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WHAT ON EARTH...



ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE CLUB

VOLUME II APRIL 18, 1991

ECO-WAR IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Doriar Reiser

Early in February, Iraq entered another war, the Eco-War, and its target was the Earth. An estimated 294 million gallons of crude oil were emptied into the Persian Gulf, a spill 27 times larger than the Exxon Valdez disaster. The oil slick, roughly 50 miles long and 12 miles wide, began to spread and separate in the Gulf. Some of the oil has been cleared and some will evaporate, but the rest will form tar balls and sit in the sea. Saddam Hussein used the environment as a weapon. Many believe that his objectives were to contaminate desalination plants and disable Saudi power stations.

However, the environment has also become a victim. The Gulf is already threatened by years of pollution, garbage and sewage. Now it could be faced with total collapse. The Gulf is an isolated body of water, the only outlet being 35 feet wide at the Strait of Hormuz. For water to be completely flushed out it takes between 3 and 5 years. Also, the water is relatively shallow, averaging at 110 feet deep, so there is less water to dilute the oil.

The oil in the Gulf will lead to the depletion of its coral reefs and their inhabitants. The commercial fish and shrimp industry could be debilitated. The bird population and many sea mammals, such as whales, dolphins and dugongs, an already endangered species, are also being threatened.

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MCDONALDS-WITH A CONSCIENCE

Kathleen Hogan

The golden arches have long stood as symbols for the American way of life. With the charges levied by staunch environmentalists, they have also come to symbolize environmental waste and unconcern. Five years ago, the goals of the McDonalds Corp. and the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) were as different as those of Saddam Hussein and President Bush. However, today in an age of enhanced concern for our planet, McDonalds is making efforts to mold company policy towards and improved public image and protection of the environment.

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OVERPOPULATION

Brian Simard

Many people do not realize the implications of overpopulation. Not only is overpopulation the over crowding of people, it is the depletion of sources that these people depend on. The more people inhabiting an area, the less resources for them to use. In the last forty years the Earth's population doubled what it had taken hundreds of thousands of years to produce. Such an increase is caused by the 'doubling process'; for example: a small group of rabbits were once introduced to Australia, in 14 years they inhabited one-fourth of the island-continent, in 15 years one-half, and in 16 years they covered the island.

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ENVIRONMENTAL & WILDLIFE CLUB
BULLETIN BOARD

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

With the recent crisis in the Persian Gulf and the catastrophic consequences, now more than ever, awareness is needed. Once again, this is what we hope to accomplish through our newsletter.

There is very little that we, as individuals, can do to remedy the problems in the Gulf, but there are some everyday things that we can do here to help our environment. Recover, Reuse and Recycle. It's as simple as that. Go easy with letter openers, envelopes and other mailers are perfectly good after one use. A fresh stamp and address label will cut out that much more waste. Recycle your glass and plastic as well as your aluminum cans. And remember to snip each circle of your six-pack holders before throwing them away.

The Environmental and Wildlife Club is going strong on our campus but it can't stop there. Awareness must reach the outside community, too. A prime example of where it has done just that is Club Eagles. Check out their new Beer Blast and Beat the Clock policies. They each revolve around cutting down on waste. Not only is this cost efficient for Club Eagles, but it is also environmentally beneficial. It's a start and every little bit counts. In the words of Edmund Burke, "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little."

Lastly, the opinions expressed in these articles do not express the opinions of the group as a whole. Theirs as well as yours are welcomed.

Peace,

Dorian Reiser and Brian Simard

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS!!!!

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Jeanne M. Handy
VICE PRESIDENT: Tom Rowley
TREASURER: Beth-Ann Dietz
ACTING SECRETARY: Susan Namorato

COMMITTEE HEADS AND UPDATES

CAMPUS RECYCLING: Jen Seaver & Heather Dunn

update: Recycling bins in Harkins, working on bins in mailroom and by Yuck Truck. Trying to remove plastic spoons for Raymond Cafe and styrofoam from Schneider Arena.

POLITICS: Deidre Carty & Helene Marsh

update: Successful petition in Slavin against L'Oreal and Gillette products. Look for info on attending hearings on bills in RI State Congress.

