

THE ECOTONE

Winter 1997 The Journal of Environmental Studies, The University of Oregon

The Sense of Place



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Editor's Note

ECOTONE: a transition zone between two adjacent ecological communities, such as forest and grassland. It has some of the characteristics of each bordering community and often contains species not found in the overlapping communities. An ecotone may exist along a broad belt or in a small pocket, such as a forest clearing, where two local communities blend together. The influence of the two bordering communities on each other is known as the edge effect. An ecotonal area often has a higher density of organisms and a greater number of species than are found in either flanking community.

Welcome to the first edition of *THE ECOTONE*, a student-produced journal published by the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Oregon. Environmental Studies is a new field of study emerging in the *ecotone* or transition zone between academic disciplines. Environmental Studies requires interdisciplinary thinking (no single discipline can solve our shared problems). We also believe that this is an area especially rich in “biodiversity” — where ideas, concepts and methodologies from the overlapping disciplines are forced to interact, compete and cooperate, sometimes leading to new “species” of knowledge. We would like these pages to reflect the incredible energy and varied perspectives that swirl through this subject, as we all grapple with the implications of our varied relationships with nature.

Each issue is loosely focused on a particular theme of growing importance within the environmental movement. In light of the remarkable changes within the program in the past year, including the move to a new building on campus, this issue is focused on “the sense of place” — what particular spaces and landscapes have come to represent to people who layer them with personal and collective meanings. In this sense, place becomes far more than mere physical reality — it is a space charged with memory, emotion and meaning, grown out of intimate experience. We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions to our future editions. Enjoy!

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THE ECOTONE

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A Sacred Geography: An Altered History of Family and Place

By Paul Schroder

IN THE LAND where I was raised, diverse languages and cultures flow over landscapes of even starker contrasts. All the diverse landscapes of my New Mexican homeland are deeply important to me. Some areas, though, have much more meaning. Cañoncito is a small campground in the Sandia mountains outside of Albuquerque. The small pine-filled canyon is cut by a small brook that emerges bubbling from the ground.

My Oregonian father and New Mexican mother met beside that clear creek rushing to its appointment with the desert below. Along the same stream, some ten years later we cast the ashes of my father's body.

In the years that followed I grew to know this piece of land more fully than I ever knew my father. I spent many nights camped at the bank of that stream staring at the stars and straining to hear my father's voice in the water and the wind.

My father's voice never echoed down from the canyons of those now-far-away New Mexico mountains. A message of sorts did come to me, however. I realized that the ashes of my father's body have been recycled back into life. A part of my father lives in the forest, not just in my memories, but in the nutrients of the spongy moss, the gnarled cedar, and the screaming jay.

Many different landscapes have helped shape my view of human interaction with the environment. The relationships I developed as a child with particular places, like Cañoncito, taught me to respect nature. Other places have vividly illustrated to me how much modern society has degraded the environment. Some

places speak to me of human suffering. And then there are those places that remind me of all three.

The first test of a nuclear weapon occurred outside of Alamogordo, New Mexico just over fifty years ago. Much of the most significant research was performed in then-secret labs in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Before I left New Mexico for Oregon, I spent a month on Rabbit Mountain overlooking the town of Los Alamos. I imagined how the atom bomb's

mushroom cloud must have looked as it cast its dark shadow over my father's face. The cause of my father's death is uncertain. We do know that after being exposed to a nuclear test my father developed a rare form of cancer and died three months later. This event has helped me to recognize that many environmental, social and justice



A. Lebenshutz

issues are deeply connected.

After I left the mountains overlooking Los Alamos, I returned to spend one last night in Cañoncito, that land still so much a part of me. That night I dreamt of waking to find my father bent over the fire boiling the morning coffee. My mind raced with questions built up since I was three years old. He turned as I approached, and I looked into his eyes — the same shade of blue as my own. My soul quieted and my questions were forgotten. The time was too important for profound questions, so we spoke instead of the stream rushing to its appointment with the desert below.

(Paul is a senior in the E.S. Program)

**Photograph: Anasazi Handprints,
Canyonlands National Park**

(Be)Coming Home

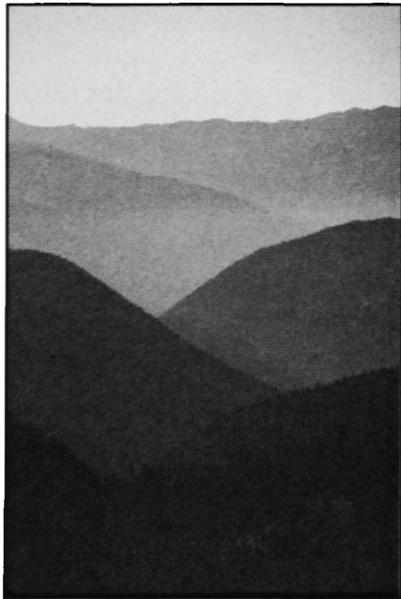
by Laird Christensen

Spoonwood Pond, Monadnock Bioregion

Wind curls off this scalloped pond in fits and sags, kicking sand toward the afternoon shade of beech and red oak, paper birch and maple. The grains skitter west and south, swelling in slow mounds against twigs and pebbles, and in this shuffle of sand I sense the shadow of another kind of wind, one that flares and sputters through the years and drives the human scatter. It's gusting now. There's Seattle; there, Phoenix.

Of course we're all migrants, or their next of kin. That's the human story. But what has changed is the pace of our vagrancy—especially here, on North America. Who lives on land that is familiar anymore, in the fullness of that word's earlier weight? No one I know. My family home is an ancient floodplain where the Columbia River burrows through the hunched Cascades. I live in New Hampshire.

After ten years at home in this hilly drainage, where brooks slant into the Cold and Ashuelot Rivers and flicker west to the Connecticut, I have come to know this graceful Appalachian erosion in a way that I have never understood the Cascades. Two decades of living in Oregon—even as a native child, the great-grandson of settlers—failed to teach me what it meant to be a part of that land.



Laird Christensen

Photograph: Hurricane Ridge, Olympic National Park

So much movement, so much freedom, has its costs. These days more than ever we dwell in culture that has little to do with where we live. The signs we learn to read, the landmarks we use as points of reference, the survival skills we master, no longer refer to a particular place; they derive instead from a social geometry that names us in the blandest economic terms. There's not much difference between selling shoes in Pittsburgh and Pasadena, between foraging in the grocery aisles of Tampa and Tacoma.

