THE ECOTONE

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

Making a Difference

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.

This issue of ***THE ECOTONE*** is devoted to the broad theme "Making a Difference," with several articles on the transformative impact individual people, places or experiences can have. Environmental Studies can easily lead to feelings of frustration, depression, and even apathy as we become aware of the enormous ecological destruction we have inherited and continue to practice, from the local to the global levels. It is easy to lose hope when we confront environmental problems far larger than any one of us. Global warming, ozone destruction, biodiversity loss, rampant consumerism, injustice and human greed are crises no individual can hope to solve alone.

But human beings, working singly, in small groups and mass movements can effect small and accumulating changes that reverberate throughout the entire system. In this issue, we hope to bear witness, provoke action and celebrate those people and places that have "made a difference" in our lives.

> *"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples will build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." Robert Kennedy, Capetown, South Africa, 1966*

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THE ECOTONE

THE ECOTONE is published by the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Oregon. If you have any questions, comments or articles, or if you would like to be placed on the mailing list, please contact us at:

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Program Director's Note

by Dan Udovic

Dear Friends of Environmental Studies:

I hope that this edition of the Ecotone will give you a sense of the excitement and challenge that surrounds our rapidly evolving program.

It was just two years ago that we initiated the undergraduate major in Environmental Studies. In that short time, about 100 students have graduated from our program, and the number of majors has grown to about 650.

Looking back, I think that this last year has been a positive one for Environmental Studies. We had a very successful year recruiting new graduate students, we received two substantial gifts from private sources, and we successfully recruited a new faculty member, Peter Walker from the University of California, Berkeley, who will be joining us this Winter term. Peter's home will be in the Department of Geography, but a substantial fraction of his teaching will be in ENVS. After much dissension, we moved into newly remodeled space in Pacific Hall. Although disruptive, we have now settled comfortably into our new quarters, and we've managed, I believe, to make the new ENVS Center as inviting as the old. We have made substantial progress toward the initiation of a Ph.D. program in ENVS, and toward closer linkages with excellent faculty and programs at OSU and PSU.

This year we look forward to final approval of the Ph.D. program, to the completion of an environmental science concentration for undergraduates, and to some major refinements of the ENVS major that should help students put together more meaningful programs of study.

Among the numerous exciting courses that will be offered this year, I would like to highlight three issues courses that will be offered winter term. We are extremely fortunate to have David Abram, author of the award-winning book, The Spell of the Sensuous, joining us for winter term. Dr. Abram will be teaching a course entitled "Environmental Philosophy: Ecological Dimensions of Perception, Language and Ethics" (ENVS 411/511). Dr. Abram's eclectic interdisciplinary background includes slight-of-hand magic, cognitive science and phenomenology, all of which have influenced his views on how humans interact with the natural world.

Peter Walker will also be teaching an issues course entitled "Perspectives on Nature and Society," which will examine how specific social institutions, cultures, and economies shape different human perceptions of and actions toward the environment.

Finally, Chet Bowers, Professor of Education at Portland State, will be joining us to teach a seminar course, provocatively entitled "Computers, Globalization, and the Ecological Crisis." Dr. Bowers is well-known for his critical works on education, modernity, and environmental issues. Those of you fortunate enough to take this class will also be helping him shape his next book.

We can also look forward to a variety of interesting outside speakers and related activities. In November, for example, Environmental Studies will co-sponsor a three-day symposium on sustainable business (partly supported by a gift to us from the Fort James Foundation). Keynoting the symposium will be Paul Hawken, author of The Ecology of Commerce; David Gottfried, co-founder of the US Green Building Council; and Fred Hanson, deputy administrator at the EPA and former director of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality. The full schedule includes numerous talks, panels and workshops on topics ranging from sustainable communities to energy efficiency.

It promises to be an interesting year for our program — fun, challenging, and rewarding! I hope the same will be true for you, and that when we look back on this year we will be able to detect significant progress on the problems and issues that bring us together. In short, let's hope this is a good year for our planet.

Two Years of Student Initiated Projects

by Jill Fuglister

Last Spring, the Student Initiated Project (SIP) wrapped up its second year as a course plan option for Environmental Studies majors. The SIP is a 12 credit comprehensive project that allows students to combine internship, coursework, field studies, and/or research focused on a particular environmental issue. SIP participants gain significant knowledge and work experience, and in the process, "make a difference." Because of the SIP's unique structure, however, many others in the environmental studies community do not get a chance to hear about their work. Consequently, we thought this issue of the Ecotone offered an excellent opportunity to share the creative work of your peers.

