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Nostalgia and New Inspiration

A Jan. 3, 1992 interview with Ken Hechler, West Virginia Secretary-of-State and Life member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

by Carroll Jett

Carroll Jett: As you are probably aware, 1992 marks the 25th anniversary of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. In the December issue of *The Highlands Voice* (our monthly newsletter), WVHC President Cindy Rank challenged the membership to look back over the past 25 years. She asked us to evaluate our accomplishments, take stock of where we are now as an organization, and identify some specific goals for the future. Since you are a lifetime Conservancy member, I thought an interview with you might give some of us a little broader perspective—particularly some of our newer members.

Ken Hechler: Yes, the Highlands Conservancy is a very worthwhile organization — with many dedicated members. I'm proud to be associated with it. Thanks for the opportunity.

CJ: How did you first become interested in WVHC? Why did you join?

KH: I served as a member of Congress from West Virginia. I was first elected in 1958 and served until 1976. I was very much interested in environmental issues even back then. Senator Henry Jackson of Washington and I introduced the bill which called for National Wilderness Area designations for Dolly Sods, Otter Creek, and the Cranberry area. There was also the issue of strip mine abolition, and protection of the New River from Appalachian Power's proposed dam. Working on these issues, it was only natural that I would join the Highlands Conservancy, since we had common goals.

CJ: Again referring to Cindy's remarks in last month's newsletter, she pointed out that we are today facing many of the same environmental threats we saw 25 years ago. Her question to the membership was, "Does this mean we are still remaining true to our original objectives, or does it mean we haven't accomplished anything?"

For example, you mentioned the issue of strip mining. In 1960, shortly after



West Virginia Secretary of State Ken Hechler hams it up with Gentle Ben who guards the entrance to Ken's office. The bear is the one on the right with the WVHC hat. (Photo by Robert F. Gates)

you were elected to Congress, strip mine production of coal was only about 8 million tons per year. Today it is over five times that amount. In his first bid for Governor, in 1972, Jay Rockefeller ran on a platform calling for the abolition of strip mining. Although he lost the election, he was obviously a serious candidate. Could a serious candidate for Governor advocate that position today? Or have we gone backwards?

KH: Let me answer the last part of your question first. Certainly I believe a serious candidate could run as an abolitionist. I'm surprised no one is doing so. I'd like to come back and follow up on that a little more in a minute.

I understand the frustration we all feel when we have to deal with some of the same problems year after year. But that doesn't mean we aren't accomplishing anything. The Conservancy and other environmental organizations have been very effective over the years. Davis Power Project stopped. New River saved from Appalachian Power. Cranberry, Otter Creek, Dolly Sods. Even strip mining — at least now we have some regulations.

Maybe not what we wanted, but better than we had. Lots of victories. Lots of battles still to fight.

You brought up the election of 1972. I believe some erroneous conclusions have been drawn from that election. I don't believe Rockefeller's stance on strip mining cost him that election —

CJ: (interrupting) Excuse me for interrupting, but this point is too interesting to pass up. What do you base that on? Why did Rockefeller lose?

KH: This might not be a popular statement with Conservancy members, but Arch Moore was doing a pretty darn

good job at that time — at least that was the perception, and perception is reality in politics. The state was being run pretty well. That was before all this scandal and corruption business. He was popular, and the people saw no reason to kick him out. And Rockefeller was still a newcomer to the state —

CJ: But what about '76? When Rockefeller flip-flopped on the issue of strip mining, he was elected easily —

KH: (interrupting) Different situations entirely. Let me tell you more about the

See Hechler, page 8

1992 Calendar of WVHC Meetings

Spring Review: May 15-17, Watoga State Park, Pocahontas Co.,
Focus on the Forest

Summer Board Meeting: Saturday, July 25, Holly River State
Park, Webster County.

Fall Review: Oct. 23-25, Cass, Pocahontas County,
25th Anniversary Celebration.

1967 - 1992: 25 years working for
West Virginians and the environment



— from the heart of the mountains —

by Cindy Rank

Driving home

What a journey the past few Friday nights have been: emerging from the marble halls of the state capitol to the sights and sounds of early spring in Charleston, then driving the ribbon of interstate highway 79 north through the smell of Penzoil country, and the carved hillsides of Wallback, and then through the Flatwoods oasis-bowl of fast food joints, I drive on home to the hills of Southern Upshur County, still white with snow from the last two weekends.

As if on cue, as I park the car the sky lets loose another squall of the wondrous white flakes. I laugh as I put the lining back in my coat, dig my toboggan cap out from under the accumulation of legislative papers and don my knee high rubber boots for the trek down the path to the warm yellow glow of the front porch light waiting below.

How different and unrelated these two worlds can be. And how difficult it is to ferry between the two and still be alive and effective (let alone sane and healthy).

Daily footsteps on hard marble floors tend to jar the spine and cloud the mind, giving rise to serious doubt about the importance and urgency of our never-ending list of demands to protect the earth's resources.

But coming home to the silence of winter clears the brain enough to remember the connections that transcend the endless debates about additional cost to industry and individual, and to recognize that the world and families of man, fish, and fowl, alike are all in desperate need of immediate and decisive action that will be well worth the cost in the long run.

Fortunately there are others on the state and national scene who occasionally take the time to remind us that our personal backyards are only part of a bigger backyard that urgently needs our undivided attention. I was impressed to find Tom Wicker addressed this very issue in his last regular column and have asked Mary Pat to include his column here to help us remember the bigger picture.

America should try to save planet

by Tom Wicker

Reprinted from Jan. 1, 1992, Charleston Gazette.

The end of the Soviet Union and the resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev, though at least a momentary gain for freedom and democracy, are sad events. The fall of a giant state, owning largely to its own human flaws, has the quality of tragedy; and a great leader's peaceful surrender of power again demonstrated the vision that distinguished him, as few others or his time.

President Bush paid the proper tribute when he said that Gorbachev had been "responsible for one of the most important developments of this century — the revolutionary transformation of a totalitarian dictatorship and the liberation of his people from its smothering embrace."

Boris Yeltsin and Gorbachev's other successors have yet to show themselves capable of achievement on such a scale. They, and we, might well keep in mind Benjamin Franklin's reply to a woman who asked what the Founding Fathers of the United States had created at Philadelphia in 1787:

"A republic, if you can keep it."

More immediately, the transformation of the Soviet Union into the Commonwealth of Independent States leaves Washington the necessity to exercise in a new world a more visionary leadership that it provided the West during the Cold War.

Military and political confrontation needs, to be replaced by a more demanding diplomacy on numerous economic and environmental complexities. These may be less apocalyptic than a nuclear exchange, but are more threatening to peace and stability.

