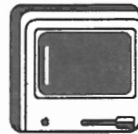


# Environment, Technology, and Society



Newsletter of the Section on Environment and Technology  
American Sociological Association

Autumn 1992

Number 69

*Editor's Note: In the Winter 1992 issue of the Newsletter, we included the full text of Dr. Felice Levine's testimony before the Committee on Environmental Research of the National Research Council and indicated our intent to reprint all the input provided by Section members in subsequent editions of the Newsletter. The first contribution below to the NRC Testimony is authored by Carole Seyfrit of our Section. The second contribution is authored by Allan Schnaiberg, Chair of the Section.*

## NRC Testimony Contributions

by  
Carole Seyfrit

In support of your forthcoming NRC Committee testimony, I can give you a few ideas and a possible source of information. The NSF Polar Research Board Committee on Arctic Social Sciences published a booklet in 1989 (*Arctic Social Science: An Agenda for Action*) that outlined five or six goals and objectives for social science research in the next decade or so. Many of these are related to the environment or could be used to discuss what is needed in social science environmental research.

Your memo asked for information concerning the "bullet" questions posed. Here are some suggestions for each:

1. Environmental problems that are not currently being addressed, what are they and why aren't they being addressed.
  - Connection between scientific discoveries about the environment and human responses needed to make the scientific discoveries work.

For example, we all know that recycling has become feasible for many waste products, but it is a human re-

(continued on page 3)

## Membership News

### We're Over 400!



We did it! Congratulations to all the section members who helped recruit new members at the meetings in Pittsburgh, and a very special thanks to Carol Seyfrit for her contributions towards getting membership up over the 400 mark. We now are entitled to that extra session at the next meeting. Membership remains a concern, and all members are encouraged to pester their colleagues and graduate students to join. Over 150 sociologists who are currently conducting research into topics related to environment and technology and who are not currently members of our section recently have

been identified. These sociologists are the target of this fall's membership drive. In other membership related news, Kent Van Liere is looking into the feasibility of a section-produced membership directory. For members who were unable to attend the meetings in August, we still have a few copies of the section guide to sessions for the 1992 meeting and the 1991-1992 section members' guide to papers presented at regional meetings. Brochures describing the Section also are available for distribution. For copies of these contact Kurt Cylke (716) 245-5335 or Cylke@Geneseo.bitnet.

### In this issue

Membership News .....	1
Contributions to Testimony: Carol Seyfrit and Allan Schnaiberg .....	1,3-4
IAP3 Conference: Chris Cluett and Ruth Love .....	5-7
Meetings .....	7
Business Meeting Minutes: August 20, 1992 .....	8
Comments from the Section Chair .....	8
Current Events: Comments, Publications, Membership Activities .....	9-11
Lubricating Industrial Conflict: The Example of Oil Recycling .....	9
Section Awards .....	12

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## Notes from the Editor

This is our largest edition yet of the newsletter this year, and I still have several book reviews that I have not been able to squeeze in. Those of you who attended our business meeting in Pittsburgh will recall that we discussed the prospect of issuing a special edition of *ETS* devoted solely to book reviews. The ASA is willing to copy and mail this out for us, but that isn't always the case, so let's take advantage of this opportunity. I would like to receive several more reviews before we go to press with such an issue, so consider this a plea for those of you who have read a provocative book or two recently on a topic relevant to our readership's professional interests (romance novels don't count). Spend a little time and write up a review (short reviews are fine), and send me

the material (preferably in electronic form via e-mail) before Christmas.

I also talked to the ASA about creating a directory of e-mail addresses for all our membership that has access to this capability. I was told that our Section's directory already contains that information in those cases where Section members have provided it. Please be sure to include your e-mail address when registration time comes around. Or you may also mail the info directly to Caroline Bugno at the ASA. We hope to be able to provide a complete Section directory to all members sometime this spring, in either hard copy or electronic form.

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### Call for Nominations

Two Environment and Technology Section Council member positions are open, and elections to fill those positions will take place in the spring of 1993. Our Section bylaws state: "The Council is vested in principle with the power to carry out all necessary operations of the Section, acting as the representative of the membership of the Section. The Council shall make decisions by majority rule of its attending members. Any action of the Section may be brought to a vote of the Section by the Council, or by a petition signed by 10 percent of the members of the Section or by 25 members, whichever is less." Please send nominations of candidates from among the membership for these two positions to **Ken Gould**, Chair of the Nominations Committee, Department of Sociology, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY 13617. These nominations must be received by Ken no later than **March 1, 1993**. The term for a Council member is three years, and these two positions will run from 1993 to 1996. Elections for these positions will be held and the results announced prior to next year's ASA meetings in Miami.

## Environment, Technology and Society Newsletter

### Editor

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### Publication Schedule

The deadline for the winter issue will be **January 15, 1993**, in order to have that issue in your hands by mid-February. Also note my request above for book reviews to be sent in by about **December 15, 1992**, in order that we can issue a special newsletter early in 1993 (vibrant reading to ward off the chill of winter).

### Page Design and Layout

**Paul Zakian**, Research Assistant

## Contribution to NRC Testimony (cont.)

(continued from page 1)

sponse that is required to make recycling work. Now that people have begun to recycle, we need more secondary uses (more product development) for recycled materials to keep up with the volume of materials people are willing to recycle.

Another example, we can reduce auto emissions by use of newly developed fuels and/or more efficient automobiles. However, these discoveries make no difference if we cannot understand and change people's perceptions, desires, and buying habits.

- Concurrent studies of new technology and how the new technology will impact humans. Also how failure of technology can affect humans and how humans can contribute to the failure of technology.

Recognizing the lag between technology and human response or acceptance of the technology is very important. Also along these lines, we need to be better equipped to anticipate the positive and negative consequences of technological and environmental change on human populations. This includes anticipating the legal issues associated with change.