Here is what they have done or are doing...

Leiserowitz

Wayne Eastman continues to work with Lane Community College to implement an integrated recycling program for the LCC campus. Wayne served on the LCC Recycling Bond Users Group where he participated in the development of a comprehensive system for campus wide processing of recyclables.

John Irish is currently working with the Western Canadian Wilderness Committee to do a paired watershed comparison of two British Columbian streams. Through field study and analysis John is looking at the difference in each stream's relative health, given that one is surrounded by clear cuts and the other by uncut forest.

Benno Lyon worked with the Oregon Country Fair Recycling Crew to improve the plastics recycling program at the annual Fair. His work included organizing crews, researching plastics to be used by vendors, educating vendors of the benefits of recycling plastic cups, increasing public awareness of recycling efforts and their benefits at the Fair, and implementing and evaluating the recycling program.

Last summer, **Ryan Rushing** worked with the PGE Relicensing Project doing a bald eagle survey in Central Oregon. Through his fieldwork and concurrent research, Ryan is exploring how environment — especially human impacts on habitat — and animal behavior influence nesting habitat and food sources of bald eagles.

Nicole Phillips is just starting a comparative watershed study that will analyze human effects on watersheds and air quality. She plans to work with the McKenzie Watershed Council to compare the Upper Long Tom River and the Tualatin River by using existing water quality and land use data and by gathering field data herself. She plans to present her work on campus sometime in the spring -- watch for this!

Gail Seward combined research of middle school curriculum and environmental education methods with an internship with Nearby Nature for her SIP. Through her hands-on experience and research she evaluated the effectiveness of several environmental education strategies, gave several recommendations for future environmental education methods, and developed a curriculum for Eugene area wetlands using a collaborative learning strategy.

Kristen Shuyler's SIP consists of an evaluation of her diverse experiences as an environmental educator. Last year, she worked with Nearby Nature leading nature hikes, writing their newsletter, and updating their webpage. Next, she worked as a teaching assistant for Biogeography last spring, and then landed an

internship at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Washington D.C. There she led forest and canoe tours and developed brochures and an environmental education curriculum. She is currently compiling her experiences and related works in a journal that will complete her SIP.

Paul Schroder combined his knowledge and experience in the development of environmentally related websites with his interest in environmental education to create his SIP. He spent one term as a teaching assistant for the Physics Dept., where he taught "cyber-environmentalism" to freshmen, and currently is working with the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics to develop a forest ecosystem education project. His final product will consist of an integrated set of webpages to create a more cohesive and user-friendly environmental presence on the web.

Many SIP projects are still in the works, however, there are a couple of completed SIPs and several approved proposals in the ES office (10 Pacific). If you are interested in learning more about the projects described above or about the SIP in general, please feel welcome to come by and check them out.

As the graduate student privileged to work with the SIP students (SIPPERS), it has been exciting to see the enthusiasm and dedication the participants have shown in doing the work. I am genuinely impressed!

For questions or more information regarding Student Initiated Projects please contact Alan Dickman — adickman@oregon.uoregon.edu or Andy Peara — apeara@darkwing.uoregon.edu

Congratulations!

Two Environmental Studies faculty members received awards at the end of last school year. Biology professor **Russell Lande** was awarded a $280,000 MacArthur "genius grant" Fellowship for his work on quantitative genetics. Lande pioneered the use of mathematical models to measure the risk of species extinction. His theoretical work has greatly influenced contemporary conservation management, including plans for the northern spotted owl and spring chinook here in the Northwest, and elephants in Africa.

Political Science professor **Daniel Goldrich** was honored with the 1997 Thomas F. Herman Award for Distinguished Teaching by the University of Oregon. Goldrich teaches Environmental and Latin American Politics. His passionate work for the environment has inspired many of his students over the years. Fellow professor Irene Diamond described him as "an example of a scholar activist."

Congratulations and thank you both for a lifetime of devoted environmental work!

The Environmental Studies community welcomes our new graduate students!

Meilani Clark
Ben Farrell
Cody Fleece
Sara Leininger
Jeremy Madsen
Keith McDade
Michelle Noble
Seth Perry
Tom Pinit
Autumn Radle
Whit Sheard
Teresa Spezio
Leslie VanAllen

Hearing Other Voices: Are We Awake?

