

High Country News

January 27, 1992

Vol. 24 No. 1

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar

N • U • C • L • E • A • R W • A • S • T • E



In 10,000 years,
how will we say
'Keep Out'?

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A tribe in New
Mexico is first to
say 'study us' for
a temporary
radioactive
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What *is*
Monitored
Retrieval
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Two
economically
depressed
counties say
'maybe' to a
temporary
nuclear dump.

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Dear friends,



Ed Marston

Standing in front of the emptied, former HCN building are, from left: Ron Leon, Diane Sylvain, Clare Moore-Murrill, Gretchen Nicholoff, Florence Williams, Jamie Williams, Steve Pettit and Joan Leon. Kneeling from left: Linda Bacigalupi, Kay Bartlett, Betsy Marston and Heather Woodcock.



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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An historic move

Sunday morning, Jan. 5, 1992, was bright, cold and historic in Paonia, Colo., as staff and friends of *High Country News*, pushing shopping carts and dollies and carrying objects in their hands, shuttled, scuttled and skidded back and forth across Paonia's icy Grand Avenue.

The physical distance traversed in any one trip was small. And the move only took from about 10 a.m. to noon. But the smallness and briefness of the move merely illustrated the Chinese adage about all long journeys. The journey completed on Jan. 5 began in 1970 with a single step, when Tom Bell founded *High Country News* in Lander, Wyo.

During the intervening 22 years, HCN has been housed in rented, generally cramped and drafty and barely suitable quarters, first in Lander and then, starting in 1983, in Paonia. Now, for the first time, the paper occupies a building it owns. Moreover, this building is surprisingly elegant. Thanks to a clerestory in the center of the 60-foot by 60-foot building, it is light throughout. Artificial lights (of the most efficient type on the market) are needed only in the late afternoon and evening.

And the building is draft-free, due to very tight, well-insulated walls. Heat rises up from the concrete floor, which contains coils of circulating hot water. We discovered how tight and well insulated the building was immediately. The furnace was accidentally turned off when we first moved in; despite the very cold weather, it took us more than a day to discover the lack of heat.

The only problem results from the building's high-ceilinged, wall-less design: sound carries and the large, unsubdivided room echoes. The noise was especially bad the first day, but once we began hanging bulletin boards and

pictures, and learned to modulate our voices, the problem diminished.

It will disappear when we install window coverings and hang the flags of the states we cover from the roof beams. The flags will spell out HCN's domain and deflect and reflect sound waves that now ricochet around the building.

With lots of help

The move came with lots of community help. Don's Foodtown loaned us the shopping carts. Jim Cheney, a Paonia resident and subscriber, mentioned the move to the town crew, and its members plowed out the snow barrier that in snow season runs down the center of Grand Avenue. The crew also sanded the street between the two buildings.

Paonia Mayor James Gall offered to have the street closed during the move; since it was a Sunday morning, that was unnecessary.

The mayor, whose other hat is minister of the Christian Church, also offered HCN his blessing on that morning's church program on KVNf, the local public radio station. Blessings are always necessary.

The move's muscle was provided by staff and neighbors. Missing from the photo above are two key players: Robin Nicholoff and Paul Murrill. After helping on Sunday, Paul returned on Monday and Tuesday to put up shelves, hang awards and paintings, and take care of the hundreds of details that turn an office into home. And subscriber Lee Sayre, knowing that even peaceable armies travel on stomachs, brought down a batch of cookies on Sunday. They didn't last long.

While the move itself depended on Paonians, the building would not have been possible without financial support from readers around the nation.

The project still has some money to raise, but fundraising is well along.

Moreover, as the financial report in the next issue will show, the money for the building was raised without reducing HCN's operating revenue. What a wonderful way to begin a new year.

— Ed Marston, for the staff

HOTLINE

One less ski area

One of only four ski areas based in a national park has finally closed. On Jan. 7, the National Park Service said it would not reopen the financially strapped Hidden Valley Ski Area in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park. Hidden Valley, first opened in 1955, once provided economic support for the nearby community of Estes Park. But regional Park Service director Robert M. Baker said, "It just doesn't make sense to keep the area open when the economic benefits to the local community are minimal." When the agency bought Hidden Valley for \$4 million from a concessionaire 15 years ago, it announced that it would close the area immediately. That plan met with immediate local opposition. The Park Service then agreed to maintain the resort, but since 1977 it has spent over \$60,000 a year to maintain ski lifts, buildings and plow roads, even though Hidden Valley was licensed to a private operator. Earlier this month Baker attended a town meeting to address continued local opposition to a final shutdown of Hidden Valley. This time, he said, the agency would follow through on its decision. "Closing the facility will expand the park's natural area, save water that would be used for making snow, and save taxpayer money," Baker pointed out. The demise of Hidden Valley, which had been diverting water from Hidden Valley Creek, will also provide a more stable environment for the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, Baker added.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Unlikely coalition protests timber cut

Ranchers have joined environmentalists in western Idaho to draw a line in the forest against U.S. Forest Service plans to clearcut their watershed.

A decade ago, planners with the Payette National Forest targeted the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area near Council, Idaho, as an ideal place to "get the cut out."

"Compared to other areas in the Payette National Forest, the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area was relatively uncontroversial during the time the Forest Plan was being drawn up," says Payette Forest economist and planner Don Hormaechea.

Neither Hormaechea nor the agency expected the area's ranching, logging and recreation community to unite and react so strongly, he says. But after the Forest Service allowed clearcuts surrounding the roadless area, and a recent environmental impact study proposed an 18.8 million board-feet cut in the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area itself, local farmers and ranchers decided to fight back.

In 1989, Cecil Bilbao, a rancher who with his family has lived at the base of Cuddy Mountain for 30 years, co-founded Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain to challenge the timber cuts.

"We knew we had to fight for our lifestyles, for the economic viability of our county," says Bilbao. "Our watershed and our wildlife and recreation are the most important economic assets of our county."

In September, Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain, which now represents 2,300 ranchers, irrigators, farmers and private property owners, filed an administrative appeal of the Forest Service's planned 18.8 million board-feet Grade-Dukes timber cut on Cuddy Mountain.

In December, the group filed a second appeal against the proposed 6.1 million board-feet Deep-Copper timber sale in the nearby Hells Canyon and Seven Devils Roadless Areas. The proposed cut is also in the Payette National Forest, within a mile of the Hells Canyon Wilderness Area.

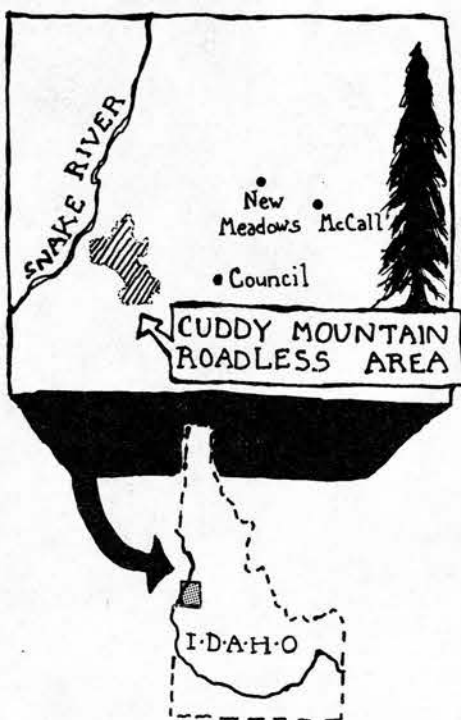
While a dozen Idaho and Oregon conservation groups have joined the appeals, this is one of the few timber battles in the West that is led by local citizens who don't think of themselves as environmentalists.

"I am a private person, but this is

affecting too many people," says Bilbao. He says he is increasingly frustrated by the Forest Service's difficult public involvement process.

The appellants argue that the Forest Service not only failed to consider significant environmental impacts, but also ignored potential damages to the area's ranching and recreation industries. A main party to the Cuddy Mountain appeal is the Weiser Irrigation District, which represents over 1,500 water users. Vincent Derig, who is secretary of the irrigation district, says 10 years of clearcuts have had a dramatic effect.

"The runoff has been occurring



before our irrigation season," he says. "Studies have shown that clearcuts reduce the canopy, increase the temperature and create an early runoff."

Their opposition seems to have had some effect. One proposed timber cut in the Weiser watershed was recently cancelled after the Forest Service fisheries biologist documented high temperatures, excess sedimentation and fish kills on Beaver Creek last summer.

Other opponents of the two proposed timber sales include the Idaho Wildlife Federation, the Ada County Fish & Game League, the Golden Eagle Audubon Society, the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, the Idaho Bird Hunters Inc., the Idaho Environmental Council, the Oregon Wildlife Federation, the Idaho Native Plant Society, the

Region 3 Idaho Wildlife Council, Idaho Salmon and Steelhead Unlimited, the Northwest Research and Information Center and The Wilderness Society.

Additional appeals to the Cuddy Mountain sale have been filed by the Idaho Wildlife Coalition, the Idaho Conservation League, the Forest Conservation Council (Oregon), the Oregon Natural Resources Council and Boise-Cascade. All but the latter opposed timber cutting in the roadless area. Boise-Cascade says more timber needs to be harvested.

The Forest Service's Hormaechea says the Cuddy Mountain timber stand has a problem with insects and diseases, which will result in the economic loss of the value of that timber if it is not harvested. The agency projects a cost benefit of \$363,226 for the selected cut.

The appellants say many administrative costs and losses in recreation days were not calculated, and project a net loss to the U.S. Treasury of \$241,666.

"The highest and best use of that land is watershed and wildlife and recreation," says Bilbao. "The proposed sale is a deficit sale."

In addition, David Towner, a member of the Idaho Native Plant Society, cites concerns about rare and endangered plants, loss of diversity, loss of old growth habitat, and general management of insects and diseases. "Clearcuts tend to be reforested with one or two types of trees," he says, "reducing the natural diversity and creating stands which may be more susceptible to disease in the future."

The appellants are requesting supplemental EISs and say they hope their case will serve as a model for other private landowners involved in the same type of battle across the nation.

Already the Forest Service has granted a stay of implementation of both timber sales, until the appeals are heard by regional forester Gray Reynolds, in Ogden, Utah. Reynolds, who was recently transferred to that position from Washington, D.C., has 100 days to respond to the appeals, which were filed Sept. 30 and Dec. 14.

Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain can be reached by writing to Cecil Bilbao, Route 1 Box 212, Cambridge, ID 83610.

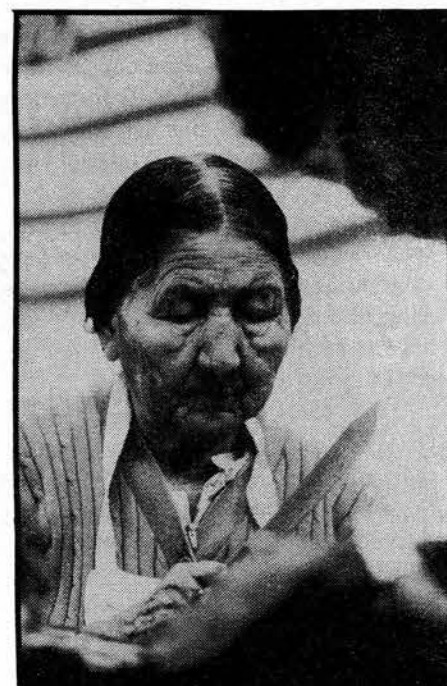
— Kathleen Marie Menke

The writer is a free-lance writer and photographer living in McCall, Idaho.

HOTLINE

Hunter harasser heads for trial

An animal rights activist charged with harassing a Montana bison hunter has failed in his attempt to challenge the state's law on constitutional grounds. John Lilburn's appeal of Montana's hunter harassment law was rejected in Gallatin County court last month. Lilburn was the first person charged under the state's three-year-old law, which forbids anyone from interfering with the legal "taking" of an animal. Noel Larivee, Lilburn's attorney, told AP the law is vague and violated his client's right of free speech. Lilburn allegedly stood between a hunter and a bison. His trial is scheduled for March, but he may appeal the decision, his attorney said.



James Woodcock

Fern Spottedelk prepares bison to feed elderly in Lame Deer, Mont.

Bison migrate — and die

More than 150 bison have been killed this winter as they crossed the boundary of Yellowstone National Park onto state land in Montana. Employees of Montana's livestock and wildlife departments are shooting the bison under an interim plan that the Washington, D.C.-based group, the Fund for Animals, has filed a lawsuit to stop. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear the case March 2. The bison are killed because of the possibility they will infect cattle with brucellosis, a disease that causes cattle to abort. For the last two years, bison have stayed put in the park. Bison are migrating now, says park staffer Stu Coleman, because of heavy snowpack, reports the *Jackson Hole News*. During the harsh winter of 1988-89, hunters were allowed to kill 569 bison as they left Yellowstone. This year, hunters are barred and the state is giving Indian tribes part of the meat. The state auctions off the rest of the meat to finance the cost of killing the bison. Tony Prairiebear, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe, says he doesn't approve of the policy allowing game wardens to kill the bison. "The buffalo is doing what comes natural to him," Prairiebear said. "He doesn't know about boundaries." But as a pragmatist, Prairiebear adds, it makes sense for tribes to get some of the meat. Jeanne-Marie Souvigney, a staffer with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, agrees Indians should get the meat, as long as the bison are being killed. She notes moving bison from Yellowstone to Indian reservations could solve the problem. Montana officials are reportedly prepared to kill as many as 600 trespassing bison this winter.

Citizens group arises to fight toxic burning

A grass-roots group has formed in Bozeman, Mont., to block a company from burning 8.2 million gallons of hazardous waste each year.

