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2-1980

## Monthly Planet, 1980, February

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### Recommended Citation

Blix, Brian and Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University, "Monthly Planet, 1980, February" (1980). *The Planet*. 131.  
<https://cedar.wwu.edu/planet/131>

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# The Monthly Planet

VOL. 9 NO. 2

"by people who have a little to say"

FEBRUARY, 1980

## Diary of an Organizer

MATTHEW WORSWICK

"Wake up you damned shortsighted fools! The energy is running out! The Crunch is coming!" I wanted to shout. I wanted to hook up a cosmic PA system and broadcast to the world! I wanted people to wake up, to listen...to understand!

So much to know: bleak forecast for oil supplies, numerous problems with nukes, coal, synfuels and other substitutes, exciting potentials of renewable fuels, necessity of conservation and increased efficiency in energy use... It all points to large changes in our institutions and lifestyles - in the structure of our society. (What! No more Cadillacs! What's the deal, man?) So much to know...we must all know, but how...?



My fervor's growing along with a plan, a program - an educational conference!

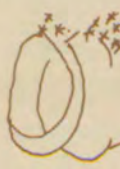
And it begins:

What topics? What speakers? Calls were made, letters sent... The network expanded...

Let's get a BIG name: Barry Commoner, will you come? Oh, won't that be

to p.8

## Bottle of Contents



- POLITICS
- DIARY OF AN ORGANIZER
- PRESERVE THE PEOPLE - AROUND THE CAMPFIRE
- A FRIEND OF MUSHROOMS, MOLDS AND MOSSES
- ANOTHER WAY TO STUDY ECOLOGY
- MONKEY WRENCH WORK

## Politics

GREG SOBEL

Social change through political action. Political action through electoral politics. Strange as it may seem, those were the goals of my involvement with student government.

The way I see it, a major reason why the world is such a mess is that a few powerful men chart the course of our societies for their own selfish interests. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the rest of us follow along out of either coercion and repression or ignorance and apathy.

top.8

# PRESERVE THE PEOPLE editorial

I bought a button from "Alaska Women In Timber" (A.W.I.T.) last summer. It depicts a virile logger holding a shovel and standing with his family amid little saplings. The button says "Preserve The People!"

The Front ran a story last October 19 about Huxley enrollment. If an A.W.I.T. sympathizer has read it, I bet A.W.I.T. has another button for sale: one that shows a hungry student shod in hiking boots wearing a down vest with an ecology symbol. The button quotes the story: "Neutered Granola Fan!"

We defend wilderness for its own sake. Regurgitated lecture material on "quality of life," "rights of the unborn" and "values clarification" often sounds like impractical rhetoric, apologetics for the real motive of restricting Earth to the unborn and those born who hike!

Now, if creativity characterized environmental students, there would be no image of a "neutered granola fan." What can we do to liven things up a bit?

Winter Quarter 1980 has

seen the fruit of the bold efforts of dozens of students during the fall.

The Give-A-Damn Jam, The Northwest Energy Conference and The Energy Fair have informed and inspired a thousand people, and set examples to be improved on year



after year.

Weekly meetings are now exploring ways to increase contact between Fairhaven and Huxley students. I suggest you help expand the goal to a dynamic series of informal discussions open to all, followed by a formal symposium in the spring on Education for Transformation, or "Common Goals and Values of Humanism and Environmentalism."

Environmentalism is meaningless without Humanism. Humanism is futile without

Environmentalism. Genuinely "holistic" thinking may give Huxley more color and aliveness, give Fairhaven more direction to its footloose ways, and give the rest of Western a less "crunchy" view of Huxleyites! We all eat granola.

Explore how you can put flesh on the bare bones of fact with The Monthly Planet. Risk getting involved in conferences, radio programs, film series and your own ideas by visiting The Environmental Center, ESC 535.

And if school seems unstimulating, take a hike in the wilderness and bring some wildness back--for wildness is the preservation not just of wilderness, but of the people!

