The Sustainable Psychologist

Newsletter of the APS Environmental Interest Group

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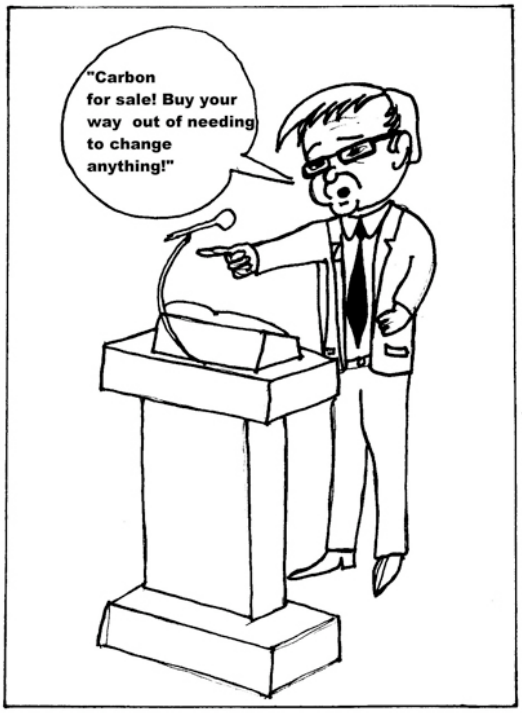
Introducing: Bev Ernst

I am a psychologist in private practice in Launceston, Tasmania and for the past three years also worked 2 days a week at the APS as Private Practice Advisor, a position I have recently resigned from.

I became involved in environmental issues when I first became aware of the significant impact that logging operations were having on individuals and communities here in Tasmania. Five years ago Gunns announced they were planning on building the world's biggest pulp mill on the banks of the Tamar River in the beautiful Tamar Valley, home to vineyards, orchards, organic farms and 100,000 people just trying to go on with their lives. As a psychologist, I have been able to use my skills and knowledge to research and write submissions and provide advice to environmental groups. Recently I conducted a survey on the Psychosocial impact that the pulp mill proposal has had on Tasmanians and especially those living in the proximity of the mill site and have just completed the report with the assistance of Joe Reser.

I've just put my money where my mouth is and was asked to preselect for the Greens for the upcoming Tasmanian State election as a support Candidate for our sitting Green member in Bass. The election is to be held on 20 March so the next month will be a busy one.



Contributed by Alfredo Zotti.

The Editor's Rave

Why I care about the future

As you may (or may not) have heard, I have been elected to the Board of the APS. One of my aims is to make the society a shining environmental example to follow. We are already doing well, but we can do a lot better.

I am brimming with ideas, but, hopefully, so are you. If you can think of a way that an organisation of 17,500 members can reduce its impact on the planet, then let me know. Email me at bob@bobswriting.com.

Some of the things I'd like to see:

- As many APS staff as possible to work from home at least part of the week, using modern telecommunications;
- Some jobs now limited to Melbourne can similarly be done by people anywhere in Australia, without commuting;
- This will allow the use of smaller office facilities, with a saving in cost, less air conditioning/heating etc.
- Using internet teleconferencing to replace as many face to face meetings as possible, with reduced air flights, interruption of busy people's week, staying in expensive air-conditioned hotels;
- Some PD activities presented via the internet, again minimising travel, and the use of financially and environmentally expensive venues;
- Change the annual conference to minimise the need for air travel and hotel occupancy, while maintaining its networking opportunities.

OK, now it's over to you. Any more suggestions?

☺

Bob Rich, Ph.D., MAPS

The APS Environment Interest Group – An Invitation
by Dr Joe Reser

This document from Joe is a resource you can use when talking with other psychologists, including students. We need to encourage all our colleagues to take the environment seriously.

The Psychology and Environment Interest Group has become active again, following a period of inactivity from 2003, with the energy and commitment of some new members, and reflecting continuing strong interest of members across the environmental domain and the urgency of issues such as climate change, habitat loss, water scarcity, and environmental degradation. The group would like to extend an invitation to any interested psychologists, including psychology students, to become a member and be involved in some way in the greening of our profession and the profiling of some of the diverse involvements which psychologists have with 'the environment', with an emphasis on the Australian context.

So what does 'Psychology and the environment' encompass? We see this umbrella phrase encompassing environmental psychology, 'conservation psychology', and many other areas of psychology and applications of psychology where the nature of people's perceptions of, experience of, connections with, or impacts *on* and *of* their natural and built environments are particularly important, and/or where pressing 'environmental' issues or problems would benefit from a psychological analysis and consideration, or from psychological theory and research findings, ideally in a collaborative, interdisciplinary context.

