

ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER OF THE SECTION ON ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Open for self-nominations

WHAT'S A "FERNALD," AND WHY ARE WE GOING THERE?

William R. Freudenberg
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706

The annual meeting of the American Sociological Association always provides you with an opportunity to hear about some of the latest in research, and you'll be able to see from the summary that's contained elsewhere in this newsletter, this year's meeting in Cincinnati offers a particularly stimulating set of opportunities to hear about ongoing research. In addition, however, this year's meeting provides you with an opportunity to do a bit more research of your own.

If you haven't already made your plans -- or perhaps even if you have -- you may want to try to get in at least one full day before the start of the "official" ASA sessions. On Thursday, August 22, the ASA tour #1 will be a Section-sponsored tour to see the Fernald Nuclear Facility and to meet with a group of citizens who've been fighting it.

For those of you who haven't already heard of Fernald, it offers a particularly notorious case of toxic contamination. The facility has been run for decades by the U.S. Department of Energy. Until very recently, the official stance of the government was that everything at the plant was being run in accordance with the highest environmental standards; in recent years, however, through a unique combination of events, a very different story has come out. Largely through the assistance of sympathetic professionals, including lawyers, newspaper reporters, physicians, and at least some environmental officials, a local group known as FRESH (Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety and Health) managed to win an unprecedented, multi-million-dollar settlement from the Federal government.

The Fernald facility is just 18 miles from our convention site, and the opportunity is simply too good to pass up. To add to the appeal, after years of being near the tail-end of the meeting, our Section day will come on the very first day of the meeting this year -- and the night before our Section day just happens

to be the time of the regularly scheduled, monthly meeting of FRESH. In cooperation with the Natural Resources Research Group of the Rural Sociological Society and the Environment and Technology division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), accordingly, we've set up what we hope will be an unusually interesting tour.

As you'll be able to see from page 11 of the ASA's official "preliminary program," the tour is scheduled to leave the convention hotel at 2:15, heading directly to the Fernald facility, where we will spend some time looking around. After that, we plan to head to a local cafe, where we will meet with representatives of the media (a reporter who has played a key role in exposing the continuing problems at the facility), the legal system (a lawyer who was instrumental in negotiating the unprecedented settlement), the medical profession (a member of the local chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility who has worked on the issue), and state/federal government officials, as well as with the "core members" of FRESH. We will then travel to the site of the monthly FRESH meeting where, being as unobtrusive as possible under the circumstances, we will be allowed to sit in on the first hour or so of the meeting.

If you are interested, please remember three things. The first is that space is limited, so you should definitely send your \$15.00 in to the ASA Executive Office, along with the official registration form on page 32 of the preliminary program, as soon as possible. The second is that, since the federal government has apparently been more vigilant in making sure that terrorists stay out than in making sure that pollutants stay in, yes, you really *do* need to provide your social security number, your date of birth and your country of citizenship to the ASA, because all of us who go on this tour will need to endure at least a low level of government security

screening. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you can reportedly expect the clearance procedure to take a solid month. The third is that we've tried to work with the SSSP to make sure that any of their environmental sessions on the 22nd will be in the morning, so that those who are interested will be able to attend sessions in the morning and then join us on the tour during the afternoon.

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ADDITIONAL ASA SESSIONS

In the last issue, I listed some of the main environmental sessions for the Cincinnati meetings. From the preliminary program, these are now listed on *Friday, August 23rd*, as: #12 [8:30 am], #24 [10:30 am] and #45 [roundtables, 2:30-3:30 pm]. The related sessions I listed then are #78 [10:30 am Saturday] and #98 [12:30 pm Saturday].