Called Montanans Against Toxic Burning, the group says Holnam Inc. wants to burn toxic wastes 20 miles upwind of town in an 82-year-old cement kiln. While high-tech incinerators must meet stringent federal emissions standards, cement kilns can emit five times more toxic particulates, says Bozeman resident Doug Mavor. That means the Gallatin Valley would be blanketed with 98,000 pounds of heavy metals each year, he adds.

In addition Mavor says, the Swiss-based Holnam Inc. plans to dump 170 tons of contaminated kiln dust each day at their quarry on the banks of the Missouri River.

Bozeman residents organized only

six weeks ago, but the group already has 30 members including teachers, machinists, construction workers, students and "Montana moms" such as Martha Collins.

"We're not necessarily an environmental group," says Collins. "We're more a citizens' group." Collins says she has gained valuable information and advice from community activists in Colorado. Last year they defeated Holnam's proposal to incinerate hazardous wastes at its LaPorte facility near Fort Collins.

According to Collins, Montana is "inviting" to hazardous waste firms because the state has no regulations governing their disposal. Ash Grove Cement West Inc. has already applied to burn hazardous wastes at its Montana City plant near Helena, and Ross Electric Co. says it wants to burn

PCBs near Butte, Collins adds.

On Jan. 27, the state Department of Health and Environmental Sciences will hold a hearing in Helena to review new hazardous waste regulations for Montana. Collins, Mavor and others plan to lobby hard for strong regulations.

For a copy of the proposed waste rules, or to comment on them, contact Dennis Iverson by Feb. 10 at the State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, C-108 Cogswell Bldg. Capitol Station, Helena, MT 59620 (406/444-2544). Montanans Against Toxic Burning can be reached at P.O. Box 1082, Bozeman, MT 59771, or call Martha Collins at 406/586-9478.

— Ann Vileisis, HCN intern

Group wants to bag the Animal Damage Control agency

A group in Tucson, Ariz., has begun a high-profile campaign to halt the killing of predators.

The group, Wildlife Damage Review, tells taxpayers that their dollars contributed to the killing in 1989 of 291 black bears, 203 lions, and thousands of coyotes, skunks, beavers and blackbirds at a cost exceeding \$45 million. This has occurred just as other state and federal agencies are trying to restore wildlife, and states such as Arizona spend millions to attract tourists to experience its wild places.

"It's senseless slaughter," charges Clarke Abbey, widow of environmental author Ed Abbey. She and three friends launched the grass-roots, nonprofit Wildlife Damage Review last winter in Tucson.

"We're not bored, urban housewives," Abbey says of herself and her three friends, Lisa Peacock, wife of Doug, a legendary battler for the grizzly bear, Marian Baker-Gierlach and Nancy Zierenberg. "And we eat meat," adds Zierenberg.

Their objective, according to Peacock, is "to be able to stop an Arizona taxpayer on the street soon, and ask them about the agency known as ADC, and have them blurt, 'I don't want my tax dollars going to that.'"

A federal agency named Animal Damage Control (ADC) is the target of their outrage. This arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it has been charged, will rush to the rescue of ranchers without requiring them to prove they are suffering any damage.

Nearly always, the ADC gets its mammal (HCN, 1/28/91).

Using leg-hold traps, leg snares, M-44 poison cartridges, rifles and assorted other weapons from the air and on the land, ADC's Arizona wildlife tote for 1989 was nine black bears, 1,676 coyotes and 44 mountain lions; also one coati, one woodpecker, 177,277 blackbirds, 48 feral house cats, plus badgers, skunks and raccoons.

In Arizona last year, according to ADC officials — who resent the new attention they are getting — 42 calves valued at \$21,105 were killed by coyotes, as were 233 lambs, worth \$19,225. ADC spent \$600,000 in the state overall to control livestock predation.

The Cattle Growers' Association estimates that its industry is worth in excess of \$300 million annually to Arizona, and that ranchers raise enough beef annually to feed 4.6 million people.

But detractors point out that ranch-



Clarke Abbey, Nancy Zierenberg, Marian Baker-Gierlach and Lisa Peacock, founders of Wildlife Damage Review

ers' grazing and water rights are subsidized at a fraction of those commodities' market value. "The few cows and sheep that lions and bears do eat," argues Dan Dagget of Mountain Lions Unlimited in Flagstaff, "are already bought and paid for by you and me."

Darrel Juve, the Arizona director of Animal Damage Control, says he has decided not to publish an annual report for 1991, because so many people have misunderstood the kill statistics. These misunderstandings, some deliberate, he believes, have led to what he feels are unfair attacks on him and his program.

"Groups like Abbey's charge we are working over a wide area. It is not true.

In fiscal '90, our entire program worked on just four and one-fourth percent of the state's land area. We are being subjected to eco-terrorism, and I have been the subject of death threats and hand grenades ... That group of women in Tucson ... I think they want to put us out of business. If we are put out of business, someone would have to do the killing, probably Game and Fish," Juve says.

"Somebody has to do this job," continues Juve. "There is a need for professionals like me to handle the conflicts when they come." Counters Clarke Abbey: "He doesn't see himself as a public servant. We're not sure he knows who he works for."

Citizen groups such as Wildlife Damage Review are not the only organizations that find fault with ADC. The General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, reported last year, after an exhaustive review of the ADC, that "no comprehensive federal policy exists specifically for managing predator species," which is what conservationists have been saying all along.

Furthermore, the GAO highlighted another concern: the program emphasizes killing bears, lions and other predators with poison, bullets or traps rather than using non-lethal control techniques such as guard dogs or fences.

As for traps, the GAO was told by Arizona Game and Fish Department officials that black bears, in several instances, had to be killed after being left in traps for days. ADC agents in Arizona are only required to check their traps two or three times a week, rather than daily which, state Game and Fish officials

argue, would be more humane.

As a result of the GAO report, there are rumblings in Congress to shift ADC out of the Agriculture Department and back to the Department of Interior, where officials are more likely to believe that lions and bears have an equal right to exist on the public lands with humans.

Despite the citizen activity, reforming ADC practices won't be easy, activists concede, because its political support runs deep in state legislatures — and in Congress. But Wildlife Damage Review is prepared for the fight. "We'll see what kinds of letters we start getting after we gather 100,000 signatures (to shift ADC to the Department of Interior through congressional action)," declares Marian Baker-Gierlach.

In the meantime, the group is gathering information and assembling documentation about ADC abuses across the nation, as well as case studies of ranchers like the Lasaters in Matheson, Colo., who manage their land like a wildlife sanctuary, forbidding bullets, poison or traps.

"We believe it is our cow's responsibility to protect her calves, which they do. We have long believed in the positive aspects of the balance of nature," says Dale Lasater.

The Wildlife Damage Review can be reached at P.O. Box 2541, Tucson, AZ 85702 (602/882-4218).

— James Bishop Jr.

James Bishop Jr., a free-lance writer, is working on a book about the late Edward Abbey. A version of this article appeared in *Phoenix* magazine.

HOTLINE

Pipeline is under investigation

Rep. Wayne Owens, D-Utah, and three federal agencies are calling for an investigation into the construction of a 900-mile pipeline built by the Kern River Gas Transmission Co. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission believes that the recently completed pipeline, which runs from Wyoming to California, has caused irreparable damage to the foothills east of Bountiful, Utah, along the Wasatch Mountain Range. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service also say the construction has caused serious erosion and that the gas company's attempt to revegetate land along the pipeline failed. Forest Service officials add that they have discovered miles of deep ruts caused by bulldozers.

"The Forest Service was snookered and should throw the book at Kern River Pipeline," Owens told AP. Kern River representative Susan Flaim said the company has nothing to hide and would welcome an on-site inspection. The U.S. Attorney's office has begun preliminary investigations into the project, according to Owens' aide Art Kingdom.

BARBS

Reassuring news from the Bush administration.

A U.N. agency recently warned that "resource collapse" was possible as the world population might top 10.2 billion by 2050 — 25 years earlier than previously expected. When asked about the report, HUD Secretary Jack Kemp said, "Nonsense. People are not a drain on the resources of the planet," AP reports.

BULLETIN BOARD

WILD POETS WANTED

For its seventh annual poetry contest, the Utah Wilderness Association will award \$100 for the best work related to the theme of wilderness, its preservation and its spiritual and ecological values. Poems must be sent in by Feb. 1 and cannot exceed 40 lines. Poets should send two copies of an entry, one with name, address and phone number attached, as well as a fee of \$3 to POETRY/UWA, 455 E. 400 South, #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. For more information, call Margaret Pettis at 801/359-1337.

SAVING A COLORADO CANYON

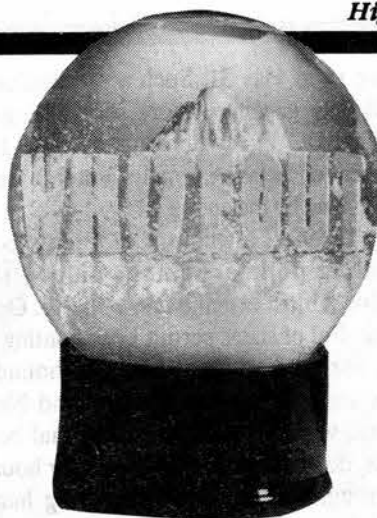
A group called the Clear Creek Land Conservancy is working to save the last undeveloped canyon near Denver, Colo. Clear Creek Canyon, which contains prime eagle habitat as well as the state's oldest hiking trail, is under increasing pressure from developers and gravel miners. So far, much of the canyon, which extends about 16 miles from Golden to Idaho Springs, is owned by elderly people and corporations who have left the parcels undeveloped. But the conservancy says that with increasing taxes and aging property owners, the land may not remain open much longer. The private, nonprofit group was formed in 1986, when 82-year-old Carla Swan Coleman donated a 240-acre plot of land to it. She said her hope was to preserve the canyon she grew up in. The conservancy's latest achievement came when the Bureau of Land Management transferred ownership of 240 acres to it. "This is a wonderful example of public-private partnership, where private citizens work with the government to keep lands open to the public for all time," said Conservancy president Rock Pring. For more information write Sharon Kent Freeman, Clear Creek Land Conservancy, P.O. Box 1470, Golden, CO 80401 (303/279-4706).

GOVERNMENT SHIRKS CLEANUP

Government programs to reclaim abandoned coal mines have been ineffective in correcting health, safety and environmental problems, says an Interior Department audit report. Only 2 percent of hazardous mines have been reclaimed since 1977, and 89 people have died in accidents related to closed coal mines. The report, prepared by the Office of Inspector General, blames the failure to clean up on legislative constraints and lack of funding. Total cleanup is estimated to cost \$60 billion. In an appended response, the Office of Surface Mining says it needs four times more money to do the job. The report, *Coal Reclamation, Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program*, is available from the Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General, P.O. Box 1593, Arlington, VA 22210 (800/424-5081).

MEXICAN SPOTTED OWL HEARINGS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants the public to comment on its proposal to list the Mexican spotted owl as "threatened." The owl inhabits densely forested mountains and canyons now threatened by logging, fires and increased predation. The Mexican owl, slightly smaller and whiter than the controversial northern spotted owl, is most abundant in New Mexico and Arizona, but is also found in Colorado, Texas, Utah and Mexico. Three public hearings are set, all at 6 p.m.: The first is at Pima Community College, Center For The Arts, Proscenium Theater, West Campus, 2202 W. Anklam Rd., Tucson, Ariz., Feb. 4; the second is at Flagstaff High School Auditorium, 400 W. Elm Ave., Flagstaff, Ariz., Feb. 5; and the third is at the conference room, BLM District Office, 176 East D.L. Sargent Dr., Cedar City, Utah, Feb. 6. Comments should be sent by March 3 to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Field Office, 5530 Pan American Hwy. NE, Suite D, Albuquerque, NM 87107. For more information call 505/883-7877.



HEAVY ON THE GLITZ

In writing *Whiteout: Lost in Aspen* while he lived for two years in the high-altitude Colorado resort, Ted Conover found himself overwhelmed periodically by the scale at which so many Aspenites lived. "I noticed that the band was playing yet another Jimmy Buffett song. With a little relief, I made a mental note of the flaw — the local band they'd found had a limited repertoire. Then I looked beyond my partner's hair and took a more careful look: The singer was Jimmy Buffett. Oh my. This was *his* band. This was Jimmy Buffett and *his* band..." This awe for the very successful or very rich becomes tiresome, although one wonders — and hopes — that some of his breathlessness is tongue-in-cheek. *Whiteout* is a large change of pace for former Denverite Conover. His previous books were about hobos and illegal immigrants from Mexico. Deft chapters here include tales of his driving a cab for the Mellow Yellow company — most of whose employees thought Conover was a narcotics agent — plus his reporting stint at the *Aspen Times* weekly. At midpoint, however, anecdotes about the egregiously rich or famous begin to pall. We start to wonder whether another Aspen exists, one not based on mega-bucks or celebrity. Conover doesn't look for or find that community, so what he does pass on is fun but much like meringue — insubstantial.

Random House, New York, NY 10022. 269 pages. Hard cover: \$20.

— Betsy Marston

WYOMING RANCHER HONORED

Wyoming rancher Jack Turnell, one of seven recipients of the National Cattlemen's Association Environmental Stewardship Award, was honored late last year at a ceremony held in Gov. Mike Sullivan's office. Cited for his exemplary job of protecting the environment while bolstering his productivity, Turnell told reporters after the ceremony that "Our forefathers may have mistreated the land — not out of malice but from a belief that the grass would always return, the creeks would always recover." Ranchers abusing their grazing lands will "die by their own hand," he said, adding, "It's not smart to overgraze ... you're not helping wildlife or habitat and all that brings you is heartache from the environmentalists." In the late 1970s, Turnell was involved in efforts to save the black-footed ferret after the last known members of the species were found on his 120,000-acre Pitchfork Ranch. While Turnell has tried to foster cooperation and understanding between the livestock and environmental communities, he said he opposes wolf reintroduction because "it's just not compatible" with his ranching operation.