By Gary Higbee

And so, everywhere now, our "interior" space of strictly human discourse begins to spring leaks as other styles of communication make themselves heard, or seen, or felt. All over, in so many different ways, we feel intimations of a wholeness that is somehow foreign to us, and we see the traceries of another reality. It is indeed a time for magic, a magic time. But it is no supernatural thing, this magic. We are simply awakening to our own world for the first time, and hearing the myriad voices of Earth.
— David Abram, The Soul Unearthed.

Higbee

Thousands of cultures, for hundreds of thousands of years, have been deeply informed by non-human voices — those of other animals, as well as plants, rocks, water, and air. Our culture, on the other hand — based largely on "progress" and economic growth — has turned a deaf ear to these voices. The inanimate Earth we have constructed can have no voice, so it is considered both pointless and foolish to listen.

But by not listening, our worldview narrows, encompassing only people and things. Our diminished, and thus flawed, perspective results in the eradication of other cultures, the biosphere, and our native sensibility. I do, however, have hope that we can heal ourselves, resulting in a self and world that are more whole. My hope stems from a growing dialogue among those who do hear the voices. And my hope is that we will become more whole by truly listening to, and participating with, the "myriad voices of Earth."

We've all heard those voices. We've all felt this "peculiar" wholeness. It may have lasted for a brief second — perhaps longer. Maybe it was the way we felt one day, something about the gentle caress of the breeze on our face, the warmth of the sun, the green tree against the brilliant blue sky, the screech of the circling hawk, or the earthy scent of the garden soil. We've all been there.

These special moments have made a difference in my life. We can learn from each other by sharing these experiences, so I'm going to tell you a short story, in the form of some excerpts from my journal and letters. I'd like to try to convey something about the non-human voices I heard at a particular place — a place very far away and very different — and how they made a difference in how I perceive this place, here and now.

While a Botany undergraduate at the University of Washington, I partici pated in two seasons of research on a remote island high in the Eastern Canadian Arctic. Devon Island is located at about 76 degrees north latitude, off the western coast of Greenland. To get there from Seattle takes a long time, consumes a lot of energy, and is very expensive. Up and down, in progressively smaller planes, for a couple days: Seattle-Vancouver-Edmonton-Yellowknife-Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island-Truelove Lowland, Devon

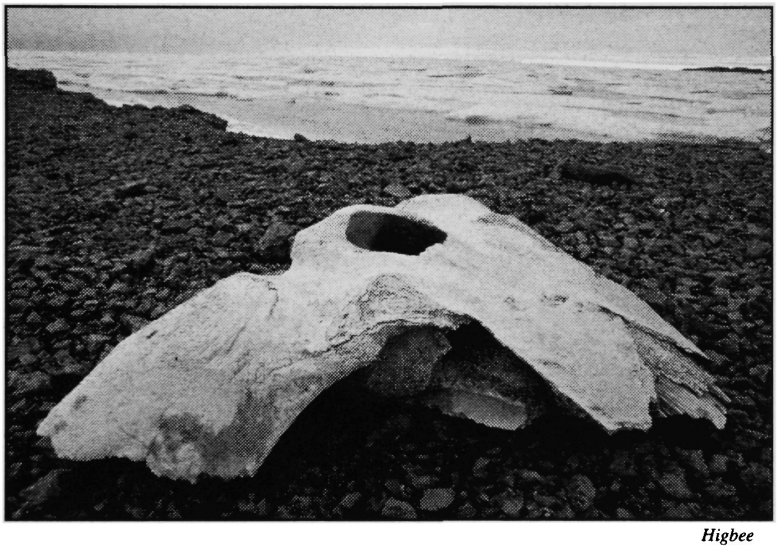
Photograph: Arctic Fox, Devon Island, Canada

Island. Forests-wheat fields-lakes-frozen sea-snowdrifted land. Devon Island is a magical place, and it speaks in many ways.

The following excerpts cover the 7 weeks of my 1992 research trip — a journey that brought me to an Arctic still locked in the frozen silence of winter:

June 18
It's cold now. Cold, desolate, lonely. Very stark and beautiful. Out over the vast sea ice, then over the folded Devon landscape, and finally soaring along the rugged coast, jagged sea ice ringing the shore. An incredible introduction.