Even the survival of some or all peoples is at risk in the great environmental issues the world has only begun to face — like global warming or deforestation — and on which the U.S. has failed, so far, to display the kind of foresight and courage for which Bush

rightly praised Gorbachev.

For the Soviet Union's political and economic systems, Gorbachev recognized the inevitable, and acted on it, not always wisely but with great goals constantly in mind.

For the equally difficult problems of the world's debased and deteriorating environment, Bush disputes the predictable and acts as if he and his country need take no responsibility for the future:

* Though the world needs to restrain its use of fossil fuels and emission of carbon dioxide, Bush proposes oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, holds back from higher auto mileage requirements and shrinks from a petroleum tax that would reduce auto usage and greenhouse gases, and raise needed revenues.

* Though global population growth still strains natural resources and exceeds the world's ability to provide jobs and decent living standards — in Latin American and the Caribbean, 44 percent of the labor force is unemployed or underemployed — the Bush administration, owing to its fear of anti-abortion forces, refuses to contribute to the U.N. Population Fund, or to support domestic or foreign family planning programs.

* Many nations are substituting military expenditures for sustainable development: the U.S. also gives high priority to anti-missile defenses against ill-defined future threats.

In these areas as vital to the global future as a strategic arms treaty, the administration not only abdicates leadership; by its own policies or lack of them, it provides instead a bad example to a world that now must look first to Washington for vision, encourage-

See Wicker, page 3

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20 years later, destruction mixed with progress

by Donella Meadows

(reprinted from the Charleston Gazette, Dec. 27, 1991)

Twenty years ago I would have been writing this column on a manual typewriter. Today I'm writing it on a laptop computer that fits inside by briefcase with room to spare. The computing power of this little laptop would have occupied a space as large as my office 20 years ago.

I've been using the computer to write a book that documents global trends over the last 20 years. A lot has happened over two decades. It's not easy to decide, looking at the record, whether to be encouraged or discouraged.

In 1971 there were 3.6 billion people and 240 million automobiles in the world. In 1991 there are 5.4 billion people and 560 million automobiles. In the single year 1970 about 72 million people were added to the world; in 1990 about 91 million were added.

Twenty years ago only 9 percent of women of the developing world had access to modern technologies of birth control. Now that fraction has risen to more than 50 percent. Birth rates are falling gradually everywhere. Death rates are falling gradually too, which is why the population is still growing so rapidly.

In Africa, food production has doubled in just 20 years. In Asia, it

has tripled. That's an amazing achievement, but it has had high environmental costs. Between 1970 and 1990 the worldwide use of fertilizers rose from 70 million to 145 million metric tons per year. The use of pesticides has increased from 1.3 million to 2.9 million metric tons per year.

According to the Worldwatch Institute's State of the World 1991, between 1970 and 1990 world forest area decreased by about 480 million acres, an area the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. Over the same period 290 million more acres of desert were created, and area equivalent to all the cropland in China.

And in the Third World the average amount of food per person has barely changed — except in Africa, where it has steadily declined. More food is going not to feed hungry people more, but to feed more hungry people.

In 1990, the world turned out about twice as many industrial goods as in 1970, but industrial output per capita has risen by only 30 percent. Nearly all the per capita economic growth has taken place not in the poor countries but in the rich ones. Between 1970 and 1990 the world economy burned 500 billion barrels of oil, 90 billions tons of coal, and

1,100 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Over the same period, geologists found more new fossil fuels or reassessed old discoveries upward) than the world burned. Therefore some people think there are more fossil energy resources than there were 20 years ago.

There aren't, of course. There are 500 billion fewer barrels of oil, 90 billion fewer tons of coal, and 1,100 trillion fewer cubic meters of natural gas. Furthermore, those enormous quantities of hydrocarbons have all been turned in the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. In 20 years the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen from 320 to 355 parts per million.

In 1971, the United Nations was preparing for the world's first conference on the environment. No more than 10 nations had environmental ministries then. Now well over 100 countries have departments of the environment, all of them getting ready for the second global environmental summit, to be held in Brazil in June. The central item on the agenda will be that rising curve of carbon dioxide and the global climate change it portends.

Twenty years ago Richard Nixon was preparing to run for his second term as president. Now George Bush is doing the same, which may cause him, the U.N. conference organizers

hope, to stop blocking the global climate negotiations. There is a wonderful Republican precedent for him to follow. Over the past 20 years the human race recognized the global problem of ozone layer destruction and reached a strong international agreement to cease producing the chemicals that cause the problem. The Reagan administration was a leader in that global negotiation.

Fortunately the technical means to reduce carbon dioxide emissions have been developed in the past 20 years. In 1970 a typical American car traveled about 9 miles per gallon of gas. Now the average new car in the United States gets 28 mpg, the best gets over 50 mpg, and on the drawing boards of many car companies are models that get over 100 mpg. Contrary to what Detroit and the White House want you to believe, most of these cars pass all safety tests and cost no more to make than do current models.

Now one can buy compact fluorescent light bulbs that produce the same amount of light with one fourth as much electricity. Now some electric utilities are working as hard to

sell energy efficiency as they used to sell energy use. Twenty years ago I wouldn't have believed either of those two developments could be possible.

Over the past two decades the human economy has roughly doubled its physical presence, from vehicles to garbage to greenhouse gas emissions. As a result there has been enormous erosion of the planetary resource base. And over the same period there has arisen a wave of concern about the environment, more information, more publications, environmental organizations, technologies and institutions on the national and global level to help the human race live harmoniously within the environment that sustains us.

Sometimes over the past 20 years I heard someone say, "We are in a race between education and catastrophe." As far as I can tell from the global statistics, for two decades now that race had been going neck and neck.

Meadows is an adjunct professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College.

An Earth Charter

by Don Gasper

Though concerned more often with West Virginia mountains, we should be aware that an Earth Charter will be attempted this summer by the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development.

The "Earth Charter" is a symbolic declaration of principals on sustainable development. To solve the world's environmental problems, all countries must tackle basic economic problems.

The debate between the industrialized North and the developing South must be again enjoined, and problems of poverty, unsustainable patterns of economic growth, international trade and the exponential growth of over population and over consumption must be resolved in principal.

It is the world's best chance to embrace the concept of sustainable living, and with the "Agenda 21" that follows, put into place an action

agenda for decades ahead to implement the Earth Charter goals.

The North must commit the resources (largely financial) that will permit the South to achieve sustainable development. Moreover, the North, with the U.S. being the least cooperative, has refused to enter broadly supported, logically necessary agreements that might effect our life styles.

The U.S. has even refused to fund its share of efforts to consider appropriately contentious issues. Clearly the U.S. has been projecting a negative image with regard to the global environment.

Recently 42 Senators asked President Bush to provide the leadership to restore the environmental image of the U.S. Each one of us should do what we can to promote U.S. leadership and the success of this crucial effort.

