonial powers shortly after World War I, with the political and economic interests of rich white rulers and corporations in mind, and contempt for the aspirations to self-determination of the majority of people in the region. The current crisis could be regarded as, among other things, an Arab response to

the arrogance and deceit of the Anglo-European and U.S. powers who still exert a strong influence in the region.

People of color are over-represented in the 200,000 member fighting force that the U.S. has sent to kill and die in the sands of the Middle East, because of the relative lack of employment opportunities available to men and women of color in this country. If there is a war, people of color and poor people generally will die in numbers out of proportion to their presence in the general population while sharing little in the rewards that could emerge from such fighting. (It is ironic that while people of color are grossly under-represented in the leadership of the military, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Colin Powell, an African-American, is the man who decided that the initial deployment of U.S. troops should be a massive one, rather than the small beginnings of Viet Nam.)

People of color, who are "have-not" people almost by definition, are also the designated enemy. The soldiers working for Saddam Hussein and other Arab leaders are almost all men who are poor to begin with and who are likely to be far more impoverished if they were not soldiers. The vast majority of Middle Eastern people live in grinding poverty. Oil is the only toe-hold on survival in the global economic order that their countries have, since they have no other major exports to the world market.

Saddam Hussein has been called a "monster" who must be stopped at all cost. The invasion of any sovereign state by another must be condemned. But the Persian Gulf situation is much more complex than the question of whether or not he is a monster or if he should be stopped and how. The hypocrisy of condemning Hussein's "naked aggression" deserves to be examined in the light of the total history of the region. We should also question the "well-dressed" aggression of our own government's leadership, snuggling up to such champions of democracy as Somoza and later the Contras in Nicaragua, the Shah of Iran. Marcos of

>> see YOUTH AT WAR, page 15

<< from *YOUTH AT WAR*, page 14
the Phillipines, and Pinochet of Chile. to name a few. From a comfortable and sanitary distance, the White House, Capitol Hill, and the Pentagon have fashioned U.S. policies which have visited death and suffering upon many millions of people of color all over the globe in the last half century. But ours is a kinder, gentler form of brutality than the Arab Saddam's.

When Latino children from McFarland, California succumb to 300% more cancers than the average, probably due to exposure to pesticides, to paraphrase poet Marge Piercy, they say "I am dying," not "they are killing me." When chemical companies export lethal pesticides to unwitting farmers in the Third World because they are deemed too dangerous for use within our own borders, it's considered just good business. When more young African-American men find themselves in jail, on parole, or on probation than in college, no "monsters" are created and condemned except among the victims of these conditions. The chronic underdevelopment of African-American, Native American, Asian, and Latino communities within our not-quite-democracy produces needless suffering and death through lack of education and employment opportunity, substandard housing and health care, police repression, bias in the legal system, unfair and unequal exposures to toxic hazards. Although the cost in the quality of human lives and outright deaths as a result of these socially-created conditions runs into the millions, seldom are the "well-dressed" aggressors who make and enforce the policies that result in these situations demonized and portrayed as "monsters."

Given the record of our own policies, how proud President Bush must be of Kuwait, that shining example of an open and just society that exploits thousands of Palestinian and Jordanian migrant workers in order to maintain a "comfortable" way of life for its citizens. He must be equally proud of the Saudi Arabian style of democ-

racy, where women can be stoned to death for "adultery," where they cannot drive even if they behave themselves, where petty theft can cost the thief the loss of a hand, and where the country itself is named after the ruling family, the house of Saud

Why doesn't Resident Bush just tell

Like Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein is being used to manipulate the unconscious racism and fears of the American people for veiled political and economic reasons. U.S. invasions of tiny countries like Grenada and Panama, to say nothing of covert activities around the world, makes Bush's media stance as a champion of the underdog sound like a sick joke.

us the real reason why our military has been deployed to the region? We are there to defend our "rights" to Arabian oil fields. If Saddam Hussein is a "bad guy" in his own right, he has also been selected by the Bush administration as a post-Cold War replacement for the "evil empire" as a target for U.S. fear and loathing. Like Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein is being used to manipulate the unconscious racism and fears of the American people for veiled political and economic reasons. U.S. invasions of tiny countries like Grenada and Panama, to say nothing of covert activities around the world, makes Bush's media stance as a champion of the underdog sound like a sick joke.