The most frequently asked questions of environmental psychologists are typically: What is environmental psychology? What is conservation psychology? What are psychologists actually doing in the environment arena? There are no brief answers to these questions, but for the present purpose we would answer that:

- Environmental psychology is an area of applied psychology which places particular emphasis on people-environment interrelationships and transactions. While the 'environment' of interest and focus is typically the physical environment, including both the natural, biophysical, environment and human designed and modified physical environments, the 'environments' encompassed within environmental psychology include human and social environments and 'behavior settings', institutional environments, learning environments, information environments, virtual environments, and local and global climactic environments. Environmental psychology is a now well-established area of applied psychology which has been going strong since the late 1960s, with specific environmental psychology journals, courses, textbooks, handbooks, and graduate programs (e.g., Bechtel & Churchman, 2002; Bell et al., 2001; Bonnes et al., 2003; Gifford, 2007; Ittelson et al., 1970, 1974; Stokols & Altman, 1987). Areas of specialisation within environmental psychology and bridging other disciplines include architectural psychology, urban and regional planning and design, environmental evaluation and impact assessment, environmental perception and cognition, restorative environments, place attachment and identity, clinical environmental psychology, disaster preparedness and response, conservation behaviour and sustainability in-

itiatives, the effects of climate, ergonomics, natural resource management, etc. While psychology programs in Australia offering subjects in environmental psychology are few, there are now many psychologists working in Australia whose honours or postgraduate research focus was in an environmental psychology or other environment and psychology area.

- 'Conservation psychology' is a new name for a convergent area of applied psychology which has been more directly involved with conservation initiatives, targeted behaviour change to protect the natural environment, people-animal interactions, and the human side of natural resource management. Conservation psychology is also a network of researchers and practitioners who work together to understand and promote a sustainable and harmonious relationship between people and the natural environment (e.g., Saunders, 2003; Saunders, Brook & Meyers, 2006).
- Ecological psychology refers both to the work of environmental perception and cognition, following from the work of Gibson (1966, 1979) and the revolutionary and paradigmatic shift proposed by more contemporary theorists (e.g., Heft, 2001; Reed, 1996). Ecological psychology also refers to the work and perspective of Barker and his disciples (e.g., Barker, 1968, 1976; Wicker, 1979, 2002), the developmental framework of Bronfenbrenner (e.g., 1979), and some more recent psychological perspectives on environmental problems and sustainability (e.g., Howard, 1997; Winter, 1996).
- Ecopsychology is a much more encompassing humanities and cultural studies perspective and movement concerned with people-natural environment connections and well being, with some psychology representation, but with roots in the broader environmental and human potential movements, and strong spiritual and therapeutic leanings and objectives (e.g., Reser, 1995; Roszak et al., 1995).

There are other similar sounding names to environmental psychology, but which cover overlapping and typically multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary domains. These include environment-behavior studies, environment-behavior research, and people-environment studies or transactions. A source of some confusion is that 'environmental psychology' is frequently used by nonpsychologists as an encompassing term synonymous with all of the above.

The membership of the Psychology Interest Group is diverse, with some members having a long history working in the area of environmental psychology, others having spent much of their professional lives working in areas such as architectural psychology, urban design and planning, organisational psychology, natural resource management, CSIRO, therapeutic environment design, and outdoor recreation and leisure studies.

Others work across diverse areas of psychology, concerned about and/or are directly involved in initiatives relating to the sustainability and integrity of our natural environment, and local, national and global multidisciplinary projects relating to climate change, urban renewal, and environmental degradation.

An important objective of the interest group is to foster a greater involvement by psychology and psychologists across the spectrum of environmental challenges facing Australians and the global community. We feel that climate change constitutes particularly critical social and environmental issues which require a renewed commitment and involvement — and an informed ecological literacy — on the part of psychology.

There are many excellent sources for finding out more about psychology and the environment. A good starting point is the recent APS Position Statement on *Psychology and the Natural Environment*. A short list of book sources is included at the end of this handout.

A brief list of core sources and cited references

Barker, R.G. (1968) *Ecological psychology: Concepts and methods for studying the environment of human behaviour.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Barker, R. (1976) On the nature of the environment. In H.M. Proshansky, W.H. Ittelson & L.G. Rivlin (Eds) *Environmental psychology: People and their physical setting.* Second Edition. (pp12-26). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Bechtel, R.B. & Churchman, A. (2002) (Eds) *Handbook of environmental psychology*. New York: Wiley.

Bell, P.A., Greene, T.C., Fisher, J.D. & Baum, A.S. (2001) *Environmental Psychology*. Fifth Edition. New York: Harcourt College.

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Gardner, G.T. & Stern, P.C. (2002) *Environmental problems and human behaviour*. Second Edition. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Gifford, R. (2007) *Environmental psychology: Principles and practice*. 4th edition. Colville, WA: Optimal Books.

Howard, G.S. (1997) *Ecological psychology: Creating a more earth-friendly human nature.* South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Ittelson, W.H., Proshansky, H.M., Rivlin, L.G., Winkel, G.H. & Dempsey, D. (1974) *An introduction to environmental psychology.* NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Ittelson, W.H., Proshansky, H.M., Rivlin, L.G. (1970) (Eds) *Environmental psychology: Man and his physical setting.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Kaplan, R., Kaplan, S. & Ryan, R.L. (1998) *With people in mind: Design and management of everyday nature.* Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Kaplan, R. & Kaplan, S. (1989) *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, E., Dietz, T.H., Dolsak, N., Stern, P.C., Stonich, S. & Weber, E.U. (2002) (Eds) *The drama of the commons*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

Reser, J.P. (2003) Thinking through 'conservation psychology': Prospects and challenges. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 167-174.