- Noise pollution as a significant and increasing human created environmental problem.
- Impact of resource development and/or new technologies on subpopulations such as women, youth, elderly, etc.
- Post-impact studies.

Many of the social impact studies on consequences of a new technology or an environmental change are done in the pre-impact stage. While this is important (and required by law), scientific inquiry requires a cumulative body of knowledge. We cannot continue to make pre-impact predictions and maintain any sociological credibility if we don't also do post impact studies to find out how good our predictions were and to refine our theories and techniques to produce even better predictions.

2. Most important environmental problems requiring study in the next five to ten years and ten to twenty years.

- International cooperation in the field of environmental regulation, law, and study of social impacts.
- Overpopulation: too many people, too few resources.
- The relationship between nations and the unequal consumption of resources.
- Effects of changes in the availability of plants and animals on subsistence cultures.
- Impact of environmental change including regulations and laws on cultures directly tied to the environment.
- Depletion of nonrenewable resources.
- Depletion of renewable resources at a faster than replacement rate.
- Exploitation of underdeveloped countries by plundering their resources.
- Clean air, clean water, and the problems of toxic waste disposal.
- Finding new non-toxic chemicals for fertilizers, cleaning agents, pesticides, AND studying how to affect human response and use of new products.

3. The major problems with funding, structure, and organization of environmental research in the US

- Disciplinary bound structure of funding in the NSF (and other agencies). The Arctic Social Sciences Program which is located in the Division of Polar Programs is a notable exception to this.

For example, the Sociology Program in the NSF is (or has not been) interested in funding projects on the environment unless they produced Weberian or Durkheimian level theoretical revolutions in sociology (Well maybe that is a bit too strong!). Environmental issues have been seen as "applied" rather than "basic" research.

- Lack of inclusion of social sciences in the environmental sciences.

The make-up of the NRC committee is indicative of this. At least one university proposed an Environmental Research Center without any reference to social sciences, although the social sciences had more NSF money to study environmental change than any other group on campus.

- Lack of attention to international responses to environmental solutions and problems.

There are no national borders that keep other nation's environmental problems out. Other nation's may have significant social and technological advances in the prevention or treatment of environmental issues, but we rarely see cross-national research, especially in social issues.

4. Suggestions for improving any problems identified.

- Creation of National Institutes for the Environment.

As the proposal stands (unless changed since ASA meetings) there is inclusion of social sciences in every directorate proposed and a specific "human" related directorate in the proposal.

- More funding for international cooperation including attendance at meetings and study at international sites.
- Inclusion of social science, i.e., the human element, in every area of environmental research. It is ultimately left to humans to solve the environmental problems and focusing only in the development of new technology is never going to eliminate the need for human factors.

### NRC Testimony Contributions

by

Allan Schnaiberg

1. Environmental problems not currently addressed:

- Broadest category of unaddressed environmental issues is the systematic linkage of ecosystem disruption to economic activity, as opposed to the

(continued on page 4)

## Contribution to NRC Testimony (cont.)

(continued from page 3)

analysis of narrow, specific issues of pollution or resource depletion.

- Linked closely to this is the sustainability of current economic production and human habitation patterns, in the face of ecosystem changes: specifically, the retention of agricultural activity in the face of shrinking water tables in the U.S. west and southwest.

### 2. Most important near-term environmental issues:

- The most pressing issue is the under-regulation of toxic wastes, both in landfills and storage facilities; research is needed on causes and consequences of this, since this will impact on agricultural activity as well as human health.
- The distribution of, political organization around, and socioeconomic impact of diminishing water tables is a second pressing issue in the immediate and near-term, since many economic and social structures are contingent on water supplies.
- Deforestation through acid rainfall is another near-term pressing impact, both for forestry, marine production impacts, and human health impacts.

### 3. Funding, structure and organization problems of environmental research:

- There is a lack of any systematic dissemination of environmental research findings in secondary and college levels, and their linkages to economic structures and activities. This places environmental researchers in a weak relationship to publics, who might be more prepared to support research if they had a cognitive framework within which to examine environmental research and policy inputs.
- Most environmental research ignores conflicting interests and varying degrees of economic freedom of "stakeholders" in environmental problems, in analyzing causes of and proposing solutions for such problems: relatively few social science inputs are used in policy-making or program evaluation.

- The systemic nature of most environmental problems is understated in the social system component (and often in the ecosystem as well, though more attention has been paid to that issue): few environmental problem analyses examine the linkages between social system structures and processes, e.g., global warming and clean air are actually both tied to automobile-truck usage, which is itself a complex outcome of social-historical processes of ethnic and class segregation (including suburbanization), and distribution of both housing and employment, and changing government subsidization of public transport, none of which offer "quick fixes" from a socially-realistic perspective.

- Social, economic, and political conflict dominate the legislation and implementation of environmental protection policies, yet few analyses routinely incorporate these conflict models.

- Environmental problem information is typically inaccessible to informed citizens and citizen action groups in every problem area, thereby limiting effective intervention by all but the most centralized and professionalized environmental movements.

- Most environmental problem-solving policies, after legislation and executive implementation, are inadequately followed up for their degree of successful implementation, leaving problems of implementation to haphazard intervention by a variety of social movement groups, most of whom have quite limited monitoring resources.

### 4. Suggestions for improvement:

- Environmental agencies need to support legislation to mandate all state educational agencies to incorporate regular and universal curricula to high schools and public colleges to provide instruction on the systematic linkages between ecological disruption and socio-economic structures and activities, developing new means of disseminating known connections.

For private colleges, some use of links to federal assistance programs might be used to ensure universal instruction there as well.