AUDOBON EDUCATION: Maureen Galvin

update: Attending and observing variety on education programs geared for preschool to 7th grade.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE FOR ANIMALS:

Karen Leahy

update: Going to shelter every Saturday, 10:30-1. Selling Ben & Jerry's coupons to raise \$ for the shelter.

GLOSTER FIELD CLEANING: Anthony Najamy

update: Working on a leaflet to publicize newly acquired land. Clean-ups to follow, see Dr. Lambe or Anthony for more info.

EARTH DAY COORDINATOR: Ray Capes

update: Earth Awareness Week, April 21-27. Panel on careers in the environment on April 24.

AUDOBON FIELD CLEANING: Jen Frese

RI PARKS ASSOCIATION PROJECT: Murry Whitehead

NEWSLETTER: Dorian Reiser & Brian Simard

The spill has been partially contained but not yet cleaned up, and it may never be. Most of the oil will probably be left for nature to dispose of, a process that could take decades.

The troubled waters are only one aspect of the vast environmental damage resulting from the war. Kuwait has been turned into an inferno, almost all of the countries 1000 wells were destroyed or set afire. About 600 still remain burning. Day seems like night and there is a 20 degree difference in temperature in places where the sky is clear. This is not only a threat to the environment but to human lives. It has been suggested that living in Kuwait is like smoking 250 cigarettes a day.

The damage to Kuwait is worse than expected, but the environmental effects on the planet may not be as severe as originally predicted. Many of the early reports were exxagerations and used as propaganda, although extensive damage did occur. The Gulf War may turn out to be the most ecologically destructive conflict of history and many people fear a reoccurrence. Our activities during peacetime are already a threat to our environment, it is doubtful that we could tolerate this happening again.

compiled from: TIME MAGAZINE,
Feb. 4, 11 & 18, 1991.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Do you ever wish that you could help the environment but you just don't have any time or money to volunteer? If so, here are some ways you can help the environment and wildlife and put a smile on your face or someone else's. The following is a list of tax deductible gifts even we (the starving college kids) can afford : get together with your roommates and adopt a humpback whale for only \$35.00. Each parent will recieve an adoption certificate and quarterly

newsletters regarding conservancy efforts. Write to Adopt a Humpback Whale; c/o Earth Trust; 2500 Pali Hgwy; Honalulu, HI 96817. Not quite ready for parenthood? Plant a seedling. For \$25.00 you can have a seedling planted (in your name) in Big Basin Redwoods State Park in the Santa Cruz Mountains. You will recieve a certificate and a map and there will be a woodstake with your name on it at the trunk of the tree. Write to Semper Virens Fund; Drawer B.E.; Los Altos, Ca 94023. Need a gift for someone who has everything? Donate \$10.00 and have a seedling planted in their honor in Los Angeles' neighboring mountains. Your honoree will receive an acknowledgement card. For \$50 you can dedicate a whole grove to them. They will receive a certificate with both names on it. Write to Tree-People; 12601 Mulholland Dr; Beverly Hills, Ca 90210. Is this person so great that they deserve even more than a grove? How about an acre? For \$30.00 you can have one acre of Latin America's richest rainforest preserved in someones name. Your honoree will receive an honorary land deed, information about the area and semiannual newsletters regarding conservation efforts. Write to Adopt-an-Acre Program; Nature Conservency; 1815 N. LYnn St.; Arlington, VA. 22209. If none of these options appeal to you, but you would still like to help, contact your local zoo. They will give you a list of ways to donate and tell you exactly where your money will go so you can be sure it will be put to good use!

Jeanne M. Handy
compiled from "Modern
Maturity"

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Overpopulation occurs when cultural growth exceeds natural growth. In other words, when a culture begins to consume too much of too many different resources, the natural world finds it difficult to adapt. An example of this is the rainforest problem: In order to supply ranches with fields to raise cattle which feed the overpopulated world, trees in the rainforest must be cut down. This deforestation contributes to global warming, loss of species, and the loss of medicinal resources found in the forest. The natural world has not been able to compensate for the loss of the rainforest.