*Brian Blix* 0000

# Around the Campfire

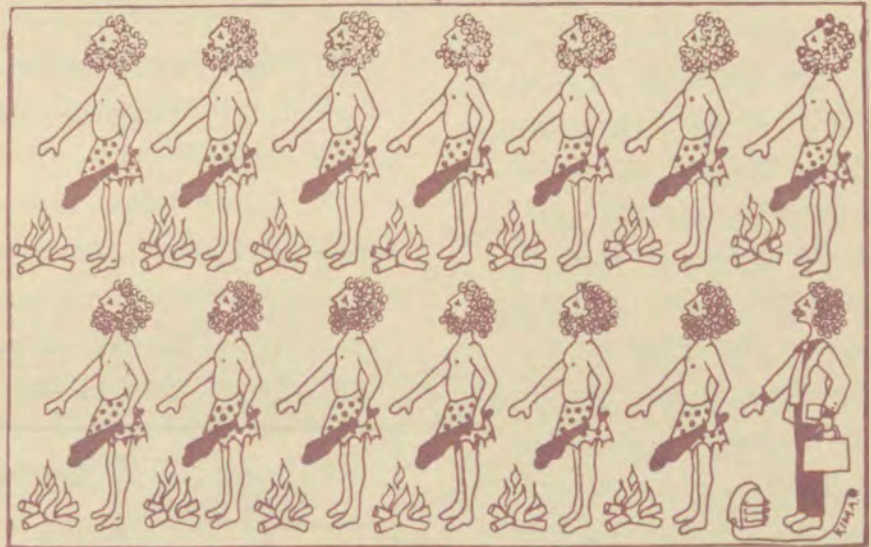
ALAN MILLAR

I had a professor once, a strange and world renowned paleontologist. During a lecture he drew one of those graph arrangements college professors seem so fond of. It plotted world population against time; simple, obvious, and depressing to those of us here near the top of the curve.

The curve began at a low level and rose ever more steeply, forming a shape that people at Huxley call a "J" curve or "exponential growth curve."

We've spent a whole lot more time staring into campfires than huddled around space heaters.

But this guy had another point to make beyond the obvious problem of runaway population growth. He took his piece of chalk and went back to the point on the graph that marked the world's population at the dawn of agriculture, about 10,000 years ago and 3 feet on his graph, from the present. Then he told us that if he were to continue that line, it would extend for about 13 miles.



In other words, folks, the professor's point was that we've spent a whole lot more time staring into campfires than we have huddled around space heaters: an incredible, mind boggling amount of time.

"What's your point?" I hear people say. I really do think that "it's all in your point of view." As we struggle along here here on the steep slope of the "J" curve coping with the side effects of growth

..... we did have a "steady state" society once .....

and technological progress and fighting over fossil fuels, it might help to remember that we did have a "steady state" society once. We were once able

to live fairly lightly on the Earth. We did it for a millenia, not for the few years that we call

Certainly we lacked some of the accoutrements of civilization, but these have proved to be a mixed blessing

"stability" now.

Certainly we lacked some of the accoutrements of civilization, but these have proven to be something of a mixed blessing. Perhaps it wasn't so bad around the campfire. We can't go home again, but perhaps we can create something like it. Those of us who, in our utopian fantasies, envision a green and peaceful earth with a reasonable amount of people on it, can take heart in realizing it's been done before.

# Another Way to Study Ecology

STEPHANIE WILDS

The beginning of a quarter is an excellent time for confusion, and I was no exception this past fall. Arriving as a wide-eyed transfer student, I found myself installed in the Fairhaven dorms, not sure where Huxley College was located, and badly needing a place to grow some roots.

I quickly disregarded the warnings I had received regarding Fairhaven College students, and discovered a delightful, growing, active community brimming with creative and energetic people. Despite kind invitations to join them in Fairhaven College, I had long before set sights toward Huxley and Environmental Studies, and so my road led toward that grey and ominous building looming above the play fields.

