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"Volume 6 - November 19, 1992" (1992). *What on Earth*. 4.
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WHAT ON EARTH...

Environmental and Wildlife Club.....Volume VI.....November 19, 1992

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD -Meridith Byrne

Audios! In the recent presidential election, America chose to say goodbye to self proclaimed environmental president, George Bush. That's good news to organizations such as the League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club who endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket. What exactly does this changing of the guard mean to environmentalists? Where have we been the past four years and what can we expect under this new administration?

Where we've been is a vast wasteland of excuses, justifications and empty promises. Let's, for the sake of nostalgia, turn back the clock to the election of 1984. Remember George's little harbor cruise through Boston? He created a great image! He promised results. Reviewing the results of his term, the League of Conservation Voters gave Bush an overall "D" grade.

Given his obstruction of the Endangered Species Act, his support of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and his attempt to pussy-foot around the Clean Water Act, it is suprising he passed at all!

Enough George Bush. It's in the past and we have a new President Elect. What do we have to look forward to? It's not easy to say, Clinton has made many promises and only time will tell if they are of substance. Still, he looks more promising than the other guy.

Bill Clinton plans to integrate jobs and the environment. He believes that the conflict "jobs versus owls" is false and can be resolved. Will he do it? Can he do it? He says that the people who may

lose their jobs because of this protection of endangered species might receive support from the federal government. Is this realistic? It sure would be nice...

Hopefully under Clinton we will see a conscious effort to reduce air and water pollution, protect wildlife and work with the rest of the world on issues such as global warming. It would seem that improvement is inevitable. Though Clinton's record in Arkansas has had its ups and downs, evidence is there that he has made the effort. Add on the bonus of Al Gore and it feels safe to hope again.

Only time will tell how this "changing of the guard" will guide our country on environmental issues. It's a new set of promises, let's hope this time they'll be followed through.

NO MORE EXCUSES, NOW YOU
KNOW...

-Jennifer Bowen

So you recycle your weekly issue of The Cowl, your diet coke cans and your glass containers. Now you can kick back and relax knowing that you've done your share for the environment, right? Wrong!! But any other action, other than recycling, will be demanding of your limited time and will require a radical change in your lifestyle, right? Wrong again!! You, as a PC student, are a crucial part of today's consumer world. You need to shop wisely not just to save money, but to save the environment.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Wake up PC!!!

Have you walked around Slavin lately? I have. I saw a mail room cluttered with paper and an empty recycling bin. I saw a bin for cans and glass filled with trash. I saw people walk by and ignore it.

Have you walked around off campus lately? I live there and I see it everyday, especially after the weekends. You are big kids now, you don't need people cleaning up after you all the time. And even when we do, you do it all over again. Do you think that that beer can or nacho box from 7-11 is just going to disappear when you drop it on the ground? Let's use a little common sense, they don't.

The Environmental and Wildlife Club was created to bring awareness and change to this campus. We're trying, but we need your help. There are many different ways to get involved, many different ways to show that you care about our environment and its inhabitants. The following is a list of our committees and contact numbers. Please use them...

Dorian Reiser

EDUCATION: Jen Buzzuto 272-5468

FIELD TRIPS: Anne Dillon 865-4184

RECYCLING: Liz Morrow 865-3317 and Roberta Robbins 865-3077

RIVER RESCUE&LAND RESTORATION: Brian Simard 274-8908

VOLUNTEER SERVICES FOR ANIMALS: Tom Rowley 273-6077

WHAT ON EARTH: Dorian Reiser 861-2356

PUBLICITY: Patti Coogan 865-4105

NO MORE EXCUSES...from pg. 1

Items such as product containers and trashbags are made of plastic, the culprit which comprises 25-30% (by volume) of the garbage in today's landfills. Because plastic cannot be recycled in certain areas, cardboard or glass containers can be used as substitutes for plastic milk and beverage containers. Liquid detergents sold in plastic containers can be traded for powder detegents sold in cardboard packaging. In addition, make certain that your detergent is phosphate-free and biodegradable. Phosphates and surfactants contained in some detergents are hazardous to drinking water and the wildlife that lives off of it.

The plastic trashbags, which make up the majority of the garbage disposed of daily in landfills, do not decompose easily. Although many companies claim that their products are biodegradable, they fail to mention that each bag takes up

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Instead of just guessing how much laundry detergent to use, why not measure it? If we all did this, detergent pollution in our waters would drop substantially.

Also, wash clothes in cold or warm water, only use hot water for clothes that absolutely require it. It is estimated that if everyone did this, the nation would save the equivalent of 100,000 barrels of oil a day (enough to heat 1.6 million homes through the winter)!

to 6 years to decompose, and only if the bag is exposed to sunlight, oxygen and rain. However, these bags are not constantly exposed to nature's elements in crowded landfills. The solution is to use paper bags, like Good Sense, which are biodegradable and made from recycled materials.