Population experts are divided when projecting the future of the overpopulation problem. The first group, technological optimists, feels that humans are separate from the rest of nature and that we will maintain economic growth by inventing a means that will supply us with unlimited energy and resources. The technological pessimists see humans as being a part of nature and feel that we will hit an economic standstill when we realize that technology will fail to supply us with unlimited energy and resources. Many ecologists feel that unlimited economic growth is bad and that stability makes an ecosystem healthy.

In order to take action against the overpopulation problem that threatens our future we must begin with education. It will take a significant time commitment on the part of the individual in order to learn the details concerning the problems, and for the education to be efficient, all individuals must participate. The government should somehow monitor the social behavior of families in order to maintain a smaller number of offspring, but citizens of the United States would see this as an infringement on their rights. A less expensive method of keeping offspring numbers down is to instill in society a sense of moral duty through religion or custom.

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It must be understood that overpopulation is not something for the next generation to handle, because the next generation will bring the total population to over six billion, one billion more than now. Soon our own college careers will be over and we will be considering our own families. The decisions we make then could have serious repercussions on our children's future. Consider the fact that resources are on the verge of becoming scarce. Do not bring children into a world that will not be able to supply them with a healthy and productive life.

compiled from "Calypso Log"
Feb. 1991.

MCDONALDS continued from p.1

EDF has set up a task force to assist McDonalds in the development of environmentally beneficial policy. They will investigate different ideas on the recycling and elimination of McDonalds waste.

Already the results are evident. Precycling, the avoidance of wasteful products and packaging, has led to the termination of polystyrene foam in the production of sandwich boxes. This foam is detrimental to the planet in two ways: its production generates industrial pollution and it is very difficult to recycle. At the present time, no infallible replacement for the foam containers has been found, but EDF offers a thin, paper based wrap as a favorable alternative. The wrap is not only made without styrofoam, but in its reduced volume, less corrugated cardboard is needed for shipping boxes.

The use of a packaging alternative is only the beginning of the alliance between EDF and McDonalds. Many other improvements are certain

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MCDONALDS continued from p.4
to follow. Two propositions
currently being investigated are
the large scale composting of
organic waste and the
introduction of reusable
dishware. Although the ideas are
still in the experimental stage,
they, coupled with what has
already been done, point to
McDonalds' desire for
environmentally beneficial
improvements. EDF has been
effective in combining this
desire with concrete proposals,
thus allowing for McDonalds to
emerge as one of the foremost
environmentally conscious
corporations.

compiled from: EDF Annual
Report. 1990, and EDF Letter,
Jan. 1991.

You always hear how bad meat
is for you. Here's another
reason why...

Studies showed that
atherosclerosis or the hardening
of the arteries, as well as
leading to strokes and heart
attacks, leads to impotence.
Meat-based diets also lead to
high blood pressure, another
contributor to impotence. "Just
as in heart disease, a
disruption of blood flow leads
to a loss of function. The
study concluded that the
increase in the frequency of
impotence with age is mainly
related to atherosclerosis."
(Animals Agenda, June 1990,
p.14. The people least likely
to have atherosclerosis are
vegetarians.

LIBERATE THE ANIMALS
Chris LaConti

With the victorious ending of
the war in the Middle East,
patriotism on the rise, and
national unity at a highpoint,
America will most likely revel
in its glory this Fourth of
July. But one group of caring
individuals will be working on
Capitol Hill that day, not
partying with Lady Liberty.

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On July 4, 1991, an assembly
of animal rights devotees will
gather in Washington, DC to
present the American Declaration
of Animal Liberation as well as
the Animal Rights Act
Constitutional Amendment in an
attempt to formally liberate all
American animals from oppressive
and unjust treatment. These
documents, if supported by
President Bush and Congress,
would prohibit cruelty to
animals and allow our legal
system to punish those who kill,
maim or torture animals in such
places as research laboratories,
dissection classes and
farmhouses across the US.