Two related sessions that I missed then include #69 and #296: on *Environmental Collective Action*. Papers are as follows:

#69: *Risk* [8:30 am Saturday]
Organizer: R. Scott Frey

"Structural determinants of risk preference in complex technological production."
Daniel H. Jackson & Susan E. Taylor,
Antioch University-Seattle

"Risk & recreancy: Weber, the division of labor, and the rationality of risk perceptions."
William R. Freudenburg, U. Wisconsin

"Risk communication in the aftermath of catastrophe."
Paul O'Brian, Coleen Fitzpatrick, & Dennis S. Milet, Colorado State U.

"Science, strategy & networks in the risk policy system."
Thomas Dietz & Gregory Guagnano, George Mason U., & Robert Rycroft, George Washington U.

Discussant: Eugene Rosa, Washington St. U.

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#269: *Environmental Collective Action*
[10:30 am Tuesday].

Organizer: Tom Hood & Sherry Cable, U. of Tennessee-Knoxville

"Backyards, NIMBYs, & incinerator sitings: implications for social movement theory."
Edward J. Walsh, Rex H. Warland, & D. Clayton Smith, Pennsylvania State Univ.

"Comparing two types of environmental conflicts: siting vs. exposure disputes."
Stephen R. Couch, Penn State-Schuylkill & J. Stephen Kroll-Smith, U. of New Orleans

"Who mobilizes whom? The role of national & regional social movement organizations in local environmental political mobilization."
Kenneth A. Gould, St. Lawrence U. & Adam Weinberg, Northwestern University

"Collective action over marine resources: a case study of the shrimper organization - Concerned Shrimpers of America."
James E. Mason, A.V. Margavio, & Shirley Lasko, U. of New Orleans

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ADDITIONAL ASA MEETING ACTIVITIES

Bernice A. Pescosolido of Indiana University is offering a teaching workshop based on PBS materials from two forthcoming series [*Medicine at the Crossroads* and *The Healing Mind*]. Materials and approaches to incorporating these two series into environmental and other sociology courses will be treated in the workshop [Sunday, 6:30 pm].

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Following the roundtables on Friday, August 23rd, at 3:30 pm, we will have the section **business meeting**, which should last until about 4:30 pm.

Business being over, surely pleasure will follow! In keeping with our efforts at harmony with our SSSP colleagues, Tom

Hood has arranged for our section party, immediately following the business meeting, at the:

**The Fountain Room
Westin Hotel
4:45 to about 6:30 pm Friday**

After the invigoration of a two-block walk away from the Convention Center, this more intimate setting will offer good company, good views, and a cash bar. This latter is, of course, in keeping with our professional desires for improved feedback systems, to enhance social impact assessment. We are grateful to Tom Hood, Steve Kroll-Smith, and our other SSSP counterparts for helping arrange this.

Friday is a crowded evening for ASA events, with an ASA welcoming party at 6:30 pm, the plenary session on minorities and women in the ASA at 8:30 pm, and the Departmental Alumni Night at 10:30 pm. Hopefully, our section party will assist in the transition from pure intellect to broader forms of social integration.

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FREUDENBURG & YOUN TAKE OVER EDITORSHIP OF RESEARCH ANNUAL

The outgoing chair of the Section, Bill Freudenburg, has recently agreed to join Ted I. K. Youn as co-editor of the JAI Journal, *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*. This is a peer-reviewed journal, but unlike many journals, it comes out just once each year.

Freudenburg and Youn are particularly interested in articles that deal with the emergence and recognition of social problems -- as do a growing number of papers on social-problems aspects of environmental issues.

For further information, readers are urged to contact Dr. Freudenburg at the Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706, (608) 263-4893.

IMPACTS OF KUWAITI OIL FIRES

Claire W. Gilbert is deeply involved in creating a new organization to focus on the ecological impacts of the oil well fires in Kuwait and Iraq. She and some other groups are attempting to mobilize government officials to be more attentive to data collection and analysis, and public discussion of both the ecological impacts of and political factors surrounding Iraq's political decision to ignite the wells.