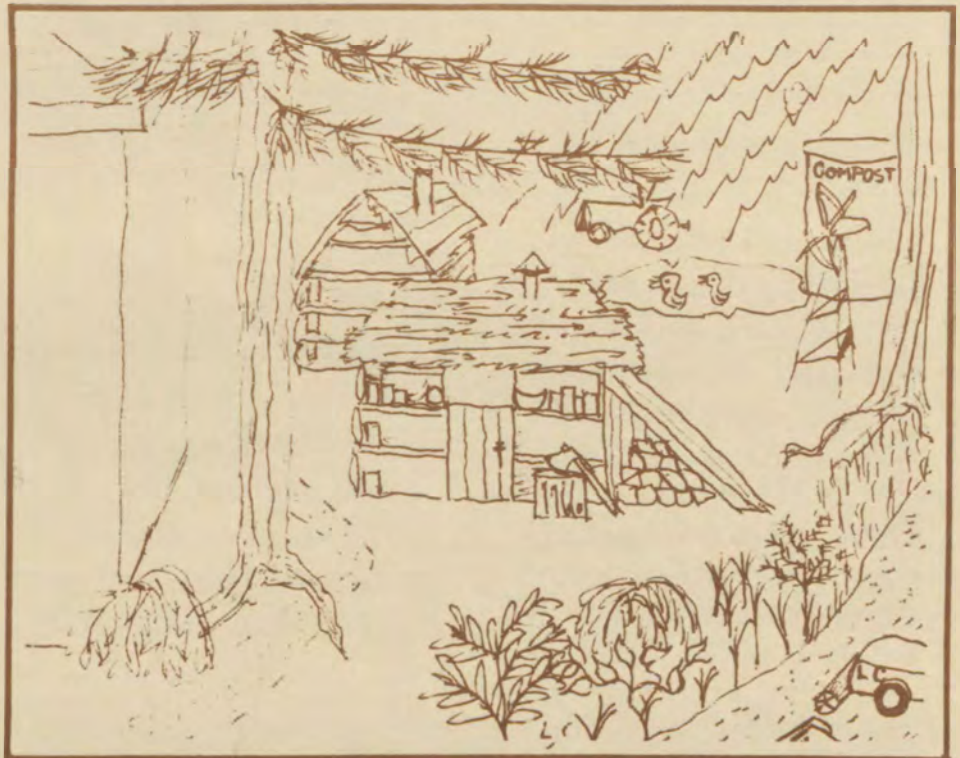
Fairhaven could not be abandoned totally, however. My room overlooked a pasture and the resident goats and rabbits drew me out to the land, the pond and the life-giving sun.

Soon I was working regularly in the gardens of Outback, Fairhaven College's experimental farm, and be-

fore I knew it, I was moving into the cabins on the ridge above.

Living in Outback is a dream come true. Not only are we all learning homesteading skills and how to live happily in a rustic

carefully planted to provide good year-round crop yield. Natural deterrents like marigolds are planted to keep out weeds that are inedible. Large amounts or compost material from SAGA is our only fertilizer.



environment, but I've discovered how to create an environment, how to make it self-sustaining, and how to live within it.

This five acre plot behind Fairhaven is no agricultural tract. It is a bit of land altered just enough to make room for ourselves and our few animals. Our gardens are

Outback is a sea of experiments in alternative energy, from the solar dehydrator and compost-heated greenhouse to the windspinner, composting toilet, and

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I quickly disregarded the warnings I had received regarding . .

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skylight-illuminated cabins.

In those sunlit rooms can usually be found hard-

ANOTHER WAY . . .

working cabin dwellers  
working on projects by a  
warm stove, or enjoying a  
hot dinner with goat's  
milk. Each member is a

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## "Outback is a sea of experiments in alternative energy"

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part of Outback. We don't  
"run" it; we are included  
in it as an integral part.  
The land and the animals  
give to us, as we give  
back, and the interdepend-  
ence grows as does our  
sense of human ecology.

In the cold morning I  
leave my cozy cabin and  
"living school" to head  
toward that grey, ominous  
building across the fields  
to see how interdependence  
reads on paper. Perhaps  
there is more than one way  
to study ecology.