The Oregon of my youth wore the televised mask of post-war America over a remarkable geography. Public education, popular culture, and white bread religion helped shape a childhood that could just as well have unfolded beside the Chesapeake as beneath the Cascades. Even my experience of wilderness was homogenized: those dripping western forests were merely a stage—convenient, but arbitrary—on which I acted out my childish frontier fantasies.

It was not until I was nearly thirty, while learning my role in the Ashuelot watershed, that I finally understood how limited my experience of hereditary place had been. And so, when the University of Oregon offered me a teaching fellowship in 1994, I welcomed the chance to meet my native community at last.

East Multnomah County remained a patchwork of berry farms and pastures and scattered scraps of forest in the quarter-century following World War II; by 1970, however, when my family fled increasingly urban Portland, that had begun to change. My parents purchased a sawdust-sweet house in one of those instant neighborhoods that appear where the fingertip of suburbia jabs into farmland. Horses grazed at the end of our fresh-paved street, and three tight strands of barbed wire kept the ponies from our sudden cul-de-sac, but not the children from the pasture. Jumbles of wild blackberries sprawled toward the Columbia, and while Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams billowed north on clear days, the sharp snowcap of Mt. Hood ruled the sky.

From the treehouse that my father built high in a relict Douglas fir, I kept watch for smoke across the river where waves of dense forest hung in mid-surge toward St. Helens. I treasured those trees that furred

Skamania County, but like all infatuations this one fixed on an ideal: it was forest that engaged me, imprecise and generic. Any serrated expanse of green in Maine or Georgia would have served as well, for it was merely setting—the only communities I understood were human.

My lack of a mindful relationship with the Columbia watershed enabled me to leave without a backward glance on the day following high school graduation. I spent the next seven years drifting over North America, taking whatever work I could find and trying on identities against a hundred passing backdrops. If I stayed in one place more than a few months, the urge to be back on the road grew insistent—it was being between places that seemed most satisfying.

Gradually, though, the thrill of arriving so often in a new place gave way to impatience. By twenty-four I was ready to outgrow my wanderlust, so I moved in with a kind, forgiving woman from a large French Canadian community in New England. Through her I began to sense what it meant to be at home in a place, but it was not my home and I stayed only a fall and stubborn winter before slipping away. Nearly two years passed before I stopped again, and this time college held me still long enough for roots to take hold. I fell in love with the leafy hills west of Mt. Monadnock, and with a woman who was nearly native, and in the years that followed I began to learn how one becomes a part of place.

For the first time I realized that a place is more than setting; it is, in fact, a community—of which humans are but one part. Understanding your role in community begins with simple acknowledgment of other members, and I sought out my neighbors with a hunger that after ten years has not dulled. While teaching at a local college I found seasonal work as a ranger, and the more I learned of the drainage patterns, plant communities and wild populations that define my watershed, the better I understood the human role; indeed, the better I understood myself. At last I knew what it meant to be at home—and, as I returned to Oregon, I wondered how my native land would look through these eyes.

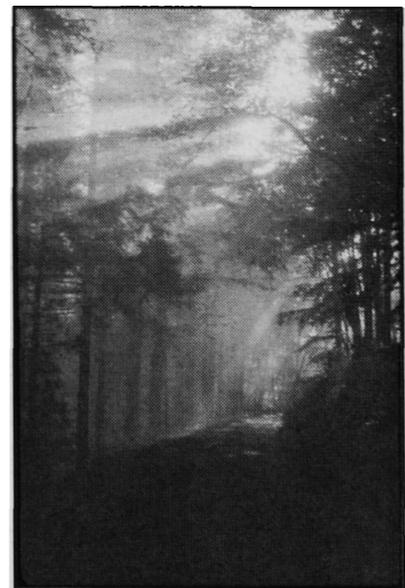
Trousdale, Oregon, nestles on a rise where the Sandy and Columbia Rivers meet, and here the Cascades begin their ascent. When I attended the local high school Trousdale was little more than a short row of low shops lining a quiet road: a bar and a barber shop, a general store, diner, and river rafting

business. The store and barber shop are gone now, but more disturbing is what is there: a stop light and a franchised convenience store, condominiums and a fast food strip up the hill, and—just off the interstate—a neon-spangled outlet mall. The whole town looks to have been swabbed with a coat of fresh paint, and even the smoky old tavern boasts ferns and sparkling brass.

After a short, indignant wait at the red light I hurry on through town, and am comforted to find that little has changed past the commercial center. The road winds down through steep thickets of vine maple and red alder, and the dark sawteeth of Douglas fir and hemlock shag the morning sky. Past a smattering of saggy homes the road bends north and crosses the Sandy on the green steel bridge from which my schoolmates jumped, arms wheeling, to soothe the burn of summer. Across the river is lush Cascadian forest.

I follow the Sandy toward Mt. Hood, climbing past its meeting with the Bull Run River, where Portland draws its water. The Sandy is one of many streams that drain Mt. Hood in a radial pattern; its source is a glacier that clings to the peak's western flank, reaching down to about 6,000 feet. Some forty millennia back that glacier stretched another twenty miles down the river's current channel, carving out a basin that today bristles with western hemlock and red cedar. Tracing the glacier's retreat I wind toward Lolo Pass, where in my great-grandfather's day the first substan-

(Be)Coming Home continued on page 14



A. Linsenwitz

Photograph: Nature Conservancy Trail, Cascade Head, OR

An Interview with Dick Gale

Past Director of the Environmental Studies Program

By Matthew Booker



Rain falls steadily on the gray concrete high-rise that is Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, home to the liberal arts at the University of Oregon.

Seven stories up, professor Dick Gale leans back in his chair, puts his feet up, and waves me into a well-worn seat. Hundreds of students have come to see Gale here in his capacities as Environmental Studies (ES) program director and undergraduate adviser.

Today the topic is Dick's tenure as ES director (1993-96) and his reflections on the development of the program since its beginnings in the late 1970s. As is typical with Dick, he first asks about me. "So, what's happening?" he asks frankly. After some small talk and some scratching of Gale's terrier (also named Booker — but no relation), I ask him about the beginnings of the ES program.

In the Beginning

Dick came to campus in 1967 to join the sociology department faculty. He remembers fondly his graduate student days at Michigan State University, but he yearned to return to his native Pacific Northwest. His decision to come to Oregon was controversial. "I can still remember my major professor saying [Dick affects a pompous, jowly voice], 'Any man who puts geography before his career is a fool' ... but I really wanted to come home, and I'm glad I did."