RURAL HOTLINE

Farmers and ranchers with questions about the availability of federal funding can call hotline number 402/846-5428 at the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, Neb. The center, a nonprofit research and advocacy organization, offers counseling and information about two programs. One allows farmers to use soil-saving crop rotations without losing farm program benefits; the other provides incentive payments of up to \$3,500 a year for farmers who develop plans that protect water quality. "We wanted to overcome the confusion and lack of information that hampered last year's sign-up for these new programs," says hotline coordinator Annette Higby. A *Farm Program Options Guide*, outlining the 1990 farm bill, is also available for \$3 from the Center for Rural Affairs at P.O. Box 406, Walthill, NE 68067.

UNCLASSIFIEDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, The Colorado Bird Observatory. The Colorado Bird Observatory is a rapidly growing non-profit organization committed to the conservation of Western birds. Applicants should have communication and administrative skills and a proven ability to raise funds. Additional requirements include a willingness to work with volunteers, computer proficiency, and experience in developing education programs. Preference given to individuals with an advanced degree in a natural science. Send C.V. or resumé, salary requirements, and a list of three references to Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601. Deadline: April 1. (1x1b)

SUMMER/AUTUMN 1992 RENTALS. Newly restored log house with all amenities. Very private location bordering National Forest, 300 yards from Gallatin River, near Big Sky, Montana. Available by the week or month. Hope Stevens, Box 459, Bozeman, MT 59715 (406/586-1182, 406/995-4268). (2x1p)

CEDAREIDGE, COLO. 8 acres, 2 homes — low maintenance, attached greenhouse, gardens, fruit trees, hay, barn/loft, root cellar, outbuildings, irrigation, creek, views, quiet. \$128,000. 303/856-6362. (3x1p)

SOLAR HOUSE overlooking Big Horn River Valley, Basin, Wyoming. 2,800 sq. ft., 3 huge bedrooms, greenhouse, deck, large garage, workshop, 24 acres, corral. \$80,000. 602/979-1345. (1x1p)

AEROSPACE ENGINEER seeks career change. Seven years as space shuttle astronaut instructor for Orbiter Computer and Navigation Systems. Six years as supervisor of 28 employees doing same. Environmentalist, nature lover, camper. Desire employment associated with environmental preservation/restoration/policy enforcement. Contact Ronnie Rogers, 713/538-1649.

OUTDOOR SINGLES NETWORK, bi-monthly newsletter, ages 19-90, no forwarding fees. \$18/1 year, \$4/trial issue-information. OSN-HCN, 218½ W. Lake — General Delivery, McCall, ID 83638. (9x21p)

11 NATURALIST INTERN POSITIONS. The Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, Aspen, Colo. Responsibilities: Provide natural history and interpretive programs for children/adults; wildlife rehabilitation; manage visitors' center; special exhibits; natural history writing; maintenance projects. Qualifications: educational background in natural sciences, environmental education or related; knowledge of Rocky Mountain flora/fauna helpful. June-August, 1992. Stipend, housing and Naturalist Field School Course(s). Send resumé, creative writing sample and 3 references to Laura Struempfer by March 2, ACES, Box 8777, Aspen, CO 81612. Call Laura Struempfer for more information at 303/925-5756. (3x1p)

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY CATALOG for remote homes. Solar electric, wind, hydro-electric generators, wood-fired hot tubs, composting toilets and more. \$2.50, refundable with order. Yellow Jacket Solar, Box 60H, Lewis, CO 81327. (6x1p)

NATIONAL AUDUBON will host an ecology workshop on the Platte River of Nebraska, March 15-22, 1992. Eighty percent of the world's population of lesser sandhill cranes (nearly 500,000 birds) gathers here — a magnificent wildlife spectacle seen by few. Participants will investigate crane biology in detail, and discuss their predicament of survival amid complex water politics and declining flows on the Platte. The workshop includes three days at National Audubon's SPRING RIVER CONFERENCE, featuring Audubon's president, Peter A.A. Berle, as keynote speaker and presentations by Platte River authorities, combined with daily field trips. \$995.00. For information contact: National Audubon, 613 Riversville Rd. Box H, Greenwich, CT 06831 (203/869-5272). (2x1p)

STUDENT INTERNSHIPS: Would you like to live on the edge of Glacier National Park, Montana, for a season and help run an outdoor education program? The Glacier Institute offers outdoor classes for all ages and interests, including 1-5 day residential environmental programs for 1st-9th grade students. 3 interns spring, 2 summer, 3 fall. Write: Glacier Institute, PO Box 1457, Kalispell, MT 59903. (2x1p)

LAND LETTER ... the newsletter for natural resource professionals. Special introductory offer. Write 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209, or call 703/525-6300. (24x1p)

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST. New, private, nonprofit rural development corporation seeking experienced ED/CD Specialist to work with rural communities throughout Oregon. Candidate must have track record in strategic planning, rural ED/CD technical assistance and group facilitation. Knowledge of ED/CD strategies to stabilize and expand rural economies is key consideration. Salary negotiable, minimum \$35K + benefits. Send resumé to: PO Box 248, Bend, OR 97709, or call 503/373-1046 for more information. (1x1b)

DURANGO, COLORADO, SPECIALIST in mountain properties, featuring 1) 2,000 sq. ft. Earth Dome at \$129,000; 2) custom stone home on seven acres at \$172,000; 3) "way cool" four bedroom secluded solar on 3.5 acres at \$225,000. Contact Scott Kurlander, Real Estate Broker with eight years experience in Four Corners area at Prudential T.S.R. 1-800/477-8346 Ext. 228. (2x24p)

DIRECTOR POSITION OPENING: The Montana Wilderness Association announces a new position to help guide MWA through a period of expansion. Tasks: coordinate organization activities, financial management, personnel supervision, development, and diversified funding. Experience required: working knowledge of non-profit advocacy organizations, staff management, fundraising skills, consensus building, grassroots development and a reverence for the land. \$26,400/yr. Application deadline: Feb. 21, 1992. Starting date: June 1992. Send cover letter, resumé, three references to: Search Committee, MWA, Box 635, Helena, MT 59624. (2x1p)

"OUTDOOR PEOPLE AD-Venture" lists 60-word descriptions of active, outdoor-oriented singles and trip companions nationwide. \$3/issue, \$12/ad. Outdoor People-HCN, P.O. Box 600, Gaston, SC 29053. (7x1b)



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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT ENVIRO-ECONOMICS

A Conference on Ecology, Economics & Ethics;
How Business Practices and Government
Economic Policy Affect the Environment

The CU Environmental Center's seventh annual conference, entitled *Enviro-Economics*, will take place on February 14 and 15, 1992, at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The conference will address the impacts of multi-national corporations, international trade and banking, the toxic waste trade, and global economics on Third World country environments and indigenous lifestyles.

Other topics include: corporate lobbying, "greenwashing," and the effects of tax breaks, corporate subsidies and government fiscal policy on cultural and biological diversity. Solution-oriented topics include socially responsible investing, consumer advocacy, environmental business ethics, environmental careers, sustainable development, eco-tourism, and environmental cost accounting.

Confirmed keynote speakers are Susan Meeker-Lowry of Catalyst, Herbert Gunther of the Public Media Center, and Dana Alston, of the Panos Institute. Other confirmed or invited speakers include Jane McAlevy of the Highlander Center, Colorado Sen. Timothy E. Wirth, economist Vandana Shiva of India, Martin Khor of the Third World Network, Colorado environmental lobbyist Jo Evans, and many others.

The conference will take place in the Glen Miller Ballroom on the CU Boulder Campus, starting at 12 noon on Friday, February 14, and ending at 10:00 pm, Saturday, February 15. The conference registration fee is \$20 for non-students (\$15 for all day Saturday only) and free to CU Boulder students. There will be no preregistration; please register at the door. For more information, contact: The CU Environmental Center, UMC 331, Campus Box 207, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, (303) 492-8308.

LETTERS

NOT MUCH OF A REPRIEVE

Dear HCN,

Reporting on revisions to Colorado's bear hunting regulations, *High Country News* took the bait set by the state's Wildlife Commission and reported that bears have been given a reprieve ("Bear hunt is scaled down," Dec. 16). The reality is, the rabidly pro-hunting Wildlife Commission not only extended the spring hunting season, but also expanded the use of both hound and bait bear hunting. Thus, it's no time to rejoice, but for renewed activism.

Even though the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) has no reliable estimate of the state's black bear population, wildlife groups such as The Fund for Animals, American Humane Association, Rocky Mountain Sierra Club, and the Colorado Environmental Coalition did not ask for an immediate termination of black bear trophy hunting. Rather, they asked for three extremely moderate reforms: an end to spring, bait and hound hunting. Current policy allows hunters to kill black bears in the spring when sows are nursing dependent cubs, leading to certain death for the orphaned young. Hunters can bait bears with food and shoot them while they're feeding. And they can chase bears with dogs and shoot the exhausted animals from point-blank range after they have taken refuge in trees.

The commission heard overwhelming opposition to the continuation of these practices. Public comment ran 16 to 1 in favor of eliminating spring hunting and 122 to 1 in favor of terminating the use of both bait and hounds. Two DOW-initiated public attitude surveys indicated overwhelming opposition to spring bear hunting and 75 percent opposition to the use of baits or hounds. And the DOW itself — whose antipathy for hunting critics is well known — recommended a complete termination of spring hunting, with state wildlife manager Len Carpenter calling spring hunting "morally indefensible."

In spite of such calls for reform, the commission chose only to limit and mildly scale down license sales in the spring. At the same time, the commission extended the spring season — where baits and hounds are used — from

May 15 to May 31. Such a modification will only guarantee more sow killing in spring; DOW data demonstrate that 100 percent of lactating females emerge from their dens by the end of May.

Taken as a whole, Colorado's bear hunting policies remain among the nation's most extreme and abusive. Only a handful of states permit bear hunting in the spring and with baits and hounds. For instance, Pennsylvania and New York, which both have substantial bear kills, do not permit spring, bait, or hound hunting. Montana permits spring hunting, but not the use of baits or hounds. Wyoming bans hunting with hounds. And New Mexico has just terminated its spring season.

Saddled with an extremely low rate of reproduction and targeted by poachers seeking profits from the sale of gall bladders, black bears can hardly afford to be exposed to bullets and broadhead arrows in spring or to baits and hounds throughout the year.

To remedy this cruel and biologically reckless situation, a broad coalition of organizations has decided to place an initiative on the ballot for November 1992 and give the Colorado electorate the opportunity to discard the Wildlife Commission's bear management policies. Please join the effort.

Wayne Pacelle
Silver Spring, Maryland

The writer is national director for The Fund for Animals.

NAME YOUR SOURCES

Dear HCN,

I was dismayed that *HCN* stooped to the use of "unnamed sources" in the environmental community to criticize another environmental organization, as was done in your Dec. 2 Reporter's Notebook by Larry Mosher ("Water Fight Sinks Wilderness Bill"). In that piece, "one environmentalist" — who hadn't the courage or the integrity to give his or her name — opined that the wilderness water rights case handled by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund had generated "fear in the water development community." The article alleged that "many environmentalists" — also unidentified — essentially agreed, and questioned the suit's tactical value.

Debate on the point is valid, and I welcome it. Discerning readers will see, within the text of the article, that the suit has had the effect both of strengthening the state instream flow program and of giving the environmental community a powerful bargaining chip it didn't have before. It has also moved Congress to act affirmatively to protect water in wilderness in other Western states.

Failing or refusing to name the sources of criticism is inexcusable, however. How can your readers know if these "sources" are credible, or if they have other, self-serving purposes for their criticism? Anonymity covers up a multitude of selfish motives. If *HCN* indeed "cares about the West," as it professes, be candid with us.

Lori Potter
Denver, Colorado

The writer is managing attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in Denver.

NO POSITION ON BILL YET

Dear HCN,

The story by Tracy Stone-Manning on the Montana wilderness bill (*HCN*, 12/30/91) incorrectly stated that the National Wildlife Federation supported this legislation. NWF has not yet taken a position on the bill; we are presently reviewing the bill with our affiliate, the Montana Wildlife Federation, and weighing its costs and benefits.

I did tell your reporter that the Burns-Baucus compromise was similar to the 1988 Wilderness Act vetoed by President Reagan which NWF and most other conservation groups ultimately supported. There are, however, important differences between the two bills, both good and bad. The Badger-Two Medicine language, for example, is much improved and would preclude drilling at Hall Creek, which the 1988 bill did not do. On the other hand, consensus wilderness areas, such as Nevada Mountain and Trout Creek, have been completely left out, apparently because Sen. Conrad Burns demanded a wilderness acreage cap as one price of the compromise. The list goes on.

While there may be good reasons for passing a wilderness bill this year, such as immediate protection of the Badger-Two

Medicine, no one should believe this bill, even with needed improvements, will resolve all the wilderness issues facing Montana or that it will be the state's last wilderness legislation.

No better example of this reality exists than Colorado, which is working on its second statewide wilderness bill (since the court decision in *California vs. Block*) while Montana has yet to pass its first.

Tom France
Missoula, Montana

The writer is a regional representative for the National Wildlife Federation.

NO PLACE IN CALIFORNIA

Dear HCN,

First as a student at Fort Collins in the early 1970s, then a zoologist and wildland manager living in Wyoming, Colorado and Arizona, I've met and known many folks who would rather be outdoors. Now I am an economic and opportunistic exile in California, isolated from the tribe of those who live with the wild creatures of the interior Rocky Mountains ...