There are many things about Arab and Islamic people generally that Americans might tend to find "exotic" at best, or, unfortunately for all concerned, alien or brutish. The problem here is our own. We don't understand their languages, customs, religious beliefs and practices, histories, political systems, diets, aesthetic sensibilities and other features of their cultures, and have been little motivated to learn. It is possible that when we pass judgement on these people and their leaders that, to some extent we don't know what we're talking about. This mistake has been made before. People of color here in the U.S. have been repeatedly misperceived and misread through filters of

ignorance and arrogance. We should not perpetrate the same kind of mistake on people in the Middle East

The Poverty Factor

Higher petroleum prices for U.S. consumers and businesses means higher prices for products or services reliant on

petroleum energy. Household lighting, heating and cooling, food grown with petrochemical fertilizers and shipped by petroleum-guz-

zling transport, and medical care, are just a few goods and services whose costs are affected by changes in fuel prices. Poor people pay a higher percentage of their income for these things than middle-income people, so they will feel the tightest pinch of any fuel-related price increases. To make matters worse, global climate change due to fossil fuel pollution and ozone depletion from CFCs will increase the demand for energy, driving up its costs further; it will hurt crop yields thus driving up food prices; and it will increase the demand for medical care for such things as heat stroke, skin cancers and pollution-related illnesses. While these general conditions may affect everyone, those at the lower end of the ladder of economic and political power will be least prepared to adjust to these new conditions.

If oil-poor Third World nations are hit with skyrocketing petroleum prices, they will not be able to develop much-needed industry and productive capacities to feed their exploding populations. Wide-spread death and devastation could result. Increased difficulties for these countries in paying foreign debts could deal the international banking system a seven blow, making the Savings and Loan bailout pale in comparison.

People from all over the U.S. will

<< from *YOUTH AT WAR*, page 15

die even if not a single shot is fired upon our 200,000 soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia. Our **domestic** crises such as the \$500 billion dollar **S&L ripoff**, the blossoming budget deficit, and the **abundant** cuts in domestic spending for life-saving services, **are** all being shoved to the back burner. Inevitably, these problems will claim the lives of thousands. Meanwhile, our **post-Cold War** "peace dividend" which was to help us to rebuild the economic infrastructure and the **morale** of the nation has **evaporated**.

Environmental Damage

Lands on which wars have **been** fought **become** broken lands. They become lands where food won't grow and animals won't graze. They can become unfit for people as well. This is especially **true** where chemical

or nuclear weapons are used, a frightening possibility in the current crisis.

We are facing a renewed push by corporations to develop our domestic resources by drilling off California's coast for oil, and **destroying** more of the **traumatized Alaskan** wilderness to exploit its reserves. The Reagan Administration's **gutting** of federal programs aimed at conservation and research into renewable energy resources is directly responsible for our continued dependence on foreign oil, a policy for which the the average **U.S.** citizen is left holding the bag.

Energy conservation could provide a way out of our dilemma, simultaneously solving energy, security, economic, and environmental problems. In 1988, only

19% of our energy needs were supplied by foreign sources. If the **U.S. government** mandated fuel-efficiency on all new automobiles to the tune of 40 to 50 mpg, a simple and realizable goal, that could make the **U.S.** an energy independent nation within a few years. Conservation measures **could** eliminate half of the **U.S.** energy consumption **with** absolutely no decrease in the quality of life within five years. By the year 2000 we could cut consumption in half again while increasing our productivity.

