

MES ALUMNI CONNECTION

Volume 3, Issue 1 January, 2001

The Evergreen State College

THE
EVERGREEN
STATE
COLLEGE

MES Alumni Connection

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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2000: A COMMENTARY by Ralph Murphy, MES Faculty

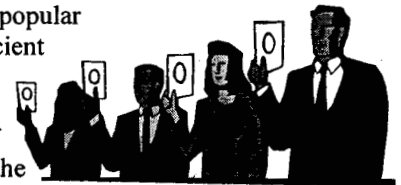
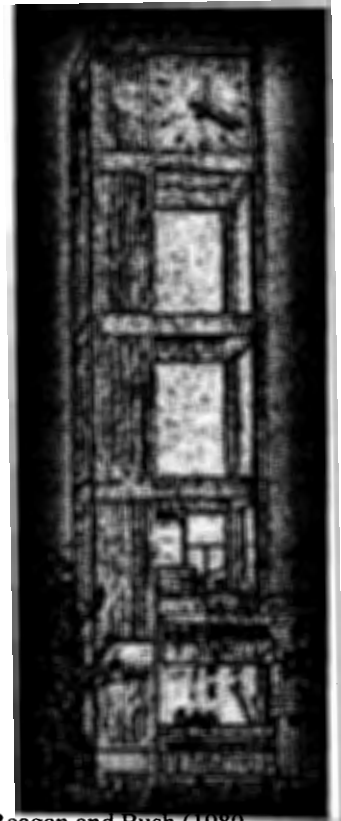
The Presidential Election is finally over. In a historically close election, George W. Bush was determined to be the next President. Ralph Nader and the U.S. Supreme Court played pivotal roles in determining the election, and aside from learning more than we ever wanted to know about "chads," several interesting and a few surprising outcomes of the 2000 Presidential Election are evident.

Once again, the election did not realign American politics to either party. Since Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964, conservatives have been diligently working to become the majority party. While the twelve years of Reagan and Bush (1980-1992) successfully challenged the liberal framework of governance in place since the Great Depression, it did not create a new public philosophy embraced by a majority of the voting public. The Clinton years, while prosperous and popular despite scandal, were unsuccessful in reclaiming Democratic Party dominance. Based on the 2000 election, we can look forward to a continuation of contested government and likely gridlock that will bode well for special interests, but not for progressive politics, the environment or social justice.

It doesn't appear the split between the popular vote and the Electoral College has ignited sufficient interest in a constitutional amendment. This is somewhat surprising, since for years many assumed a split election would create a crisis of legitimacy that would result in the abolition of the Electoral College. The Constitution sets a very high standard for constitutional amendments (a two-thirds vote in the House and Senate, followed by ratification by three-fourths of the states). Smaller, less populated states benefit from the current system, and without strong public opinion against it, the Electoral College will elect the next President in 2004.

In a significant way, the outcome of the 2000 Presidential Election was determined in 1803 when Chief Justice John Marshall (in *Marbury v. Madison*) declared the Court's power to be the final arbitrator of the Constitution through judicial review. Given the current Court's strong State's Rights history, it was remarkable they intervened in the Florida election. Consistent with the long history of the Supreme Court, the majority crafted a finding that was procedural but not definitive. Rendered with just a few hours left before the deadline for recounting votes in Florida, it ensured a Bush Presidency.

The lasting contribution of the 2000 election should be improvements in voting rights. We should all demand the states improve their voting laws and procedures to guarantee all votes are counted. The country has a long history of disenfranchising segments of its population; the election of 2000 served as a reminder our right to vote cannot be taken for granted.



THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

John Perkins



Fall 2000

NEW SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EVERGREEN'S GRADUATE STUDENTS

During the past six months, we have made some major rearrangements for staff to support the MES program. Although a staff transition time is always a bit confusing, we think the new setup will give students enriched opportunities during their education.

As many of you may remember, MES and MPA for a long time shared support staff. In recent years, Julie Slone and Bonita Evans helped MES and MPA students find internships, financial aid and solutions to other problems. Julie was appointed to a new position in Academic Advising last March, and Bonita retired in June.

Our new arrangements combined the staff support for MIT with MES and MPA. Our first new staff were Sue Sanders and Lee Stellmacher, who provide the secretarial support for all the graduate programs from their newly constructed office, Lab I 3019. Amy Blasen, who used to work just for MIT, was appointed as Coordinator for Student Services for all three programs. You can find her in Lab I 3022, where she advises students on their academic work, helps them with financial aid, and provides guidance on many other problems.