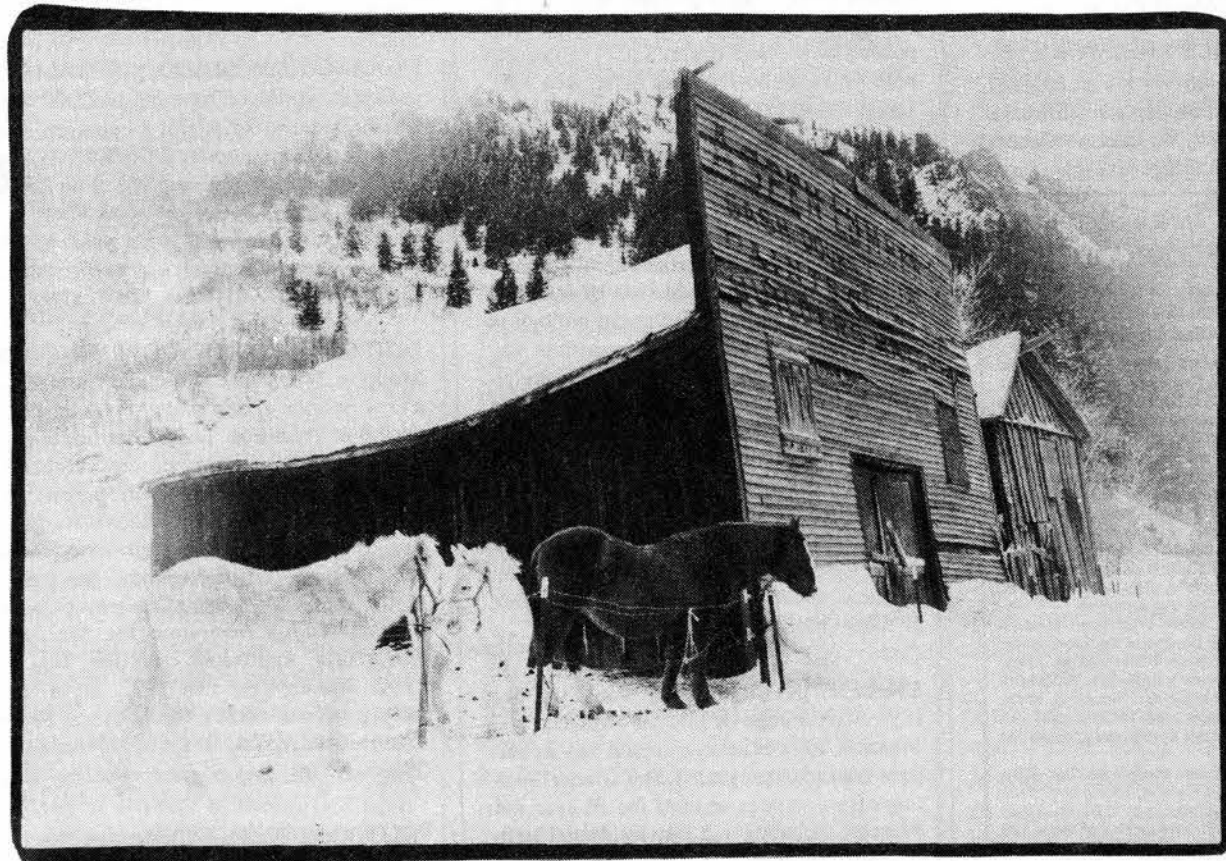
When I scan your list of *HCN* Research Fund contributors, I remember familiar faces, hear fascinating stories of nature, recall standing in awe of spirited animals, see again the green leaves of some priceless botanical treasure and review soliloquies of many conservation issues. Some rascals have struck gold and stuck around on one lode or another for a long time. Most others meander. Some retire, some move on to "new opportunities," but continue to care from distant shores. Thanks for publishing that list of Research Fund contributors. You document the far-flung community of people who share in having taken the time to learn by heart a part of the interior highlands of North America.

I see you were pondering coverage of California in your newspaper. Don't do it. As Tom Wolf wrote about Wyoming, you cover "a small town with long streets" and you do it very well. Try to include California and your small town will vanish.

There is no sense of place in this place.

Mark R. Stromberg
Carmel Valley, California

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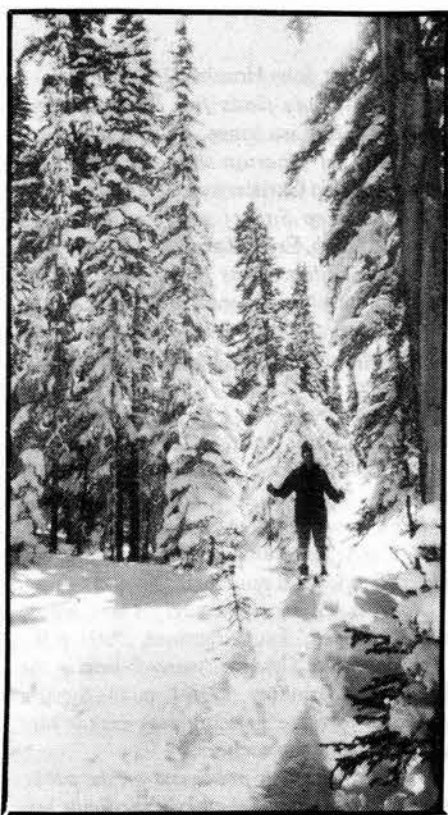
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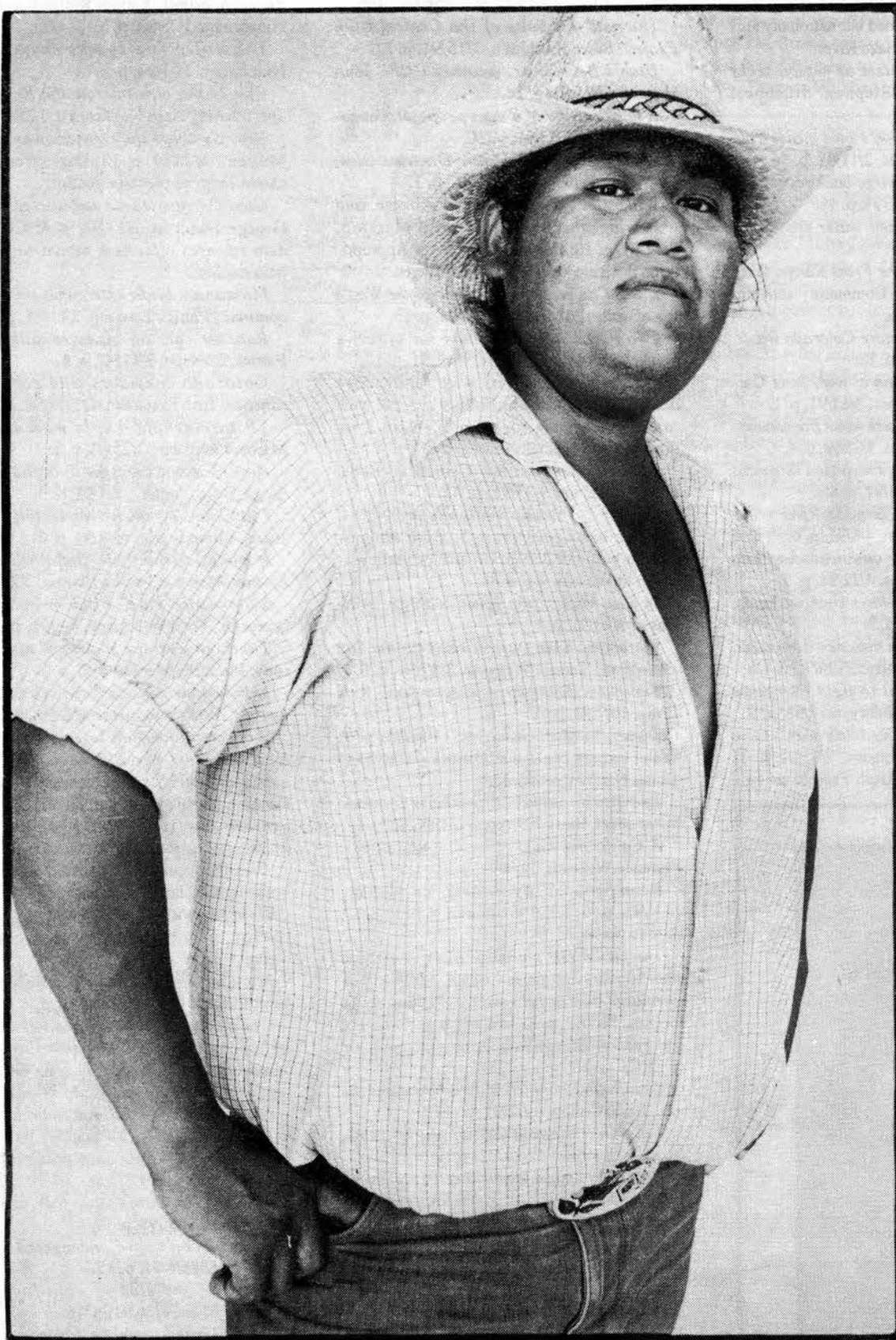
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SOMETHING ABOUT BEING AN INDIAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN RUNNING

CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN POETRY

For one thing, you can believe it:
the skin chewed soft enough to wear,
the bones hewn hard as a totem
from hemlock. It's a kind of scare-

crow that will follow you home nights.
You've seen it ragged against a field,
but you seldom think, at the time,
to get there it had to walk through hell.

Jim Barnes
Kirkville, Missouri

THE MAN FROM WASHINGTON

The end came easy for most of us.
Packed away in our crude beginnings
in some far corner of a flat world,
we didn't expect much more
than firewood and buffalo robes
to keep us warm. The man came down,
a slouching dwarf with rainwater eyes,
and spoke to us. He promised
that life would go on as usual,
that treaties would be signed, and everyone —
man woman and child — would be inoculated
against a world in which we had no part,
a world of wealth, promise and fabulous disease.

James Welch
Missoula, Montana

SOMETHING ABOUT BEING AN INDIAN

There's something about being an Indian
we say to each other in a Bishop saloon
both of us forty with pony tails
grown long down to our Levi butts.
Yes brother, it is the heart, and it is
the blood we share.
The heart alone is not enough.

There's something about being an Indian
we say in soft whiskey voices that remember
many soft, brown women.
We laugh past the window and its vision
of constant traffic, the aimless yuppies
bound for the ski lodges.
Snow must be licentious for such fools:
white sheets to be soiled with temporal chill.
Yes, there's something about being an Indian
we say as we exit into the warmth
of Hell's secondary nature,
a place we call the Fire Water World.

Adrian C. Louis
Pine Ridge, South Dakota

BACKLASH

The cage bars are buzzard brown
deeply brown
as if intending to be
a deception of skin
angry and firm as I shake them
in my velocity dance.

They do not rattle
but laugh out loud.

My finger bones,
reproduced in your books, x-rayed into helplessness,
shatter. I am silenced
and ground under
your bulldozing chant.

Things are kept still
as ghosts are polishing the chains.

It's not that your songs
are so much stronger
or your feet more deeply
rooted, but that
there are
so many of you

shouting in a single voice
like a giant child.

Wendy Rose
Coarsegold, California

ALL WINTER

In winter I remember
how the white snow
swallowed those who came before me.
They sing from the earth.
This is what happened to the voices.
They have gone underground.

I remember how the man named Fire
carried a gun. I saw him
burning.
His ancestors live in the woodstove
and cry at night and are broken.
This is what happens to fire.
It consumes itself.

In the coldest weather, I recall
that I am in every creature
and they are in me.
My bones feel the terrible ache
and want to fall open
in fields of vanished mice
and horseless hooves.

And I know how long it takes
to travel the sky,
for buffalo are still living
across the drifting face of the moon.

These nights the air is full of spirits.
They breathe on windows.
They are the ones that leave fingerprints
on glass when they point out
the things that happen,
the things we might forget.

Linda Hogan
Idledale, Colorado

DANDELION

In grease-bubbling heat
a soft orange alley cat spats
streaking through bleak and battered traffic
to reach the slim shadow of a dead palm tree.
He, too, is a survivor.
In this barrio of thieves and whores
in the murderous morning smog
I sweat cleanly into my last clean shirt
and march erect past my feline brother.
My broken watch tells me I am possibly late
to ask a man I despise
for a job washing dishes.
A dandelion in violent bloom
in a sidewalk crack mumbles something
when I hop over it and continue on my way.

Adrian C. Louis
Pine Ridge, South Dakota

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"The Man from Washington" appeared in the *South Dakota Review*. Welch's poems, *Riding the Earthboy*, 40, were reissued by Confluence Press in 1990.

"Contemporary Native American Poetry" has appeared in the *Mississippi Valley Review*, in Barnes' *American Book of the Dead*, and in anthologies, including *Dancing on the Rim of the World* (University of Arizona Press, 1990).

"Backlash" is from *The Halfbreed Chronicles and Other Poems* (West End Press, 1985).

"All Winter" is from *Savings* (Coffee House Press, 1988).

"Something About Being an Indian" and "Dandelion" are from *Fire Water World* (West End Press, 1989.)

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— Chip Rawlins, HCN poetry editor



Traditional dancer, Blood Tribe, Standoff, Alberta

Apaches split over nuclear waste

by Tony Davis

MESCALERO, N.M. — At the Inn of the Mountain Gods, a fountain bursts from an artificial lake; a tepee stands on the far shoreline. The \$20 million inn bills itself as "New Mexico's most distinguished resort." It's certainly one of the most opulent resting spots in the state, at \$238 per person for a two-night stay during ski season.

