

Natural world's life key to survival

How ironic that America's Environmental Protection Agency administrator finds refusing to sign world treaties — designed to curb global warming and protect wildlife and its habitat — a "character-building experience."

Last week's earth summit brought government officials and environmentalists from 178 countries together in Brazil to discuss the earth's environmental future. The huge gap between rich and poor countries was obvious as representatives fought to have their perspective heard. Unfortunately, while many lesser-developed countries spoke up about the near-impossibility of saving the environment when it was all they could do to feed and care for their people, they still seemed to be striving to catch up to the larger powers that be, seeing that status as the only one worth achieving.

What they fail to realize is those countries' bigness is what's causing all the problems — the biggest offender being the United States. In order to begin saving this planet, the plan shouldn't be for everyone to get as huge, mechanized, industrialized and money-ized as possible; the plan should be for everyone to start scaling back.

America now has the lion's share of the pie, and we're obviously willing to do anything to keep it that way, ranging from pretending there's no problem to refusing to join international earth-protecting measures.

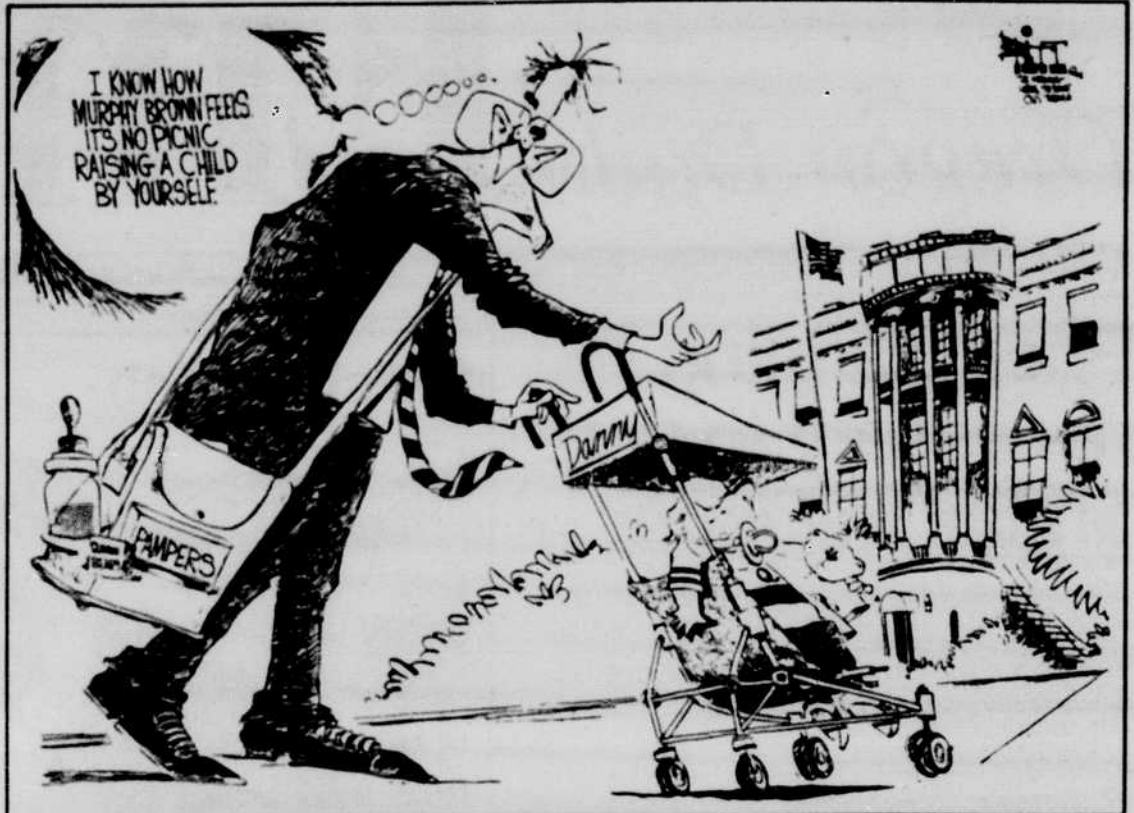
EPA administrator William Reilly spent last week's meeting defending America's hypocritical arguments against signing treaties set to slow the earth's environmental decline. And as stated, he found it to be character building. Why does this man, who supposedly represents the organization designed to monitor and protect America's environment, advocate no protective measures — either here at home or abroad?

Well, guess that's easy enough. Money. Progress. Power. Protecting the natural world and conducting a never-ending effort to "improve" and develop just don't go together. So guess which one wins here in America?

Sure, jobs are important. And the new America was built on innovation — something some people are proud of. But as we've stated so many times this year, without the natural world's survival, there will be no jobs, no innovation, no nuthin' quicker than you can say "die." Everything in this world is intertwined with the environment, even the most advanced technological toys. All at some point require natural resources; all depend upon the environment at the most basic level.