The Federal Republic of Germany and Japan both have technical advances

In addition to the economic and environmental costs, war has a terrible human cost, and in our age, this cost will be weighted upon the most vulnerable members of the human community: children, the poor, people of color. To maintain our humanity, and ultimately for the sake of our own survival, we need to find another road.

and productivity **greater** than the **U.S.** yet their energy **expense** per capita is roughly half that of **U.S.** levels. It should be possible in our own **country** to **reroute** most of

the billions of dollars that we now waste through pollution-generating **inefficiency**, to the rebuilding of necessary social programs, the creation of a national health care system, the realization of full-employment, the **reduction** of the national debt. all with **no** increased economic burden to the American people. Simultaneously, we **can** reduce our contributions to global warming, smog, acid rain and other environmental **stresses**. Conservation makes sense. Additional cuts in **unnecessary** defense spending and welfare for the rich could make us for the **first** time a universally prosperous nation.

Most people in the **U.S.** do not want a war in the Persian Gulf. They

remember **Viet Nam**, and to their credit, do not want to **repeat** the obscene **mistakes** that were made in that era. War is an expensive, dirty, polluting business. Even posing a military threat is grossly expensive. In **1987**, before **the** current **crisis** erupted, **U.S.** taxpayers spent 47 billion dollars on military **escorts** for **tankers** in the Persian Gulf to insure our right to "cheap" oil. The average **U.S.** citizen has been hoodwinked into believing that we're getting a bargain on gasoline because we haven't **been** paying through the nose at **the gas pump**.

In addition to the economic and environmental costs, war has a **terrible** human **cost**, and in our age, this cost will be weighted upon the most vulnerable members of the human community: **children**, the poor, people of color. To maintain our humanity, and ultimately for the sake of our own survival, we need to **find** another road.

This **other road** will consist of **partnership** between the "haves" and the "have-nots" of the world the likes of which we have **never seen**. The parasitic relationship of **the** industrialized nations to the Third World will give way to an **equitable** exchange of natural and technical resources that insures the maximum benefit for all parties. Military interventions, actual or threatened, will also diminish in importance in favor of diplomatic means of resolving **international** conflicts. The **U.S.** and **the** rest of the industrialized world has the means to support swift and ecologically-sound development in the Third World and in our own nations. These **kinds** of **drastic** measures must be taken, and **soon**, to avert global, human, and **natural catastrophe, perhaps** triggering the end of the human experiment. An **equitable** sharing by all of humanity in the wealth of the Earth will be the **cornerstone** of any long-term solution to the problem of wars, including the current conflict unfolding in the Persian Gulf. The alternative will be a persistence of such conflicts, heavy loss of life in poor nations, and eventually the loss of all that we hold dear.

<< from LEAD, page 1

city residents, often people of color — have the least resources to combat the problem, and the **least access** to medical care to diagnose it **before** it is too late.

In 1988, the Public Health Service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported to Congress that "about 2.4 million white and black metropolitan children, or about one percent of such children in the U.S. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, are exposed to environmental sources of lead at concentrations that place them at risk of adverse health effects." This number was believed to approach **three million** black and white children in the entire U.S. child population, and between **three and four million** U.S. children in total.

Acting on the EPA reports, the California legislature enacted a law that established the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and mandated that the state Department of Health Services (DHS) conduct lead screening programs in the three areas of the state, register cases of elevated blood lead levels, and submit a policy report of **findings** to the legislature with **recommendations** for future prevention. "Elevated blood lead levels" was defined as 25 or more micrograms of lead per deciliter, although the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is considering **lowering** the **threshold** to 15 micrograms of lead per deciliter, based on studies showing neurological damage at that level.

In June 1989, DHS **submitted** its interim report, *Childhood Lead Poisoning in California: Causes and Prevention*, to the state **legislature** (the final report is expected to be issued by the end of 1990). The interim report's findings were **shocking**: DHS estimated that **3,200** children under the age of six in California had elevated blood lead levels, and if the new **CDC** standard was adopted, **more than 50,000 children** under the age of six may suffer **from** lead poisoning. In the areas studied, 1.3% of the children had blood lead levels of 25 micrograms per deciliter or greater, **and fully 20%** of the children had blood lead levels of at least 15 micrograms per deciliter.