You should also be careful in the "Health and Beauty" sections of stores. Aerosol underarm deodorants contain VOCs, volatile organic compounds, which have helped to produce the greenhouse effect. Why not sacrifice and buy sticks or roll-ons? Some hairsprays, mousses and shampoos are alcohol based and alcohol also contains VOCs. The same styling results can be achieved by using water-based products.

Air fresheners are another product which are seldom considered a threat to our ecosystem. Yet, aerosol air fresheners have a 90-99% VOC content whereas solid air fresheners have only a 5-10% VOC content. Stop spraying the Lysol and break out a box of Armon Hammer Baking Soda, a bag of potpourri or even a cedar block.

Finally, how would you like to save \$\$\$ on your electric bill as well as becoming more energy conscious? A typical household could cut their electricity bill from \$68 to \$27 a year by using efficient lightbulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs and Capsylite bulbs can be used instead of incandescents in order to make homes more energy efficient.

So don't be left in the dark! Recycling plays an important role in the preservation of our environment, but so much more can be done with a small amount of time, effort and education. Compiled from The Earth Care Annual 1991 by Russell Wild

UPDATE ON ENDANGERED SPECIES
-Johanna Smialek

There are 37 species of dolphins and 6 species of porpoises in the world's oceans and rivers. Over one million of these docile, intelligent mammals are killed needlessly each year. Many are the drowning victims of unethical, careless and illegal fishing practices which fail to discriminate between fish and mammals. Others are fatalities of pollution. When a cetacean ingests polluted food, the toxins are stored in its blubber. If the cetacean ever needs the reserve food in its blubber, the toxins are then released into its system and it is killed instantly due to the immediate failure of its nervous system.

Different species of dolphins and porpoises are affected by different environments and types of human intervention. In fact, according to March 1992 National Geographic, four of the most endangered of these species are each threatened by a different cause.

The Vaquita, or Mexican porpoise, is a slight, sweet porpoise that swims only in the Gulf of California. Their population is a few hundred at best, and at least thirty a year are fatalities of crustacean fishermen. Vaquitas cannot afford to lose this many annually; they do not reproduce fast enough to account for their losses. Despite international and Mexican wildlife protection laws, fishing with nets that ensnare and drown Vaquitas continues because this method yields the largest amount of crustaceans. Most of the fishermen and their

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families live in dire poverty. To them, protection of the Vaquita does not match hunger. Poverty, then, is not only a social issue, but also environmentally detrimental.

The Indus River dolphin is an ancient, almost blind relic of prehistoric cetaceans. They are one of the only species of dolphins that will use their teeth in defense. There are less than five hundred dolphins in the Indus River. Besides pollution, this dolphin faces an unusual obstacle. The Indus River is divided by a number of concrete barricades. These barricades separate the population and stifle breeding. Fortunately, the Pakistani government has acknowledged the problem and steps are being taken to remove the barriers.

Another river dolphin, the Baiji, of China's Yangtze River is not so fortunate. There are less than two hundred Baiji who each day face overwhelming challenges to their survival. Chinese fishermen use an illegal but high yielding method of fishing that involves numerous hooks on a string. Thrashing fish caught on the hooks attract the Baiji, who are then ensnared and drown. Baiji are also the frequent victims of fatal wounds obtained by boat propellers and explosives. Today, the only hope for the survival of the Baiji is in captive breeding reserves.

Perhaps the most endangered dolphin in the world is the Black Dolphin. At last count, less than one hundred lurked in the rocky, murky, coastal waters of Chile. The Black Dolphin is deliberately sought by fishermen who use its meat as crab bait. Again, it is poverty as well as apathy that

4 causes fishermen to ignore and defy international wildlife laws. Unlike the Mexican government, the Chilean government has refused to recognize the problem. The future of the Black Dolphin is sadly grim.

What then can be done to ensure the survival and longevity of these gentle mammals? In addition to consuming only dolphin safe fish products, we can support organizations that seek to overcome the poverty of the people who kill these endangered species in their desperate search for food. Education is essential and sympathy helps but only action will produce results.

BANKING ON THE FUTURE

-Maggie Leonard

A new kind of debt-for-nature swap has developed in an attempt to preserve the large unprotected and increasingly rare pieces of land in developing countries. Because the same countries whose land is ecologically valuable also owe billions of dollars to banks and governments of industrialized countries, the exchange is a simple one. The debt of the developing country is traded in for a financial commitment binding the country to protect certain ecologically vital areas.

In the past, debt-for-nature swaps existed on a purely commercial level. A group or organization would raise money to buy commercial bank debt at a discounted rate and would then give this debt back to the developing country in exchange for the country's financial commitment towards preservation. In one situation involving this swap, Jamaica's national park system is able to be funded by the income from an environmental trust fund.

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ON RESPONSIBILITY II

-Dr. Dorsett

It's a new day dawning, right? A new administration, complete with a Vice President who actually studies environmental issues. A President who may actually heed his Vice President on those issues.