The inn is the product of the Mescalero Apaches, a tribe of 3,000 people who have built a string of economic success stories. Others are a \$30 million ski resort, a sawmill, a bingo parlor, a fish hatchery and two fishing lakes, cattle ranches and an elk hunt.

Few tribes have also proclaimed their attachment to the environment more consistently than the Mescaleros, whose leaders were making speeches about protecting the land long before it became fashionable.

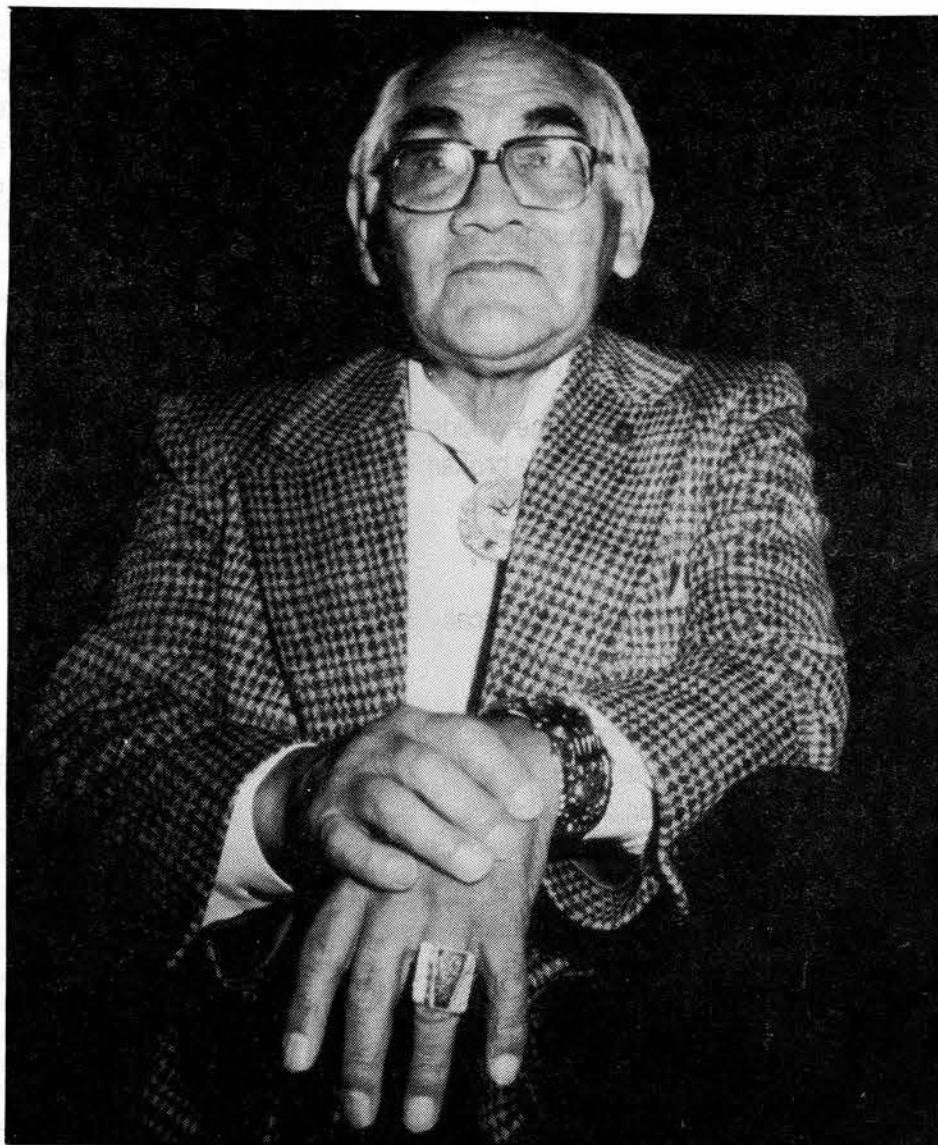
"To him (the Indian) the land was sacred," Mescalero president Wendell Chino told an Albuquerque audience in 1966. "A part of his God was the land. The land sustained man, and man did no harm to it."

Today, however, the marriage of progress and preservation on the 460,000-acre Mescalero reservation is threatening to crack. Tribal leaders were first in the nation to agree to study temporary storage of high-level radioactive waste from power plants. Called a "Monitored Retrievable Storage Study," it has turned Indians against Indians and Indians against Anglos.

Chino, tribal president for well over 30 years, is drawing most of the attacks from those who don't want the tribe in the business of storing spent nuclear fuel rods for 40 years. Over the years, Chino has also won most of the credit for making the tribe synonymous with progress.

Chino, now 66, has a small sign on his desk that says, "Be nice to me, I'm hard to replace." For many, it is hard to imagine the Mescaleros without him.

He's been hailed as a saviour and blasted as a dictator as he fought gov-



Mescalero president Wendell Chino

Ron Guerin

A successful tribe gets entangled with a hot issue

emors, judges and agencies on behalf of his tribe. He dismisses accusations that he wins elections by 2-1 margins through vote fraud.

He's known as a national pioneer in the battle for tribal sovereignty. He's won far more court battles than he's lost in efforts to assure the tribe's right to sell liquor, divert water from a river and conduct elk hunts.

But now his critics accuse Chino of being greedy. The

waste storage plan has drawn strong opposition from New Mexico Gov. Bruce

King and the state's two

senators. Plus, many residents in Ruidoso, a town on the reservation's eastern edge, say they fear a nuclear waste site could wreck tourism.

"Mr. Chino seems to think that because we have close ties to the earth, having nuclear wastes will be good for the reservation," says Mimi Hoahwah, a Mescalero nursing student who attends New Mexico University in neighboring Alamogordo.

"He's only looking at the dollar signs. He's not looking at the elders or the children."

But Chino, who once fought the U.S. Department of Energy's efforts to bring a permanent military nuclear waste dump to Carlsbad, N.M., is the kind of leader the DOE is looking for today.

For anyone willing to take the high-level nuclear wastes from commercial nuclear power plants, the DOE is dangling promises of millions of dollars in

annual payments (see story page 13). Plus, Energy Department officials are offering hundreds of jobs and countless benefits, such as schools, hospitals, airports, new roads, or virtually any other kind of public improvement one can imagine.

On the Apache Mescalero reservation, financial help would be welcome. While they're better off than they were 50 or 60 years ago when they lived in shacks and teepees, the tribe still has an unemployment rate of 35 percent. When the tribe applied for and received the \$100,000 MRS grant last October, Chino was in the midst of his campaign for re-election.

Since then, four other tribes and two county governments in five Western states, plus Minnesota, have applied for similar federal grants (see stories page 15). The battle over this temporary waste dump is shaping up as another in a long string of fights over Eastern wastes coming west. Nearly 85 percent of the nation's high-level nuclear wastes today sit in pools or in dry storage casks in reactors east of Mississippi.

For Chino, much of the furor over the waste study is premature. He says he and his tribe see the storage scheme simply as a prospective business venture and a chance to help the country solve a national problem.

"Right now, I have no desire other than to complete the study," says Chino. "If it's not feasible, we won't go forward."

"I don't play games with my people," Chino said. "They put their trust in me, and I remain faithful with that trust."

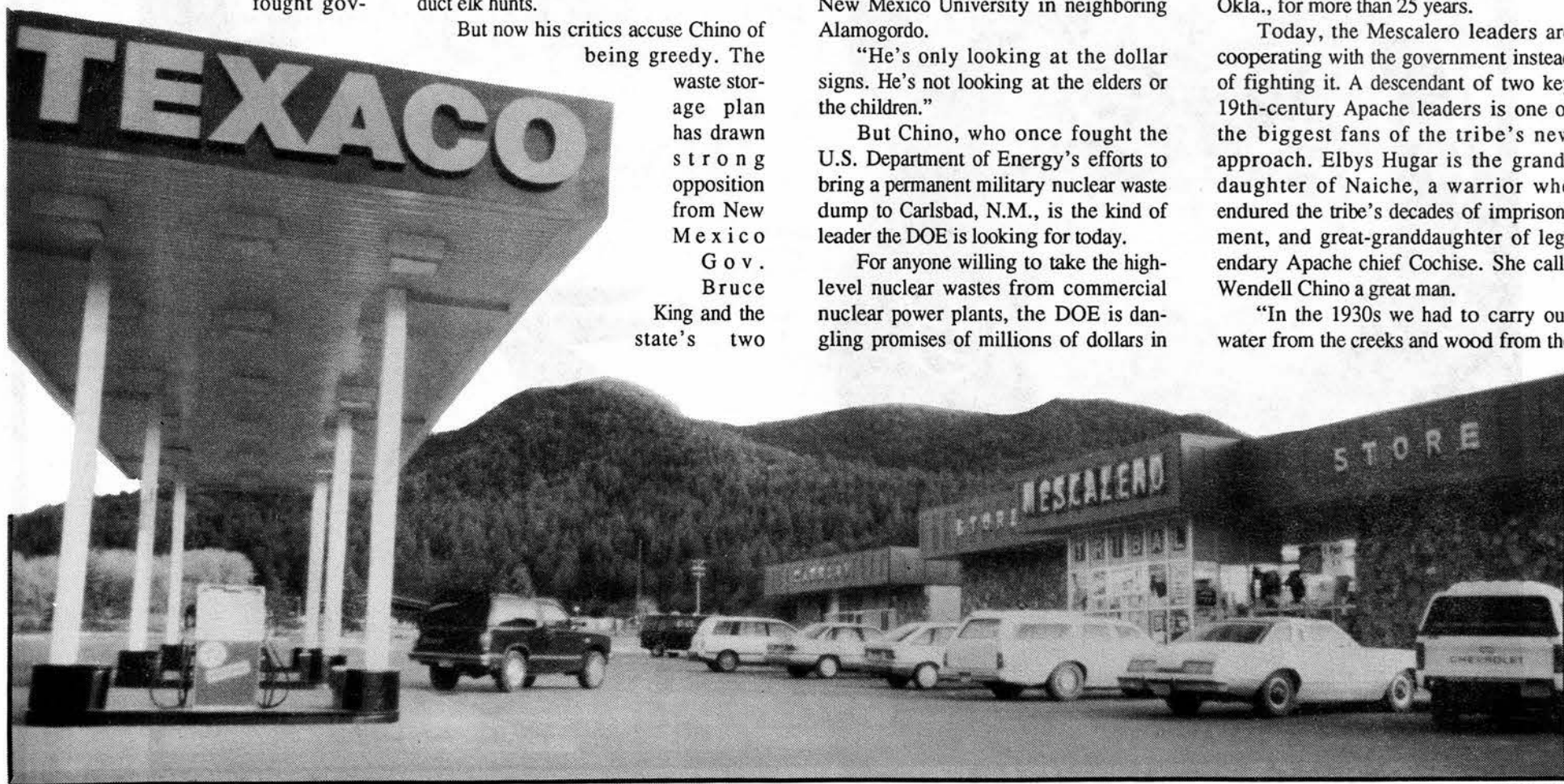
REMEMBER GERONIMO

The history of the Apache Mescaleros is anything but serene, even by the standards of late 19th-century U.S. government-Indian relations.

From the 1850s until 1886, government troops and Apaches waged unremitting war in southern New Mexico, with death and destruction punctuated by brief, fruitless efforts at peacemaking. The fighting stopped only when the U.S. government exiled 390 members of a band of ancestors of the current Mescaleros, including warrior Geronimo, to Florida and later to Fort Sill, Okla., for more than 25 years.

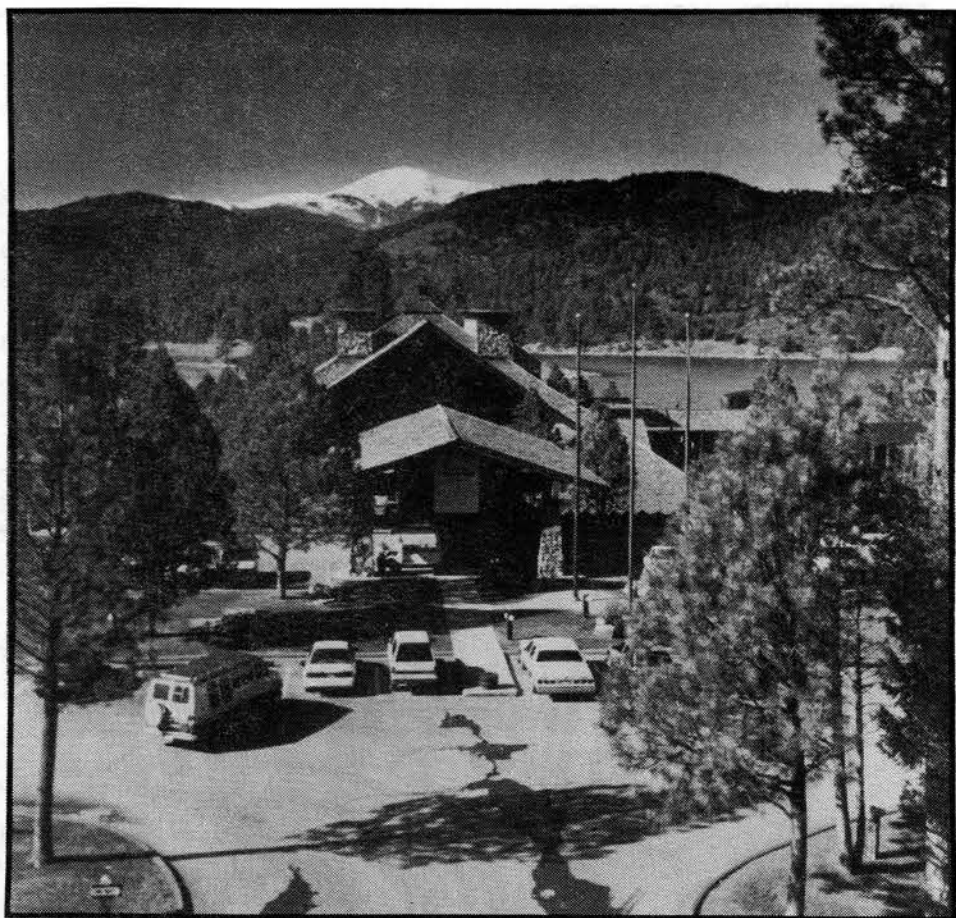
Today, the Mescalero leaders are cooperating with the government instead of fighting it. A descendant of two key 19th-century Apache leaders is one of the biggest fans of the tribe's new approach. Elbys Hugar is the granddaughter of Naiche, a warrior who endured the tribe's decades of imprisonment, and great-granddaughter of legendary Apache chief Cochise. She calls Wendell Chino a great man.