Wicker — from page two

ment and help.

Bush has not even agreed to attend the so-called "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, a U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in June.

In sharp contrast, both Japan and Europe are pushing to use the "Earth Summit" to set global targets — to limit, for instance, emissions of warming gases like carbon dioxide, in which the U.S. leads the world.

Even with a 30 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2005, the U.S. still would exceed the average of most European nations.

But at least until the departure of

John Sununu as White House chief of staff, the administration did not even approve the concept of global warming — while many authorities fear the world is already may be too late in trying to reverse it.

Such quiescence is unworthy of a great nation, the last superpower, the leader of the free world in its "long, twilight struggle" against despotism.

As the U.S. did not hesitate to spend its resources to prevail in the Cold War, it needs now to go forward as boldly to lead a longer, more desperate struggle to save the planet, and rescue the human race from itself.

Hedgesville refuses to use LCS dump

(compiled by Carroll Jett, chair of the Conservancy's Solid Waste Committee, from news articles in Martinsburg Journal and interviews with Town Council members)

The Hedgesville Town Council has for years been adamantly opposed to the opening of the LCS/Chambers garbage dump in northwestern Berkeley County. In the meantime, dump representatives and promoters have employed various legal maneuvers — and, according to local residents, underhanded tactics — in an attempt to shut down the publicly owned Berkeley County Landfill.

Although the sheer size of the LCS megadump dictates acceptance of large quantities of long-haul refuse, they apparently would also like to force the locals to "patronize their pit" in order to help justify their existence.

The trash tycoons must have felt smug indeed when the DNR forced the closure of the publicly owned landfill on Nov. 30. With no other local disposal facility available, it was felt that the folks from Hedgesville had no choice but to capitulate and use the very facility they had fought very hard to keep out of their community.

According to an article by Kelli Shores of the Martinsburg Journal, LCS even offered the locals disposal service "free of charge." However, the Hedgesville Town Council — still optimistic for a timely reopening of the publicly owned and controlled landfill — refused the LCS offer!

Instead, they elected to truck their trash to a transfer station approximately 25 miles away. From there, it will go to a landfill near Greencastle, Pennsylvania for disposal.

When asked to justify the town's refusal of the LCS offer, Mayor Ken Mosher said, "It is sitting on top of our water source, and I don't choose to foul our own water."

In addition, Mosher stated that the council does not want to patronize a privately run landfill.

"Waste disposal should remain in the public sector," Mosher said. "The problem with closing off the public to their representation when no public facility is available is that they have no say in landfill safety and landfill caps."

Hedgesville Council Member Ron Good told The Voice, "I have three children, and I feel a responsibility to leave them a suitable community to live in. So long as I am on the Council, there will be no secret deals or secret meetings. Any proposal LCS has to make, we can discuss it in an open, public meeting — not behind closed doors."

The Berkeley County dump promoters have organized a "civic" group — similar to the McDowell Improvement and Development Corp. — which is funded by a token fee collected from each ton of waste dumped at LCS. One of the group's goals is to create the "good neighbor" image by presenting checks (with much flourish and fanfare, of course) to various worthwhile community projects.

Berkeley 2000, as the front organization is called, is headed by Lacy Rice. Rice is a respectable lawyer, bank official, and local Democratic Party activist. His involvement, along with that of Martinsburg's Republican Mayor Tony Senecal, apparently gives the front group an air of legitimacy, and is a constant source of irritation to the local opponents of out-of-state garbage.

When asked about the Berkeley 2000 philanthropic activities, Councilman Good replied, "I am very proud to say that no one who lives in Hedgesville has accepted a dime from them. We don't want their out-of-state garbage, and we won't dump our own garbage there. We don't want their garbage, we don't want their money, and we don't want them. We want them GONE. Landfills should be publically owned, so we can control what goes into them."

Following is a list of the Hedgesville Town Council members, who are unanimous in their opposition to the LCS/Chambers megadump: Mayor Ken Mosher, Ron Good, Dennis Donaldson, Mary Beth Good, Dale Buck, Mary S. Catlett, and Clarence Mason.

Hats off to these Hedgesville Heroes!

Who we've been, how we got here

(excerpts from past copies of *The Highlands Voice*)

January 1974:

Moore calls for Coal Commission

In his State-of-the-State message delivered to a joint session of the West Virginia legislature on Jan. 10, Governor Moore called for the creation of a new commission to develop coal resources in West Virginia, in view of the energy slow-down in United States.

...In his comments before the legislature Moore noted that he considered the present energy situation as a "second golden opportunity" for coal. He warned, however, that any coal policy must take into account environmental impact, and that coal must be developed in a way compatible with the environmental health of West Virginia....

From the Editor

by Ron Harway

...As editor of the Voice I now call upon all member of the Conservancy to seriously consider contributing to the Voice. I cannot, of course, guarantee that every contribution will be published. But I can guarantee that every contribution will be acknowledged, [I have not lived up to Ron Harway's commitment, but I will try to do better. mpp] and if your contribution is not published you will be given a reason for non-acceptance.

The Voice can always use black and white photographs. Many people who "read" the Voice actually only look at the pictures and read their captions.

Thus a good picture may well be worth a good article. We can use original cartoons. We will consider poems. In fact, we will consider anything!

Since President Nixon has suggested that everyone stay home in order to drive up the price of gasoline, we suggest that while you are sitting around watching the price of gasoline click upward, you write something for the Voice. The Highlands Voice would appreciate it, and one distracted, absent-minded school teacher would sleep more soundly.

Last year the state of Oregon passed a "bottle bill." The innovative measure outlawed throwaway containers for soft drinks and beer, and made payment mandatory for returned bottles.

Blasted by can and bottle manufacturers as irresponsible and uneconomic, the bill has turned out to be amazingly successful in Oregon. According to government studies bottles and cans accounted for 34.9 percent of Oregon's roadside litter in October 1971. By February of 1973 bottles and cans comprised only 19.4 percent of the litter. No more recent studies are available for the end of 1973, but eyewitness accounts say one has to really search for a discarded bottle or can in Oregon...

...We suggest that every legislator take a five minute drive from the Capitol in any direction, over any road, including interstate highways and city streets, and take someone along to count the cans and bottles lying beside the roadway. We think no further information will be required to outlaw these permanent blights on our landscape.

Overlook

by Bob Burrell

"But if you don't like Rowlesburg or Moorefield or Canaan Valley," Reddy Kilowatt and Colonel Damsite ask us, "where would you like us to build the dam, Cheat Canyon, Gladly Fork, Otter Creek?" Which of course is akin to asking, "Would you like your wife or your daughter raped?" It is remarkable how the engineers, the technologist, and the politicians make the unchallenged assumption that to build dams is good no matter who or what gets hurt....