- All environmental problem research and policy development activities need to include a social science component, to document the interests of various stakeholders in the problem and in proposed solutions, especially the variability in objective economic impacts.
- Some component of the environmental research budget must be allocated to modeling the broader links of socio-economic structures and ecosystem changes. This should be allocated initially to primarily qualitative approaches, since the development of quantitative models is premature, given the current state of knowledge.
- One element of all environmental protection policy development grants should be the social science projection of likely patterns of social, economic, and political resistance to proposed policies, and means of dealing with this in the implementation phase.
- Empirical research on the inaccessibility of governmental and university research and program monitoring data for community and citizen groups, other than the largest national environmental social movement organizations (Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, etc.) should be carried out by social scientists. This should be used to find new mechanisms for effective dissemination of usable information.
- Environmental research and protection programs should devote some funds to documenting the realities of implementing the policy outcomes, following legislation and executive implementation. In particular, the variable implementation across ethnic, racial, and economic population sub-groups needs to be systematically documented by social scientists, and fed into the policy process. ∞

## IAP3 Conference

### International Association of Public Participation Practitioners (IAP3)

First Annual Conference  
Portland, Oregon  
September 10-12, 1992

Chris Cluett and Ruth L. Love

**Introduction:** The International Association of Public Participation Practitioners (IAP3) is a new professional group devoted to letting public involvement practitioners share their experiences, learn from each other, and further the cause of citizen participation in government and industry decision making the world over. IAP3 was formed in 1990 as a non-profit corporation by some of the "gurus" and pioneers of planning and conducting effective public involvement programs, such as Jim Creighton, Larry Aggens, and Jerry Delli Priscoli. Approximately half of IAP3 members are Canadian or from abroad, legitimating the "I" for International in the logo.

Although public involvement (PI) proceedings are by no means limited to environmental issues, the sharp and often chaotic controversy of these issues has helped spark the new profession of public participation practitioners. From an environmental sociology standpoint IAP3 will be worth watching for several reasons, some of which are listed here:

- The involvement of environmental sociologists in IAP3 may help identify strategic sites for conducting research on modes of resolving environmental issues, and whether PI does lead to "better" decisions.
- For sociologists who assume advocacy roles or more neutral facilitator/researcher roles in environmental issues, IAP3 offers a professional, applied forum in which to share ideas with persons engaged in similar work.
- Since public involvement activities, by their very nature, involve recognizing diverse social constructions of physical environmental conditions, including the research findings and data gathered by an array of scientists, IAP3 activities may be

the venue for finding a theoretic balance between objective reality and the social construction of reality.<sup>1</sup>

Against this background we present an overview of IAP3's first annual conference, held in Portland, Oregon, September 10-12, 1992. We attended, along with fellow section member, Desmond Connor.

The conference was a huge success. A few months prior to it, organizers anticipated perhaps 100 attendees at the most, based on early registrations and expressions of interest. The final tally was over 360 attendees! People came from as far away as Australia, Japan and Germany, and there was a large contingent from Canada. It was truly an international gathering, with broad representation from both public and private sectors.

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**... citizens want to be able to influence decision making processes to reflect their interests, and they want to be involved from the very beginning of these processes.**

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**First Day:** Jim Creighton, President of IAP3, gave in his welcoming speech a brief history of public involvement, and then offered a challenge to the attendees. He urged that the conference constitute a forum for practitioners to share openly what works, what doesn't and why, suggesting that interaction among participants was at least as important as the presentations. He said:

"As we are creating the field of public participation, we are also the product of dramatically changing expectations of what it takes for a decision to count, that is, for decisions to be implementable in the face of continuing disagreement, protest, and legal challenge. For decisions to count, there must be three things: sufficient agreement on the substance of the decision, a belief that the procedures followed in arriving at the decision were rational, adequate, and complete. And there must also be psychological satisfaction. Psychological satisfaction has to do with such apparent intangibles as trust, equity, and feeling valued."

Jim outlined another framing topic; namely, how you define the problem to be decided is at the heart of most disputes and controversies. For example, do you define an electric power problem in terms of how you transmit power from Point A to Point B? Or do you define it more broadly, in terms of how you develop adequate power resources, including energy conservation as a resource?

Today citizens want to be able to influence decision making processes to reflect their interests, and they want to be involved from the very beginning of these processes. During the past decade or so there has been a transition from what Jim calls procedural public involvement to consensus seeking public involvement. The former is illustrated by very formal public hearings (poorly advertised at that) that some government agencies hold to meet the letter of laws (e.g., NEPA) requiring the public to be informed and allowed to give input. In the consensus seeking mode, while decision making isn't handed over to the public, decision makers put forth a clear effort to include diverse groups of citizens throughout the process to attempt to define alternatives that could enjoy the support of all impacted groups. Jim points out that, while consensus isn't always reached, stakeholders are clearly at the table throughout the discussion. When the techniques of public participation fail to lead to agreement, then alternative conflict-resolution techniques come into play, such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.

Jim posed some important questions to the conference. Can we be certain that an agreement reached between highly interested parties is identical with the interests of the broad public? Does the potential for realizing through modern communication technology a genuine global village reduce the need for representative democracy? Does direct public participation run the risk of following the impulse of the moment without concern for precedent and prior commitments?

IAP3, Jim believes, is on the cutting edge of trying to define the appropriate balance between representative and participatory democracy, and that balance point is changing. Public participation professionals are part of the working out of what democracy means

(continued on page 6)

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in action. The challenge is to discover the proper balance point between a representative system and a direct participatory system.<sup>2</sup>

With these challenges in mind, plus a warm welcome by City of Portland Mayor, Bud Clark (who got his political start as a neighborhood activist), the participants could choose among several breakout sessions during each morning and afternoon of the conference. Presentations at these concurrent sessions covered public involvement techniques, case studies, strategic planning and visioning for the future. There also was an option of joining in ad hoc discussions that could be spontaneously scheduled for a designated conference room.