Just this past week, we appointed Freeda Warren as Associate Director for the graduate programs. Freeda will head up the recruitment efforts of all three programs plus provide overall supervision for the Graduate Program Support Office. She comes to Evergreen after extensive experience in recruitment for the University of Puget Sound and Seattle University. She has a J.D. from Seattle University. Freeda will be in Lab I 3016.

One position remains to be hired: the Coordinator for Public and Professional Services. This person will help arrange internships, conferences, and short courses, plus coordinate with alumni of all three programs. We will be advertising the position soon.

One thing we plan to do is ask our alumni more directly for assistance in new student recruitment. Please let me know if you are willing to serve in this capacity. In the meantime, come by and visit us on the 3rd floor of Lab I. You will notice some changes!



From left to right: Debora Holmes, Editor of MES Alumni Connection; Amy Blasen, Coordinator for Graduate Student Services; Lee Stellmacher, Graduate Programs Support; Sue Sanders, Graduate Programs Support; John Perkins, Director, Graduate Program in Environmental Studies. *Not pictured:* Freeda Warren, Associate Director for Graduate Programs.



THE 12th ANNUAL
RACHEL CARSON FORUM
is coming in
APRIL!

Watch for Future Updates!!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

MES Grad Focuses on the Environment and Public Health Darius Sivin, '94

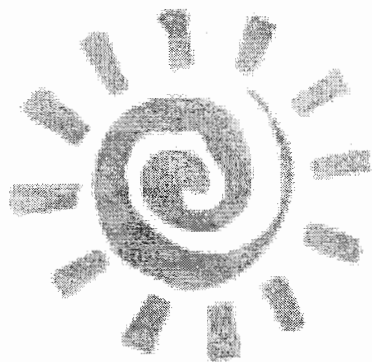
Darius D. Sivin, currently from Washington, D.C., is a 1994 graduate of our MES program. Since his graduation from Evergreen, Darius has accomplished a great deal. In late 1994, he began work at Hunter College as an environmental and occupational epidemiologist, and shortly afterward published a technical report on environmental exposures in Brooklyn. Following this, he also published a paper on an ergonomic intervention study, and in 1996, entered the PhD program in Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

Darius began work at OSHA in January of 1999, and two months later received a dissertation grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). He is pleased to announce his marriage to Heather Hurlburt on the 23rd of May, 1999 (see picture). Barry Wallis, another MES alum, was in the wedding party.

Since then, Darius has continued to remain active in his field, among other things organizing a conference to promote cooperation among federal agencies concerned with environmental and occupational health. Most recently, he participated in writing regulatory justification for the OSHA ergonomics standard, which became law this past November. "My life goal is still to build labor-environment coalitions to promote environmental protection and public health in the broadest sense," says Darius. He may be contacted via e-mail at dsivin@jhsph.edu.



Heather Hurlburt and Darius Sivin.



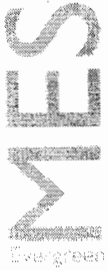
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

A Western Washington Wetlands Ecologist Kim Harper, '91

Kim Harper has had quite the career in the environmental field since her graduation in 1991 from the MES program. Since then, she has worked as a wetland ecologist for three private consulting firms in the Seattle area. Kim is now Senior Wetland Ecologist and Principal with a small firm that specializes in aquatic resource assessment. She reports that most of her work is for public agency clients.

Currently, Kim reviews proposed development plans for their potential to impact wetlands and streams, and conducts wetland studies. In addition, she develops wetland compensation and restoration plans, and writes management plans for wetland and stream systems. "Most of my work now occurs in Western Washington," says Kim, "but my previous job as a biologist at EA Engineering took me to a variety of places across the country and even to Japan."

A daughter, Lena Harper Stern, was born to Kim and her partner, Robin Stern, on January 2, 2000; she originally weighed in at 8 lbs., 8 oz. However at recent update, Lena, now 11 months, was already the proud owner of three big teeth. She is reported to be "very spirited". Kim, Robin and Lena currently reside in Seattle.



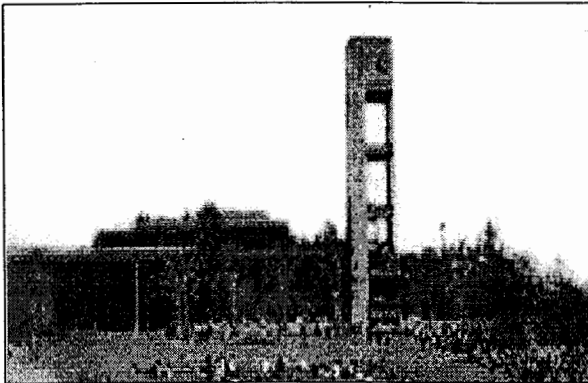
A PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

by Lada Kochtcheeva and Parvina Shamsieva

There is no doubt about the role of higher education in society. The topic we would like to address here is how education can be delivered to people, and we wish to attract your attention to the unique process of obtaining education that we ourselves experienced in the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) Program at the Evergreen State College.