June 24
My experiences have grown each day, and include walks, wildlife, the circling sun, the fear of the Great White Bear, the loneliness of isolation, and the awesome view of a vast frozen landscape. As I sit here now, after a week of wonders, the warm sun shines upon my face, while a light icy breeze blows in from the frozen sea. Long-tailed Jagers soar along a distant beach ridge, squawking a sound unlike anything I've ever heard. Indeed, this is a land of sights, sounds, and experiences without compare. Different plants, animals, geography. I feel as if I'm part of a dream — plopped down into an imaginary landscape.


Higbee

The night light is so magnificent. The air cools, and it's often very calm. So still, frozen, vast. Time itself seems to stop. There's a liquid quality to being here. I flow out into the air, the land, the frozen sea. And the landscape comes pouring in.

July 2
This place is so different from anything I've experienced before. It's strange to never have darkness. Sometimes I just want that sun to go down for a bit — just a little while — so I can feel the envelope of darkness. Instead it just burns around the horizon in circles, dipping a bit lower at "night."

July 5
Miles of walking on ice, slush, and snow blocks, but mostly walking through water on top of ice. Looking down, I see no depth cues, only a pale blue. I am suspended in space. I climb onto, into, a large iceberg, exploring caves and a "canyon." Walls of ice envelop a blue lagoon. A stream flows in, as do waterfalls, over the ice-cliffs. To stand in this place is pure magic — spellbinding. Ice world, water world, sky world, passing through my mind.

July 11
There must be over 50 musk oxen on the lowland. It is such a beautiful, peaceful sight to look out over the meadows and see them grazing — the soft light on the land, and quiet beyond belief. The rest of the world doesn't exist, nor does time itself. Just musk oxen grazing.

July 18
After three weeks without a reminder of the outside world the supply/mail plane lands. Letters, postcards, a "care package." Thanks so much to all of you. Your letters ground me, remind me of home. Yet, they also scare me because they remind me of the chaotic world I must return to.

It's after midnight. I stand on a lowland rock. A wedge of orange to the north reminds me there is still a sun. A cold wind blows from the west. All so big — so very big. It's hard to believe there are cars and cities out there. A big, complicated, mechanized world. I'm afraid to go back. I've grown into this landscape and I just don't know how I can deal with all that. Yet I miss my family so much.

It's starting to rain. Time to leave the three musk oxen I've been keeping company and head for camp. This experience firmly convinces me that we must get outside the clutter of

Photograph: Whalebone, Devon Island, Canada

Hearing Other Voices continued on page 10

Story of a Slough

by Amy Klauke Minato

Amazon Creek, which spindles along through Eugene, was once a veritable river, flexing and sighing in its vein. Since 1959, the floodplain has been filled for development, and the creek channeled. But rivers need to breathe, to be replenished with nutrients from floodplains. Small ponds form when the river recedes, providing vital habitat for treefrogs and pond turtles. A river allowed to spread to its natural girth will create islands of habitat for heron, beaver, mink.

Amazon slough, however, is now an algal sludge trickling along the bottom of a deep scar, dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers. Throughout the summer, grasses and rushes are relentlessly mowed to the very lips of the creek, destroying habitat and food. The trees in the park are "bottomed," to give shade, and keep transients from living in the skirts. The trees look naked and imbalanced, shamed in a way. All done in service to a standard of beauty that can be traced back to America's British roots: a preference for manicured, ordered gardens, and a fear of insects. In the Anglo tradition, managing, controlling, clipping, mowing, or chopping gives an area value. It bears our mark. It has yielded, become safe.

But to survive we must learn to loosen up, mingle with bugs, revere the tangle of underbrush, the individual shapes of trees and tall, teasing grass.

Last week I brought a group of children to the park. Fortunately, there was an unmowed area beside an island of trees. First, we paid homage to the robin puffed and squatting in its nest in the ecotone between the woods and meadow, dark eye gleaming. We played, hid and laughed in the remnant patch of grass taller than the kindergartners. We caressed a caterpillar, whistled across dandelion seed, tickled each other with fescue. Mauve pollen colored our hair and clothes. This small meadow became our secret place, shared with life forms too myriad to imagine.

While we played, the park mower roared in the distance. It frightened us, more so with our new awareness of the fragile ecosystem webbed in the tall grass. Together we imagined how it choked the soil, clipped the plants before they could make seed, chewed up insects. The kids each collected a favorite plant stalk to press and keep. We waved back at the dancing bromes as we left.