We're all set. Congress will assure us fresher air and sweeter water. Housing and Urban Development will build us greener beltways under deeper, bluer skies. Department of the Interior will rescue wild creatures and preserve wild places for the generations.

Right?

Washington will solve all our problems. All we need is leadership and vision.

Well, could we be so sanguine. Problem is, there are hands on troubles right here in River City, and our record isn't so shiny.

Right here at PC, I'm saying. Right here where we ought to take some responsibility, show some leadership.

Set an example for our representatives in government, say.

Take a for instance: students in the Environmental and Wildlife Club, with considerable material and moral assistance from the Physical Plant, started a recycling program three years ago. Great idea.

It didn't work.

Most of the recycling bins were removed last summer, because people-read that you and me-threw garbage in with the aluminum cans, threw aluminum cans in with the glass and glass and plastic in with the paper.

Great ideas fail when we muck up the particulars. It takes some forethought to make recycling work, to separate out the recyclables. It takes some care.

Or take another for instance: members of the Club and of BOP, on their own time, at their own volition, because they care, clean trash from the neighborhoods near campus. Every Sunday this fall, they've been out picking up litter.

Other students "walk past. Students who live in the neighborhoods. Students just out for a stroll. Does anyone offer to help? Clean up their own backyard?

You might guess the answer.

"We have met the enemy," says Pogo, "and he is us." We can do better. So let's do better.

BANKING ON THE FUTURE...from pg.4

The US government has become involved in debt-for-nature swaps. In a program called the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI), the government to government debt is exchanged for environmental protection. However, certain qualifications must be met by the developing country before any trade can be made. Bolivia and Jamaica are two countries that met the qualifications and they are now seeing the ecological improvements.

It is hopeful that the US will be able to set set up similar swaps with several other South American countries

but the financial details must be approved by Congress. However, when one sees a restored and protected area such as the Blue Mountains in Kingston, Jamaica, the financial problems seem to pale in comparison to the natural beauty. Optimistically, it would be ideal for countries to work together to improve the debt situation and thus improve ecological situations.

Compiled from the Nature Conservancy, May/June 1992

THE UNTAINTED SONGS OF NATURE
-Erika Gasper

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Human-produced noise: a type of pollution generally overlooked in the face of the grave environmental crises of our day. Consider, though, how few of us living in America have experienced nature totally devoid of human noises. Even worse, consider how few of us realize our loss. Most state and national parks offer only an illusion of quiet refuge from human noise. Chainsaws and heavy machinery hum in the distance; trucks, park vehicles and trains ramble by, jets roar overhead. Sadly, many will never have the opportunity to explore the old-growth forests of the world in search of the untainted songs of nature. Fortunately, however, there is a man who is dedicated to bringing those songs to anyone wishing to hear them.

Gordon Hempton is a nature recorder, but not of the sort most of us are accustomed to. Believing that nature needs no improvement, he refuses to use sound filters. "[They] can reduce noise, but they also eliminate a lot of the presence of nature," he says. "[They] take some depth out of the woodpecker, all of the body out of an owl's hoot." His microphones are found in the rubber ears of a tripod-mounted head. With the look and feel of real ears, they convey sounds to the microphones more realistically than the bowl-shaped microphones used in most nature recordings. Hempton chooses recording sites for textures, contrast in vegetation and a foundation to build the piece on, such as a soft grass floor or a rock that reflects sound well. His Earth

Sounds series (Peter Roberts Productions) bears the recommendation of the American Museum of Natural History.

Currently, Hempton is working in the creation of the "Dawn Chorus"-a 24 minute nature symphony cataloging the global dawn chorus from simple to complex ecosystems. The 24 minutes represent a 24-hour movement of dawn across the planet. It will also serve as a database of sounds produced by a panorama of creatures while they still exist.

Noise pollution is a disheartening problem for all in the industrialized world. Hempton's own collaboration with nature is becoming increasingly difficult as human noise continues to mar natural sounds. Luckily, Gordon Hempton is a man of perseverance and can provide what many will never experience: the unadulterated songs of nature. Compiled from Omni, Oct. 1990

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

*Recycling one ton of paper saves: 4100kwh energy (enough to power the average home for 6 months), 17 trees, 7000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, and keeps almost 60lbs. of air pollution effluent out of the air.

*Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to keep a 100 watt light bulb burning for 4 hours.

*Recycling one aluminum can could operate a tv set for 3 hours.

*An average student uses 1/2 lb. of recyclable paper a day.

*An energy efficient 15 watt light bulb has a life expectancy of 9000 hours, lasts up to 9 times as long as a conventional light bulb and uses a quarter of the energy to produce the same amount of light.

*At 8 cents a kilowatt hour, the national average for electricity today, a 15 watt bulb will save over \$30 worth of electricity over its lifetime.