It was the sixties, and Dick found himself in the greenest state in the country. "One of the first things I did was make contact with environmentally active professors on campus. Then Earth Day 1970 occurred.

I can remember going to endless meetings — 'Well, we should have an environmental this or that, or an institute or whatever.' We kept talking about having a program, and nothing ever really happened. Finally we created the environmental studies program, even though it had no staff and no funding."

Academia has never been known for its revolutionary fervor, and Oregon was no exception. The nascent ES program ran into opposition immediately. "We had to get faculty approval and that was a battle — some faculty fought even the creation of the program! Then came the interdisciplinary masters, about 13 years ago."

With the help of partisan faculty members, the ES program added a minor for undergraduates and by the late 1980s had about 100 undergraduate minors and the masters program. Gale became the program's third director in 1992, after John Baldwin and Al Urquhart. He decided to resurrect the idea of an undergraduate major, a long-desired objective for the ES program.

How the Undergraduate Major Came to Be

After Gale's appointment as director, the ES Committee met and decided to push for the major. The associate dean for social sciences during Dick's tenure as ES director was Joe Stone, who looked favorably on the new major. "He was very supportive, in a really direct way. I remember him sitting there looking at the ES 201 enrollment last year, and I said 'Well Joe, you want 70 more students in that class? Then give me another GTF (graduate teaching fellowship) position for it.' And Joe said, 'Okay, here you go.' And that was it. Another time I said we needed to get the student internships going, so we got a GTF for that position. That is the kind of guy Joe was."

Another contributing factor in getting the undergraduate major was the budget cuts resulting from Measure 5, which made the University anxious to attract and recruit new students, especially out of state students who pay higher tuition. Says Gale, "Environ-

Dick Gale continued on page 16

A Profile of Dan Udovic

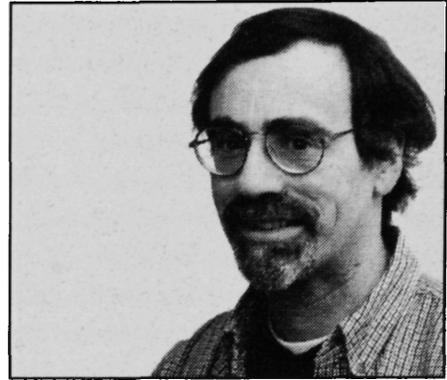
New Director of the Environmental Studies Program

By Anthony Leiserowitz

Dan grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. He studied briefly to become a priest, then decided to go instead to the University of Texas for an undergraduate degree. In his junior year, he took a zoology class called “Man and the Environment.” The professor, an ecologist, opened his eyes to the importance of environmental issues and subsequently became his mentor. Dan went on to graduate school at Cornell University to study ecological theory. He did his dissertation on genetic feedback in evolutionary ecology — how the interactions between two species affect the genetic evolution of each. As a graduate student, Dan did mathematical and laboratory modeling of this process.

He came to the University of Oregon after receiving his Ph.D. in 1973. He began looking at the interaction between pollinators and plants, specifically between Yucca plants and Yucca moths in southern California. Dan also became interested in computer modeling, which led him to earn an MA in computer science and he began thinking about how to use computers in undergraduate education. In 1990, Dan developed the introductory Biology course called “Workshop Biology.” This was a very different kind of college course, which emphasized active, experiential learning. Three main goals of this approach were to help students: 1) develop decision-making skills; 2) recognize science as a human endeavor — including the interactions between science and society, particularly in public policy, and; 3) to encourage life-long learning. Dan and his colleagues found that experiential learners did better on Biology concept tests than traditionally educated students. Recently, he has spent the past few years helping other universities around the country adopt this approach.

Dan became Director of the Environmental Studies Program in the midst of enormous change within the program, including the new undergraduate major and the move to a new building. I recently sat down with him and asked a few questions about the current status of the program and for some personal reflections.



As we all know, the undergraduate major is growing very rapidly. What are the main challenges we currently face?

“Two of the major challenges are providing the classes that students need to graduate and keeping class sizes down. We are working hard on these problems, both within the program and with other departments on campus. We are also trying to create a more cohesive undergraduate curriculum, which includes helping many departments design courses that better fit the needs of our students. This also includes creating a set of courses that provide a really good, solid introduction to environmental studies and to the variety of analytical approaches different disciplines take toward environmental issues. I firmly believe this curriculum should also develop decision-making skills. I’d also like to see a lot more cohesion in the courses offered at the junior and senior levels. The program needs to be responsive to the academic needs of our undergraduates, without assuming what those are. Finally, we need to make sure that this is a meaningful major. Graduates should be adequately prepared to find a job relating to their interests. Many students may not seek environmental jobs, but I would like this major to help graduates understand our shared environmental challenges, and contribute, at any level, to the process of finding solutions. Environmental Studies is a major in which students can develop valuable knowledge and skills not only for their own lives, but for their communities as well.”

Dan Udovic continued on page 18

The Environmental Studies Explosion!

by Alison Purcell

If you haven't noticed by now, you must have your nose buried too deep in your Environmental Studies 201 textbook. Yes, the numbers are mind numbing and the classes are packed. The Environmental Studies major at the U of O has taken off with a blast. Last Fall was the first time one could declare Environmental Studies as a major and the turnout was much larger than anticipated. By the end of Fall term 1995 about 250 students had declared Environmental Studies as their major. Yet, those astounding figures are nothing compared to this Fall. The program's records currently show over 750 students now declared! Hey, all the talk you've heard about exponential growth applies to our program too!

The rise in interest is encouraging, but every blessing comes with a curse. Classes are overflowing to the brim and many students are left behind in the scramble for classes. I talked to several ES undergrads who are caught up in the mess. Here is a sampling of what they had to say:

"I have had trouble registering into some classes, but I just keep attending the class and talk to the teacher and I eventually get into the class"—Mike Fabbre, Sophomore.

"I just gave up when I didn't get into Env. Studies 203. The class was just so packed, I didn't want to waste my time"—Adam, Sophomore.

"I have had an extremely hard time getting into classes for my major (Environmental Studies). I went to BIO 308 for the first two weeks and was unable to

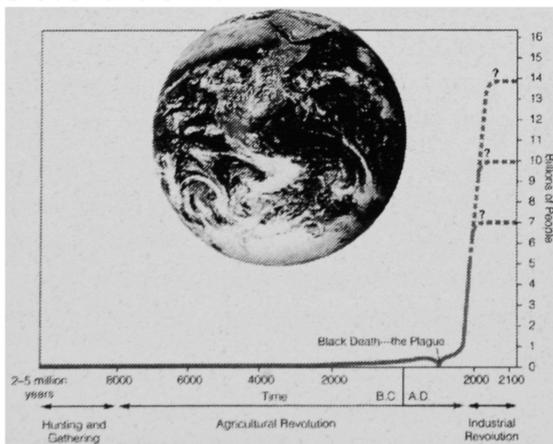
get in. I had to stop trying to get in the class because it was taking up a lot of time"—Scott, Junior.