Saving the world's economy by saving its natural resources is far from the pinnacle reason for protecting the environment, but if that's the perspective the monied world must take to stop its rape and pillage, so be it.

Keep the environment, and we keep our economy, sanity, clean air and water. The natural world's well being is imperative to humankind's survival; it also deserves to live in and of itself.



LETTERS

Communication

In response to the article of May 27 in the *Emerald* concerning rape survivors, I feel that we must be repelled by the crime of rape as we would toward any assault on a human being.

Feeling this, I nonetheless strongly object to the sentiments expressed by Heather Gillman in the highlighted quotation at the top of page four. To me, the statements are slanderous and sexist.

I am certain that there would be a justifiable outcry raised by women if the quote had stated, "Every woman is a potential infant killer. Every woman is custom-tailored to infanticide through the media...."

The point is though some men are rapists; most aren't. Just as some women kill their babies, not all do. Blanket condemnations of either sex serve men and women not in the slightest. It's hard enough to communicate as it is.

Miltiades Mandros
Architecture

Faith

I would like to apologize to Dr. Otto Helweg (lecturer on "Scientific Proof of the Existence of God") and any others who drew the erroneous conclusion from my letter of May 19 that, since I find Helweg's views to reflect intolerance and bigotry, I conclude that Christians in general are similar in this respect. This is not at all the case!

I maintain Helweg's presentation was an example of intolerance and bigotry, not because of his Christian beliefs, but because of his statements that those who do not believe in God should have inferior individual rights under the U.S. Constitution to those Christians enjoy. Moreover, I feel his claim that the ethics of atheists and agnostics are totally lacking in validity reflects extraordinary intolerance since it dismisses the moral values of millions of people based simply on their faith.

Although I am not a theist, I studied theology and philosophy for four years at a Jesuit college. I am well aware that

other Christians practice tolerance in a way that Helweg does not. This includes observance of sexual freedoms as well as all other constitutionally protected rights; it includes observance of sexual and reproductive freedoms; it includes freedom from government-sanctioned religious observations. A June 1 letter to the *Emerald* by Vicki Travis is a good example of a tolerant, Christian approach that contrasts sharply with that of Helweg.

Peter O'Day
Neuroscience

Violence?

As an Earth First! activist, it is particularly interesting to see the destruction the Federal Building's windows referred to as a violent act. I am happy to see the beginnings of an open debate on what constitutes violence and I'd like to broaden the discussion.

I hope the following questions will stimulate further discussion of violence vs. non-violence: When is there a meaningful difference between violence directed toward property and violence directed toward living beings? Can you be violent toward an inanimate object? Is it a question of what is hurt or destroyed that determines violence, or is it based upon the intent and the emotions of the person involved in the act? I think that questions such as these can help each one of us come to a better personal understanding of what violence means to us.

Was breaking those windows a violent act? It is interesting to note that Martin Luther King distinguished violence against property from violation against life. I feel that this distinction is basic to any critique of laws, policies and institutions that exploit living things and exalt property rights above human/natural rights.

I personally hope that we look for the distinction between property rights and the rights of living things and discontinue blurring the distinction.

I think it is important to submit that no one person has a monopoly on the truth and that each of us has just a piece of it. With this in mind, I hope we can develop our personal work-

ing definition of violence.

More importantly, I hope we can open our own definitions to incorporate others. We need to find ways to support intentions without criticizing specific tactics. Finally, I hope we don't devote all of our time philosophizing and criticizing, because there's a lot of work to do.

Rebekah Ledwith
Student

Colors

An item that has appeared in the *Emerald* for the last couple of days has given me a warm feeling inside. It was an announcement appearing in the classified section depicting a triangle within a circle.

The explanation said that "a person displaying this symbol is one who will be understanding and trustworthy if a gay, lesbian or bisexual student or co-worker needs support or is seeking a positive environment."

It's so nice to know that anyone wearing the triangle can spot a homosexual out of a crowd and give him or her extra-special courtesy. I don't know how many times strangers have approached me, saying: "I'm bisexual. Can you give me directions to Burger King?" Of course, since I was not wearing this new "Safe Zone" badge, I rudely brushed them aside.

Now, homosexuals everywhere will know who to avoid based simply on whether or not a person is wearing the symbol. Kind of like Block Homes for children.

As my part, I will not bother those wearing the badge with my silly, unimportant heterosexual concerns.

Here's an idea: How about a system where heterosexuals approach only strangers wearing blue triangles. Black students should only approach those wearing red triangles, and Chicano students should avoid anyone not wearing a purple triangle. This way, all minority and special interest groups would have their own color.

I think this would make campus a much nicer place to live.

Tadd Van Cleve
Student

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