The next week I brought another group to the park, preparing to send them to a spot hidden in the grass, to treasure-hunt for life. But the area where we played had been mowed. It was as bald and yellowed as the rest of the park, but for a pool table-sized patch where the Nature Conservancy had found a stalk of endangered tufted hair grass. This swath stood out like an exhibit, a museum piece to remind us of something lost and gone. Eight swallows swept over this vestige of insect habitat. The robin had abandoned its nest, probably to seek out a better food source.

There was no one around to confront, just the parking lot and impervious picnic tables. I stood stunned and silenced. Had I not played in this meadow last week, my response to the mowing would have been mute, if I'd even noticed it. Not having rolled around and napped here, the news might have brought me only mild irritation, instead of a gnawing sense of loss.

Maybe we need to get out of our cars, off our lawnmowers and down on our knees in the dirt. Making connection with a place brings familiarity, responsibility, and an extension of self. There is risk in caring about what is not widely valued, but a greater risk lies in not honoring what is precious.

The kids' excitement, buoyed by stories of crab spiders, robin chicks, and camouflage games in the tall grass, quickly deflated. They sat on the ground and covered their legs with the dead grass, contemplating, maybe, what scant world might be left them.

Story of a Slough continued on page 12

Drawing: "Who On Earth Sees the Plants?"

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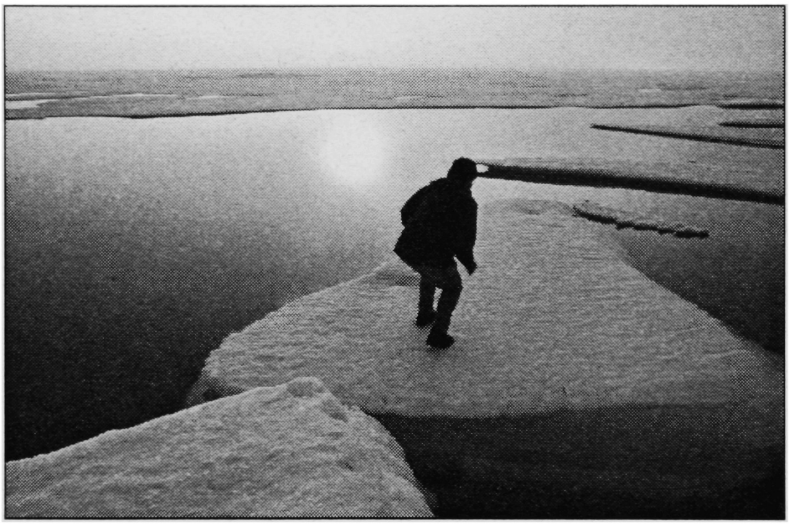
programmed living, stand in magical places, and feel the Earth. The Earth sings to us a song. Softly, subtly. And such a melody it is.

July 24
Last night I was pulled straight out of my journal onto the tundra. One look out the window and I was compelled to go walking. This landscape is like a magnet, and I'm just a fleck of iron. It's incredible how I can be exhausted, with sore feet, and yet feel so compelled to go hiking. Something keeps calling me.

July 30
I know this experience is changing me, just as we're all influenced by profound sights, sounds, and events. There is a tremendous power in the solitude and isolation here. This vast and wild place speaks to me. And I don't hear so much as I feel these voices. They permeate my brain, my body — and engage me in a conversation that is both new and very, very old.



Higbee

August 3
I can feel the ice moving — slowly, gently — with the swells. I join the wind, ice, earth, and sky for a dance on the sea.

August 8
Little plane, big plane. The uniformed flight attendants pass out magazines and peanuts, the engines roar. I can't keep tears out of my eyes. Glad to be going home. Sad to be leaving. At times I was so absorbed in the landscape that the "other" world ceased to exist. Now all doubt is gone.

August 9:
It is very difficult to face cars, buildings, and busy people. The wild has grown in me and this other world feels a little like a bad dream — one in which I want to roll my head back and forth, saying "no, no, ..." as I try to wake. I just don't want to accept all this. I must remember this discomfort, and use it as a motivation to work towards a more sane way of being.

A more sane way of being. On Devon Island I experienced a dimension missing in my life — a deep connection with wild voices and the suggestion of a wholeness I had rarely experienced. It is in such moments that a place speaks to you and other realities emerge.