"In the 1930s we had to carry our water from the creeks and wood from the



Ron Guerin

The giant Mescalero store on the reservation



Inn of the Mountain Gods

Ron Guerin

mountains," says Hugar, who runs the tribe's cultural center. "In those days, we used straw to make mattresses.

"Now we all live in new homes, and we have running water in the houses, we have electricity in the house, heat and bathrooms. Wendell is the one who brought us here."

Tribal members today work as clerks and managers of their resorts, counselors for health care agencies, loggers at the sawmill and managers at the fishing lakes. They live in frame-stucco and concrete block houses that could belong to a modern American suburb.

Hugar answered questions about her views on the nuclear waste study by telling a story about her great-grandfather. "Cochise wanted us to change from the beginning to the white man's ways. He made friends with the white man, he learned how to talk English and how to get along with white people.

"Today, I know this waste is something very important to all of us, but for myself, I really don't know what to do. If it's safe for the people, it's OK, but for my grandchildren and children, they should know what it is," Hugar says.

But two men who descend from another great Apache warrior, Geronimo, are the leaders of those who say the wastes don't belong here. Brothers Joseph and Harlyn Geronimo have run and lost repeatedly against Chino for tribal president, and have peppered each defeat with charges of vote fraud. Harlyn made the most recent effort against Chino; he lost 493-210.

At a recent meeting of tribal members on the waste study, Joseph Geronimo asked nuclear waste consultants and tribal leaders pointed questions again and again.

"Every single treaty we've ever made with the U.S. government has been broken," Geronimo says. "What recourse do we have if the government breaks this?"

"This treaty will be approved by both houses of Congress and signed by the president," replies Miller Hudson, a Denver, Colo.-based nuclear waste consultant for the tribe. "Number two, it will be a legally binding contract that will be enforced in court."

"All the other treaties that were broken by the U.S. government were heard in the courts, but what did we get from it?" retorts Geronimo.

Today, the Geronimo brothers and their followers are using the waste issue to raise old concerns that Chino is out of

touch with his people. They've held meetings to organize opposition and have linked with critics in nearby Ruidoso to form a united Anglo-Mescalero front against the project.

The Mescaleros' introduction to nuclear waste was quiet, so quiet that many tribal members say they knew nothing about the issue until the study

was virtually a done deal.

It started in July 1990, when nuclear waste consultant Hudson flew to the reservation to discuss another proposal: to temporarily store far less dangerous plutonium-tainted wastes from the Rocky Flats weapons plant in Colorado, until the Waste Isolation Pilot Project was ready to open outside Carlsbad, N.M.

The idea never flew because the federal government never issued a formal request for proposals for the projects. But Hudson managed to build bridges with the Mescaleros.

Their elementary school had burned down a few months earlier, and they needed textbooks and desks for their temporary building. After hunting around Denver, Hudson came up with 300 desks and about 100 boxes full of textbooks. Critics were later to view Hudson's action with suspicion; Hudson portrayed it as a simple act of helping.

"I kind of went out on a limb and figured we were going to be a partner with the Mescalero Apaches, on all problems, not just things we were interested in," says Hudson, a former two-term state legislator and Denver County Democratic Party chairman.

A year later, Hudson and other private nuclear consultants were back again, this time to discuss the high-level waste storage issue. In August 1991, the tribal council voted to apply for the \$100,000 federal grant, and the application hit the New Mexico newspapers in early October.

Within weeks, opposition had bro-

ken out. In late October, the pastor at St. Joseph's Mission told reporters that 85 percent of the church's 300 members were against the waste storage plan.

A reporter's informal interviews among about 20 Mescaleros found that three-fourths were opposed. Even some Chino supporters were speaking against the plan.

"It's just the thought of nuclear waste," says Beverly Kirgan, wife of a tribal councilman. "I don't know much about it, but I don't want it. No one that I know is for it. I just have a feeling that if they put this up for a vote, it will be 'no' all the way around."

A half-dozen tribal members said they were opposed to the idea of storing nuclear wastes, but didn't want their names printed.

"There's a lot of fear on the reservation now," says Donalyn Torres, an activist who lost badly to Chino in the September tribal primary election. "You could cut it with a knife."

Stories and rumors about a darker side of life on the reservation under Chino began to surface. The most common rumor was that Chino was pushing the waste proposal because tribal businesses such as the Inn were ailing. Harlyn Geronimo, who makes bronze sculptures of the Apaches' mountain gods, noted that annual tribal dividend payments to members had dropped from \$500 to \$100 over a decade.

Chino, however, denied the tribe had financial problems. He said it had

Continued next page

Wanted: homes for spent fuel

It will look like an industrial park and work like a nuclear version of a garbage transfer station. It has a political history as tangled as spaghetti, and there's a respected body of opinion that says it isn't even needed.

But for now, a Monitored Retrievable Storage project (commonly known as MRS) is the only game in the United States for storing high-level nuclear wastes. Billed as a temporary above-ground bunker, it's supposed to provide breathing room for the federal government so it can start moving spent fuel rods off the grounds of nuclear reactors without having to wait until a permanent site opens. Under federal law, an MRS project is supposed to stay open no more than 40 years — unless it gets its operating license renewed.

The project would cover about 450 acres. A single site could store up to 15,000 tons of highly radioactive spent fuel rods, standing 12 to 18 feet high and shielded from the public by mammoth steel or concrete casks.

Nationwide, about 20,000 tons of spent fuel rods exist today and DOE estimates the number will top 40,000 by 2000.

The rods, whose gamma rays can penetrate skin and kill on contact, would travel from nuclear power plants to the storage plant by truck or rail. Later, they could be shipped to a permanent repository planned at Yucca Mountain, Nev.

The U.S. Department of Energy is now promising 500 to 1,000 jobs that pay salaries of up to \$45,000 to any state or tribe that hosts an MRS. It's offering states and Indian tribes additional payments of \$5 million to \$10 million a year.

In the past few months, the

Mescaleros and the Grant County, N.D., government have each received \$100,000 federal grants to study the storage scheme. Four Indian tribes in Oklahoma, Minnesota and Washington state and the Fremont County government in Wyoming have applied for similar grants (see stories page 15).

The Energy Department says an MRS would be safe because its wastes could be easily watched.

"This has got to be one of the most benign facilities we can contemplate," said Tom Isaacs, director of strategic planning for DOE's civilian radioactive waste program in Washington, D.C. "It's not like a reactor or a coal-fired plant. You put the stuff on a pad and watch it until it moves on."

But over the years, the idea of an MRS has brought controversy. Proposals by DOE and private contractors to build them have been killed in three Eastern states. When DOE tried to build this plant in Tennessee in the middle 1980s, state officials produced a study saying it would hurt the economy and tourism.

Environmental groups, such as the Washington, D.C.-based Don't Waste U.S., have warned that the fuel rod storage casks could leak if their seals break or an air pressure buildup causes a rupture.

"This material takes away the ability of the average mind to deal with it," said Bill Petty, a Ruidoso, N.M., landowner and Texas businessman who says he used to work with fuel rods as a federal contractor. "This stuff will do it to you — it's putting out so much radiation and it's so unpredictable."

Since the first round of MRS proposals died in the middle 1980s, Congress has revamped the system that looks for a home for this plant. To

ease fears that DOE would ram a site down someone's throat, Congress created a new Office of the Nuclear Waste Negotiator. The job of negotiator David Leroy is to find a volunteer host.

Opponents' biggest fear, however, remains the same as it was five years ago. They're worried that the "temporary" storage plant will become a permanent dump site in disguise, as the opening of the Yucca Mountain, Nev., repository keeps slipping.

It's now slated to open in 2010, but nuclear waste consultant Miller Hudson has predicted it probably won't open until 2020.

DOE is under heavy pressure from the nation's electric utilities to take the fuel rods off their hands a lot sooner. All utilities operating nuclear power plants have signed contracts committing DOE to take title to the fuel rods in 1998. But in a recent report, the General Accounting Office warned that controversy over the storage project probably will delay its opening, and that the utilities probably will sue DOE.

Many critics have said this plant isn't needed. "A number of studies and industry representatives have concluded that virtually all utilities should be able to store their spent fuel through their plants' licensed life and beyond," the General Accounting Office said in its report.

"Do I think the utilities can do that? Yes. But it would be absolutely irresponsible," said DOE's Isaacs. "The nation has a commitment to take responsibility for high-level wastes, and it's not going to do that at 120 reactor sites around the country."

— Tony Davis

Mescalero Apaches split over nuclear waste ...

(Continued from page 13)

only recently invested \$35 million in the ski resort for improvements.

Geronimo claims to have recently gotten two letters threatening his life, although he never pressed charges. He and several other tribal members say Chino denied them access to tribal financial records, although Chino insisted in an interview that any Mescalero could see them whenever they wanted.

Critics Torres, Geronimo, Juanita Makil and Francine Nagoosh say they or their spouses had either gotten fired or been unable to get jobs after they spoke out against Chino's policies.

Chino and other high-level tribal officials, however, say the critics were either victims of the recession or had acted improperly by attending political meetings without notifying their employers.

"This is not a democratic place — it's like communism," says Makil, who today works for a tribal social service program. "One person rules the area, and people are afraid to speak up on anything. They're afraid for their jobs."

In an interview before the election, Chino scoffed at the idea that he is too powerful. He said if people didn't like him, they wouldn't keep re-electing him.

Flipping through an appointment book, Chino noted the scores of tribal members who had gotten in to see him and reminded a reporter that he had been able to walk into the president's office "without going through two or three secretaries."

"Wendell Chino doesn't run a closed shop, he doesn't run a closed government," Chino says.

But after the election, Harlyn Geronimo filed a vote fraud complaint with the Tribal Court because the tribe's election board had refused his request to appoint an election observer. The court turned him down.

"The two candidates for Tribal Council who engaged in deceit, lies and smear campaign all lost," Chino says in a post-election press release. "My opponent, Harlyn Geronimo, was the lowest vote getter in the election. He ended up at the bottom of the pile."

NOT ON TRIBAL LAND

Where both sides agree is that the tribal land is still sacred. It's a blissful place, where endless groves of piñon and juniper dot the hillsides and where deer and elk roam the highways at night.

After the storm broke over the waste project, Chino sent a letter to tribal members promising not to put the waste on the reservation. The tribe has talked of buying private land or trying to get federal land transferred to them for the site.

So far, officials have looked at three locations. One is the Three Rivers area in desert flats west of the reservation on the edge of the White Sands Missile Range. Another is in alkali flats just off the reservation's southeastern edge. The third once was the home of U.S. Army outpost Fort Stanton, which, consultant Hudson noted pointedly, the U.S. government used as a base of operations to ride herd over the Apaches 120 years ago.

The Mescaleros have also told the federal government they don't want the wastes without certain assurances. For instance, they say they don't want workers at the MRS site to have to open the metal-encased spent fuel rods and

repackage them into new containers to ship to a permanent repository.

Since last fall's election, tribal leaders have held numerous meetings to explain the study to members.

"The tribal council will not be blind to the hazards that may exist with the project based on the study and we will not let money or financial gain overshadow the safety and well-being of our tribal members," Chino says in his letter to the tribe.

When he built the Inn of the Mountain Gods and the ski resort, Chino recalled, he had to relocate people living in those areas, but he consulted with them first.

"Do you think we would have moved those people out without getting their approval? No way," says Chino. "Until we determine the feasibility of the project, we're not going to say we'll put it here or we'll put it there."