For those who need being reminded, West Virginia is the Mountain State, a geographical designation which connotes thing associated with mountains, i.e. clear, cold running trout streams; massive, wild canyons; broad,

pastoral valleys; all picturesque, tourist promotign, wild-life teeming, income generating in their own right of course, but more importantly, a place, indeed a unique place, for people to live in dignity and beauty, for those of us who call West Virginia home.

As we would take steps to safeguard our homes against termites, rats, cockroaches, and other vermin, so let us take steps to protect our West Virginia home against dam-building vermin.

Where Do We Go From Here?

by Gordon T. Hamrick

U.S. District Judge Robert E. Maxwell recently ruled that clearcutting is not an acceptable method of forest management in the Monongahela National Forest, that clearcutting violates the spirit and intent of the Organic Act of 1897. The Forest Service, of course, immediately announced that it will appeal the ruling, that it — the Forest Service — feels that it cannot properly manage the National Forests in the northwest without clearcutting.

January 1975:

Regulation of Throwaways Essential

by Jane S. Henley

In 1958 the American public was introduced to a new word - "and a new concept from the container industries" - the word was "throwaway" and the concept was "no return." In 1974, the polite word is now "convenience packaging."

Both the bottlers and the can manufacturers mobilized all their advertising expertise to sell the American people on the "throwaway" idea. The idea took hold rapidly - I'm ashamed to say. Many Americans became hooked on toss away containers - no one was concerned about what would become of these cans and bottles after they hit the trash can - everybody forgot that cans and bottles don't deteriorate - they don't burn - they just take up space in a dump.

No one was concerned then about the 11,200 jobs lost from 1958-1967 in the beer industry as returnables were exchanged for throwaways, and the big firms got bigger and drove the small bottlers out of business.

No one was concerned then about the natural resources which wer being wasted in the extra energy used to manufacture the throwaway containers, and the waste of precious metals and elements which were being depleted with no thought of recycling and reuse....

from the Highlands Conservancy

Membership form

"...Many disturbing signposts indicate that we cannot keep going on our present course. We are pushing past the limits of our finite resource base...We have breezed past the environmental crisis, and we are racing through the energy crisis. Our lights flicker. Our air smells four. Our streets are choked with traffic. Our land is jammed with buildings. No matter. Full speed ahead.

A day will come when we shall rue our recklessness. A day will come when we shall look back in wonder that we didn't use more care...We may be heading for national disaster, but that isn't in our minds right now....Speeding past the danger signs, the American Joy Ride rolls on."

John R. Quarles, Jr.
Deputy Administrator, EPA
October 22, 1974

January 1977:

Nature Conservancy Interested in Canaan

by Linda Cooper Elkinton

In an affidavit submitted to the Federal Power Commission, the Nature Conservancy, a well-known national

The beginning

by Max Smith

reprinted from *The Highlands Voice*, September 1977

As far as I can determine there are no written record of the founding of the Highland Conservancy prior to the mid-Winter Meeting of January 1967, so this article is a trip down Memory Lane. Special thanks are due to Dr. Thomas King of Bridgeport, for without his help this could not have been written.

The Canoe Cruisers Association of Washington held their First Annual Whitewater Week-end on the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River between the Mouth of Seneca and Petersburg on April 3-5, 1964. At this time some members of the Association were disturbed by reports that a scenic (?) highway was to built across Dolly Sods.

In the spring of 1965 a meeting was held at Bob Harrigan's Camp near Yokum's Motel at the Mouth of Seneca. This was the first meeting for the people who would eventually become the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. The various threats to Seneca Rocks — Spruce Knob — Dolly Sods were discussed and it was decided to organize and try to keep these areas in their natural state. A review was planned for that Fall in order to publicized the necessity of saving these natural areas. Bob Harrigan acted as Chairman. Here is the roster of that meeting (from memory): Bob Harrigan-Canoe Cruisers, Washington; Dr. Thomas King-Canoe Cruisers, Bridgeport; Rupert Cutler-Wilderness Society, Washington; Bob and Sue Broughton-Pittsburgh Climbers; Jim Wolfe, Pittsburgh; Bob Burrell, Morgantown; Joe Rieffenberger, Dept. of Natural Resources; Jim Johnston-Canoe Cruisers, Washington; Max Smith-West Virginia Wildlife Federation; Sona Smith-West Virginia Garden Clubs; Bob Waldrop-Sierra Club, Washington; Carl Walker; Lou Greathouse-West Virginia Recreation Society; Joe Hutchinson and Bob Maynard. If any have been missed please let me know.

There were more meetings that summer at Bob Harrigan's Camp, mainly to set up the Fall Review. Through the efforts of Rupert Cutler, The Wilderness Society not only bore the full cost of printing our brochure but also mailed it to their full membership.

The First Review was held on Spruce Mountain on a Saturday in late October 1965. It was a cold, wet, miserable day; however, the attendance of 350 to 400 persons far exceeded our hopes. After the day's activities there was an evening meeting at Gatewood Management Area on Spruce Mountain. Bob Harrigan had arranged for the meal, and tent and the generator for lights. The meal was an excellent barbecued chicken dinner, which was cooked and eaten in the rain, but enjoyed by all. The meeting later in the Revivalist's Tent was well attended, with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and U.S. Senator Robert Byrd as the main speakers. During Senator Byrd's speech the generator stopped, and had to be restarted. The Senator remarked that was the first time he had ever had the lights turned out while talking. The meeting was a definite success.

More meetings were held through 1966 at Harrigan's Camp, and it was decided to organize and become a permanent, on-going organization to act as a watchdog for the wilderness areas of West Virginia and to be an activist organization rather than just try to coordinate activities of other outdoor groups. Committees were appointed to write the Constitution and By-Laws, to select a name and to plan for the future. The Fall Review for 1966 was held at Shot Cherry Cabin on Spruce Mountain, and while this

organization dedicated to preserving natural areas, stated its interest in negotiating with Allegheny Power System for acquisition of their land holdings in the Canaan Valley. Such acquisition would serve to preserve the valuable wetlands in the Valley and would preclude development of the 7,200-acre lake and 1,000-megawatt pumped-storage power generating facility APS proposes for the Valley.

A petition by the Sierra Club for reopening the proceedings for inclusion of this new evidence was also filed with the FPC at the same time. The WVHC filed supporting petitions....

COALition Backs Phaseout of Strip Mining

by Larry George

On Sunday, January 9, the COALition Against Strip Mining held it Citizen's Coal Policy Conference in the Gold Room of the Rayburn Congressional Office Building in Washington, D.C. The Conference brought together 120 people from nearly 90 organization for the purpose of discussing support for and amendments to the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

However, a surprising and significant change in the position of COALition took place. Instead of attempting to amend the existing regulatory bill, the COALition will support its own bill calling for a nationwide phaseout of strip mining in a three to five year period...