The number of children at such risk over time could become even greater: because lead does not break down in the environment, lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil remain an exposure source for successive new

families with children that move in. (The study **reported** that California families with children under the

age of six are highly mobile: in any 15 month period, nearly 40% of these families move to a new home.)

In the sample selection and door-to-door survey conducted by the DHS, 551 children **under** the age of 6 in Oakland and 487 children in Los Angeles were tested for lead poisoning in their homes. Environmental samples were collected at each home to look at lead levels in paint and soil. For participating children, blood was **drawn** in the home and analyzed for lead. Parents were interviewed using a **questionnaire** to analyze factors **that** might be related to lead exposure. At each surveyed house, samples of soil, **interior and** exterior paint were **collected**. Soil samples were collected **at** each house from the front, side, and rear yards, and from under the rain **spout**.

The study found that people of color **and** poor people were most likely to be affected, and least likely to have **access** to medical **care**. Latinos are **at** greatest risk in the two cities surveyed: in Oakland, 54% of the children studied were Hispanic, 26.3% were Asian and 12.9% were black, while in **Los Angeles**, 90% of the subjects were Hispanic. (Of the participating families, 70% had total family incomes of under **\$15,000** per year and 20% were unemployed.) In **Oakland**, 33% of the study participants were covered by the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, 42% were

covered by Medi-Cal, and 20% had no health insurance at all.

The San Francisco-Oakland area is estimated to have 31,000 children (19% of the child population) with blood lead greater than or equal to 15 micrograms.

Lowering of the **CDC** standard doubles the number of affected children. For example, it is estimated that **115,000** children (55%) in the

San Francisco-Oakland area have **blood** lead levels greater than or equal to 10 micrograms per deciliter.

In the Oakland study, soil lead levels in the target area were high, exceeding state environmental standards in the **majority** of instances. The **average** soil lead level taken showed a concentration of 1,232 parts per million (**ppm**). **As** a comparison, the California Hazardous Waste **regulations** define wastes containing **1,000 ppm** as a hazardous waste, and U.S. background levels range between **10** and 700 ppm.

The association between soil lead **and** blood lead was examined, and front **and** back yard soil lead were significantly associated with blood lead. These **locations are** probably where children spend more of their time. For every 500 ppm **rise** in front yard soil **lead**, a child's blood lead is predicted to rise an average 4 micrograms per deciliter, for every 500 ppm rise in rear yard soil lead, 5 **micrograms** per deciliter.

Paint samples taken **from** the households surveyed in Oakland also showed **significant** lead **content**. Interior paint taken from walls had the lowest average lead level (**11,300 ppm**), while **outdoor** paint samples **from** window sills **and** porches **had the** highest average lead level (46,415 ppm). **Indoor** paint lead levels greater than **or** equal to the federal standard of **600 ppm** were found in 75% of the households: outdoor paint

>> see LEAD, page 18

DHS estimated that 3,200 children under the age of six in California had elevated blood lead levels, and if the new CDC standard was adopted, *more than 50,000 children* under the age of six may suffer from lead poisoning.

« from LEAD, page 17

lead levels **greater** than or equal to 600 ppm were found in 91% of **the** households. Interviews conducted in the homes for the condition of paint found that 10% of the homes had peeling or flaking interior paint and 26% of the homes had peeling or flaking exterior paint

There is a direct correlation between lead in exterior paint and childhood blood levels. Children living in houses with exterior paint lead over 16,000 ppm had blood lead levels twice that of children living where levels were under 16,000 ppm.

The report found that lead levels in paint in high risk areas were frequently in excess of current federal standards and requirements. 75% of the interior paint and 91% of the exterior **paing** sampled in the study exceeded federal standards. In addition, 10% of **the** interior paint was in poor physical condition, making the lead in paint accessible to active young children. (Lead levels in soil and paint correlated with blood lead levels of children living

in the housing.) Additionally, there is a relationship **between** income, **ethnicity** and high blood lead levels. **Yet**, no routine testing is presently being done while there is an apparent need to make **all** blood lead levels reportable.