It is true that environmental awareness is growing these days and the job market for Environmental Studies graduates is increasing, but are those the only reasons students are flocking to this newly established major? Here are a couple of my own theories:

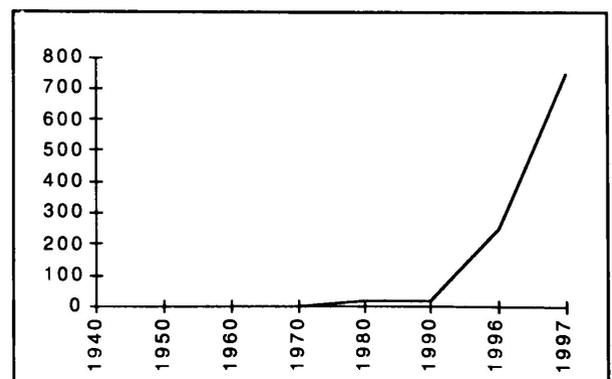
1. Incoming freshmen are choosing the University of Oregon because it is one of the few to have Environmental Studies as a major.
2. Students currently struggling through science majors or other meticulous disciplines have discovered the wonderful world of the Environmental Studies major requirements! In other words, we may be picking up some students who are dissatisfied with other departments.

Whatever the reason, Environmental Studies has captured the interest of many students at the University of Oregon. This interest does not seem likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. My advice to all of you ES majors out there is to register early and don't give up hope about getting into a class. This growth pattern surely can not sustain itself for eternity. If you know the exponential growth concept, predict what the figures might look like in ten years if this growth pattern continues. What impact will thousands of committed ES majors have on this planet? Hopefully it won't be a boom and bust!

(Alison is an Environmental Studies undergraduate)



Population Explosion: Planet Earth



Population Explosion: Environmental Studies Majors

Place-ment in the Basement: The Move to Pacific Hall

By Jill Fuglister and Kim Miller

Many people connected with the Environmental Studies Program remember last spring's profusion of "space" e-mail messages concerning where the ES Center would be located this year. The decision to move the Center to the basement of Pacific Hall was not without debate or controversy, and for many it provided a lesson in the politics of space at the University.

Although certainly about *space*, the move and the debates surrounding it were also about *place*. Geographers and architects, among others, make a distinction between the two. Place is the more elusive concept; it involves the often intangible meanings and values associated with a physical space that develop over a period of time.

The ES Center had been located in Condon Hall since the birth of the program thirteen years ago. A strong sense of place had developed there, which was strengthened by close ties to the Geography Department (also in Condon) and the humanities departments in nearby Prince Lucien Campbell Hall. It is not surprising that the idea of moving created feelings of *displacement* — enhanced, in this case, by the way in which the move decision was made by the university. It has been well-documented that humans resist change, particularly when denied the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

The ES Program was unquestionably in need of more space. The popularity of the new undergraduate major had dramatically increased traffic flow and use of the Center's resources. More ES classes meant more advising and more GTF activity. A new undergraduate secretary, Karissa Ansell-Bell, joined program manager Jacqueline Willoughby in an already cramped office the size of a closet. The Program was clearly outgrowing its space.

What was troublesome for many, however, was not the idea of a move, but the selection of the basement of Pacific Hall as the new home of the ES Program. Many considered this a case of *misplacement* — the new site did not seem to reflect the values and visions of the Environmental Studies Program. The basement hallway is less than inspiring, and the main office is essentially underground, with small windows at the top of the walls. In addition, there were concerns about possible chemical hazards resulting from the past use of these rooms, which were in horrible condition. All of these physical aspects conflicted with the

warm sense of place developed at Condon Hall.

In light of the seemingly grim prospects for the new space, as well as uncertainty about the message behind the selection of this space (why was one of the most popular undergraduate majors being shunted into the basement?), some of the ES community questioned

the decision. After much foot-dragging and mixed messages from the space powers on campus, it became clear that this was a done deal. The move to Pacific would go ahead, regardless of the resistance and concerns that had been expressed.

Fortunately, the offices were completely renovated this summer. Kris and Jacqueline actively participated in the design specifications and decorating choices, so the space was tailored to the needs of the Program. The main office was repainted and carpeted, and new lighting was installed. This has helped mediate the lack of natural light created by the subterranean (or, as

The Move continued on page 15

**Photograph: Fields of the Palouse
Pullman, Washington**



A. Leiberman

The Environmental Studies Mural Project

By Dave Wilson

Since last spring when Environmental Studies became faced with the move to the Pacific Hall basement, I have thought that a mural might improve the appeal of our new digs, making visitors feel more welcome and regulars more at home. A spot of paint would add color and character to our concrete walls. Because I believe that the quality of our built environment affects our spirits, I would like to see a couple of smallish murals in our new space. I envision them in the stairwell, outside the main office, and outside our seminar room. Perhaps even the office could use a couple tattoos. Murals can make a lasting contribution to the Environmental Studies program and to future inhabitants of the Pacific Hall basement. I'm thinking we can start small and work toward this as a goal. The advantages of taking it a little at a time are that it should be easier to accomplish and public reaction to the first mural would shape things to come.

Many people have expressed an interest in contributing to such a project. In the summer, the Environmental Studies Program gained approval from the University to paint a mural in the Pacific Hall basement, subject to approval of the design by Environmental Studies Program Director, Dan Udovic. My call for input during the fall led to small flurries of interest and quite a few ideas. I was particularly excited that there was interest from sources external to

Environmental Studies. Representatives from HOPES and the Cultural Forum's EMU Gallery have expressed interest in co-sponsoring a mural project, particularly one that would integrate the larger community and be ready in time for a show with the theme of Art for Environmental Advocacy that will coincide with both the E-Law and HOPES conferences in the spring. One idea is to involve local school children in the project. Another is to seek input from local mural artists. We might also consider drawing conference participants into the painting process. Finally, AA is offering a class this term in public art. Students in this class are likely to be a resource for planning, designing and painting our murals.