Reser, J.P. (2001) Situating and representing psychology, environmental psychology, and conservation vis-a-vis the natural environment and other perspectives and disciplines. *Population and Environmental Psychology Bulletin,* 27, 4-7.

Reser, J.P. (1995) Whither environmental psychology? The transpersonal ecopsychology crossroads. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15, 235-257.

Roszak, T., Gomes, M.E. & Kanner, A.D. (1995) (Eds) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Saunders, C. (2006) What does 'conservation psychology' really mean? *Population and Environmental Psychology Bulletin*, 1.

Saunders, C.D. (2003) The emerging field of conservation psychology. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 137-149.

Saunders, C.D. & Myers, O.E. (2003) Special issue: Conservation psychology. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 1-193.

Saunders, C.D., Brook, A.T. & Myers, O.E. (2006) Using psychology to save biodiversity and human well-being. *Conservation Biology*, 20, 702-705.

Schmuck, P. & Schultz, W.P. (2002) (Eds) *Psychology of sustainable development*. Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Stern, P.C., Young, O.R. & Druckman, D. (1998) (Eds) *Global environmental change: Understanding the human dimensions*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Stokols, D. & Altman, I (1987) (Eds) *Handbook of environmental psychology*, Vols 1 & 2. New York: Wiley.

Wicker, A.W. (2002) Ecological psychology: Historical contexts, current conception, prospective directions. In R.B. Bechtel & A. Churchman (Eds) *Handbook of environmental psychology* (pp 114-126)). New York: Wiley.

Wicker, A.W. (1979) *An introduction to ecological psychology*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Winter, D.D.N. & Koger, S. (2004) *The psychology of environmental problems*. Second edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Winter, D.D.N. (1996) *Ecological psychology: Healing the split between planet and self*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Selected Resources

Journals

Journal of Environmental Psychology
http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws'home/622872/description#description

Environment and Behavior
http://eab.sagepub.com/

Population and Environment
www:Springerlink.com/content/105738/

Human Ecology Review
www.humanecologyreview.org

Journal of Architectural and Planning Research
www.japr.homestead.com/homeC.html
Newsletters
Bulletin of People-Environment Studies
www.iaps-association.org
Population and Environmental Psychology Bulletin
www.apa34.org
IAAP Newsletter
www.psy.gn/iaap/IAAP'newsletter.htm
Organisations
American Psychological Association
Division 34, Population and Environmental Psychology
www.cas.ucf.edu/psychology/APA34/
International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP)
Division 4, Environmental Psychology
www.iaapsy.org
Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA)
www.edra.org
International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS)
www.iaps-association.org
Conservation Psychology
www.conservationpsychology.org
The Society for Human Ecology (SHE)
www.SocietyforHumanEcology.org

Events

ICAP, 11-16 July 2010, Melbourne

I am one of the reviewers of submissions for presentation at ICAP in Division 4: Environmental Psychology. There were so many that initially I was assigned 50 abstracts to look at! Since I DO have other things to do, I begged off and "only" judged 25.

Let me tell you, it's going to be a fascinating program. Must attend.

Conservation for a Changing Planet
Conference, 3-7 July 2010, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

I write to invite those of you interested in species and ecosystem conservation to participate in the 24th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB), the 2010 meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB). SCB is a international professional organization with more than 10,000 members around the globe (see www.conbio.org for more information).

The meeting is in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (near the beautiful Canadian Rockies) on July 3-7, 2010. The theme of the meeting is "Conservation for a Changing Planet." Because of the focus on environmental change, the meeting will highlight the importance of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to conservation.

The SCB's Social Science Working Group (SSWG) is making particular efforts to encourage social scientists to consider this invitation, in the hopes of widening SCB's international network of social and policy researchers who are doing work in applied conservation. SSWG is a global community of conservation professionals interested in the application of social science to the conservation of biological diversity. With nearly 700 members in 65 countries, SSWG is home to social scientists (anthropologists, economists, historians, human geographers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and many others), ethicists, natural scientists, and conservation practitioners (governmental, nongovernmental, and business sectors).

Since 2005, SSWG has worked closely with the SCB annual meeting organizing committees to stimulate social science contributions for the meetings. In each year since then, the prevalence of social science and integrative conservation, reflecting the marriage of social and natural science, has increased significantly. We hope to continue that trend in Edmonton, with strong social science and integrative contributions that will promote collaborations between social and natural scientists interested in conservation issues that transcend location- or case-specific application.

SSWG is especially trying to engage conservation scientists (natural and social) in the questions raised by the recent paper "One Hundred Questions of Importance to the Conservation of Global Biological Diversity" (Sutherland et al. 2009, *Conservation Biology* vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 557-567). This paper is an attempt to identify questions of critical importance to the future of conservation practice and policy, and we are particularly interested in researchers and practitioners who are themselves interested in engaging these questions.

Additional information on the meeting, including links to instructions for submitting proposals, is available here: www.conbio.org/2010

If you are interested in participating in the meeting and have additional questions, please contact me at tteel@lamar.colostate.edu.