But why? What made these other realities accessible? It was only because I was truly awake. I needed to be, for my own and my companions' safety — Polar Bears, musk oxen, and deep cracks in the ice were an ever-present danger. I was also awake because of the compelling newness of experience — what Zen Buddhists call the "beginner's mind," and others call a "childlike sense of wonder." This wakefulness resulted in a reality, a lucidity, I had seldom experienced.

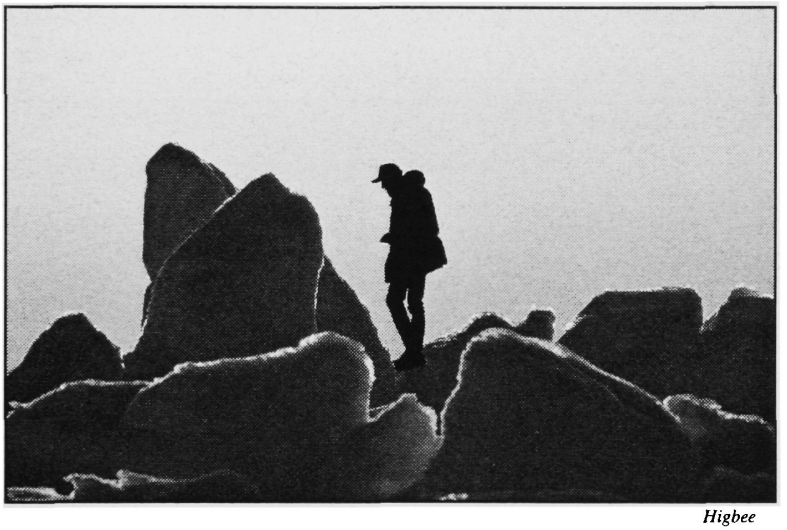
But how does being lucid in the Arctic relate to this place, here and now? What I came to see was that I had been dozing much of my life. On Devon Island, I woke up to wakefulness. But I also realized that we can cultivate this wakefulness here and now, and that we don't need to travel so far, and consume so much, in order to hear and feel the other voices. They are all around us — and within us. Stephanie Kaza reflects upon leaving her home of several years:

> *"Though I knew the land like an old friend, I didn't realize how much it supported my entire life and worldview. Like roots growing*

Photograph: Ice Floe, Devon Island, Canada

up through my toes, the land had entered my body. The creek water flowed in my veins, the night stars shone in my eyes. The waxing and waning moons measured the rhythm of my blood and silence, the howling coyote cried in my deepest songs of the night." — Stephanie Kaza, The Attentive Heart

Kaza reflects an attentiveness deeply attuned to place. She not only hears the voices — she is *of* those voices. Yet she acknowledges how difficult it is to grasp just how much place affects us. We're numbed by what we call our daily affairs, which rarely include an ongoing, authentic relationship with our place and all who dwell with us in it. How then do we wake up? How do we learn to listen to — to feel within — the rich chorus of non-human voices, and the wonderful wholeness this offers us?



Higbee

Cultivating wakefulness, like cultivating a garden, involves practice, especially for those of us indoctrinated into a human-centered worldview. Practice means that we open ourselves, that we ask questions and consider relationships, and that we engage all our senses. When we walk in the forests of Cascadia do we feel our connection with them? When we buy a product do we have any sense of where and how it was made, whose lives were touched, and how, and where this thing will go in the future? When we garden do we appreciate this intimate relationship with our food—that we become of this land and of the sun and water? When we eat bread do we feel the wind in the wheat, the sun and the rain? Do we engage in direct experiences with the wild around us? Do we take the time to look each other in the eye and smile? These are a few of the ways that I've found to cultivate wakefulness — to hear the other voices.

This brings me back to the Arctic. The loud voices of a highly-industrialized culture were largely absent, and my wakefulness was spontaneous. When I heard those voices, though, I knew that they were *here*, too — just harder to perceive. But our perceptions can be honed by practice, which in turn helps us open ourselves to "the myriad voices of Earth." As we hear them, and begin to truly know our place, we can begin to heal — to become more whole. Then perhaps we can learn to respect and live with all the other cultures, and with the other animals, the plants, the waters and rocks. Maybe we can (re)gain a sanity that we can scarcely imagine. Think what this might mean. To feel the creek in our veins. To be of the land. To be fully alive, part of a very animate world. To be truly awake.