As of today we need to develop some concrete designs which could either stand alone or fit together into a collaborative collage. I am anticipating that people will contribute images and collaborate on a mural based on this input. As we develop final designs we will submit them for review by the Environmental Studies community and hopefully have a couple final designs ready to paint before the conferences in early spring. If you would like to get involved in any aspect of the project, from design, to planning, to painting, please contact Dave Wilson through the Environmental Studies office (or dwilson@darkwing).

(Dave is an Environmental Studies graduate student)



"Paradigm Shift" by Justin Ramsey

The Environmental Index

By Dave Wilson

- 33 of 118,000 Number of USFS projects blocked by the Endangered Species Act between 1987 and 1991.
- 70% Proportion of USFS budget devoted to timber sales.
- \$4.5 billion US Forest Service's estimated financial losses from timber sales between 1978 and 1993.
- 10% Proportion of government wildlife monies spent to study or help nongame species.
- 2 billion Number of people who can not obtain enough fuelwood to meet their basic needs.
- 1.3 billion Number of people living in cities where the outdoor air is unhealthy to breathe.
- 1.2 billion Number of people without a safe drinking water supply.
- 66% Proportion of rural wells tested in the US that violated more than one federal drinking water standard.
- 15% Proportion of US landfills that are lined to prevent groundwater contamination.
- 100% Proportion of US landfills that will eventually leak, according to the EPA.
- \$2 billion Average price paid by taxpayers for **each** of the first 20 stealth bombers; more than their weight in gold.
- 45,000 Number of US sites contaminated with radioactive wastes.
- 6% Proportion of hazardous waste produced in the US regulated by federal hazardous waste laws.
- 5% Proportion of money spent on health care in the US that goes to prevent disease.
- 800 million Number of undernourished or malnourished people on the earth.
- 66% Proportion of US crop land used to grow livestock feed. (50% globally)
- 3% Proportion of US crops grown "organically".
- 90% Proportion of US elections won by the candidate raising the most money.
- 90% Proportion of campaign contributions that come from corporations or wealthy individuals.

Women work about two thirds of all hours worked globally according to some estimates but receive only one tenth of world income and own only one ten thousandth of all property.

Information sources are available on request. All percentages are approximate.

Book Reviews: History and the Columbia River

By Kim Miller

William Dietrich, *Northwest Passage: The Great Columbia River*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

Blaine Harden, *A River Lost: The Life and Death of the Columbia*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 1996.

Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.

The Columbia River existed as a mythical place, a river of the imagination, long before details of its physical geography were fully known. The westward journey of Lewis and Clark was born in part from a fascination with the idea of a 'great river of the west.' If the recent spate of books on the subject is any indication, the Columbia River has once again captured the imagination of many Americans.

There is, however, a salient difference in the nature of our fascination. Jeffersonian America dreamed of the river's future—its potential as a transportation and trade corridor, and how, as Dietrich puts it, "it could be remodeled into something useful."

Today, it seems to be the river's past that fascinates us: its pre-development existence, "what the great falls and fish runs and thunder of its floods must have been like" (47).

These three books are all concerned with the ways in which the Columbia River has been changed by human activity. They are not celebrational narratives about progress and technology; rather, the authors urge us to take a second look at the changed river, and to think critically and honestly about our perceptions of, and relationships to, it.

Dietrich and Harden, both journalists, have written

histories similar in style and scope. Both are based on a combination of personal observation and experience, interviews, and written sources. While both books provide a good overview of Columbia River history and contemporary issues, Dietrich's *Northwest Passage* is the better book in terms of depth and completeness. An informed and thorough history of the river, it is accessible to the general reader without compromising historical integrity. Although the lack of footnotes or endnotes may frustrate those seeking specific sources, the book does include a substantial bibliography, as well as a timeline of important dates and a list of Columbia Basin dams, all of which are excellent reference materials for anyone interested in the Columbia.

One of the main themes of *Northwest Passage* is the extent to which the Columbia has been transformed by dams into a human-manipulated and engineered entity. Dietrich highlights the historical debates and conflicts between public and private hydroelectric power interests, and how these have played out politically. Also of interest is his observation that our perception of dams is as engineered as the dams themselves. At most dam visitor centers, he concludes,

interpretive displays are manifestations of a "government fairy tale," and taken together they create "a monotonous repetition of an edited history that crosses into myth" (309).

Harden does not draw on as many written sources as Dietrich, nor does he provide as much historical detail, but *A River Lost* is nonethe-

less a sound and informative history. The narrative develops from numerous interviews as well as Harden's own experiences along the river, and this structure proves to be an effective way of presenting multiple perspectives on controversial river issues, such as those surrounding salmon. Harden does a nice



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job of making these perspectives more understandable, regardless of whether one agrees with them — that is, he is able to suggest how they have developed from certain experiences and contexts.

In Harden's view, the Columbia River, "in the sense that Lewis and Clark understood it," is lost — it is indeed, dead, "killed more than 60 years ago and ... reborn as plumbing" (75). It is precisely this notion of the death of the Columbia that Richard White, an historian, wishes to

refute with *The Organic Machine*. This is a short yet provocative history of the Columbia River, part of a 'Critical Issues' series published by Hill and Wang. (The requirements of this series undoubtedly influenced the format and style of the book, which may be one reason why it has left some of White's fans dissatisfied.) *The*

Organic Machine is more academic in tone than the other two books; the history of the river is interwoven with questions about the conceptual boundaries we have created in our definitions of what is 'natural.'

According to White, we have not killed the Columbia: "What has happened is closer to a failed marriage. Nature still exists on the Columbia. It is not dead, only altered by our labor" (59). The river is an organic machine, a complex combination of untouched nature and human activity. For White, nature is less about places than it is about processes. His explanation focuses on the concepts of energy and work, which are shared by humans and the river. The 'natural' cannot be removed from the Columbia as long as it continues to work; similarly, "our labor, our energy, is the nature in us" (112).

White also suggests that we acquire knowledge of nature through work — for example, the men working on Columbia River dams "were in a full and meaningful sense knowing nature" (61). His point is that there are many ways to 'know' nature, and that work, as one such way, has been neglected by environmentalists and environmental historians. This is a valid point, but one that begs many key questions about 'knowing' nature which are left unasked in this brief and concep-

tual treatment. His argument is thus less convincing than it might be.

White's discussion of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) should interest those seeking to weave a sociological thread into environmental history. While describing the BPA's justification of what were basically unneeded power dams, White speculates about the significance of planning as a "boring" exercise of power. "In a democracy," he suggests,

"boredom works for bureaucracies and corporations as smell works for a skunk. It keeps danger away" (64). A critical study of the BPA, as a "large and boring agency," could illuminate important aspects of this relationship that could be applicable to other natural resource agencies as well.