For general information about SSWG, please contact Rich Wallace, SSWG's vice president and program committee chair, at rwallace@ursinus.edu.

Sincerely,

Tara Teel, Ph.D. tteel@lamar.colostate.edu
Assistant Professor & President, SCB Social Science Working Group
Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1480 USA

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy: Conference, 15-20 August 2010, California

Understanding human behavior will be critical as many of us seek to motivate more sustainable individual and organizational choices. Social science researchers have an important role to play, and that is why I am writing to you and your fellow task force members today.

The field I work in — energy efficiency — is seeking to better tap into the knowledge of social scientists to help us better advance a more sustainable use of energy (and thereby reduce the greatest human contribution to climate change). To this end, one of the premiere conferences on energy efficiency dedicates a week-long panel to the human and social dimensions of energy choices. The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy hosts the Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings in Pacific Grove, CA, every other year. This event attracts some of the greatest minds in our field to discuss a wide range of research and efforts to move us all in a more energy efficient direction.

For the 2010 conference (August 15-20), we are reaching out to social scientists from outside the energy field as well, so we can learn from their insights about human behavior and decision-making. Conversely, this conference is also a terrific venue for social scientists to learn more about current thinking and efforts to influence energy behavior. I would welcome your assistance in letting colleagues in psychology and other social science fields know about this conference. I have copied the web address for the conference announcement and a brief description of the human and social dimensions panel below.

http://www.aceee.org/conf/10ss/10ssindex.htm

Human and Social Dimensions of Energy Use: Trends and Their Implications. Panel Leaders: Ingo Bensch, Energy Center of Wisconsin and Christopher Payne, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

The exploration of the most complex component of energy-using systems: people who design, create, acquire, and use energy-consuming devices; lessons from various disciplines to illuminate how to understand and influence human choices that affect energy consumption with particular insights from the theoretical frameworks of social science disciplines.

Thank you for your consideration. My co-panel leader and I welcome any questions you might have about this conference.

Regards,

Ingo ibensch@ecw.org

What we can do

The Psychology of climate change communication

Dr Susie Burke has drawn my attention to http://cred.columbia.edu/guide/, an excellent, readable, succinct summary of how to influence an audience to take climate change seriously, and do something effective about it.

A few resources from Dr Jo Earl

I have come across these very interesting videos that you might like to share with others.

http://www.poptech.org/popcasts/?viewcastid=163

Dan Gilbert

Dan Gilbert is a Harvard Professor who talks about reasons why we ignore climate change. These include:

1. Global warming has no face;
2. It does not offend our moral sensibilities;
3. It threatens our future but not the present;
4. When the rate of stimulus is slow enough the change goes undetected.

George Kell is the leader of the UN Global Compact (which has 10 principles including climate change). He has some interesting observations to make about climate change and the GFC.

George Kell
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br'aV5SStPQ
Hope this is helpful.
Jo
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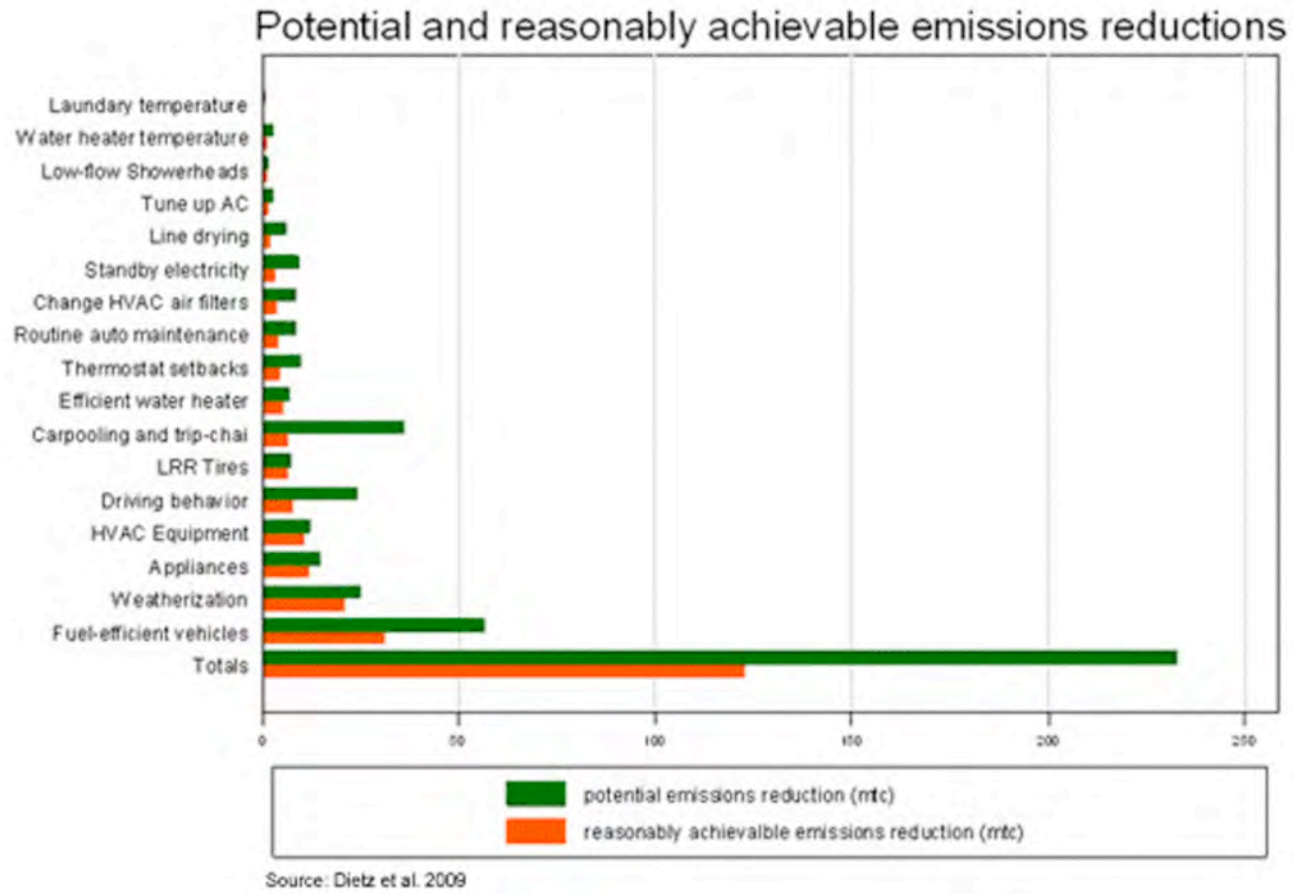
Individual Power:

Household actions can provide a behavioral wedge to rapidly reduce U.S. carbon emissions

Thomas Dietz, Gerald T. Gardner, Jonathan Gilligan, Paul C. Stern, and Michael P. Vandenbergh

Abstract:

Most climate change policy attention has been addressed to long-term options, such as inducing new, low-carbon energy technologies and creating cap-and-trade regimes for emissions. We use a behavioral approach to examine the reasonably achievable potential for near-term reductions by altered adoption and use of available technologies in U.S. homes and nonbusiness travel. We estimate the plasticity of 17 household action types in 5 behaviorally distinct categories by use of data on the most effective documented interventions that do not involve new regulatory measures. These interventions vary by type of action and typically combine several policy tools and strong social marketing. National implementation could save an estimated 123 million metric tons of carbon per year in year 10, which is 20% of household direct emissions or 7.4% of U.S. national emissions, with little or no reduction in household well-being. The potential of household action deserves increased policy attention. Future analyses of this potential should incorporate behavioral as well as economic and engineering elements.



Published online at PNAS before print October 26, 2009.
Source: http://behavioralwedge.msu.edu/index.php

Climate change denial as a form of grief
from Dr Thomas Joseph Doherty

There is a very good article by Rosemary Randall about loss and climate change in the upcoming issue of Ecopsychology. It's one of the better articles I have read in some time and has helped me to think in a more in depth way about coping with climate change. In fact, it and other factors of late have led me to refrain from using the term "climate change denial" or "denier." As Randall illustrates, there are a number of tasks associated with grief and a number of ways the process can be derailed. Along the progression, one may exhibit intellectual acceptance while still demonstrating signs of emotional working-through (e.g., numbness, idealization of what has been lost, manic activity). Also, there types of loss, some of which are imposed from without and others that are experienced as a conscious relinquishment.

From the *Ecopsychology* editorial:

In *Loss and climate change: The cost of parallel narratives*, Rosemary Randall addresses the parallel and often disconnected narratives present in public discourse regarding climate change: Images of a catastrophic future paired with mundane rhetoric of small steps, market transformation, and technological rescue. Randall analyzes case studies drawn from the Cambridge, UK Carbon Conversations program using a psychoanalytic framework of grief and loss. Randall illustrates how an intellectual acceptance of the reality of climate change can mask underlying denial about its emotional ramifications, and how the process of working through grief and loss can be derailed through negative responses such as idealizing the past or lapsing into hopelessness and withdrawal. Randall calls for a more sophisticated understanding of the processes of loss and mourning which will allow them to be restored to public climate narratives and help release energy for realistic and lasting programs of change. She concludes with examples of individuals who are moving through the grief and loss process toward a reinvesting of emotional energy in ecologically stable life choices.

Dr. Thomas Joseph Doherty uses his expertise about psychology and behavior change to help individuals and organisations become more healthy and productive. Through Sustainable Self, Thomas specializes in serving clients with ecological and socially conscious values. Thomas inspires insight, compassion and empowerment in the people that he works with, and guides a new generation of sustainable individuals and organizations.

Measuring the success of reconciliation

Anjanette DeCarlo and Saleem H. Ali

http://www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/innovations/data/000154

All too often we shy away from evaluating and holding humanitarian efforts accountable to their project goal. We want to assume that do-gooders are doing good, though even with the best of intentions reconciliation can be elusive.