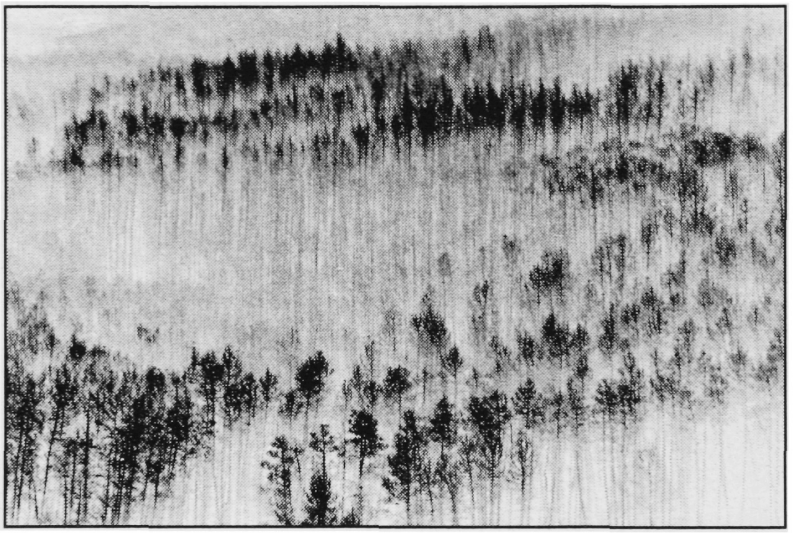
Gary Higbee is a father, a husband, a part-time gardener, a novice builder, and an Environmental Studies graduate student. For the past few years he has taught a course titled "Exploring Sustainable Living."

Photograph: Silhouette, Devon Island, Canada

Story of a Slough continued from page 8

Every day in that same park I watch the drama of the red-winged blackbird enacted against the backdrop of joggers, cyclists, and frisbee players. While a common bird in many places, there are few red-winged blackbirds in the city of Eugene. Only one pair left along this stretch of the Amazon Creek. Today, one is chasing crows away from its nest in the willows and cattails. A bird as large as an oak leaf chasing one as large as a kite. Three more crows speckle the mowed lawn beside the creek, waiting. They are patient and implacable, their slick feathers cobalt blue. The two blackbirds take turns chasing and nest-sitting, and exhaust themselves with their valiant pursuits and scoldings, the red on their shoulders flashing like wounds.

It seems impossible that they have time to hunt, and that the chicks are getting enough to eat. I don't believe we will see them here next spring.



Leiserowitz

A woman who grew up near this park 40 years ago says turtles were heavy in the creek, which used to spread ten times its present width. Each morning she woke to the song of meadowlarks thick as mosquitoes. But the Amazon today is pinched into a single vein and the ponds near where the western pond turtle laid its eggs have disappeared. Today, the turtle eggs that manage to hatch are eaten by the non-native bullfrogs.

Without the tall grass we lose the meadowlarks and their liquid songs. What other life forms no longer grace Amazon Creek? What else is lost that might wake us to beauty, quicken our senses, stir our imagination, and woo us toward love?

Photograph: Untitled
Aspen, Colorado

Among species there are generalists and specialists. Generalist species introduced into a disturbed ecosystem tend to have advantages over native species. Maybe they are adaptable to sterile conditions, or immune to local diseases, or more aggressive. Generalists are competitive, tenacious, pervasive. They can adapt to a variety of environments, climates, and foods. They are cockroaches, crows, bullfrogs, possums, blackberries. They are the bane of the specialists.

Specialists need particular environments — clean air and water, shelter, certain foods. They are more passive, sensitive, and yielding than generalists, and are winnowed out first when an environment changes. Unable to adapt to newer, usually harsher conditions, or to compete with colonizing species, specialists retreat, decline, are quietly extirpated. Today we root for the red-wings making a last stand, knowing in our bones what will happen, as we ourselves throw stones at developers, collect our belongings and sense what in us can survive only in a living environment, what in us prefers mountains to malls, streams to subways, air to airplanes. Can we read our own future in the story of the red-wing blackbird? Are we putting up as gallant a defense?

Amy Klauke Minato has been writing and living in Eugene for 12 years. She has a masters degree from the Environmental Studies program and an MFA in Creative Writing from the UO. She currently works as a naturalist educator for the local non-profit Nearby Nature, as an artist-in-schools through the Lane Arts Council and teaches Environmental Studies 203 in summer.