Gilbert notes that the meteorological conditions produced by these massive fires may represent a new climatological shift, different from global warming or oil winter. She notes that the particulate emissions of these fires approximate total particulate emissions from all current auto usage worldwide. Among the possible effects of these oil fires are: lower humidity, stronger winds (with possible increases in acid rainfall), or diminished sunlight. These have potential impacts on agriculture as well as even wider climatological effects, to which little scientific attention is being paid. Green Action Australia and Earth Alliance Alert (Seattle) are both involved in this emergent network of concern.

Members interested in this issue, who want to share their own information, or gather others' information, should contact Dr. Gilbert, who is attempting to start a newsletter:

Dr. Claire W. Gilbert
110 NE 19th Avenue, Apt. 3
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441
Phone: 305-429-9469
Electronic: EcoNet "cgilbert"

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NEW ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

The South-North Centre for Environmental Policy of the University of London was established in late 1990. It is publishing a *Newsletter*, which outlines the range of program and policy interests. Professor Graham Chapman [Geography, with reference to Asia] is the Director.

Workshops and seminars of the Centre have included communications, media and the environment, international trade and the environment, land-use and environmental policy in South-East Asia, and water use and allocation. Other efforts will include wetlands and global warming conferences. To participate or get more information, contact:

Professor Graham Chapman
School of Oriental & African Studies
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG UK
Tel: 071 637 2388 ext 2602
FAX: 071 436 3844

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PAPER SUBMISSIONS

The Fourth North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management will be held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on May 17-20, 1992, with a theme of *Integrated Resource Management*.

It will emphasize the linkage of social and natural sciences on these issues. Abstracts of up to two double-spaced typewritten pages should be sent by December 1, 1991 to:

Donald R. Field, Program Chair
School of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin
1450 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-262-6968
FAX: 608-262-6055

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Tom Webler and **Ortwin Renn** are organizing a session on *Novel Forms of Public Participation* at the annual meetings of the Society for Risk Analysis, December 8-11, 1991. To submit a paper, call Tom at 508-793-7655 (office) or 508-544-6277, or send Tom materials at:

Environment, Technology & Society
Program
Clark University
950 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610

MEMBERSHIP NEWS AND NOTES

Penelope Canan [U. of Denver] is serving on the Economic Options panel of the UN panel monitoring ozone protection provisions of the Montreal protocol. She is particularly involved in information exchange on substitutions and technology transfer. In addition, she has been involved in the National Academy of Engineering's workshop on technology transfer of ozone-depleting chemicals (Irvine, April 1991), and the National Academy of Science's colloquium on industrial ecology (Washington, May 1991).

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Carlo C. Jaeger [Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich] has recently published "Innovative milieus and environmental awareness", *Sociologia Internationalis* 28(2): 205-216.

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Tom Webler [Clark University, Technology & Risk Assessment Program] is currently analysing discourse in his thesis on public participation in technological risk management. He is interested in sharing models of dialog with section members and others interested in how normative issues get resolved through dialog.

Tom Webler and **Ortwin Renn** are organizing a session on *Novel Forms of Public Participation* at the annual meetings of the Society for Risk Analysis, December 8-11, 1991. To submit a paper, call Tom at 508-793-7655 (office) or 508-544-6277.

Peter C. Yeager [Boston University] has just published his book, *The Limits of Law: The Public Regulation of Private Pollution* by Cambridge University Press. It is a structural and historical analysis of regulating industrial water pollution, emphasizing systemic limits on such efforts at control. A dialectical relation between law and economy is analysed, related in part to political mobilization and political economy.

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TO: Members of the Environment and Technology Section, ASA
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**PLEASE SEND THIS TEAR-OFF SHEET OR A COPY FOR INCLUSION IN
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Your current research interest[s] you'd like to share with others:

New literature you've published, or found especially helpful. Give full citations.

Forthcoming meetings and conferences. Calls for papers. Papers you've recently presented.

Activities of related social science environmental groups.

Name: _____

Address: _____