In the absence of clear metrics for success, comparable across post-conflict zones, the profession of peacebuilding can be cynically dismissed by policy hawks. And with professional programs to train peace-builders developing worldwide, greater rigor is needed in this area. Furthermore, as resources for international peacekeeping operations become more limited, the stakes increase for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of humanitarianism.

The use of indices, such as the Human Development Index or the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, is widespread among donor agencies. Often such indices are used in post-conflict situations as an indirect measure of reconciliation. Yet they are a degree removed from the micro-level reconciliation processes that often take place at the community level. The lag time between those processes and their translation into broader development or corruption indicators can be several years. It is also possible to see improvement in development indicators without actual conflict resolution at the community level—latent rivalries may be temporarily suppressed only to reemerge under socioeconomic stress. An indicator with higher resolution is thus needed to assess the progress of reconciliation.

The need for such an indicator became particularly apparent to us while working with Fambul Tok, a nonprofit organization that facilitates unofficial community-based reconciliation in Sierra Leone. The first step in their process consists of a community deciding whether it wants to reconcile—the chiefs hold participatory meetings along with Fambul Tok facilitators to determine the will of the community. If the community decides to go forward, then committees are formed to oversee and organize the process. Over the next several months the community prepares for a culminating ceremony around a bonfire, where the victims speak out about what the perpetrators, who are present, did to them during the war. The perpetrators must publicly acknowledge what they did and ask the victims for forgiveness.

Following the bonfire ceremony, other cleansing actions are carried out according to local traditions. The committees also organize reconciliation activities, such as community gardening and soccer tournaments, to keep bringing the community together. Often perpetrators will take over the gardening responsibilities of their victims, and both will play together on the same soccer team. The cost of the ceremonies and activities is paid

for in part by Fambul Tok, but the community must also chip in to ensure commitment and ownership of the reconciliation process. These costs are no small detail in a land where starvation and extreme poverty are rampant.

The Fambul Tok process is quite different from that of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was held in Freetown, which was not the most impacted region during the civil war. Moreover, poor people from the rural parts of Sierra Leone had little means of traveling to Freetown to attend the Commission. The TRC gave victims a chance to testify about what happened to them, and while this is of course extremely useful, it is not equivalent to engaging the community in the design process of its own reconciliation. The end result of the TRC was a report of recommendations and findings (distributed on the Internet). It is a critically important document, albeit one that can't encapsulate the side-by-side soccer tournaments that victims and perpetrators are now playing in the remote rural areas where the fighting started.

Communities that have gone through the Fambul Tok reconciliation process are not only healing the wounds of the brutal civil war but also building capacity for sustainable development. The civil war destroyed community bonds and traditions along with lives and property, and now the participation in town meetings and reconciliation committees has empowered them. The ceremonies offer release, and this combination of release and empowerment generates a community that is ready to participate in its own development. With so many failures in development due to the divide between donors and recipients, professionals have come to recognize the critical importance of community-based, participatory development projects.

What is needed is a composite indicator to substantiate the impact of this reconciliation approach through surveys and analysis of the various criteria of lasting reconciliation. The indicator could be used to determine progress in the reconciliation process, which in turn could determine the disbursement of precious development resources, increasing the success of sustainable development overall.

There are several variables to consider when ascertaining the efficacy of traditional techniques such as Fambul Tok: a return to functional livelihoods; mental health indicators suggesting a recovery from post-traumatic stress; anger management strategies; and gender dynamics, particularly in the context of parenting and spousal relations.

An indicator would not only help the process of reconciliation be more transparent, accountable, and effective, but also highlight the importance of reconciliation in attaining the larger goals of development.

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The Transition Town movement is set to take over Sydney

See the Sydney Morning Herald http://www.smh.com.au/environment/pioneers-aim-for-cleaner-greener-lives-in-suburbia-20100101-lls3.html

Beyond Zero Emissions

...is a very practical group of people who have put together a plan to reduce Australia's carbon emissions to ZERO by 2020.

http://beyondzeroemissions.org/node

Ammunition

Nuclear Power and Climate Change
by Dr Jim Green

There are three main problems with the nuclear “solution” to climate change — it is a blunt instrument, a dangerous one, and it is unnecessary.

First, nuclear power could at most make a modest contribution to climate change abatement. The main limitation is that it is used almost exclusively for electricity generation, which accounts for about 25% of global greenhouse emissions. The 2006 Switkowski report found that 12 nuclear power reactors would reduce Australia's emissions by 8% if they displace coal-fired plants, or just 4% if they displace gas. Globally, doubling nuclear power would reduce emissions by about 5% but it would also result in the production of over one million tonnes of high-level nuclear waste and enough plutonium to build over one million nuclear weapons.

The second big problem with the nuclear "solution" to climate change is that all nuclear power concepts (including “next generation” concepts) fail to resolve the greatest problem with nuclear power — its repeatedly

demonstrated connection to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Not just any old WMDs, but *nuclear* weapons — the most destructive, indiscriminate and immoral of all weapons.