Roses

By Amy Klauke Minato

With growing complicity I watch you
save the native roses from the blackberries,
your red flannel flashing, the light-green,
oval-thin leaves quiver around you.

I want to know what keeps us
here, where the heron
lifts its tremulous throat to wind,
the grey river rushes in, rain erases
the least cavity, trying to watch
small leaves uncurl, flowers
sigh open and fall apart

in this place clutched with low muscle,
thorn-heavy sleeves, a greed
of berries. They go
and go, choke whatever we hope
will grow beside them.

But we are constant, now, careful,
with our clippers circling what we love.
O wild rose, we work to keep you
splendid, free. Ever surprised
at your slender resilience,
our own miraculous growth.

Sharing the Planet

By Amy Klauke Minato

In one of my Green Scouts environmental restoration activities with children, collecting rare, native mule ear seeds for the Nature Conservancy, I remember one child's fervent desire to take home a spider he'd found. I explained to him how spiders are important in the food chain, how they eat and are eaten by other species, how much better it would be for the spider to stay right there at Willow Creek. We talked about how we do these activities to help nature, how for one morning a month, we put the needs of the plants and animals above our own. He whined and resisted until I gave up, and carried the spider to his mom who had come to pick him up.

But just as I turned away I heard him say to her, "Wait a minute. I gotta go put this spider back. It'll be happier here." Surprised and delighted, I turned back to watch him. His manner when he put the spider back on the grass was different than his glee when he'd found it. He put it back gently, with a serious look, more than a little proud of himself. This small action went against the grain of everything our consumer oriented culture was teaching him, but it was a good thing to do, and he knew it in his bones. He watched the spider scurry off, and he looked pleased.

Leiserowitz

Photograph: Poppy

Calendar

October, 1997

1
NEW EXHIBIT: "Living on the Edge: The Geological Story of Oregon"
U of O Museum of Natural History
This new long-term exhibit covers ancient plant and animal fossils and the geological processes that formed the Oregon we know today.

6
CLASS: "Birds! From the Inside Out" series begins
U of O Museum of Natural History
Cosponsored by the museum and the Lane County Audubon Society, and taught by Dan Gleason, this series covers attracting and feeding birds (Oct. 6), bird origins and taxonomy (Oct. 20), feathers (Nov. 3), shorebirds (Nov. 17), and food and digestion (Dec. 1). The series costs $70; individual classes, $15. For details, call Dan or Barbara Gleason at (541) 345-0450.

7
VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION
U of O Museum of Natural History
The museum will host a volunteer orientation program for continuing, new, and prospective volunteers from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Anyone interested in finding out about volunteer work at the museum is welcome. The orientation program is free—just call to say you plan to attend: (541) 346-3024.

16-18
EVENT: "Water Cultural Representations and Ecological Questions in Germany and the American West"
University of Oregon
The German Studies Committee presents an interdisciplinary symposium for analyzing the cultural, environmental, and political significance of water in Germany and the American West.

17-December 28
NEW EXHIBIT: "Water: The Renewable Metaphor"
U of O Museum of Art
This exhibition presents contemporary German and American photographers who explore themes and imagery of water.

23
Annual Meeting of Certified Drinking Water Laboratories
8:00 am, Lane Community College
For more information, contact Dr. Irene Ronning, ODH, 503-229-5505, or Julie Wose, OELA, 541-382-6432.

November, 1997

1
SATURDAY SAFARI: FOSSILS
U of O Museum of Natural History
The first of the museum's 1997-98 Saturday Safari programs focuses on fossils. The family oriented event runs from noon to 2:00 p.m. and will feature hands-on activities and a guided exhibit tour or field trip. Cost is $1 per person; free to MNH members.

10-12
Sustainable Business Symposium
U of O Campus
An opportunity to explore, learn, and implement practical and sustainable business practices. By addressing the perceived dichotomy between business and the environment, the Symposium will provide businesses the skills and experience necessary to increase profits while preserving our environment.

Keynote Speakers:

Paul Hawken, Founder: Smith & Hawken and author of The Ecology of Commerce;

Fred Hansen, Deputy Administrator: US EPA, and author of Beyond the Horizon and Reducing Risk;

David Gottfried, Owner: Gottfried Technology, Inc. and Founder: US Green Building Council

For more information: (541) 346-3994

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