## Public involvement empowers the decision maker; it helps managers manage controversy to make better decisions.

The luncheon speaker, Peter Johnson, former Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration spoke on "How I Learned to Harness Public Controversy to Make Better Decisions". Peter, with assistance from consultant Jim Creighton, and support in the trenches from BPA employees with social science backgrounds, turned Bonneville around over a four-year period from an organization judged by its publics to be arrogant, insensitive, and uncaring to one that was widely praised in the region for its very successful public involvement efforts. Johnson found from his experiences that public involvement gave BPA a new legitimacy to act. It gave him the authority—the consent—to enforce a settlement in the face of opposition and disagreement. Public involvement empowers the decision maker; it helps managers manage controversy to make better decisions. He also discovered that instituting public involvement in an organization implies organizational change and changes in organizational culture.<sup>3</sup>

After Johnson's talk, Larry Aggens, who created the concept of a Samoan Circle, led the entire conference group through a Samoan Circle discussion on the topic: How can you use public involvement to change

your organization? Aggens explained that a Samoan Circle has nothing to do with Samoa. It is a technique to elicit useful dialogue in a very large group. Participants are seated in concentric rings around a central table. Only four persons may sit at the table and only those persons may speak. Others wanting to speak must stand by the table and wait for a seated discussant to leave. There are few ground rules, no moderator, and participants must attempt to keep the discussion on the topic agreed upon ahead of time. At IAP3, the Samoan Circle discussion was lively. One line of talk focused on whether an organization's willingness to use public involvement is the product of a crisis; likewise does it take a crisis to lead to change in corporate culture? Another line focused on concern that both active members of the public and consultants become burned out by the participation process. At the same time there is need for much outreach work to have the uninvolved become involved. Another idea expressed was the need to better integrate organizations into their community through more volunteer work and a willingness to value members of the community as well as the organization's stockholders.

**Second Day:** The opener was cathartic with a Seattle Public Theatre stage production, "Timber", dramatizing the conflicts in the Northwest among loggers, timber interests, environmentalists and other citizens.<sup>4</sup> The play had a powerful effect on the viewers. Afterwards, the audience broke into small discussion groups to consider how drama can be used as a PI tool to help bring out different points of view, the feelings that go with them, and some values held in common, despite the differences. A frequent comment in these discussions was that "Timber" enabled you to experience some of the feelings that loggers, environmentalists and other parties to the dispute were having.

The drama was followed by a panel of three seasoned activists who deal with public involvement programs as representatives of Native American, natural resource, and human resource interests. They offered their views about what public involvement practitioners do well and what needs fixing. The latter include:

- making sure decision makers insist on providing adequate funding and time for public involvement;
- concentrating on sincere efforts to engage in public dialogue in lieu of managing problems through the courts;
- giving more voice to under-represented interests through greater outreach efforts, assisting with transportation and child care, and scheduling meetings at times and places convenient for these people;
- creating coalitions that help make decisions work, and holding people accountable for achieving positive outcomes.

Ralph Cavanagh, an attorney/energy planner with Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), wound up this panel by pointing out that NRDC and similar activist groups are now seeking ways of collaborating with their erstwhile "enemies" such as electric utilities to reach "better" decisions without resorting to the judicial system. The bottom line for activists is whether PI leads to decisions that better serve the needs, interests and values of the broader public (made up of many smaller publics).

## ... individual thought is largely incoherent; coherent thought is a collective experience, and public participation practitioners are the caretakers of the context of this collective thinking.

At lunch, Bill Robertson, Associate Chief of Engineers, US Army Corps of Engineers (one of the first civilians to reach such a high Corps post) spoke on *The Challenges of Public Decision Making for Sustainable Development After Rio*. Bill called for a partnership for action between engineers and public participation professionals. He suggested that individual thought is largely incoherent; coherent thought is a collective experience, and public participation practitioners are the caretakers of the context of this collective thinking. Robertson's hope is that IAP3 will be able to work closely with engineers on international planning. Discussions are occurring to structure such a relationship.

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**Final Day:** The focus of the general session was on international applications and cross cultural issues in public participation. An international panel talked about PI in developing countries, the role of citizen action groups in other industrialized countries such as Germany where local governments do not yet see these groups as fully legitimate, and the need to modernize decision making in the democratic process in all three "worlds". There is much practical and intellectual interest in the processes by which people, particularly disadvantaged persons, influence policy choices and decisions. A recent USAID study of over 50 projects in developing countries shows that public participation is more important than the amount of funding in producing a successful outcome.<sup>5</sup>

As moderator of the international panel, Jerry Delli Priscoli (on loan from the US Army Corps of Engineers to World Bank) wound up the session by wondering if one of the risks of PI is the possibility of revolution. He also outlined some needs:

- The World Bank is moving in the direction of PI but it needs to move beyond individual projects to considering cross-sectoral long-term development objectives and strategic avenues for realizing these;
- Evaluation of public involvement is needed as well as planning and training;
- A "best practices" handbook is needed as well as effective means for disseminating it.

At the closing session, Jim Creighton introduced IAP3 board member Richard Roberts speaking as a representative of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). Roberts said that IAIA would like to form some collaborative relations with IAP3 – possibly some sort of strategic alliance.

Creighton invited IAP3 members to next year's conference scheduled for October 6-8, 1993, in or near Banff, Alberta, Canada.

**Postscript:** The two and a half day meeting

had some elements of a social movement about it, composed of participants who are the true believers and teachers, and those who have suddenly awakened to the need for PI, seeking truth and enlightenment. But under the enthusiasm there was a strong professional core, with people eager to learn from each other. At one breakout session, a presenter opened her remarks by saying that she could feel the support of the audience and that it was so good to be among supportive people, interested in sharing, after many years of laboring on PI in isolation.

What people sought from each other and the sessions ranged from quickie guides for successful PI to a reflective context for thinking about PI activities in new ways. During the final breakout session, there was a Samoan Circle on any PI issue that concerned participants. A utility planner said he had found the sessions too philosophical, that they weren't practical enough, and didn't fill his need for easy specifics for running a PI program. In contrast, someone else said she found plenty of practical information at IAP3 and welcomed this session in order to reflect and philosophize on what it all meant.