These risks are not hypothetical. There is already an alarming history of 'peaceful' nuclear programs providing the expertise, facilities and materials for nuclear weapons programs. Supposedly 'peaceful' nuclear programs have facilitated many nuclear weapons research and production programs. Of the 10 nations to have produced nuclear weapons, five did so under cover of a supposedly peaceful nuclear program: India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa and North Korea. Over 20 countries have used their 'peaceful' nuclear facilities for nuclear weapons research. (See www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear/issues/nfc/power-weapons.)

Former US Vice President Al Gore has summarised the problem: "For eight years in the White House, every weapons-proliferation problem we dealt with was connected to a civilian reactor program. And if we ever got to the point where we wanted to use nuclear reactors to back out a lot of coal... then we'd have to put them in so many places we'd run that proliferation risk right off the reasonability scale."

Running the proliferation risk off the reasonability scale brings us back to climate change — a connection explained by Alan Robock in The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: "As recent work... has shown, we now understand that the atmospheric effects of a nuclear war would last for at least a decade — more than proving the nuclear winter theory of the 1980s correct. By our calculations, a regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan using less than 0.3% of the current global arsenal would produce climate change unprecedented in recorded human history and global ozone depletion equal in size to the current hole in the ozone, only spread out globally."

The third major problem with the proposed nuclear solution to climate change is that it is unnecessary. A significant and growing body of scientific literature demonstrates how the systematic deployment of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency policies and technologies can generate major reductions in greenhouse emissions without recourse to nuclear power. (References to many of these papers are posted at www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear/issues/clean-energy.)

For Australia, a starting point is the study by the Clean Energy Future Group (CEFG). The CEFG proposes an electricity supply scenario which would reduce greenhouse emissions from the electricity sector by 78% by 2040, comprising solar (5%); hydro (7%); coal/petroleum (10%); wind (20%); bioenergy mostly from crop residues so it is not competing with other land uses (28%); and gas (30%).

The CEFG study is conservative in that it makes no allowance for technological advancement in important areas like solar-with-storage or geothermal power, even over a timeframe of several decades.

Recently, Dr Mark Diesendorf, who contributed to the CEFG study, has proposed a more ambitious scenario: "By 2030 it will be technically possible to replace all conventional coal power with the following mixes: wind, bioelectricity and solar thermal each 20 to 30%; solar photovoltaic 10-20%; geothermal 10-20%; and marine (wave, ocean current) 10%. Natural gas too, provided it hasn't all been sold to China, could be fuelling cogeneration of electricity and heat, trigeneration (electricity, heating and cooling), combined-cycle power stations and back-up for solar hot water, solar thermal electricity and wind power. There is an embarrassment of riches in the non-nuclear alternatives to coal."

More information: www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear/issues

Dr Jim Green is the national nuclear campaigner with Friends of the Earth (www.foe.org.au) and a member of the EnergyScience Coalition (www.energyscience.org.au). He has an honours degree in public health and a doctorate in science and technology studies for his thesis on the debates over the replacement of Australia's n uclear research reactor.

Actually, I can add two more points to Jim's excellent summary.

First, the lead time for building a nuclear facility is about 10 years, and it has a huge amount of embodied energy.

Second, the production of electricity by nuclear power releases very large amounts of heat that is in addition to solar input (the same problem as burning hydrocarbons). Heat generated by human activities is a major contributor to global warming, separate from and additional to the increased greenhouse effect.

Several book reviews
sent by Lance Olsen

Real Climate www.realclimate.org

Communicating Science: Not Just Talking the Talk

http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2009/09/communicating-science-not-just-talking-the-talk/

Michael Mann and Gavin Schmidt

OPENING 3 PARAGRAPHS

The issues involved in science communication are complex and often seem intractable. We've seen many different approaches, but guessing which will work (An Inconvenient Truth, Field Notes from a Catastrophe)

and which won't (The Eleventh Hour) is a tricky call. Mostly this is because we aren't the target audience and so tend to rate popularizations by different criteria than lay people. Often, we just don't get it.

Into this void has stepped Randy Olsen with his new book *Don't be such a scientist*. For those who don't know Randy, he's a rather extraordinary individual — one of the few who has run the gamut from hard-core scientist to Hollywood film maker. He's walked the walk, and can talk the talk. And when he does talk, we should be listening!

While there may be some similarities in theme with *Unscientific America* by Chris Mooney and Sheril Kirshenbaum we reviewed previously, the two books cover very different ground. They share the recognition that there is currently a crisis in area of scientific communication.

FULL TEXT at:
http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2009/09/communicating-science-not-just-talking-the-talk/

David Orr's recent book, *Down to the Wire*, declares that we need a cultural shift, in the form of reorganised priorities, to fend off climate scenarios out toward the worst case end of the spectrum. Economist Robert Costanza reviews Orr's book for *Nature*. I have it as pdf. Please feel free to ask.

Nature also published reviews of two other books relevant to conservation behavior versus non-conservation behavior. I see these as particularly relevant because it seems reasonable to me that our recent decades of economic growth have effectively "grown" us into simultaneous crises of both climate and finance.

Fool's Gold author Gillian Tett is most known as a reporter for Financial Times, which puts her in excellent position to explain how the global economic system went mad, leading to systemic catastrophe on a global basis. While Tett doesn't intend links to climate, I think that climate watchers will see parallels in whole-system failures of finance and climate.