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# "Monkey Wrench Work"

BRIAN BLIX

Joe Lyles might not  
have been too well known  
beyond the concrete bas-  
tion of the Environmental  
Studies Center before Grad-  
uation Day 1979, but his  
memorable graduation  
speech took care of that.  
I doubt if anyone who was  
there, or watched the cer-  
emony over closed-circuit  
TV like myself, has com-  
pletely forgotten Joe tel-  
ling in his southern ac-  
cent the joke about the  
truck that drove into a  
burning house. The oc-  
cupants jumped out and  
beat the fire to death.  
The houseowner and neigh-  
bors took up a collection  
in gratitude. Handing  
it to the driver, the  
owner asked him what he  
was hoping to do with the  
money. "Buy new brakes,"  
said he. This was Joe's  
example of how different  
people see the same thing  
differently sometimes...

Anyway, Joe just fin-  
ished a bicycle trip almost  
to New Orleans from B'ham  
with Paul Connors, another  
'79 grad. I was grateful  
for his letter to come  
crashing into my mailbox  
last December and thought  
I'd share some of it:

"I'm sitting in a bakery  
in Phoenix, Arizona, wait-  
ing for my clothes to get  
clean next door...

"I like the desert. I  
enjoy the open spaces,  
clear skies, star-lit  
nights, coyote howls, and  
the lack of rain. I see  
a lot of what Edward Ab-  
bey writes about. I've  
read three of his books  
on this trip and I feel  
I understand the appeal  
and plight of the desert  
much better now. I saw  
the canals of the Central  
Arizona Project which is  
so heavily loathed by  
good environmentalists.'  
There are plenty of pro-  
jects just waiting for the  
Monkey Wrench Gang to  
come out of seclusion.  
There are plenty of over-  
grazed pastures which  
need to be rescued from  
the claws of energy cor-  
porations. Blah bla bla....

"We've seen some in-  
spiring sites. There cer-  
tainly are a lot of beauti-  
ful places in America--  
lots of diversity. Paul  
and I haven't really been  
taking time off to visit  
scenic spots, but we've  
seen some anyway...

"I miss all my good  
and mediocre friends in  
B'ham. Take care, JOE LYLES"

# A Friend of Mushrooms, Molds, Mosses

SUSAN TURNBLOM

Students line up to see this man at 8 a.m. While they wait they can read a poster on which a fungus tells all about its life.

Inside his office two microscopes, a computer terminal and a camera and tripod sit on one desk cluttered with bottles of chemicals and jars of specimens. Several racks full of test tubes are on the filing cabinet.

Behind another desk he sits, a small bearded and bespectacled man with blondish hair, a smooth head and kind blue eyes. He is Fred Rhoades, a biology



professor who teaches about mushrooms, molds and mosses. the so-called "lower" organisms of the world.

I talked to him the other day. He says it is exciting to turn students on to these strange little things often hidden from us.

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**"it is exciting to turn students on to these strange little things"**

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"We don't understand them as individuals themselves," Rhoades says.

"We don't see them because of the big things like trees and other plants. However, we are aware of them as causes of disease and rot."

Rhoades believes that this does not indicate a propensity in humans to harp on the bad aspects of life. It's just that we don't notice the good. For example, lichens moderate the environment for other organisms and aid in soil formation--obviously necessary but not necessarily obvious.

Another reason we don't notice lower organisms is the environment they live in.

"The more akin an organism's environment is to our environment, the easier it is to understand the organism," Rhoades said. We understand many animals quite well because we too are animals and have needs similar to other animals.

"People know less about plants because we aren't like them at all, but they are important to us," he said. They provide food and shelter, to name but two functions. As a result, we know a little about them.

We know even less about fungi because they are not quite plants, and we don't live under mushrooms or eat fungus at every meal.

Rhoades cited another reason for our general

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**"the lower organisms in country are culturally hidden"**

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Lack of knowledge about lower organisms. "There is a tendency of more and more people in the educational system to become divorced from the real world. Even biology is less and less the study of organisms in their real habitats," he said.

In addition to being

often physically hidden, the lower organisms in this country are "culturally hidden."

"In life in general, not just the educational system, people are separated from the real world," Rhoades said. This separation is not only from the little fungi, but from most of the natural environment. People are not in contact with birds and trees, or fungi, and only encounter the food

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**"we don't live under mushrooms"**

---

they eat in stores. Very few see what organisms look like in their natural environment.