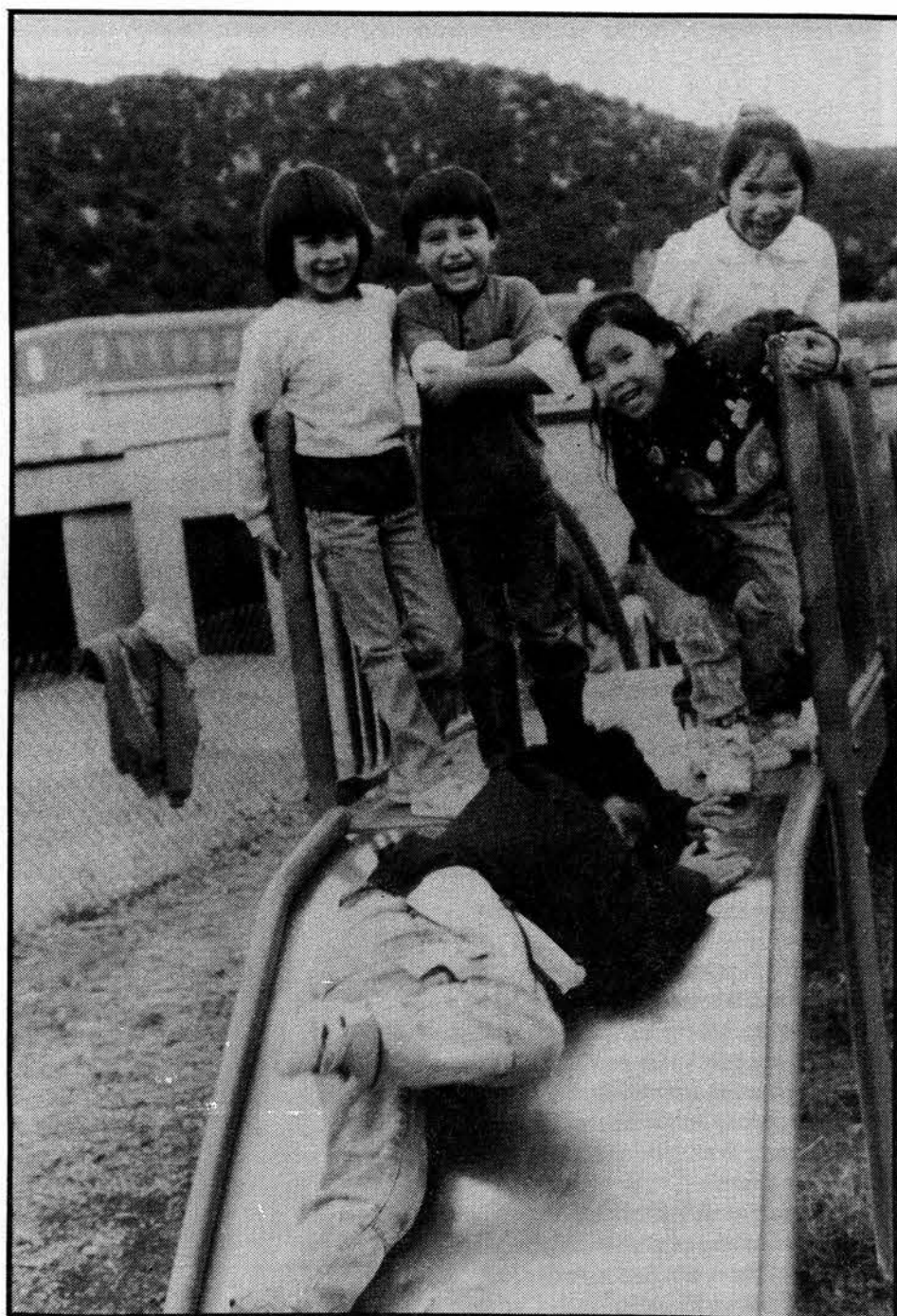
Whether it goes on or off the reservation, the high-level waste project will have few friends in New Mexico's state government. The first day the project became publicly known, Gov. King told Chino he was adamantly opposed. Since then the governor's opposition has grown stronger.

"He's resigned to WIPP (the Waste Isolation Pilot Project), but he's digging in his boot heels to discourage the idea that New Mexico be seen as a further repository of nuclear storage," King's press secretary John McKean says. "New Mexico has no large commercial power plant reactors. We don't feel we should be responsible for high-level wastes."

"We've got a lot of open space here, and not many urban areas, and it's real dry," McKean says. "So at first glance, people think this may be a good place to bring wastes. They will be hearing increasingly from those of us who live here that that may not be the case."

Chino declined to speculate whether he'll try to push the proposal through over King's opposition. But he noted that the state is already filled with leftovers from the nuclear era.

First, noted Chino, there are the Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories, which dumped wastes on the ground in the 1940s and 1950s. Then, uranium mines and tailings piles are all



Ron Guerin

Children playing at the reservation's elementary school

ties, there always was room for another one. Now that an Indian community comes along, people say 'time out, we've done our part.'"

NEIGHBORS SAY NIMBY — NOT IN MY BACKYARD

In Ruidoso, the waste proposal has triggered fears of economic disaster. The city is a virtual colony of tourists, mainly Texans, with a year-round population of 4,500. But it jumps to 25,000 during the summer when thousands pack Ruidoso Downs to see the All-American Futurity, long the nation's richest quarter-horse race.

More than 60 percent of the homes are vacation homes. One former resident, Renee Castle of the Dallas area, sold her

does he need a ski lodge?"

There's been no love lost between the tribe and Ruidoso over the years. Some Mescaleros have told consultant Miller Hudson about bigoted signs in the 1960s Ruidoso stores. The signs said: "No dogs or Indians." And many Ruidoso residents fought Chino years ago when the president wanted to build an artificial lake for his Inn of the Mountain Gods. The lake needed water from a stream that eventually goes through Ruidoso.

In 1985, the local *Ruidoso News* lampooned the Mescaleros' decision to change the name of their ski resort from Sierra Blanca to Ski Apache. They printed a cartoon showing Wendell Chino's head on the mountain where the resort lies. Chino, angered, promptly cancelled a plan that the tribe and city were working on to build a railroad line from the reservation to Ruidoso.

"There's a love-hate relationship between us and Chino, no question about it," says longtime Ruidoso Realtor Bill Hirschfield. "But we're happy to have the tribe as neighbors. They're a very progressive tribe, and they've done a lot for the community."

"But what I'm hearing from clients of mine now is: What is Wendell trying to do?" Hirschfield says. "What game is he playing? Is he serious? Does he have another motive?"

That may not be clear for months or years. Tribal leaders and their consultants insist that they mean business, but won't decide to proceed until they've consulted with their neighbors, and even with anti-nuclear groups.

But the final decision whether to build this site rests with Congress. And there, any opposition may not mean much when powerful states like New York, Florida and California swing their weight. ■

Tony Davis is a staff reporter for the *Albuquerque Tribune*.

Both sides agree the tribal land is still sacred.

over the Navajo reservation. There's also White Sands Missile Range, 60 miles west, where the first atomic bomb test exploded nearly 47 years ago.

"Why don't those officials look at the situation at Sandia lab? Why don't they walk the canyons of Los Alamos? Why didn't these officials ask the Mescaleros if they could set off the atomic bomb 60 miles from here if they are so concerned about the welfare of my people and the people of this state?" Chino says.

Consultant Hudson charged that racism underlined much of the opposition.

"Here's a state where DOE and New Mexico have done a lot of these waste dumps and screwed them up for a fare-thee-well," Hudson says.

"As long as it was Anglo communi-

family's 1,400-square-foot home just before Thanksgiving because she didn't want nuclear waste "in her back yard." A half-dozen other people in Ruidoso say they've put off or cancelled plans to buy land or a house because of the nuclear waste study.

Although the Ruidoso city council and county commission have opposed the nuclear dump study, Castle said many people in Ruidoso still think nothing will happen.

"They think Chino is playing one of his games again. He isn't. There's too much money at stake," Castle says. "When you throw that much money at anyone, you see what happens to our politics every day. He doesn't even have to have the ski lodge if he gets this thing going. If he gets \$10 million a year from the DOE, why

Waste project lures hard-luck areas

Fremont County application opposed by the Wyoming Outdoor Council

Like the rest of Wyoming, Fremont County crashed in the mid-1980s. While most of the country pulled itself out of a recession, the county lost most of its uranium and all of its iron-ore mining jobs, and more than 3,800 people became unemployed. The population dropped from 40,250 in 1980, to 33,600 in 1990.

Fremont County, in west-central Wyoming, also lost nearly two-thirds of its assessed valuation, dropping from \$514 million in 1983, to \$202 million in 1989. It has only now slightly rebounded to \$241 million.

"One thing after another kind of piled up and hit the economy," explains Mike Morgan, a county administrator who cites these dismal figures about the area's economy in the 1980s. For more than seven years, he adds, the county's unemployment rate was well above the national average. The suicide rate was, too.

That helps to explain why the county's commissioners were happy to greet a new economic development proposal, making them among the first in the country to apply for a \$100,000 grant to study locating an MRS in the county. The acronym stands for Monitored Retrievable Storage for high-level radioactive waste.

"To my knowledge no one's ever lost their life because of a MRS facility," Morgan says. "But we have people in Fremont County who have blown their brains out because they've lost their jobs, their homes and their life savings. There are some people who are strong advocates of MRS because of economic considerations."

Stephanie Kessler, executive director of the Wyoming Outdoor Council, a Fremont County-based organization, fails to share his enthusiasm.

"If it's such a great deal, why has it been fought everywhere?" she asks. Her group, founded in 1967, is pushing the commissioners to put the issue on the ballot to let the voters decide.

Kessler is sure "if an election were held today it would lose big. I think generally lots of people oppose it." The council lists five reasons it opposes any MRS facility — not just in Fremont County:

- "It's not needed," Kessler insists. The council quotes a September 1991 Government Accounting Office report that states "virtually all utilities can store their waste on-site well beyond ... 2010," the earliest date a permanent site at Yucca Mountain, Nev., could begin storing spent fuel rods.

- "It's too costly and a waste of money." A 1987 Tennessee study estimated the MRS benefit-cost ratio at best at 1:4, and that did not include the millions promised host communities, the council says.

- "The MRS ... creates the potential for greater health and safety risks" than storing the waste on-site at reactors. Transportation, rehandling the waste, and "DOE's awful record on nuclear waste" increase the risk, Kessler says.

- "Promises of economic benefit are doubtful." Nevada has laid off state workers, the council claims, because

the state budget was figured on receipt of funds promised by DOE for Yucca Mountain. "History shows that DOE does not deliver," Kessler says.

- MRS threatens permanent geologic disposal for nuclear waste. A 1989 Tennessee report said interim storage at an MRS would be an indication "DOE is not effectively dealing with the disposal problem." That means an MRS facility could become a "de facto repository."

So far, one other county and five Indian reservations have bitten at the government's offer of \$100,000 to study whether they want the facility. The Mescalero Apache tribe in New Mexico and Grant County in North Dakota have each received study funds. In Oklahoma, two tribes, the Sac-Fox Nation and the Chickasaw Indian Nation, have

North Dakota county's MRS effort prompts a recall election

Times are tough in North Dakota's rural, southwestern Grant County. Only one implement dealer survives in the farming and ranching area, and when teenagers graduate from high school, they leave and don't come back, laments a county commissioner.

"We had four drought years and depressed farm prices," Commissioner Ray Miller explains. "The drought years really put the 'kabosh' on."

Then an economic development project came along that could bring millions of dollars to the area each year and employ as many as 400 people. That is a significant number in Grant County, where Elgin, the largest town, has a population of 700. The project is MRS, which stands for Monitored Retrievable Storage for high-

initiating a feasibility study is the first step toward having a nuclear waste dump in Grant County," said Marty Ketterling, vice chair of the opposition group. "The people of this county are not being fooled into believing otherwise," he told the *Grant County News*.

The commissioners wouldn't listen to his group, Bertch said, so the group began a recall effort that will culminate in a vote March 10. Bertch says the group collected 900 signatures to force a recall.

"We had no other alternative," he said. "They wouldn't yield to public sentiment. We felt it was the only option left to us."

The three commissioners, who voted unanimously to apply for the \$100,000 grant, will face three people chosen by Bertch's group, plus three others.

"We hope to get re-elected," Miller said. "We haven't done anything wrong."

Miller said the commissioners planned from the start to hold a referendum in the autumn, after an advisory group had gathered information about MRS. The group is chaired by a "neutral" person and includes three opponents and three proponents of MRS, he said.

"We felt as commissioners it would have been not even right to make them vote for something they don't know anything about," Miller said. "Let them learn and let them make an intelligent decision. Nobody knew — we didn't even know nothing about it."

What Miller does know about the MRS is that North Dakota could receive \$10 million each year for the 40 years the site could exist, and Grant County would get one-third of that money. Grant County would also get the security, maintenance, equipment operator and clerk jobs promised. The DOE also mentioned something about hospitals, schools and roads to offset the impact of the site, but Miller said no specifics were spelled out.

"The benefits for hosting a site are phenomenal," he added. However, Jerry Torstenson, a member of the Dakota Resource Council, told the *Grant County News* that he thinks the DOE's job figures are exaggerated.

For now, both sides appear to be at an impasse. Bertch's group is waiting for the recall election, when he is confident the three candidates his group supports will be able to take office and stop the MRS study.

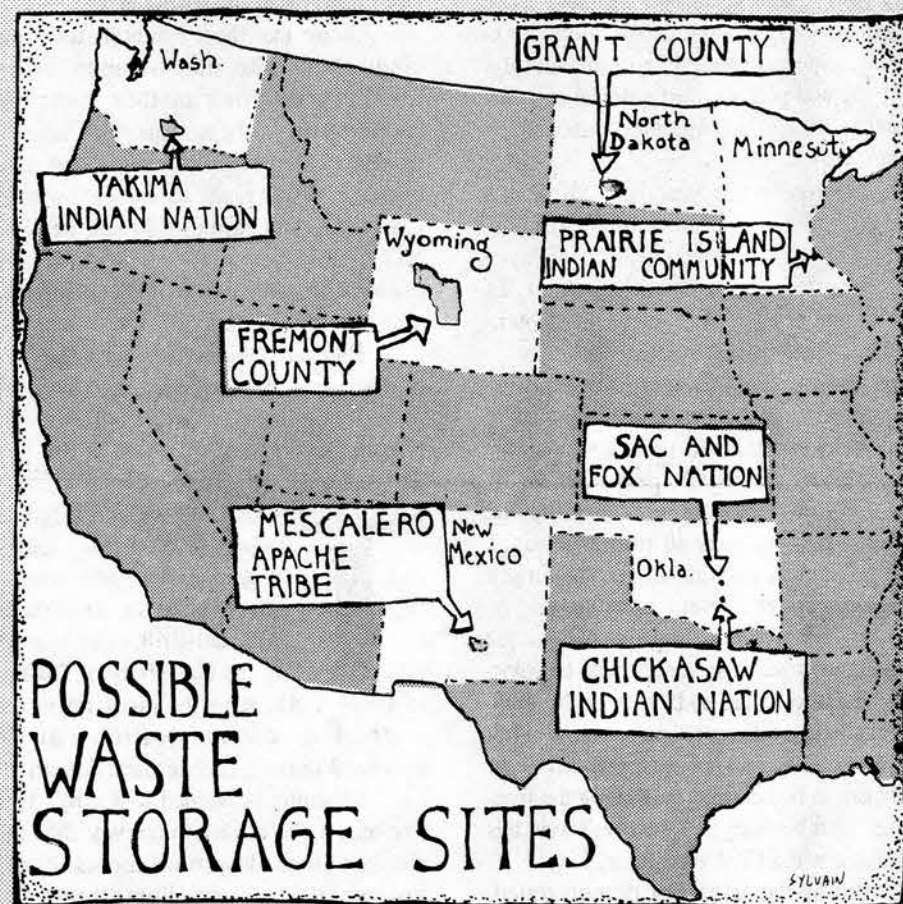
However, the commissioners have already received the \$100,000 for the initial study and are applying for the advanced study grant, Commissioner Miller points out.