West Virginia was well represented at the Conference by nearly a dozen people from the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Save Our Moun-

Who we've been, how we got here

was not as large as the 1965 Review there was a good attendance and much was accomplished. I will never forget driving off Spruce Mountain about midnight through the snow!!

The First Mid-Winter Meeting was held at Blackwater Falls Lodge on the last weekend of January 1967. At this meeting we adopted the Constitution and By-Laws, and also accepted the name proposed by Bob Broughton "The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy." Dr. Thomas E. King was elected President, Sona Smith as Secretary-Treasurer, and Maxwell Smith as Corresponding Secretary.

More meetings were held during the summer of 1967, and much was accomplished. Many activities were carried on at all of our meetings — from the first one in 1965 — and much work done by members between the meetings. With the help of many dedicated people, we kept in close touch with all developments and had much input into the planning for these areas. The meetings were long and exhausting, but those taking part thought the objectives worth the effort.

The Conservancy's four main objectives were: to protect and preserve important natural areas for present and future citizens; to aid in the designation by law of certain protected wild areas; to conduct land use studies and formulate management recommendations; and to serve in general as a means to acquaint the public with the superlative natural attributes of the Highlands Area.

From the very first this group was involved in: scenic roads and parkways; dam construction; unplanned real estate development; strip mining; water pollution; regional management plan for the Highlands; acquisition of inholdings within the national forest; preservation of wild lands and rivers; and any other matters that affected the Highland Natural Areas.

The 1967 Review was held October 7-8, 1967, and based at the Mouth of Seneca. It was the first Review under our present name. Co-sponsoring groups were: The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania; Brooks Bird Club; Canoe Cruisers of Washington; Explorers Club of Pittsburgh; Tucker County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League; Kanawha Trail Club; Nittany and Pittsburgh Grottoes of the National Speleological Society; West Virginia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy; Pittsburgh Climbers; Potomac Appalachian Trail Club; West Virginia Recreation Society; Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club; West Virginia Garden Club; West Virginia Wild Water Association; and the Wilderness Society.

Saturday's activities were: bird-banding at Rec Creek Campground; nine-mile hike on Dolly Sods; float trip through the "Trough;" hawk-watching at Bear Rocks; cave trip into the Sinks of Gandy; and a climbing demonstration on the faces of Seneca Rocks. An evening Chicken Barbecue Dinner at the Mouth of Seneca Pavilion was followed by the Program "A Plan For The Highlands." Among the speakers were Ephe Olliver, Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest and United States Senator Jennings Randolph.

This was a very successful Review which attracted more than 300 people. THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY WAS OFF AND RUNNING!!!

tains, and the West Virginia - Citizens Action Group. Conservancy members in attendance were Nicholas Zvegintzov, Ed Light and Larry George...

Brief Strips

Washington, D.C.

Nick J. Rahall, II, newly elected to the 4th District seat and appointed to the House Interior Committee cockily invited the committee and its new Chairman, Morris K. Udall, a veteran of many previous battles for Federal strip legislation, to visit strip mines in West Virginia.

"It is not necessary," (he wrote) "for the federal government to regulate surface mining and reclamation in the state of West Virginia...The state has continually improved its surface mining regulatory program with additional legislation and regulations. Today, West Virginia has a tough, effective program regulating surface mining that protects the environment and insures sound reclamation."

Rahall is brand new in office and is probably not to blame for mouthing off the first statement that a big-time industry lobbyist puts before him. He is young enough to have to live with the results of our present methods of coal extraction. His office is open, and he talked to the Fanning brothers, Jack Frazier, Bob Gates, and Larry George when they were here for the National COALition meeting.

January 1978:

Canaan suit advanced in federal court

Dam appeal refused (Stonewall Jackson)

Hechler files for Congress

Federal Waste Water aid

Decisions in the east

by Nicholas Zvegintzov

The circular lines in the map of West Virginia show air miles from Washington, D.C. — 50, 100 and 150. They show as clearly as any statistic the major environmental pressure on the eastern counties; they are little developed areas within a few hours drive of one of the fastest developing areas of the country.

Sometimes in Washington there doesn't seem to be one family that doesn't already have or is looking for the "little place in West Virginia." Ten years ago earnest new settlers penetrated Monroe and Pocahontas with bib overalls, looms, horses, and guitars, planning for a lifetime. Now nice young families are pouring into Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire, and Hardy with clever Norwegian woodstoves, down parkas from Eddy Bauer, sensible Volvo station wagons with tape decks playing "Country roads — take me home —," planning for the weekend.

The influx poses some embarrassing choices to conservationist and resident alike...

Recently some items have reached the Highlands Voice which raise these issues....If you have something to contribute, get in touch with Lowell Markey or Nicholas Zvegintzov.

January 1979:

Mid Winter Workshop

Conservancy's annual mid-winter workshop will be held the last weekend in January...at Jackson's Mill...

The program will revolve around the theme "Past, Present, and Future." At 10 a.m. Saturday, we will hear presentations by leaders of the first five years of the Conservancy who will not only reminisce, but also draw conclusions from those experiences that may be helpful in our present and future activities...

After lunch on Saturday, we will look at the present by means of committee reports on current projects as the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge, Cranberry Wilderness and other topical issues....

Mountain Top Removal Halted

by Nicholas Zvegintzov

Threat of a suit by a coalition of West Virginia groups (including the Conservancy) has halted the indiscriminate use of the "mountaintop removal" method of surface mining in the State. In this method, whole peaks and ridges are removed to lay bare an underlying seam of coal, and the broken rock is regraded in an adjoining hollow to form an area of plateau.

The dream of vast table-lands in the sky, fruitful with shopping centers, High Schools, model farms, airports, bowling alleys, golf courses, nature trails, and flood-free homes for West Virginia's working people has long been a favorite theme with the surface miners -- and even with Jay Rockefeller who last year took his Mountain State Governor hat in hand and went to the U.S. Congress to ask them to allow this method in the 1977 Surface Mining Act.

January 1980:

Cranberry Bulletin!

Congressman Harley O. Staggers is effectively blocking action on Cranberry Wilderness legislation by requesting the House Public Lands Subcommittee hold

field hearings in West Virginia. The Subcommittee's schedule will not allow it to hold field hearings until late spring, too late to move the legislation through Congress before adjournment in September. With the state mining moratorium expiring in December 1980, subsequent coal mining and gas drilling will destroy Cranberry's wilderness qualifications before Congress can take action on this legislation.

International Conference on Acid Rain

by Ann Rick

An action seminar on acid precipitation was held in Toronto, Canada on Nov. 1-3....