For further information about IAP3, including member services and application forms (annual membership is \$50.00), write to:

International Association of Public  
Participation Practitioners  
555 Bryant Street, Suite 712  
Palo Alto, Calif. 94301 USA  
Tel: (415) 853-1000

<sup>1</sup> There is need for a balanced approach to looking both at material and socially constructed reality. For a recent discussion of this as it applies to environmental sociology see F.H. Buttel and P.J. Taylor, "Environmental Sociology and Global Environmental Change: A Critical Assessment", *Society and Natural Resources*. 5 (3) 1992, pp. 211-230.

<sup>2</sup> For some comparisons between participatory and representative democracy, see Amitai Etzioni, *The Active Society*. New York: Free Press, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of participation in decision-making is clearly broader than "public involvement", being well-grounded in Social Psychology, starting with the small-group experiments of Kurt Lewin and his students. The same theme is found in concepts of management and leadership training, and the New Age concept of "empowerment". Companies and agencies embarking on effective public involvement efforts may find themselves changing internally as well, as employees seek

to apply some PI principles to their work situations. At IAP3, Brian Sadler of the Water Authority of Western Australia reported that his agency went through this type of change with public involvement becoming part of a new management philosophy of Total Quality Management. For an older but general discussion of this see Amitai Etzioni, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, Revised and Enlarged Edition*. New York: Free Press, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> "Timber: A Living Newspaper on Deforestation and Reforestation" was originally written in 1939 as part of the Federal Theatre Project of the Seattle Work Projects Administration (WPA). Before the play could be produced, Congress cut theatre funds out of WPA because of fears of communism. The controversy sparking the play was the creation of Olympic National Park, thereby ending logging in the heart of the Olympic Peninsula. Recently the 50-minute play was discovered, resurrected and adapted to the current logging controversy. For more information, contact:

Edd Key, Office Manager  
Seattle Public Theatre  
915 East Pine, Room 426  
Seattle, WA 98122 Tel: (206)328-4848

<sup>5</sup> For studies showing the usefulness of public participation in planning and conduct of development projects in Third World countries see:

- a. K. Finsterbusch and W.A. Van Wicklin III. "Beneficiary Participation in Development Projects: Empirical Tests of Popular Theories" *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 37 (3), April 1989.
- b. "Unanticipated Consequences of AID Projects: Lessons from Impact Assessment for Project Planning". *Impact Assessment Bulletin*. 6(3-4) 1988, pp. 126-136.

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## Meetings

Phillip Obermiller reports that the tenth annual meeting of The Society for Applied Sociology was held October 15-18, 1992, with the organizing theme: Sociology in a Changing Environment. The program indicates a number of sessions likely to be of interest to environmental sociologists. Obermiller and Penelope Canan are among the presenters at a thematic session on *The Changing Environment*. Those interested in further information regarding the papers presented may contact John Kennedy of the Program Committee at (812) 855-2573 or Internet: kennedyj@ucs.indiana.edu

Galen Cranz reports the following meeting: *Supercities: Environmental Quality and Sustainable Development*, October 26-30, 1992, San Francisco, sponsored by SF State University and UC Davis.

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## Section News & Comments

### Minutes of the August 20, 1992 Business Meeting for the ASA Environment and Technology Section

The 1992 Section Business meeting was brought to order by Chair Allen Schnaiberg. The meeting opened with the presentation of the 1992 Distinguished Service Award to David Sills. The Chair read the inscription and made the presentation. Dr. Sills made a short speech indicating his appreciation for the award. He noted the importance of the topics being studied by the Section's members and encouraged all to keep up their efforts.

The Chair then announced that Hal Aronson (University of California—Santa Cruz), had won the Student Paper Competition (the award includes \$200 for the deferment of costs of travel to the meetings). Mr. Aronson also expressed his appreciation for the award.

The Chair also reported that Marvin Olsen had been selected for the 1993 Distinguished Contribution Award. Normally the award would be voted on at this year's meeting and awarded at next year's meeting. However, because of Marvin's special circumstances, the award had been made earlier in the year by unanimous agreement of the Council.

The minutes of the 1991 business meeting were approved.

**Secretary-Treasurer's Report.** Kent Van Liere reported that the section had a balance of \$2,607.79 as of May 1, 1992. No specific budget for 1992-1992 was presented.

**Membership Committee Report.** Carol Seyfrit reported that the section currently has 401 members as a result of a last minute flurry of recruiting at the meetings. Since the section has more than 400 members, one additional session at the 1993 meetings will be assigned to the section. Carol also re-

ported that the new Chair of the Membership Committee will be Curt Cylke.

Curt Cylke reported that he and Carol were looking into other methods to attract new members. In particular, he noted that he had been sending recruitment letters to all of the people who had presented papers on environmental topics in other ASA sessions, and to people who had presented papers in environmental sessions.

**Publication Committee Report.** The Chair noted that the bylaws call for a Publication Committee which includes a Chair and two members. The Chair nominated Chris Cluett. The nomination was approved unanimously. The Chair also asked for volunteers to assist Chris on the committee. The Chair also commended Chris for the excellent job he has done with the newsletter.

(continued on page 11)

## Comments From the Section Chair

### Meetings of Minds: From Pittsburgh to Miami

Allan Schnaiberg, Section Chair

For some time, I have been concerned about enhancing the intellectual stimulation at our section meetings. Our increased membership now gives us more opportunities to address old questions in new ways, and new questions in old ways. It also obligates the session organizers that well-used approaches that have predominated the section inform our dialogues, without closing us off to new voices and ideas.

Last year, I experimented with one way of opening us up — by inviting some colleagues whom I thought would enhance our diversity to submit papers to our sessions. A number of section members commented about the unusual liveliness of discussions at these Pittsburgh sessions. The more open debate seemed to affirm that this was one way of expanding our horizons.

Accordingly, Penelope Canan and I have attempted to move farther along this path.