Adults **are** also at **risk**. From April

In Oakland, soil lead levels in areas tested exceeded state environmental standards in the majority of instances. The **average** soil lead level was 1,232 parts per million (ppm) -- California law defines wastes containing 1,000 ppm as a hazardous waste.

1987 through September 1988, nearly 8,400 reports on 2,700 adults were received and analyzed by the California Occupational Health Program (COW). For the **majority** of these **reports** (8,103 or **95%**), elevated blood lead levels were due to occupational exposures. Almost 10% of **these** cases had blood lead levels over 50 **micrograms** per deciliter and could be considered urgent medical situations since there is a **risk** of permanent disability, **as well as** possible household contamination of

children and pregnant women from "take-home" exposures. (A blood level of 40 **micrograms per** deciliter or greater may cause or **contribute** to brain and nerve **damage**, reproductive failure, kidney impairment, high blood pressure, and other adverse health effects.)

Virtually all of **these** reports involved individuals with well-known occupational exposure in such **worksites as** lead baaery plants, demolition work or painting of **structures** with lead paint. Almost 80% of reported cases were for men and women in reproductive age groups (under 50 **years** old) and many of these cases were **Hispanic-surnamed**.

In the course of conducting telephone follow-up for **the** occupational cases with over 40 micrograms per deciliter, **COHP** staff found **that** many participants were unaware of the health hazards of lead, or of appropriate measures to be taken. The problem of **workers** taking lead home on their clothes **remains**, and no one has studied **the** situation thoroughly enough to know to what extent children and pregnant women are exposed to lead inadvertently, or what their exposure levels might be.

« from EMORS NOTES, page 2

masthead to a full editor, taking on more writing and editing duties. The two of us also remain as editors, but thankfully with **less** full editorial plates — when we began this venture **six** months ago, we had no idea of how enthusiastic the response would be, and we also had no idea of how much time it **took** to put out a **newsletter**. The four of us are ultimately responsible for **putting** out **RPE**, but our plan is to have a fluid editorial board made up of whomever we can coerce into working on the newsletter.

All four members of the editorial cabal are also members of the Urban Habitat **Program's** policy board, so that Urban Habitat is having a significant influence on **RPE** and vice versa.

California **Rural** Legal Assistance Foundation continues to co-sponsor RPE, and provides significant resources toward putting it **out**; we will continue to **look** at **rural** problems and solutions **as well as** urban issues. We **see** the marriage of California **Rural Legal** Assistance and Urban Habitat in a project such **as RPE as** another step toward realizing our common problems and working together to solve them.

The new regime will also improve our production, which used to consist of Luke and Carl **staffing** the mimeograph machine late into the night and licking stamps into the wee hours of the morning. Our production schedule for the July issue went awry, meaning that while some of you received the issue in early August, some did not receive it for

some time after **that**. We have hopefully **ironed** out the production problems, and everyone will get their issues at the same time, hopefully in the month on **the** cover!

The response to **RPE** continues to be positive, and we continue to learn from what people **are** doing around the **country**. The **success** of **RPE** depends on its readers sending **us** information, articles and **reportbacks** of important events.

We are also excited that foundations **are** being supportive of our **efforts**; the San Francisco Foundation recently made a generous award **to** the Urban Habitat Program which will help us put out **RPE**.

For environmental justice.

Carl Anthony Luke Cole

Contaminated Classrooms

Many children are unknowingly entering a veritable "poison zone" of pesticide exposures in their classrooms, according to two studies by Public Citizen. A recent study done by Public Citizen's Texas office echoed the findings of a 1988 report by the group, which indicated a possible connection between pesticide neurotoxins—chemicals which affect the nervous system—and behavioral problems in children. This means a classroom tainted with pesticides can actually hinder a child from learning, according to the report.