A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that acid rain is responsible for substantial adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems in this hemisphere and probably on the terrestrial ecosystems and on public welfare. Similar effects were documented 10-15 years ago in northern Europe....

Dear Voice Editor:

We have had the best idea for Christmas presents -- WVHC memberships! They're cheap, they keep on giving (the *Voice*) all year long, and they also keep on working for a better world....

Yours truly,
Tom & Judy Rodd

Strip Mining Loophole

by Tom Dunham

(recounted insufficient reclamation bonds, 5,000 tons of coal mined on a prospecting permit that allowed 250 tons, and bonds not forfeited despite mines left unreclaimed -- all with the same Marion County operator.)

Callaghan gets more land for Stonewall

Jackson

At the request of State Department of Natural Resources Director David Callaghan, the Army Corps of Engineers has received approval to expand the controversial Stonewall Jackson dam project by 789 acres. Kenneth Parker, leader of the opponents of the Lewis County project, releasing the latest additions, characterized Callaghan as "playing fast and loose with our money and our land."

January 1981: (headlines)

Cranberry Defeated; '81 Prospects Mixed

Conservation, management could forestall Davis Power Project

Opposition to DLM Coal Suit Broadens as Hearing Date Nears

January 1982:

Conservancy Convention

David C. Callaghan, director of the W.Va. Department of Natural Resources, will be the featured speaker at the Highlands Conservancy's annual mid-winter workshop, Jan. 15-17 at Jackson's Mill.

Strip Mines and Sludge

by Perry Bryant

Modern Earthline, after receiving thumbs down on a similar proposal in Maryland, is proposing to dump sludge from Baltimore's and Philadelphia's sewage treatment plants on surface mines in Preston County.

The Baltimore sludge is considered by some experts to be the most toxic in the country, containing high concentrations of heavy metals, organic chemicals and PCB's...

other voices - other voices - other voices - other

ATV's, ORV's, and other disasters:

EIS needed to gauge effects of off-road traffic in the Mon

November 2, 1991

Mr. James Page
U.S. Forest Service
200 Sycamore St.
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Jim:

It is my understanding that the Monongahela National Forest has been approached by Mr. Leff Moore, Mr. Larry George, and Off Road Vehicle organizers in order to push for the establishment of ORV trails on the Forest.

We have written to you about this in the past, and I will reiterate here our concern. There remains very little remote land in the eastern U.S. compared to the vast expanses in the West. Some of the best of this remote land is located within the Monongahela National Forest. The Forest Plan reflects the strong interests of the public to keep the Forest remote and emphasize semiprimitive non-motorized recreation and remote wildlife habitat.

ORV use of Mon National Forest lands is an abuse that is generally incompatible with other uses of the Forest. Noise, soil erosion (see attached info), stream sedimentation, vegetation destruction and safety fac-

tors all contribute to the reasons for this statement. I enclose a resolution on ORV facilities passed by the West Virginia Environmental Council which is a coalition of over 80 environmental and citizen groups in the state. Sierra Club is part of the coalition, and we strongly concur with this resolution.

No evaluation of ORV impacts was done in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Forest Plan. We have written to you before indicating that, in our opinion, if any consideration is to be done of ORV use of the Mon NF, then a supplement to the Plan's EIS must be done to cover the serious, potential, short and long-term impacts of this activity on all other resources of the Forest. All the users of the Forest could then be involved in the final decision. The same situation was true with military use of the Forest which is why a Forest-wide Environmental Assessment to determine if an EIS is necessary is currently being prepared. We do not agree that this issue can be taken up OA by OA. We would like your response to the need for this environmental review.

Sincerely,
Mary Wimmer
Public Lands Chair
Sierra Club
West Virginia Chapter

Michigan estimates billion dollar damage from off-road vehicles

(enclosed with Mary Wimmer's letter to Jim Page was this Oct. 29, 1990 release by the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts.

More than a billion dollars would have to be spent to restore land in the state damaged by off-road vehicles, according to a survey conducted by the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD).

Debra Bogar, MACD Executive Director, said the estimate is extremely conservative since it is based on figures supplied by only a third of Michigan's 83 counties. MACD sent questionnaires to Conservation Districts in every county and received responses from 27.

They showed a collective total of over 600,000 acres damaged by ORVs. Resource agencies estimate costs of restoring damaged areas at from \$2,000 to as high as \$20,000 an acre, depending on the severity of erosion. Using the \$2,000 minimum figure for all 600,000 acres yields a total of \$1,200,000,000 in estimated restoration costs.

Damage estimates ranged from 20 acres in Hillsdale County to 109,010 acres in Presque Isle County. Several land management agencies report that the northern Lower Peninsula has been hit harder by irresponsible ORV users than any other part of the state.

MACD released the figures as the Legislature prepared to take final action on a bill to restrict ORVs on state forest lands. Introduced by Rep. Thomas Alley, D-West Branch, the legislation would allow ORVs to be used only on state forest lands that are posted open. At present, ORVs can be driven on any of these roads that are not posted closed.

The bill also provides stiffer penalties, including confiscation of vehicles in cases of flagrant violations. It

also provides for increased funding for law enforcement and for trail development and maintenance and establishes an ORV Trails Advisory Committee. A hearing on the bill is scheduled in the House Conservation Committee on November 13.

Ms. Bogar pointed out that Michigan has more places open to ORV riding than any other state except California.

MACD is a private, non-profit association representing the state's 83 Conservation Districts. The Districts, governed by boards of elected citizens, provide assistance to landowners in resource management.

MACD is part of a coalition seeking adoption of legislation to control ORVs. Other members of the coalition include the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Audubon Society, Michigan Sheriffs Association, Consumers Power Company, Michigan Forest Association, Trout Unlimited, West Environmental Action Council, Michigan Wild Turkey Federation, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and Anglers of the Au Sable.

Year-long study expected

A joint resolution to create a study panel on off-road vehicles is expected to come out of the House of Delegates and the State Senate soon. The proposed group would look at a variety of issues over the next year as a prelude to drafting legislation.

Forests:

Mon Forest Update

by bill ragette'

The Greenbrier Ranger District is preparing plans for the Beaverdam Opportunity Area (OA). This area is the northern border for Laurel Fork North Wilderness and consists of 4,215 acres in the Laurel Fork valley.

This valley and the adjacent Gladly Fork are natural corridors between the Laurel Fork Wildernesses and Otter Creek. In the Monongahela Forest Plan this area was designated Management Prescription 3.0, emphasizing large hardwood trees, and primarily motorized transportation.

The scoping letter specifically mentions potential ORV use. As you know the whole length of Laurel Fork is eligible for wild and scenic designation, I encourage anyone to contact the district and let them know how ORV use will adversely impact the wilderness area and Laurel Fork itself. Scott Wells (304 456 3335) as USFS, PO Box 67, Bartow, WV 24920 is the lead on this analysis.