This news doesn't please MRS opponents. "I don't know what their motivation is to move so quickly," Bertch said. One guess is that the commissioners are hurrying the process before they are voted out of office, and he worries that the new commissioners won't be able to stop the process.

What he hopes is that "once our commissioners get elected they can say, 'That's enough, fellows. You can go home.'"

Citizens Against a Nuclear Waste Dump can be reached by writing David Bertch, Rural Route, Carson, ND 58529. Grant County Commissioner Ray Miller can be reached at HCR 3 Box 16, Flasher, ND 58535.

— Melinda Merriam, HCN intern



applied for the study funds, as have the Yakima Indian Nation in Washington and the Prairie Island Indian Community in Minnesota.

Initially, applicants can receive up to \$100,000 to study anything they want relating to nuclear waste, explained DOE spokeswoman Samantha Williams. Applicants can later apply for up to \$3 million for further study and to begin serious talks with David Leroy, the independent negotiator for the government.

Morgan says the Fremont County commissioners have never said they definitely want a nuclear storage dump. They want to study the idea. A soon-to-be appointed citizens advisory board will become the local experts on nuclear waste, he adds.

Kessler says she is highly skeptical of the group making decisions. "What I want to push them on is to come up with some objective process where everybody has a voice."

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is at 201 Main, Lander, WY 82520. Mike Morgan can be reached at P.O. Box 1700, Riverton, WY 82501.

— Melinda Merriam, HCN intern

level radioactive waste.

"If it's safe and if the people want it, there could be economic development for Grant County," Miller says.

David Bertch, chairman of a newly formed group called Citizens Against a Nuclear Waste Dump in Grant County, agrees the local economy needs a boost. But he doesn't believe the MRS facility is the answer.

"Times are tough, but there's tough times all over," said Bertch, a farmer and rancher near Carson, the county seat whose population is 350. "I guess economic development is what this thing is all about. But I disagree. We don't want this here, and the people of Grant County don't want this here. We think it's dangerous."

When they learned about the possibility of the MRS facility in their county, Bertch and others went to the commissioners with a petition opposing the grant application. Out of a county population of 3,500, more than 600 people had signed the petition, which asked the commissioners not to apply for the study grant. The group also wanted the issue put on the ballot for residents to vote on before the study began.

"The reality of the situation is that

Don't even think of parking here!

Panels seek radiation warnings that will travel well through time

—by Florence Williams

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Imagine southeastern New Mexico in 100 years. Imagine it in 1,000 years, and then in 10,000 years. Picture a world in which vengeful, militant feminists destroy all signs of 19th century patriarchy. Or imagine the U.S. invaded by the totalitarian state of Eastlandia. How about a spaceship spewing malfunctioning lasers over Carlsbad?

It's not The Twilight Zone. It's the Department of Energy.

A team of experts came up with the futuristic scenarios for the Energy Department last year. Two weeks ago in Albuquerque, N.M., another team assembled to consider the scenarios and present a system for communicating with human civilization in the distant future. Their message: Stay away from our civilization's nuclear waste.

Thanks to federal environmental laws, the DOE must take into account the next 10 millennia when planning for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste from bomb-building. In only five decades of making weapons, the DOE has generated 2.4 million cubic-feet of nuclear waste. It plans to bury it in the \$1 billion Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, known as WIPP, now almost fully constructed in the high New Mexican desert.

Known as the Marker's Panel, the Albuquerque team was given the task of designing a monument for the WIPP repository so that the next 300 generations might recognize it. If the site were accidentally drilled into by, say, scavengers attracted by the area's high metal readings in the year 8,000 A.D., and radionuclides leaked out, the DOE would be violating federal waste disposal regulations.

"We take it very seriously," said Rip Anderson, chief of WIPP's performance assessment division. "It's a crazy regulation but we have no choice."

As speculative as future predictions may seem, one thing is certain: Radioactive waste will still be around. Plutonium, uranium and neptunium, among other elements used in building weapons, contain some isotopes that won't decay for thousands and even tens of thousands of years.

"The stuff exists and something has to be done with it," said panelist Fritz Newmeyer, a linguist at the University of Washington and a self-described anti-nukes radical from the '60s. "At first I was reluctant to be on a DOE panel, but nuclear waste is very real."

Joining Newmeyer were other humanist scholars, including anthropolo-

gists, archaeologists and psychologists, as well as materials scientists, geologists and astronomers.

Presenting what is probably the first report to the Energy Department ever to quote Perry Bysshe Shelley ("Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!"), the panelists tackled some of the more unexplored aspects of long-term radioactivity.

"It was part art, part science and part science fiction," commented panelist Jon Lomberg.

During the last year, the 11 experts split into two separate teams, Team A and Team B, a sort of "radioactive Olympics" as one panelist put it. In Albuquerque, the teams presented potential designs for marking the WIPP site.

Both teams considered not marking the site at all, but decided it was better to risk calling attention to the repository than leaving its hazards unexplained.

"We have a moral responsibility and a legal responsibility to mark the site," said Team A archaeologist Maureen Kaplan, a Massachusetts consultant.

In fact, Team A linguist Newmeyer argued the marking system should be colossal. "To work, it has to be one of the architectural and artistic wonders of the world. It must be on the scale of the pyramids to get scholars to bother with translating the message," said Newmeyer. "We don't want this confused with a Civil War statue."

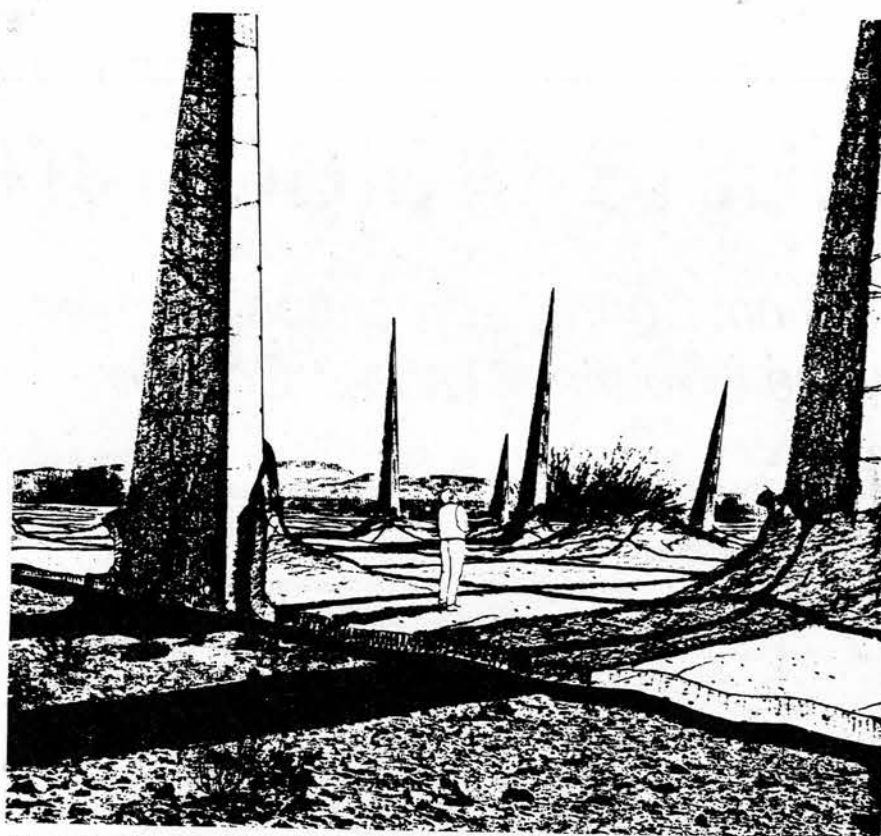
But as the assembly demonstrated, communicating a complex message to future generations is no easy task. Over thousands of years, languages evolve, political institutions change, climates swing and physical materials disintegrate. During the last 10,000 years, humans emerged from the stone age at the end of the pleistocene and developed agriculture.

Perhaps not surprisingly, several of the Albuquerque panelists were involved in the government-funded Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence Project.

"The problems of communicating with extra-terrestrials are analogous to communicating with human intelligence in the distant future," said Lomberg, a Hawaii-based graphic artist. "My designs are on a satellite that will orbit the galaxy for the rest of time. Compared to that, 10,000 years is small potatoes."

In Albuquerque, Lomberg presented the draft marker plans of Team B. The team's overall design included giant stone monoliths inscribed with warnings written in European, ancient liturgical and Native American languages.

But in case New Mexicans in the 20th century have difficulty interpreting 20th century texts, Lomberg's team came up with alternative strategies using symbols



Does "spikes bursting through grid" say "Radioactive, keep out?"

Team A draft report

and pictures. Proposed symbols included the 20th century's ubiquitous smiley-face, but wearing a frown and sticking its tongue out, the skull-and-crossbones poison sign, the radiation trefoil and the image popularized by the movie Ghostbusters, the "Do Not" slash (as in "do not dig here").

Aware that these symbols, too, may elude those who stumble upon WIPP, Lomberg unveiled another plan: The comic strip. In these sequential images, Lomberg depicted workers at the 20th century WIPP plant receiving radioactive waste and storing it in salt deposits half a mile below the surface. He also drew a picture of a man becoming ill after opening a drum of waste.

"Pictographs have a long history in human art," explained Lomberg. "The most recognizable aspect to these is the human stick figure."

Team A took a different approach. The team lacked a graphic designer; instead there was an architect. Michael Brill, who teaches at the University of Buffalo in New York, says the most universal method of communication can be achieved through architectural design.

"Meaning is bonded to form," Brill explained. "We want to convey that this site is odious, dangerous, thorns, chaos, poison, destruction. Something that denies welcome and habitation."

Brill proposed elaborate outdoor sculptures that would cap the two-mile-square surface of the underground WIPP site. His favorite, "Landscape of Thorns," was not practical, though, because stress-fractures would likely develop over thousands of years in the joints of the giant concrete spikes, he said.

Another favorite sculpture designed to repel future colonists was entitled "Menacing Earthworks." This consisted of 50-foot tall concrete lightening bolts laid out in a grid above the buried waste. Other proposals were "The Black Hole," a giant concrete slab resembling a giant parking lot; "The Spike Field;" "Rubble Landscape;" and "Forbidding Blocks."

It did not take Team B long to trounce Brill's blueprints.

"How do you know it won't be mistaken for art?" demanded Lomberg. "Art is ambiguous as well as powerful," he continued. "Art draws people to it. You don't want this to become a major pilgrimage center, with hotels drilling for water."

Lest the meanings of Team A's sculptures be misinterpreted, Brill explained that the stone and concrete markers would also include simple lin-

guistic messages, for example:

**DANGER
POISONOUS RADIOACTIVE
WASTE BURIED HERE
DO NOT DIG OR DRILL HERE
BEFORE 12,000 A.D.**

Another, slightly more complex, message explains that radiation is "invisible energy," and ends, "You don't want to live here."

If the science of futuristic communication seems imperfect, the Department of Energy nevertheless determined to attach numerical probability to the panel's ideas. What was the likelihood the markers would survive 10,000 years? That inadvertent intruders would find the site? That they would understand the markers?

Both teams assigned probabilities to the latter question of less than 50 percent. "Predicting the future is folly," apologized the panelists, whose total research cost U.S. taxpayers approximately \$500,000.

What, if anything, the agency will do with the designs is uncertain. The Environmental Protection Agency is currently rewriting its nuclear and hazardous waste disposal regulations.

"If the new regulations say we will have markers, then we will have markers," said WIPP's Anderson.

Meanwhile, WIPP in New Mexico has yet to receive its first shipment of nuclear waste. Currently, the plant's 900 employees keep busy running tests and practicing with dummy steel drums to the tune of \$300,000 a day. Before the real thing can arrive, Congress must approve transferring the New Mexico land from the Interior Department to the Energy Department.

New Mexico's congressional delegation also wants to iron out a few wrinkles before 800,000 drums arrive, such as how much money the DOE will give the state for highway costs, and which U.S. regulatory agency will oversee the operation.

Another hurdle for WIPP is that it must convince the EPA its operation is safe. In WIPP's underground salt caverns, excavated for housing waste, 100-ton slabs have begun falling down. Brine is also seeping in, which worries some critics because of the likelihood of radionuclides escaping into groundwater.

"The site is seriously flawed," said Don Hancock of the Santa Fe-based Southwest Information and Research Center. Hancock said he is also skeptical about the work of the marker's panel. "DOE should be spending its money on making WIPP less dangerous in the present." ■

Florence Williams is a *High Country News* staff reporter.