The Texas study showed disturbingly widespread use of neurotoxins and other pesticides that cause cancer or birth defects. It also found that most school districts spray these poisons on a strict schedule, regardless of need. Saturating classrooms with pesticides led to unnecessary exposure for children who take naps on floors and play in the dirt—and put their hands in their mouths afterwards—the report said.

Youth. Notes

Congress Looks at Children

The environmental hazards faced by children were examined in two day-long field hearings—one in Oakland, CA, and another in Washington, DC—by the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. Testimony by a variety of experts on children's health, as well as parents of children affected by environmental hazards, brought out some key points. First, children are more vulnerable to environmental hazards than adults. However, most government safety standards—such as for the amount of contaminants allowed in drinking water—are based on the average adult and thus do not adequately protect children.

Some children are being exposed to potentially dangerous workplace situations because no childcare exists. "Increasingly I hear of farmworker families that are having to take their children with them to the field because there are no childcare centers," testified Dr. Salvador Sandoval of Merced, CA. Witnesses also stressed that the communities most at risk—inner city neighborhoods and poor rural areas—had the least access to health care.

Teenage "Toxic Avengers"

A group of Latino teenagers in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, has organized against the Radiac Research Corporation, which stores toxic and radioactive waste in their neighborhood. As well as taking on Radiac, the activist group, calling themselves "The Toxic Avengers of El Puente," is working on fighting environmental racism and adultism.

Violence and Children

A study has found 74% of Chicago's inner-city children have witnessed a slaying, shooting, stabbing or robbery, and experts worry about the impact such violence has on youngsters' mental health. "People think if they're chronically exposed to this kind of violence, kids adapt to it," said Dr. Carl Bell, a psychiatrist at the University of Illinois School of Medicine who conducted the study. "But they're wrong. If children who witness crimes appear withdrawn or silent, it's a symptom of the damage. They just shut off."

California's Cancer Clusters

In California's San Joaquin Valley, children are being stricken with cancer at alarming rates. In the agricultural community of McFarland (population 6,400), thirteen cases of cancer in children under 20 were confirmed by the state between 1975 and 1985: the community counts 17 cases. From 1982 to 1985, when just one case would be expected, there were eight cases. In Earlimart, just 15 miles up

the road, five cases of childhood cancer were observed from 1986 to 1989, when just 0.4 cases would be expected. All of the parents of these children are Latino farmworkers, and mothers of four of the five children worked in the grape vineyards during their pregnancy. "I worked in the fields when I was eight months pregnant," says Ramona Ramirez, whose daughter Natalie was diagnosed with kidney cancer when she was just 11 months old. "At lunch time, there was no place to eat out there except underneath the grapevines. We couldn't help but breathe the chemicals used on the fields. My husband and I believe that the pesticides are to blame for our daughter's illness."

Children and the Environment: Some Facts

- Infants of parents who smoke have significantly more pneumonia and bronchitis than do infants of non-smokers. Studies show children of **smoking** parents are hospitalized for respiratory infections 20% to 70% more often than children of non-smoking parents. An estimated 8.7 to 124 million children are exposed to **cigarette** smoke in **their homes**.

- **Children born** in areas with high pesticide use are twice as likely to be born with limb reduction birth defects than children **born** in areas of minimal pesticide use.

- The World Health Organization cites the following factors which may influence the vulnerability of children as compared with adults when exposed to chemicals: larger body surface area in relation to weight; higher metabolic rate and oxygen consumption per unit body weight; different body composition; greater energy and fluid requirements per unit of body **weight**; special dietary **needs**; rapid growth during which chemicals may affect growth or become incorporated into tissues; and functionally immature organs and body systems.

- The average child receives four times more exposure than an **adult** to eight widely used cancer-causing pesticides found in **food**. From 17% to 58% of the country's 18 million children ages 1 to 5 are being ex-

Youth Notes

posed to **neurotoxic organophosphate pesticides** at levels

above what the federal government **considers safe**.

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