During the Miami meetings, we will be holding one session on *Unequal Risks & Unequal Access to Resources*, jointly with the section on Race and Ethnicity. Rose Brewer and Penelope will be screening submissions for that session.

In addition, to deal more directly with technological issues and conflicts, we are attempting to use another session for a presentation by Hardin Tibbs, a leading *industrial ecology* theorist from the Global Business Network. A panel of section participants will respond. We hope this will broaden the number of links with our interests from related sections, including labor, gender, organizations, world systems, and law.

Third, we wanted to explore new methodological approaches to studying environmental disputes, conflicts, and accommodations. I have often observed our uncritical use of the dominant methods in the disci-

pline, and I think we can go farther than this in future sessions. On the one hand, our responses to the challenge of studying environmental and technological disputes can expand the range of methodologies used by other social scientists. And on the other hand, some innovative, reflective approaches used by other creative sociologists may equally inform us about new approaches to our own research.

The roundtable sessions will be more flexible, open to a variety of topics, and we hope these will complement the other main sessions. It is our expectation that we will have one additional session, assuming our membership has crossed the 400 member level. As a sometime demographer, I am all too aware that size is often much less important than activity, so I hope that Miami and forthcoming meetings will continue to add to the stimulation that meetings can and should provide. ∞

## Lubricating Industrial Conflict The Example of Oil Recycling

Allan Schnaiberg  
and Adam S. Weinberg  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, IL 60208

Our recent interaction with a major solvent recycling firm, Safety-Kleen Corporation, suggests some new analytic challenges for environmental sociologists. In our previous research efforts, both of us have focused on conflicts between environmental movements and government agencies engaged in environmental protection, on the one hand, and representatives of major industries, on the other. This note suggests another dimension of environmental conflict, as well as some possible new alignments between some movements and industrial interests.

The case we have noted involves continuing struggles around the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). In our previous work on waste recycling and toxic waste movements under the Community Right to Know provisions of RCRA, we have noted how many industrial actors have sought to *undermine* RCRA controls to enhance profits. The recycling of waste automotive oil paradoxically involves a struggle to *extend* RCRA provisions to the waste recovery industry. Safety-Kleen, as one organization with a major capital outlay in an oil recycling and recovery plant, has been active in trying to get the EPA to classify all waste oil as a *hazardous waste*, under the rubric of RCRA. Its motivations are economic. At present, only oil that is to be discarded is classified under RCRA, whereas oil destined for "recovery and recycling" (including burning) is not so classified. Oil "recyclers" therefore are not covered by the stricter guidelines of RCRA recovery options (Hong 1992). In effect, this means that higher-technology organizations which *can* meet RCRA guidelines are in competition with lower-cost recyclers, who can market recycled oil or fuels more cheaply. In part, the competitive advantage of the latter industrial recyclers is purchased at a higher environmental risk: many of the heavy metals contained in the used oil simply get passed through their cheaper processes.

Two theoretical and policy implications of this case are noteworthy for environmental sociologists. First, under the modern ecological principle of *reduction, re-use, and recycling*, waste oil recycling can accomplish: (1) a reduction of oil extraction from domestic and foreign sources, (2) a re-use of existing social resources, and (3) a recycling of post-consumer wastes to produce an ecologically and socially useful product. Thus the *economic* motivations of the industrial interests are coupled with *social* and *ecological* gains. In this case, resistance is lodged within EPA, which has apparently responded to a variety of small users of oil, who want to avoid the costs of handling their waste oil by contracting for it to be recycled like other hazardous wastes.

Second, within our new attention to "sustainable development", this case already exhibits some new political coalitions with this as a general target. Safety-Kleen (n.d.) has already helped form an "environmental coalition" with the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Hazardous Waste Treatment Council, and Evergreen Oil. On a

theoretical basis, this coalition has some similarity to the "sustained yield" movement (Hays 1969), which pitted scientists and larger firms against less-rationalized production by small, local entrepreneurs and agriculturists. Tracing the issue of ecological protection, as well as the issues of alternative labor and capital allocations in this process of oil recycling, would therefore build on the earlier *progressive conservation* policies, and help us project what sustainable development policies will actually mean, in terms of both social conflicts and social gains.

## References

- Hays, Samuel P.  
1969 *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920*. New York: Atheneum Books.
- Hong, Peter  
1992 "Throwing brickbats at big oil's recycling act." *Business Week*. May 11:33.
- Safety-Kleen Corporation  
n.d. "The environmental hazards of unsafe used oil recycling." ∞

## Publications

Kenneth A. Gould. 1992. "Putting the W(R)APs on Public Participation: Remedial Action Planning and Working-Class Power in the Great Lakes." *Sociological Practice Review*. Vol. 3, No. 3. (July).

Thomas Weblar, Horst Rakel, and Robert J.S. Ross. 1992. "A Critical Theoretic Look at Technical Risk Analysis." *Industrial Crisis Quarterly*. 6:23-38.

Phil Brown (Brown University) reports that his book titled *No Safe Place: Toxic Waste, Leukemia and Community Action* and co-authored with Edwin J. Mikkelsen is now available in paperback at \$14. The publisher is U. of California Press, 1992.

Phil Brown. 1992. "Popular Epidemiology and Toxic Waste Contamination: Lay and Professional Ways of Knowing." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 33:267-281.

Jim O'Connor is editor of *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, a Journal of Socialist

Ecology. CNS is an international red green journal of theory and politics which combines the themes of history and nature, society and environment, and promotes the ideals of ecological socialism and feminism. Contact Jim at (408) 459-4541, UCSC, P.O. Box 8467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 for further information on their quarterly publication and subscription information. Also refer to information on CNS in issue #67 of ETS, p. 8.

Galen Cranz recommends: Anita Gordon and David Suzuki, *It's A Matter of Survival*, Harvard University Press, 1990.