A. Leisenwitz

These three books highlight the notion that human perceptions of the Columbia River, and the meanings and values we give to it, are multiple and dynamic. The books also illustrate that our perceptions have had very real consequences for the river—the meanings we *ascribe* can and do become *inscribed* upon the landscape, and our perceptions then change in turn. Perhaps we are fascinated with the river of the past because we perceive the modern day Columbia to be something less than 'natural.'

But such a fascination is unproductive to the extent that it involves a vision of the river in which humans are absent, for this precludes us from making decisions about the future of the river. As White concludes: "Human history and the history of the river have merged to create the modern Columbia, which is at once a natural space and a social space. It is an organic machine and has to be dealt with as such. To call for a return to nature is posturing" (112).

(Kim is an Environmental Studies graduate student)

**Photographs: Ute Tribal Park, Colorado (left)
Three Trees, Eastern Oregon (right)**

tial wave of white migrants used ropes to inch their creaking wagons up and over this volcanic palisade.

I make camp just upriver from where the Sandy takes on water from Clear Creek. The river here is thirty feet wide and running strong, having already swallowed Horseshoe Creek, Lost Creek, and the Muddy Fork since draining the glacier. There are dozens of downed trees bridging the river, and those that were uprooted hold aloft vertical patches of land, complete with living bushes, rocks, soil, and moss. Those that fell early are bleached white, shining like bones above the mellow green of the current.

Enough rain and snow falls at this elevation each year—nearly eighty inches—to water a rich understory of tight-budded rhododendron and shiny tangles of serrated Oregon Grape wands.

White clusters of salal blossoms spatter the forest floor. Moss is everywhere, fringing the alders in chalky shreds and coating the soil in miniature fern jungles, and I lean against a cedar trunk and watch the river pour past. Soon a part of me seems to loosen and follow it, leaving me hollow beneath the scaly wings of evergreen.

After two years of exploring western Oregon, visiting my native geography leaves me uneasy. It's not just the changes I've observed in

settled areas, although the human spill is plenty troubling. I'm coming to see, however, that my discomfort has more to do with the growing awareness that my attempt to really know this place is not likely to succeed.

I can study its geology and botany, its wildlife and settlement patterns, but such knowledge is only academic. Without the sincere desire to seek membership in community, the same type of information that brought Monadnock, New Hampshire alive remains a dead accumulation of facts. The certain knowledge that home waits three thousand miles east restrains me from giving enough of myself to this place to really belong, for community membership demands investment and I am merely curious. This land is undeniably beautiful, and I treasure my time in its forests, but it is

not my home. My heart belongs to another.

At 1,900 feet Little Monadnock isn't much of a mountain by Oregon standards, but it's enough. From a granite ledge on its north face I look across thick forests that fill the basin between Mt. Monadnock to the east and Pitcher and Fall Mountains to the north; a few miles west, across the Connecticut River, Vermont's Green Mountains blush as they swing gently up toward the sun's flame. I'm surrounded by blueberries that will soon reward my daily climb through hemlock shaded colonies of mountain laurel and rhododendron and into the dappled mix of red oak, birch, and maple—as if the climb itself weren't reward enough.

Down below, past one of the silver ponds that speckle these forests, a church steeple signals the working-class village of Troy, though a hardwood canopy hides the rest of town. There are villages like this, home to a thousand or less people, scattered throughout these plush woodlands; I live in Harrisville, an old mill town perched in the hills north of Monadnock. Most of these villages have no active commerce—you'll have to drive to Dublin or Marlborough, or



into Keene to find a store—but they are community centers nonetheless. They provide a refreshingly antique counterpoint to the sprawl that brought commerce but no local community to my birthplace.

I have had much practice explaining my move against the current, from west to east, for new acquaintances are often surprised by my preference. The New England countryside, I tell them, feels kinder than the rural West, where human settlements often tend toward that peculiar blend of defiant individualism and intolerance. I also favor the seasonal cycle here, although western Oregon's circle of soggy gray is nearly redeemed by its late, lovely arc of summer. But these reasons don't convey the whole truth, which is that when I was ready to find home, I happened to be in New Hampshire.

Of course the process wasn't so arbitrary as that suggests. As my wanderlust waned I often found myself in New England, so I suspect that some part of me sensed early on that here was a place where I could be content. The opportunity to participate in a rich rural culture and the proximity of good friends prepared me to accept this as home even before I knew what it meant to desire such a thing. But the point remains that this is my home because it was in this place that I became ready; in other words, finding home means discovering something about yourself. Home is a process that occurs when you are ready at last to exchange the desire for independence for the acceptance of interdependence, and the responsibilities which that entails.

At the risk of hypocrisy, I mourn the rootlessness of contemporary America. When people ignore their membership in an ecosystem it remains difficult to recognize how their daily choices affect the community as a whole; such ignorance lies at the heart of all environmental degradation. In an age of instant communication and frantic transportation, it seems unlikely that Americans will choose to remain in their native places; greater mobility may, in fact, be an inevitable step in the evolution of our species. But it is not necessary that people deny themselves the privilege of freedom; what seems more important is that people begin to see themselves as part of an ecological community wherever they are.

After a hundred lazy minutes of biding time, a sudden surge brings the Green Mountains across the orange rim of sun, and a shadow-shift ripples through the trees below. I imagine the same sun warming Cascade flanks three thousand miles west, easing the steep shadows of ancient conifers across the sword ferns and salal. And I smile, not only at the thought of such beauty, but also at the recollection of so many friends who have mindfully chosen to be at home in Oregon. They come from New York and Delaware, from Michigan and Ohio, but year after rolling year they are slowly learning what it means to become a part of that place.

Welcome home.

(Laird is an English Ph.D student)

Kris and Jacqueline describe it, "grass roots") location of this room. Thanks to the leadership and hard work of Dave Wilson, the graduate student room has also been transformed into a comfortable home and office. He also leads plans to create a mural on the walls of the basement hallway to further improve our space.

The move to Pacific Hall was completed at the end of the summer. The Environmental Studies Program now occupies three rooms: Room 10 is the main ES Center complex, containing Kris' and Jacqueline's offices, as well as ES faculty member Bob Collin's office; Room 7 is a small conference room; and Room 6 is the graduate student office. The new space is almost twice as large as the Condon office, which has eased cramped conditions. The proximity of staff, faculty, and grad students on the same floor is convenient, efficient, and will hopefully strengthen the Program. And, as chance would have it, the new director of the ES Program, Dan Udovic, already had an office on the third floor of Pacific.