"Our culture seems to place a high value on surface quality. There is an effort to produce a uniform, superficially beautiful item," he said. A good example is the produce sections of grocery stores. "It doesn't matter what it tastes like," Rhoades said, "as long as it looks good."

According to Rhoades, this uniformly beautiful item is a result of mechanized agriculture. Machines cannot pick all kinds of different things. Instead of developing dif-

ferent machines, which is expensive, the plants are developed. This increases our separation from the real world by making even the foods we eat somewhat artificial.

Nevertheless, Rhoades believes that people want to experience different tastes and types of things. More and more our generation is tending to make distinctions between the things they buy.

He hopes different kinds of mushrooms will be available in stores in the Pacific Northwest. Right now there is no market for brown mushrooms, perhaps

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**"people are separated... not only from the little fungi, but from most of the natural environment"**

---

because they are "different."

People don't realize how much they limit themselves and how much they are missing until they are educated. For this reason, classes such as "Mushrooms, Molds and Mosses" are offered to increase awareness of the natural environment--the ultimate human experience.

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POLITICS . . .

I was considering all this at Pete's Tavern one evening last spring. "Greg" I thought, "you sit here consuming alcohol and lamenting about the sad state of affairs but you're not doing anything about it. A few administrators, with the occasional counsel of a portion of the faculty, mold the institutional environment for ten thousand of us."

At this point a grand notion struck my brain: why not run for election to the A.S. Board! I'd have access to more information and to the campus media as well. Then I'd be in a position to light some fires. Get some people hopping. I could encourage students to take more control of their educational environment. Later, they'd be more likely to exercise their power in their communities and on their jobs. Wow!

So I ran for election, won, and here I am. Have I been successful? Moderately. Very moderately. More next issue.

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NEXT ISSUE: "Thanks, Henry David," "Notes From the Field," "Are Students Too Busy?," "Alaska Town," "Rain Poem"



The Monthly Planet is funded by A.S.W.W.U. as the "magazine of environmental concern" of The Environmental Center, 850 535; 616-3974.

...MY OF AN ORGANIZER . . .  
spectacular! ...weeks are  
passing, anticipation/anxiety  
... "Sorry he can't make  
it - damn! ...Amory Lovins,  
will you come? He'll be a  
big draw! No response, he's  
out of the country - drat!  
Keep trying...John Sawhill  
will you come?

Another month has gone  
by:

films" volunteers Michelle.  
"I'll put out the public-  
ity" says Laurie... "I'm  
with you all the way" added  
Jenny.

And it's growing and  
growing:

More programs, more help-  
ers: Tom, Bob, Ron, Larry,  
Gil...wow, thanks everybody!  
More letters...more meetings,



It's getting bigger...I  
need help... "Will you help?"  
There's so much to be done!  
Sawhill fell through.

And people are respond-  
ing:

"I'll help! What should  
I do?" Oh fantastic, they're  
interested, they'll make the  
conference bigger, better,  
Yahoo! ... "I'll coordin-  
ate the Jam and the Fair"  
says Ed... "Can I organize  
the grant writing seminar?"  
asks Melissa... "I'll do the

...late nights...skipped  
lunches...phone calls, hund-  
reds of calls...sprinting  
from office to office, phone  
to phone...rush, rush, take  
care of details, details...

And it's getting enor-  
mous:

The Bellingham Chamber  
of Commerce will help...  
the Campus Conservation  
Committee will help...the  
student councils will help  
(\$\$\$)... And volunteers

keep pouring in...photo-  
graphers, projectionists,  
construction crew members,  
info booth helpers, artists.  
My God, look at all the  
helpers, they're all in-  
volved, they care! It's  
so big, it's hard to believe!

It's almost here, and  
it's Huge:

Thirty seven programs,  
seventy six speakers...  
forty exhibitors...topics  
covering the entire spectrum  
of energy issues.

And the Conference has  
begun.

I stood at the podium  
introducing the keynote  
speaker, Jack Robertson,  
the spotlights are on, rep-  
orters and photographers  
poised...

And the room is full...  
the people are there...  
they're awake...they're  
listening...

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CREDITS

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