Robert Shiller, co-author of *Animal Spirits*, is most known for a previous book, *Irrational Exuberance*, and for his studies of real estate economics. Both books were reviewed in *Nature*, in the same column. Again, climate is beyond the direct scope of *Animal Spirits*, but the book demonstrates core features of human irrationality that can as easily feed climatic crisis as it fed crisis of the economic kind. I have the review of both books as a pdf. Please feel free to ask for that one too.

Lance Olsen lance@wildrockies.org

India is serious about climate change

A report from Jasmine Greene on Care2.com http://www.care2.com/causes/environment/blog/india-leading-the-way-towards-a-greener-future/ outlines several initiatives by the Indian government. Unlike Australia's smoke-and-mirrors approach of focusing on how to appear to address climate change without interfering with business as usual, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced ambitious targets for the use of solar electricity, improved energy efficiency, maintaining the viability of important ecosystems including the Himalayas, water conservation, and public education on climate change.

Can we get this bloke to stand against Kevin in our next election?

Everyone can have the moral high ground

Hummer owners claim moral high ground to excuse overconsumption.

Hummer drivers believe they are defending America's frontier lifestyle against anti-American critics, according to a new study in the Journal of Consumer Research.

Authors Marius K. Luedicke (University of Innsbruck, Austria), Craig J. Thompson (University of Wisconsin–Madison), and Markus Giesler (York University, Toronto) researched attitudes toward owning and driving Hummers, which have become symbols to many of American greed and wastefulness.

The researchers first investigated anti-consumption sentiments expressed by people who oppose chains like Starbucks and believe they are making a moral choice by shunning consumerism. To these critics, Hummers represent the ills of contemporary society. As one extreme example, on www.fuh2.com, people have posted thousands of photographs of middle fingers directed at Hummer vehicles.

They investigated various Internet expressions of anti-Hummer sentiment, but they were equally interested in the ways Hummer owners framed themselves as "moral protagonists" in the ongoing debate over consumer values. They conducted in-depth interviews with twenty U.S.-born and raised Hummer owners and found among these consumers an equally strong current of moralism.

"As we studied American Hummer owners and their ideological beliefs, we found that they consider Hummer driving a highly moral consumption choice," write the authors. "For Hummer owners it is possible to claim the moral high ground."

The authors explain that Hummer owners employ the ideology of American foundational myths, such as the "rugged individual," and the "boundless frontier" to construct themselves as moral protagonists. They often believe they represent a bastion again anti-American discourses evoked by their critics.

"Our analysis of the underlying American identity discourses revealed that being under siege by (moral) critics is an historically established feature of being an American," write the authors. "The moralistic critique of their consumption choices readily inspired Hummer owners to adopt the role of the moral protagonist who defends American national ideals."

Marius K. Luedicke, Craig J. Thompson, and Markus Giesler. "Consumer Identity Work as Moral Protagonism: How Myth and Ideology Animate a Brand- Mediated Moral Conflict." Journal of Co n-sumer Research: April 2010 (published online September 18, 2009).

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How to improve the health of the population

Recently, Mr Rudd announced a forecast health cost blowout. Here is research to suggest a sol u-tion:

Life and death during the Great Depression

José A. Tapia Granados & Ana V. Diez Roux

Abstract

Recent events highlight the importance of examining the impact of economic downturns on population health. The Great Depression of the 1930s was the most important economic downturn in the U.S. in the twentieth century. We used historical life expectancy and mortality data to examine associations of economic growth with population health for the period 1920-1940. We conducted descriptive analyses of trends and examined associations between annual changes in health indicators and annual changes in economic activity using correlations and regression models. Population health did not decline and indeed generally improved during the 4 years of the Great Depression, 1930-1933, with mortality decreasing for almost all ages, and life expectancy increasing by several years in males, females, whites, and nonwhites. For most age groups, mortality tended to peak during years of strong economic expansion (such as 1923, 1926, 1929, and 1936-1937). In contrast, the recessions of 1921, 1930-1933, and 1938 coincided with declines in mortality and gains in life expectancy. The only exception was suicide mortality, which increased during the Great Depression, but accounted for less than 2% of deaths. Correlation and regression analyses confirmed a significant negative effect of economic expansions on health gains. The evolution of population health during the years 1920-1940 confirms the counterintuitive hypothesis that, as in other historical periods and market economies, population health tends to evolve better during recessions than in expansions.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Contributions need to be brief. Ideal is something to fit one page. I have reduced font size, so if it's all text, that's about 800 words. Pictures, tables etc. will reduce the word count. And shorter filler items are invaluable.

Particularly valued are responses to this issue, and to recent issues before it.

Content should be relevant in some way to psychology and the environment, using clear language. Anything inflammatory, discriminatory or libellous will be consigned to the deep.

The next issue is due out in November, 2010. Deadline 12th October, 2010.

Send contributions to bob@bobswriting.com.

☺

Bob

Acknowledgement

Much of the material included came to my attention thanks to Lance Olsen.