This noble project,
undertaken by the devotees of
AMERACA (American Mandate to
Enact the Rights of Animals
Constitutional Amendment) is not
yet complete. The members
of AMERACA strongly encourage
all animal rights supporters to
share their views on what these
documents should entail. Also,
for those interested in signing
the completed version of the
American Declaration of Animal
Rights, AMERACA will send any
individual or organization a
copy upon request which, when
signed and returned, will be
held and protected by AMERACA
until the July 4 convention.
AMERACA anticipates millions of
caring Americans will respond to
the needs of the animals. Write
to:

AMERACA
2020 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1776
Washington, DC 20006

compiled from Animals Agenda
January, 1991

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS!!!!

The New Clean Air Act is "a triumph of environmental protection that puts the economy and American innovation to work for the environment instead of against it," said Dr. Daniel J. Dudek, who was the architect of the acid rain reduction portion of the new law.

In the fall of 1990, Congress passed a New Clean Air Act. This is the first national air pollution legislation to be passed in 13 years. Clean air legislation disputes have been raging in Congress for years with environmental forces and industrial supporters of such products as coal, electricity, oil, chemicals, and automobiles opposing each other. However, with the help of the Bush administration, a compromise was reached between the environmental and industrial advocates.

The new act focuses on a reduction of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions and creates incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide are the main causes of acid rain, but with the new law a 50% reduction of sulfur dioxide and a 15-30% decrease in nitrogen oxide are expected to occur. To reduce the amount of these gases released into the atmosphere, the new law focuses on the operation of power plants.

Power plants are now required to monitor 24 hours a day the acids and carbon dioxide emissions to make sure the levels of these gases never exceed the limits stated by the federal government. Power plants are also given incentives by the new law to cooperate with the government's pollution reduction method. For example, it is the decision of the power plants as to how to promote energy efficiency. Each plant is given a target date for reducing sulfur dioxide.

However, they are encouraged to go beyond the required reductions by incentives from the federal government, thus rewarding energy efficiency and cutting pollution quicker.

The new law also addresses the greenhouse effect. When oil and coal are burned they produce the greenhouse gases. These gases are called so because they are linked to the rise in the earth's temperature and the damaging effects of global climate change. The new law provides incentives to reduce the emissions of these gases, however, it is not as strongly stated as the reduction in acid rain-causing gases.

This new law is a major step towards the reduction, and someday elimination of acid rain and the greenhouse effect. Due to the help of environmental activists, especially the Environmental Defense Fund, EDF, this law fought oppositional industrial activists and was passed. However, many more laws are needed to ensure the protection of the environment.

compiled from: EDF LETTER,
January, 1991.

STRAYS ON CAMPUS
Trish Carleton & Gail Renahan

There seems to be a current problem here at PC of stray dogs and cats on campus. They may seem like cute, lovable companions, but you may be doing them more harm than good.

Encouraging strays to stay at PC by feeding them or taking them in temporarily actually creates more of a problem than a solution. Most animals that are taken in by students in dorms do not get the proper care and attention they need, such as a regular diet, shots, health care and space. Off campus the situation isn't much better. Most landlords don't allow pets and sneaking them in can lead to problems for both you and the

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We would like to believe the war is over, that U.S. troops have solved the problems in the Gulf and that we can return to business as usual.

Not so. This is only the eye of the Desert Storm.

The world community must address the political and economic instabilities in the Middle East, and we in the U.S. must adopt a sustainable energy policy which minimizes our dependence on foreign oil.

Now is the ideal time to revamp our energy policy: having asked 500,000 troops to risk their lives in the Persian Gulf, surely we can ask ordinary Americans to use energy more rationally.

There is only a finite supply of oil -- about 40 years of known and projected domestic reserves according to the U.S. Geologic Survey, and about 60 years of global reserves at current rates of consumption. Extracting oil more rapidly, by encouraging off-shore drilling and opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, for example, will only hasten oil depletion.

Instead, we would do well to invest in alternative, sustainable energy resources. Solar systems such as wind-generated electricity and thermal solar are already competitive with traditional power plants in some regions of the country, and photovoltaics are rapidly approaching competitive prices. Fusion may provide essentially unlimited electric generating capacity in the long term, and alternative, biological fuels such as ethanol and methanol could provide clean and sustainable liquid fuel sources. If those programs are given adequate public support, they would mature much more rapidly.