Paul Mohai (School of Natural Resources, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor) has co-edited with Bunyan Bryant a book now available titled *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards*, published by Westview Press. This book "is dedicated to exposing the fact of environmental inequity and its consequences, in the face of general neglect

(continued on page 10)

# Current Events

## Publications (continued from page 9)

by policymakers, social scientists, and the public at large." Contact Paul at (313) 763-4598 if you would like an abstract and contents of the book, plus a 20% discount order form.

Ruth Love reports that the Office of Technology Assessment has published a document titled *Forest Service Planning: Accommodating Uses, Producing Outputs, and Sustaining Ecosystems* that gives an overview and background on the cutting of old growth forests. It covers such issues as public involvement and community stability, and many of the sociologists who have published on forest-related issues in the past twenty years are cited in the bibliography. Ruth suggests that this is definitely worth reading for anyone concerned with public involvement in Federal agencies, Forest Service issues, how NEPA gets integrated into an agency, and the like. It also may be useful for classroom teaching, as the report is well written and organized. It may be ordered from New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Cost is \$10. Document number is S/N 052-003-01264-2.

Ruth also reports that Steven Meyer at MIT has prepared a report indicating that among the 50 states, those with tougher environmental laws experienced better economic growth. She says: "It would be neat if someone in the Section could contact Meyer at MIT and get a copy of the report to summarize and review for *ETS*." Please contact the *ETS* editor if you would be interested and willing to provide such a review.

## Papers Presented

Thomas Webler and Ortwin Renn. 1991. "A Normative Theoretical Foundation for Evaluating Public Participation." Paper presented at the Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting. Baltimore, MD. December.

Phil Brown is an organizer and will present a paper titled *Lay-Professional Differences in Detecting Toxic Health Effects in Woburn, Massachusetts* at the AAAS meetings in Boston, MA, February 14, 1993.

## New Award

The Southern Sociological Society and the Department of Sociology at Emory University announce a new Award for the Promotion of Human Welfare. This award is designed to recognize currently innovative sociological work with a high potential for enhancing human welfare and to act as an incentive for realizing that potential. The recipient of the first Award will be announced at the 1993 SSS Meeting in Chattanooga.

The Award is in two parts. First, \$5000 will be directly presented to the recipient(s) in recognition of their work. Second, up to \$10,000 will be available to aid in the dissemination/implementation of their work. Proposals for disseminating/implementing the work might include consultation with relevant policy organizations, a conference with policy makers, start-up money for demonstrating projects of high visibility, and the preparation of manuscripts for publication in the mass media.

The award will be presented every two years to an individual(s) for a written work or series of related written works based on or consistent with sociological research; and the recipient(s) of the Award should be an

American sociologist(s). The work must be introduced to the public within the three year period prior to, but not including, the year of the presentation of the Award.

The welfare enhancing value of the work will be assessed in terms of its capability for concretely realizing broadly recognized human values such as freedom, security, equity, opportunity, health and happiness. Work in all subfields of the discipline is eligible for the award, including work of a general theoretical or methodological nature with welfare enhancing elements.

Two criteria will be given equal weight in selecting the award recipient. 1) The potential of the work for enhancing human welfare, and 2) the extent to which the award will facilitate the realization of that potential.

Nominations, including self-nominations, should be submitted to Dr. Robert Agnew, Department of Sociology, Emory University, Atlanta GA 30322 (BITNET: SOCRA@EMUVM1) by January 15, 1993. All nominations will be evaluated by a five person committee of the Southern Sociological Society.

## Position Announcement

The Department of Sociology at Iowa State University is accepting applications for a tenure-track position for a sociologist at the rank of Assistant Professor. Areas of specialization will include technology impact assessment and/or environmental sociology. Primary responsibilities are teaching undergraduate/graduate courses and research in the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station. The position is available Fall 1993. *Qualifications Required:* Ph.D. in Sociology or Rural Sociology, with specialization in technology impact assessment and/or environmental sociology. Applicant must demonstrate research potential. *Preferred:* Teaching

experience. *Proposed Start Date:* August 21, 1993. *Salary:* Competitive, commensurate with experience. *Application:* Please send cover letter specifying research and teaching interests, vita, three letters of recommendation and other materials that may be helpful to the Search Committee in considering the applicant to: Gordon Bultena, Chair of Search Committee, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University, Ames IA 50011-1070. *Deadline:* **October 15, 1992 or until position is filled.** Iowa State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Women, minorities and members of other protected groups are encouraged to apply.

## Current Events

### Membership Activities

Thomas Webler reports: "I am doing a postdoc at the Polyproject for Risk and Safety at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich for two years. I study the evaluation, design, and implementation of models for public participation in environmental decision making. Specifically, I am working with Ortwin Renn to organize and conduct public participation in the Canton of Aargau over the topic of planning for municipal waste disposal. The model for participation that we are using is derived from the use of Jürgen Habermas's theory of Communicative Action.

Ortwin Renn (Clark University, Worcester Mass.) and Peter Weidemann (KFA, Jülich, Germany), and I co-organized a workshop in Morbach, Switzerland on *Novel Approaches to Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*. It was funded by the Humboldt Foundation and included scholars from the US, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, and Great Britain. We plan to publish an edited volume sometime in summer, 1993." Webler plans to write a short article for a

forthcoming ET&S Newsletter that describes this workshop. He reports that "the topic (novel approaches to public participation), the participants (practitioners of public participation), as well as the setting (rural Alps in Switzerland) were all unique in and of themselves, and together they made for an extremely interesting and productive meeting. Eight models of participation were discussed. Each model was presented by a proponent – someone who had applied the model, and was also critically reviewed by a scholar familiar with the application efforts, but not personally committed to the model. Each team also paired an American with a European, in order to facilitate international learning and exchange, as the Humboldt Foundation likes to support such endeavors. A book will be published next summer, so there is something for interested readers to follow up with.