The Environmental Studies Program is settling into its new space. A sense of place, of course, will take longer to develop. According to geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, "what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as

we get to know it better and endow it with value." Thanks to the hard work and thoughtfulness of many — especially Jacqueline, Kris, Dave, and Dan Wectawski of the Physical Plant — this process has begun, and the new space is beginning to offer the warmth and comfort previously felt in Condon Hall. So, if you haven't done so, stop by Pacific Hall and visit the ES Center — see our new space and help us create a new sense of place.

(Jill and Kim are Environmental Studies graduate students)



mental Studies is exactly the kind of major that students wanted, and this major was very cheap for the College—a couple of GTFs and a few course releases where the College pays professors in other departments to teach courses for environmental studies.”

So, Environmental Studies... can you get a job with an ES major? Gale says it's a question students should be asking themselves. “I tell students that this is a broad, liberal arts, issue-directed major. What I mean by that is, it's like English, History or Sociology — we don't ‘train you up’ for anything. It's not a vocational major. It offers latitude for students. That's why I encourage students to double-major — add focus and skills to your liberal arts degree. Without skills there is about as much of a market for ES grads as for folks with a degree in sociology.”

ES has grown explosively in the past two years (ed. note: see article in this issue). Dick says it has something to do with place. “We're the ‘green university’ in the ‘green state’ — it's logical to have Environmental Studies here. People were very surprised that we never had an Environmental Studies major before.”

The Graduate Programs

Another idea that became a reality during Gale's tenure is the Ph.D. program. Gale says adding the Ph.D. will benefit the ES program, but only if adequate support exists for it. “Where we are now is that the [Ph.D.] proposal is sitting in the Chancellor's office, waiting for approval... It's not clear who is going to pay for it. The major cost for a Ph.D. program is separate GTFs to support the students in that program. If you mix Ph.D. students with the master's program, you will destroy the master's program by taking away all the support for the master's students.”

The Master's program has been a success for the university, in part because it is an unusual degree. “I describe our master's program as being like a small MBA or MSW program, or master's in planning. It's a paraprofessional, terminal degree.” Gale is pleased that the ES program will offer the Ph.D. — just like a real department. “The bottom line is that I'm really happy with what happened in those three years [as director]. When the Ph.D. program is passed, we will have the full complement of academic programs that you would expect of a department. There will be a minor, a major, a strong master's program, and a Ph.D. program.”

The Future

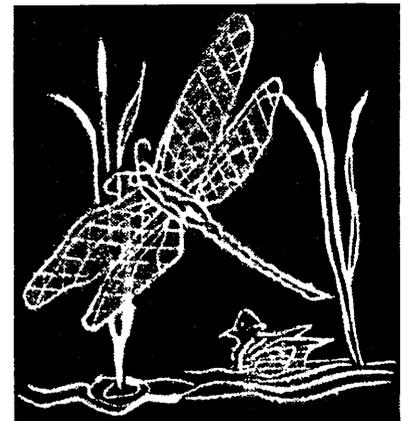
What's next for Environmental Studies? Gale sees the lack of ES faculty members as the biggest need of the program. New hires in the geology, international studies and geography departments will probably be teaching ES classes next year, but they won't be ES faculty. Gale favors hiring faculty directly. “I would like to see, in five years, Environmental Studies to be like International Studies... what I mean is, International Studies has three or four faculty within their program. Those are faculty appointed in International Studies. They are not borrowed from some other department.”

Previous ES directors had served more than one term, but Gale decided to step down after three years and enter a phased early retirement program. He says he was satisfied

with the progress of the ES program and ready for some time with his wife Susan at their home on the Oregon coast. “I went in and gave it everything I could for three years. Our weekends were basically nine to twelve on Saturday mornings. Saturday

afternoons and Sundays I had things that had to get done. I have no regrets. You had to get the momentum going to get the kind of support we now have. It's nice to have two full-time office people. It's nice to have the GTF support. It's nice to have the internship program — there was no internship program when I was director. I was able to establish the momentum that got us the current amount of support.”

Gale thinks the runaway growth of the undergraduate major has brought some of the major's weaknesses into view. In particular, the major may be too broadly based, without adequate room for students to focus in any particular discipline or interest area. “I think there is going to be some adjustment to the major, to move it a little bit away from such a broad liberal arts major. You probably should have a social sciences concentration, a natural sciences concentra-



tion, a policy concentration and a humanities concentration within the undergraduate major.”

Gale thinks the major’s success will continue to get attention from the university administration, which is a good thing in an era of tight budgets. “I think that the existence of the ES major and the viability of the program will continue to push the University to hire faculty who have an interest in environmental studies,” he says.

He is candid when discussing the program’s connections with the various departments on campus. “We are strong in the natural sciences here at the University of Oregon. What we have, however, that all the other [environmental studies] programs don’t have is strong social sciences, law, economics, policy, humanities... we have all that good stuff. We need, however, to make better links to the natural sciences.”

Fortunately, the program’s new director is a biologist and a person with a strong commitment to both science and Environmental Studies. “Dan Udovic is a particularly well-timed director in that the natural science part of campus needs better bridges with Environmental Studies,” says Gale.

With Gale continuing as undergraduate adviser, Udovic is freed of a major time-consuming task traditionally assigned to the program director. Gale hopes this allows him to spend time on projects that Gale was never satisfied with, like seminars for the graduate students.

What Now for Dick?

Gale seems content with his semi-retired life, which brings him to campus several days a week, but leaves time for his private interests. “My primary passions are cooking and classical music. I live on the coast, where we have a new performing arts center with a convention center and full kitchen. I occasionally work in the kitchen, assisting the caterers, and I give pre-concert talks to the mostly retired population there. I could see myself recycling back into environmental issues in three years or so... perhaps the Sierra Club again.”

Gale recently trained for the State of Oregon’s nursing home ombudsman program, safeguarding the rights of elderly patients in nursing homes. His concern for elderly members of society mirrors his belief in a diverse society. “I’m glad to see that many genera-

tions are involved in environmental issues today. I think we need a full complement of ideas, of ages, in every organization.”

By the end of our conversation, the sky is dark and I’ve missed my bus. The rain is still pouring down. Some things never change. Others change faster than we realize. Dick Gale looks out the window and says, “So, that’s what I know. Evolution goes fast.”