The greatest energy resource we have, however, is conservation. Improvements in building construction and in automobile fuel consumption initiated in the 1970's save millions of barrels of oil per

day, but there is room for much improvement. The automobile fleet fuel consumption is far greater than it has to be: current best prototypes average 70 miles per gallon, and best production models average over 50 miles per gallon. We must raise fuel efficiency standards, not lower them.

In that regard, one of the most sensible policies would be to increase the tax on gasoline. We in the United States pay only a fraction of the average world price for a gallon of gas, and the U.S. prices fall far short of the real costs to the environment, the costs of enhanced production, and the costs of military deployment to protect oil supplies. A stepwise increase in the gas tax to raise the price, say, to \$2.00 per gallon would encourage conservation, decrease our reliance on foreign oil, and generate revenues to improve the public transportation sector and help resolve the national debt.

If we continue business as usual, burning ever more oil and ignoring energy alternatives, we will almost certainly have to send U.S. forces into future Desert Storms to secure the flow of foreign oil. Our national security and the future economy require vigorous steps to conserve the current supplies of oil and to anticipate the transition to a world without oil.

In 1985, former President Reagan ended the fuel efficiency program. If it was still continued today, cars would be 7 miles per gallon more fuel efficient and 1.9 million gallons of oil would be saved a day. This means that the US would not be dependent on Iraq, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia for oil. President Bush's newly proposed energy policy mentions nothing about a future enactment of any such program.

animal. By temporarily taking in an animal without notifying the authorities, such as the Animal Rescue League, you may deprive the animal's owner the opportunity to locate it. Another problem that arises is the fact that students take in these animals only to leave them at the end of the year, which is unfair to the animal who has grown dependent on them.

Also, there are many diseases that can be transmitted from a stray to another dog, cat or even you. In cats, feline leukemia is on the rise, which requires treatment. And in dogs, distemperment is a deadly disease which needs inoculation to be prevented. Many animals may carry ringworms and rabies which, too, can be transmitted to humans. When one takes in a stray they are unaware of any diseases the animal might carry. By notifying a shelter, the animal can get proper care. Not knowing if the animal is spayed or neutered can create yet another problem. Further complications could arise if the animal were to become pregnant. Now there's not just one animal but several that are not receiving the necessary attention.

There is a solution to help stray or injured animals. The Providence Animal Rescue League or Volunteer Services for Animals are shelters which provide adequate care and attention to these either unwanted or lost animals. It is through these organizations that owners can locate their lost pets or others can find them through adoption. Granted the shelters can only hold the animals for a short time, but they make every effort to extend it as long as space allows. On the whole, it is the most humane solution.

If you wish to contact either of these organizations, the numbers are as follows:

Animal Rescue League 272-3121
VSA 273-0358

The war in the Middle East appears to be over and many Americans are relieved. But major problems still exist, not only in the political sphere, but with our environment. Several hundred oil fields are burning in Kuwait, bringing ominous black clouds to the region. However, environmental problems are now much closer to campus. The Cowl's Todd Spitter recently reported a major oil spill on campus, including several hundred gallons of oil that leaked on two separate occasions. This may not seem like much compared to the millions spilled in the Gulf, but it will have a great impact on our school. Unfortunately, many students do not realize that we are paying for this spill. If they did, reactions would have been much stronger. I am personally disgusted that my parents hard earned money is going towards such things as an irresponsible oil spill. No doubt we will face yet another increase in tuition for next semester, and knowing that this spill is part of the cause is very frustrating. I am sure the PC Administration will fail to mention the spill when they raise tuition, but I don't blame them. I'd be embarrassed about it, too.

However, PC is responsible for the spill and it was probably done without malice. Accidents do happen. My point is that many people ignore environmental problems because they think that they don't affect them. Now we have a specific incident on campus that does affect us, because you and I will eventually pay for it. I am not asking for your worldwide environmental awareness, although I do hope for it. I am asking that you look at these PC oil spills and recognize that it is our problem, not someone else's. I can only hope that these spills make you aware of this fact and that you carry this awareness with you for the rest of your lives.

Tom Rowley