Galen Cranz (Dept. of Architecture, UC Berkeley) reports: "I have introduced the idea of sustainable development to the Riverside South Planning Process in NY City, and am now chronicling the influence of the

idea on park design, housing design, sewerage treatment, and energy consumption, especially air conditioning, on the Trump Development Corp., the City of NY, and community groups." Galen also reports that the Environmental Design Research Association voted to send a letter to President Bush demanding cessation of CFC production within 6 months – as fast as he mobilized the U.S. for the Gulf war. ∞

### Call for Papers

Global Awareness Society International Meeting, July 2-4, 1993, New York City, Marriott Marquis. Interested participants, related to environmental issues, are encouraged to submit abstracts (no more than 250 words) of papers, workshops, or panel proposals as soon as possible to: Dr. Lewis A. Mennerick, Department of Sociology, 716 Fraser Hall, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045. Telephone: (913) 864-4111. FAX: (913) 864-5280

### Meeting Minutes (continued from page 8)

Chris reported that there has been some discussion about adding a 5th issue of the Newsletter this year that would deal exclusively with book reviews. Chris also reported that the ASA office indicated that we could have a fifth issue at no additional cost to the Section. A motion to add the fifth issue was brought to the group and was approved.

**Liaison Committee.** The Chair indicated that a Chair was needed for the Liaison Committee. Bill Freudenburg was nominated and approved. Bill asked for volunteers to assist him on the committee.

**New Business.** Bill Michelson reported on the *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*. Most of the chapters were ready two years ago, but a few needed further attention. Riley Dunlap has sent a memo to the authors asking for updates and revisions by Novem-

ber 1st. Bill also reported that there has been tremendous interest in the book and that the publisher is anxious to get it printed. With luck it will be available before next year's meetings.

Loren Lutzenhiser updated the group on the developments with the proposed National Institutes for the Environment (NIE). He reported on an organizing committee meeting of about 100 scientists held in May 1992. The meeting included a few social scientists, including Bill Freudenburg and Riley Dunlap from our Section. There was general agreement among participants that the social sciences should be represented in the Institutes. However, there was some disagreement about the exact role for the social sciences. (Loren will provide a more detailed discussion in the next edition of *ETS*).

The Chair raised the possibility of putting

out a directory of section members to gauge interest in the idea. The group present responded very favorably. As a result, efforts are being made to get an electronic copy of the list and determine the difficulty of making the directory.

The Chair asked for nominations for the 1994 Distinguished Contribution Award. Nominations should be forwarded to Allen Schnaiberg.

**Nominations Committee.** No Report.

The meeting ended with a flurry of announcements. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kent D. Van Liere  
Secretary-Treasurer

## ☆☆ Section Awards ☆☆

The Section on Environment and Technology announced several awards at the ASA meetings held recently in Pittsburgh. David L. Sills was presented the 1992 Award for Distinguished Contribution "in recognition of his efforts to create and sustain intellectual and political legitimacy in a variety of foundations and professional associations for serious environmental scholarship by sociologists. In addition to his own syntheses about environmental movements, his coordination of social science work on the accident at Three Mile Island offered unique insights into the nuclear industry and related energy facilities. It also encouraged further activities by social scientists in energy policy arenas previously dominated by engineers and economists." Dr. Sills was instrumental in the early days of this section in helping direct both financial and social support for basic and applied research by environmental sociologists, thereby enhancing new career and research opportunities.

Hal Aronson of UC Santa Cruz was awarded the 1992 Outstanding Student Paper Award for his work entitled *Becoming an Environmental Activist: The Process of Transformation from*

*Everyday Life to Making History in the Hazardous Waste Movement*. This paper applies several theoretical perspectives to explain the transformation of naive citizens into environmental activists in the hazardous waste movement. Aronson examines the relationships between citizens and government, trust in management, and the process by which citizens become educated and politically sophisticated. His work helps us better understand power politics and environmental issues.

All section members are invited to submit nominations for the Best Student Paper Award for 1993 to Penelope Canan no later than May 1, 1993. The award includes a stipend for the winning author to defray the costs of attending the meeting.

As has been previously announced (ETS, No. 67), the Council of the Section took the unusual step of presenting its 1993 Section Award for Distinguished Contribution in April to Marvin E. Olsen. Marv died of cancer on May 7, 1992. Remembrances may be sent to the Marvin E. Olsen Memorial Fund at Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA.

## ASA 1993 Annual Meeting Program

Take note: Our Section day is Sunday August 15, 1993 for the 1993 Annual Meetings in Miami Beach. The meetings are from August 13-17th. Papers for presentation at E&T Section sessions are being solicited and should be sent to Penelope Canan, Program Chair, by December 31, 1992 at the University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208-0209. Our sessions will be organized around the following themes:

I. Methods of Understanding Social Conflict About the Environment. Papers are invited that cover innovations in bridging qualitative and quantitative methods and that provide different examples of studying the sociology of the environment and technology, from ethnography to network analysis, from discourse analysis to event history analysis, and from multidimensional scaling to diary interpretation and historical readings of public records.

II. Social Justice, Technological Control and the Environment: Race, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity. This will be jointly sponsored with the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities.

III. Roundtable Presentations to include (but not limited to):

- Organizational and industrial perspectives in environmental conflict
- Environmental law and regulation
- Social impact assessment
- Natural resource management
- Urban and rural community development
- Energy
- Housing
- Global problems: ozone layer depletion, global warming

- Environmental and spatial manifestations of social inequality
- The globalization of environmental issues
- Medical, physical and mental health environmental issues
- Cultural and symbolic images of the physical and social environment
- Hazardous waste management
- Land use management and conflict

IV. A session comprised of an Author-Critic Forum is in the planning phase. Presentation by Hardin Tibbs, Global Business Network, entitled *The Ethical Management of Global Technology: Challenges for Transnational Corporations, Nation-States, Diverse Cultures, and the Law*. Formal responses by invited members of our Section, followed by Tibbs' reply and audience discussion.

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