Since my pleas in the last issue for no 'new' forest activist contacted me. I realize it's only been a few weeks, but if you think the current crowd of six or so activists can monitor the Mon without your help; well, ha ha.

In the last issue I reported that we were following up on the info the forest service included in its oil and gas decision, that 57,000 acres of trees in the Mon NF were in the age class 150-200 years.

Knowing how some of us are interested in old growth restoration, I contacted the Elkies Office to find out where these areas were. It appeared at first that the numbers were correct, but just yesterday I got back a letter detailing the reasons there really were only 2,500 acres known to be in this category.

Actually this makes it a whole lot easier to check the stands out. I'd like to research the reported 50,000 acres of trees in the 100-149 age class, but that will take more of you. So why not add in one of those spots next time you go camping and send me a report back on it?

Contact bill ragette' at 144 Trace Fork, Culloden, WV 25510 (304-824-3571).

Clearcuts: Why they're the worst!

Courtesy of Virginians for Wilderness. For info, call (703) 885-6983, (703) 997-0055, (804) 361-9036.

1. They destroy the forest floor with its delicate balance of organisms, root structures and dens. If rare and endangered species are present, they may be lost forever under the tracks of bulldozers.

2. Soils are bared, sunburned, compacted by heavy machines and are subject to surface wash. Because of rapid saturation during rains, they erode and streams are silted up. Nutrients are leached away.

3. The removal of many small logs, which are relatively rich in nutrients, depletes the soil. The result is a gradual decline in forest productivity and increased vulnerability to pollutants such as acid rain.

4. When hardwoods regenerate in clearcuts many sprout from small trees that were not cut because they originated high on the stump. Pruning these is expensive. By contrast, selectively cut large hardwoods sprout less and are propagated more by seeds.

5. When conifers such as pine or spruce are planted in clearcuts herbicides that poison watersheds are used to suppress hardwoods.

6. The many small trees of clearcuts are expensive to cut, remove and transport relative to large trees on a board foot or volume basis. The result in National Forests is below cost timber sales.

7. Even-aged stands of trees that result from clearcutting lack the vertical structure and other features of habitat diversity of natural forests of uneven-aged stands.

8. Large snags and den trees are lost during clearcutting or, when saved, soon blow down. In any case our rarest birds and animals don't like to nest and den in clearcuts.

9. Clearcuts and the roads to them fragment habitat in unnatural ways. They create edge effects in a world with too many edge effects already.

10. Clearcuts and their edges encourage alien and native weed species and predators that invade, prey upon and drive out increasingly rare native species of the adjacent forest.

11. Clearcuts provide little hard mast such as acorns and other nutritious food for many years.

12. Clearcuts encourage wildlife that is already common — in many cases to the point of destructiveness — on private lands and discourage our rarest and most endangered species. Thus they are among the threats to our planet's biodiversity.

13. Clearcuts in National Forests benefit large special interests such as

voices - other voices - other voices - other voices

Forests ————— from page six

paper companies and their contractors by providing cheap government subsidized pulp wood.

14. Clearcuts also benefit certain U.S. Forest Service bureaucrats by creating jobs for timber managers, road engineers and other land rappers while denying funds to badly needed ecologists.

15. Let's STOP ALL CLEARCUTS!

TU Mountaineer Chapter opposes clearcutting

At a recent meeting of the Mountaineer Chapter of Trout Unlimited the following resolution in opposition to clearcutting passed unanimously.

WHEREAS the Mountaineer Chapter of Trout Unlimited has as its primary objective the preservation, protection and enhancement of coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, both in West Virginia and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS many of those fisheries and watersheds are located at least partially in our National Forests and are therefore affected by logging practices and policies regulated by the U.S. Forest Service; and

WHEREAS the clearcutting of tracts of timber has been a practice commonly promulgated by the Forest Service, which has over-emphasized its use as a timber management tool; and

WHEREAS clearcutting results in severe sedimentation and erosion that degrades water quality and aquatic habitat; and

WHEREAS clearcutting impairs the productivity of forest soils and reduces the biological diversity of the forests — forests which are essential to the health of the fisheries and watersheds therein; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mountaineer Chapter of Trout Unlimited, at its regular monthly meeting on December 2, 1991, does hereby stand in total opposition to the use of clearcutting as a timbering method in our National Forests and elsewhere, and does hereby urge the adoption of a similar position by all Trout Unlimited members both in West Virginia and nationwide.

spring dawn at dragonfly glade

by firstlight,
the frogsongs fade away
with the thin pond-mist
wreathing the waning moon.
thrushsongs begin flowing
from the deep spruce-shadows,
grouse-drums echo from the rocks,
winter wrensongs weave
through the alder thickets,
and a tribe of swifts
comes gracefully swooping
and darting
over the calm water,
chattering among themselves
with their loud, rolling voices,
now and then dipping down to drink,
rippling the blue mountain.

by Robert Stough

My apologies to Bill Ragette' for chopping several lines off "Otter Creek" in the last edition of the Voice. It is reprinted in its entirety (I hope) to the right.

I appreciate the response to my pitiful whining last time, especially that the response came in marvelous stories, beautiful poetry and information on issues. Many thanks,

Mary Pat

Hidden subsidies disguise dangers

by John David

reprinted from the *Charleston Gazette*, Dec. 3, 1991

Many in business and government are fond of setting up an artificial fight between those who promote economic development and those who express concern about the environment. There is considerable evidence that the fight is over a false issue.

The real issue is whether society can afford to subsidize a product that is not accurately being assigned all true costs of production and use, and is able to compete in the marketplace due to this hidden subsidy.

Captains of industry can easily create conditions where workers will die from environmental contamination if the products are made or die from economic hardship if the products are not. The situation is economic extortion, because one is unnecessarily forced into choosing the short-term option, praying that the next generation will live long enough to figure out a way to correct the environmental consequence.

The usual response, of course, is to push for additional recycling and improved production techniques. Unfortunately, recycling often is not a solution to correct a problem already out of balance but to justify the continued production and use of a product that cannot be totally recycled and accepted by the environment. With regard to production techniques, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment estimates that half of U.S. manufacturing wastes can be eliminated by using existing technologies. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, American companies produce five times the waste per dollar of goods sold compared with Japanese companies, and more than twice that of Germany.

However, all of these efforts avoid dealing with the fundamental issues of whether the product is environmentally compatible and accurately priced. While traveling through Chicago recently, I read with interest an article about milk jugs being recycled into plastic boards, which are being used for park benches and playground equipment. While some might applaud this innovative use of a problem product, the more basic issue remains. The process encourages the continued manufacture and use of petroleum-based plastic jugs instead of returnable containers. In essence, the process encourages the manufacture of plastic wood from a finite resource instead of from regrowable wood.