(Matthew Booker is an Environmental Studies graduate student)

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES RECEIVES DONATION FROM BARKER FOUNDATION

Dan Udovic, Environmental Studies Program Director, announced October 29, 1996 that the program has received a \$10,000 donation from the Barker Foundation. Udovic said the recent gift will support the program’s efforts to attract and retain “the best and brightest to the University of Oregon campus.” He expressed his gratitude on behalf of the entire program and said the Barker gift is an example of the private support that enables the program to attract graduate students.

In 1995, the Barker Foundation gave the program a \$100,000 endowed fellowship for ES graduate students. The Barker Foundation fellowship program provides tuition remission and a stipend for two incoming ES graduate students each year.

David Wilson, a 1995-96 Barker Fellow, said the financial support allowed him to focus on his education at the University of Oregon. Wilson said the fellowship’s support has been invaluable and was a significant factor in his decision to come to the University of Oregon.

University of Oregon Development Director David Begun noted that the latest donation from the Barker Foundation is an example of the critical role that private donors now play in an era of reduced public support for higher education.

What is our greatest strength?

“I really like how truly interdisciplinary our program is. It is not only an environmental science program. We need to have a complete view, we need to understand more than just the sciences — it involves social science and humanities perspectives on the environment. I know of no other program in the country that has the kind of interdisciplinary approach and support that we have. I’m also very impressed that many departments on campus have recently hired or are planning to hire professors with environmental research and scholarship interests. I’d like to make it easier for other departments to do this, in part due to the increasing numbers of students we can provide them. That will also be a big boon to the graduate program, because grad students will have even more faculty to work with here. I am very excited by the potential of ES at Oregon.”

What about the graduate program?

“The heart of our program has been the MA, which has been very successful and works very well. I worry that the growth process of the undergrad major and the new Ph.D. program (expected to start next year) might adversely affect the Master’s program, so we need to take special care. The Ph.D. program will be small (approximately 3 students). Each student will have a “focal” department and will have to satisfy all the Ph.D. requirements of that department and take some courses related to ES, then do some kind of project

tying the two together. We worked last year with representatives from Biology, English, Geography and Political Science to figure out how this might work.”

What environmental issue do you personally find most pressing?

“I personally think that the growth of the human population is at the root of most of our environmental problems, including biodiversity loss. I am also very interested in the effects of global climate change and habitat destruction on human health, especially as it relates to the emergence of new infectious diseases and epidemics.”

What books most influenced your own environmental awareness and concern?

“A few of the books that made an impact on my own thinking are Paul Ehrlich’s Population Bomb, John Harte’s Patient Earth, E.F. Schumacher’s Small Is Beautiful and Rachael Carson’s Silent Spring. Also Limits to Growth and Beyond the Limits by Donella Meadows. Recently, I have been very impressed with Norman Myer’s The Primary Source : Tropical Forests and Our Future, Laurie Garrett’s The Coming Plague, William Dietrich’s The Final Forest, and Paul Hawkin’s The Ecology of Commerce.”

What is your favorite natural place?

(Immediately) “French Pete Creek Wilderness Area in the Cascades. When I first came to Oregon, French Pete was an embattled wilderness, much like Warner Creek is today. It includes one of my favorite stands of old-growth forest and I have taken my family there to camp many times.”

(Anthony Leiserowitz is an Environmental Studies graduate student)



Photograph: Zinnia

Leaving Illinois

By Laird Christensen

Four days past Beltane,
chainsaws snarl down Maple Street,
spitting plumes

from deep in the shadows
of twin Chinese Elms. Echoing
too many two-

cycle strikes on my native Cascades
and long-adopted Appalachians,
I slip

through the margins of this
midwestern town, pedaling past
the asphalt's

dead end. Some fields are still
too damp to plant. May spills green
through corn stubble

from unkempt mounds of earth
that frame a sunken current,
blushing bluebells

and clover. Walking my bike
atop steep banks, I peer down on a world
that rages life

beneath a land too soon
embalmed, its plowed acres bleeding
petroleum silt

to the Gulf. Slowbudding tangles
of sandbar willow and cottonwood
bristle over

the black pulse of irrigation,
and the ditch brims birdsong; cardinals,
yellowthroats,

and redwing blackbirds
weave a shimmer in the web of branches.
I stop,

hungry for any hint
of wild in these dangling final days of
flatland exile,

until ungainly bass of airhorn
belches from the highway, urging
me along.

A twig across my spokes
sparks a sudden coda from below,
and then—

the stream explodes, its face
a sudden bloom of frothy clods;
the crashing

ascent of far bank's brush
delivers coyote. Wet and well-fed,
he bursts

over fresh-turned earth and
drums a broad arc away, looping west
before curling

northeast, and melting
at last into oak and hickory, nipping
at the heels

of my second-growth heart
and herding it home
to New England.



L. Christensen

Photograph: Datura/Spiral Galaxy

Calendar

Ongoing Events

Thursdays, 4:00: Geography Tea and Talk, 106 Condon

January, 1997

30

Perspectives on the Salmon Crisis in the Pacific Northwest (sponsored by the UO Survival Center)
7:00 pm. Walnut Room, EMU

30-Feb. 1

Symposium: Land in the American West: Private Claims and the Common Good
LaSells Stewart Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR
For info: (541) 737-4583

February, 1997

12

Keith Devlin, "The Search for a New Cosmology of the Mind" (Science, Technology, and Society Lecture Series)
7:30 pm, Hult Center
For info: <<http://www.isepp.org>>

March, 1997

6

David Harvey, "The Body as an Accumulation Strategy"
4:30, Gerlinger Lounge
(Workshop: Friday, March 7, 10 am, 159 PLC)

11

George Lakoff, "The Mind Made Flesh" (Science, Technology and Society Lecture Series)
7:30 pm, Hult Center

13-15

Public Interest Environmental Law Conference
For info: (541) 346-3828

April, 1997

11-13

HOPES Eco-Design Arts Conference
For info: (541) 346-0719

May, 1997

2-4

Public Interest Science Conference
Willamette Hall
For info: (541) 346-5195 or
<<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~pisc>>

14

Stuart Kauffman, "Emerging Complexity: At Home in the Universe" (Science, Technology and Society Lecture Series)
7:30 pm, Hult Center

15-17

Oregon Humanities Center Conference on Native American Literature: "Ethnicity and the Problem of Multicultural Identity: 'Where Do You Come From, Where Do You Go?'"
EMU Ballroom, Gerlinger Lounge, various other locations

(see also the Environmental Event Calendar at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~opwww/envcal/calendar/cgi>)