The pricing issue is also worth careful attention. Economic development agencies offer subsidies to make production cheaper, thereby providing an incentive to geographically shift production. Cheaper Worker's Compensation rates, super tax credits and relaxed surface mine enforcement are examples of subsidies that have a potentially long-term costly

impact on citizens and the quality of life in West Virginia.

The production of aldicarb, the dangerous Pesticide that is made from MIC (the lethal chemical that was inadvertently released by the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India), provides an economical method of growing beautiful fruit and vegetables in the short run. Long-term side effects may be passed on to the public in various ways, such as through contaminated surface water runoff and by ingestion, perhaps contributing to various cancers, immune deficiencies and similar health effects.

In almost every instance, one could argue that if the full costs of producing and using the product in question were borne by the manufacturer, there certainly would be one of two consequences. First, the producer would incur higher costs in order to manufacture the product in a safer manner and clean up all consequences of its use. There is little question that the result would translate into job creation once the overall impact would be more labor-intensive. If the final costs were high, the second possible consequence is that society might conclude it could not afford to continue production of that particular product, and switch to an alternative product.

We are all aware that those who favor the "free market" believe they are in the driver's seat in the era of the New World Order. They may also believe that long-term costs should continue to be excluded from the equation and that they should be allowed to enjoy overt or indirect subsidies in their quest for competitive advantages and profits.

Actually, the very economic principles they use to justify their positions can also be used to insist that all long-term cost and side effects must be internalized in the cost equation for the products. Environmentalists who seek sustainable economic development should push to:

- Internalize all external costs.
- Establish regional or United Nations compacts that would prevent geographical areas from competing for plants on the basis of offering waivers on externalities disguised as subsidies.
- Change the concept of economic development by giving subsidies over the short-term to those firms that internalize externalities. The result would contribute to increased employment, improved coexistence with the environment, and a decent code of economic ground rules for ethical and environmentally responsible business in the competitive marketplace.

Dr. David, a professor at West Virginia Tech, is one of the Gazette's contributing columnists.

Otter Creek, August 1991

a bit of cheese is what the doe ate
from my fingertips on Shavers Mtn
in the opening about the shelter
near the ancient spruce/hemlock forest.
Have you been there?

for half an hour the two of us
studied one another.
they are so curious and tame here.
she could ignore me some after awhile
and uneasily crop the grass before the shelter.
yet when i too began to eat
she was lured back to me
circling round the breeze
to better smell the cheese and mustard.

in the last few minutes before

she took the cheese
i saw the flies on her
how they flocked and searched her fur
her eyes so large and flaring nostrils
sucking in the air to know
what weird perfume i wore

as the cheese left my hand
i wondered what effect it would have.
was she tamer now?
would it cause her trouble,
bring others joy?
Someday in peaceful evolution
could we befriend all wilderness and
not have it fear us?

by bill ragette'

Hechler — from page one

election of '72. I was elected to Congress that year, and I advocated abolition of strip mining long before Rockefeller did. Needless to say, the Coal Association (and especially strip mine operators) wanted me out.

After the census of 1970, West Virginia lost a Congressman and had to re-draw the district lines. The "powers that be" in Charleston gerrymandered me out of my district. The district which included most of the southern coal counties was represented by James Kee. That seat had been in the Kee family for over 40 years. Kee was a big supporter of the Coal Operators and they, of course, supported him.

The took around 70 percent of Kee's district and combined it with 30 percent of mine. This newly-formed district included the most heavily strip-mined area of the state, and my opponent was strongly backed by the Coal Industry. We didn't run from the issue of strip-mining. We took the battle straight to the people. Environmental activists were my biggest supporters, and we won. That's why I don't think Rockefeller's defeat can be blamed on that issue. People are more progressive than politicians give them credit for.

CJ: Was that election close?

KH: Very decisive — nearly 2-1, as I recall.

CJ: And you credit your victory to your strong stand on strip mining and other environmental issues?

KH: That, and some incredibly stupid statements made by my opponent.



Deputy Secretary of State Mary Ratliff, also a former editor of *The Highlands Voice*.

CJ: Such as?

KH: He claimed that strip mining was actually good for the environment.

CJ: How so?

KH: The highwalls serve as natural firebreaks to prevent the spread of forest fires. And abandoned mine lands where trees won't grow create level areas so the wildlife can come out of the woods and browse in the open air and sunlight.

CJ: I can see why the Coal Association would support a candidate like that. What do you view as the biggest challenge(s) facing the West Virginia environmental community today?

munity today?

KH: Forest production — including some regulation of the timber industry and a ban on clear-cutting.

Strip mining.
Education of the public to environmental concerns — guard against misinformation campaigns from industry.

Corridor H — the Conservancy has to stay on top of this.

Surprise answer — high unemployment. During economic hard times, people are more willing to declare war — either against another country or against their environment.

CJ: What services are provided by your office which might be of interest to our members?

KH: Our most important function, of course, is to provide for clean elections. The Secretary of State is the chief elections officer. Mary Ratliff, Deputy Secretary of State, is in charge of that section, and she does an excellent job. Incidentally, Mary is also a long-time Conservancy member, and I believe she has served on the Board of Directors.

Don Wilkes heads our Corporations Division, which keeps track of all corporations authorized to operate in the state. If you need to know who is involved with a corporation of its objectives as listed in the articles of incorporation, we can provide that information.

I'd also like to point out that this is the "People's Office." If for some reason you need a place in Charleston to hold a strategy session of a Board of Directors meeting, or even a news conference to announce the launching of some worthwhile project, by all means give us a call. We'll try to accommodate in any way we can.

CJ: What message would you like to send to the environmental community in West Virginia?

KH: Just keep fighting! Not only the Highlands Conservancy, but other environmental groups have worked together on many important issues and you have been very successful. In addition to the things we have already touched upon, you have been responsible for helping to at least slow down the flood of our-of-state garbage and helped to establish a ground water protection act. Someday, maybe we will get in the chance to vote on the issue of strip mining.

CJ: Before we end this interview, I want to make sure I've understood you correctly on that issue. Is it correct to say that your current position is that strip mining should be completely ended in West Virginia?

KH: Yes. However, I would add that I have mellowed just a little. Rather than an outright immediate abolition. I would favor phasing it out over a reasonable period of time.

CJ: And what is a reasonable period of time?

At this point, Hechler is betrayed by a slightly impish grin, and a Santa Claus twinkle in his eye as he contemplates

KH: Oh, say 18 months or so. Don't you think that's fair?

CJ: Sort of a "kinder, gentler" form of abolition?

KH: Yes, I like that. That's my position. I am now a "kinder, gentler abolitionist."

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