What makes education at Evergreen different from other colleges and universities in the United States? The first thing we felt upon our arrival is a strong sense of community. Evergreen faculty and staff work with students to create a welcoming environment, one that includes variety, promotes tolerance and understanding, and is committed to cultural, racial and ethnic awareness. The main ideals of the college include a strong belief in students' educational experiences and a focus on lives enriched in a multicultural environment. Thus, in spite of different political and cultural backgrounds between our American classmates and us, we could closely integrate in such a diversified community.

Coming back to the educational process itself: the cornerstones of the Evergreen education are



interdisciplinary and collaborative studying and teaching, narrative evaluation instead of grades, internships and applied projects that link theoretical knowledge and practical skills, small group discussion classes called seminars, and a campus environment that welcomes diversity as a resource for studying. We would like to draw special attention to the non-grade system. We both believe that competition between students based on a grade system suppresses learning processes due to the fact that students are concerned with getting good grades rather than gaining knowledge.

The MES curriculum is designed in a way that promotes cooperation among students, among faculty members and between students and faculty. This interaction with program faculty gives you an opportunity to discuss your academic progress. Such a process compares your current achievements with earlier ones, and moreover, the evaluation system encourages important connections between students and faculty. Graduate students are encouraged to find multiple solutions to different problems and to assess the implications of proposed actions. The development of analytical and research skills and the acquiring of knowledge are also essential to any decision-maker in environmental policy. The MES program builds into its curriculum a consideration of the ethical and personal aspects of individual behavior as well.

Such a system at Evergreen develops and promotes the kind of intellectual and moral properties that enable graduate students to act with competence, professionalism and integrity. We strongly believe that this system is a crucial breakthrough into the future of education.

In conclusion, we would like to mention that the system described above played a certain role in our process of adaptation to the American lifestyle. We are grateful to Evergreen for giving us an opportunity to be part of the community. And, we are thankful that MES prepared us for our future professional lives.

Lada Kochtcheeva, Moscow, and Parvina Shamsieva, Tajikistan, graduated from the MES Program in the year 2000. Both Lada and Parvina were in the Muskie Fellowship Program while at Evergreen.

MUSKIE PROGRAM FELLOWS IN MES STUDIES AT EVERGREEN

By Ariadna Reida and Tatiana Koveshnikova

Since 1998, MES has maintained a strong relationship with the Open Society Institute and its Muskie Fellowship Program. This fellowship program enables students from the former Soviet Union to receive graduate degrees in the United States. It has happened that we were two of those lucky students who were chosen by Evergreen this year. Not only good fortune, but also hard work allowed us to go successfully through the highly competitive process of selection, which included GRE testing, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and interviews with American specialists.

In October we went to a conference in Washington, D.C., where we met with other Muskie fellows who currently study at different universities all over the United States. We exchanged information about our universities both with other fellows and with our program representatives. They were very surprised to hear about the educational system at Evergreen, and about the free and comfortable academic atmosphere of the college. One part of our conference was devoted to the 2000 Presidential Elections. It underscored once more our MES professors' ideas that any young leader who is interested in the positive changes of society should be knowledgeable in political issues.

We hope that our participation in this program is mutually beneficial both for us and for our American colleagues in the MES program. We try to share our Russian professional and personal experience with our classmates and faculty, and surely we learn a lot from Americans not only in our classes, but also in our everyday life.



Both first-year MES students, Tatiana Koveshnikova is from Samara, Russia, and Ariadna Reida hails from Irkutsk, Eastern Siberia.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

January 8	Winter Quarter Begins
January 31	Internship Fair; Noon-3 p.m. Contact Career Development Office for information (360) 867-6193
February 25-26	Day of Presence/Day of Absence Guests and Speakers on Multiculturalism Contact Amy Blasen for information (360) 867-6181
March 23	Winter Quarter Ends
March 26-30	Spring Break
April 2	Spring Quarter Begins
April TBA	12 th Annual Rachel Carson Forum The Evergreen State College
June 14	First People's Graduation; 6-9 p.m.
June 15	Graduation; 1 p.m.
June 16	Super Saturday

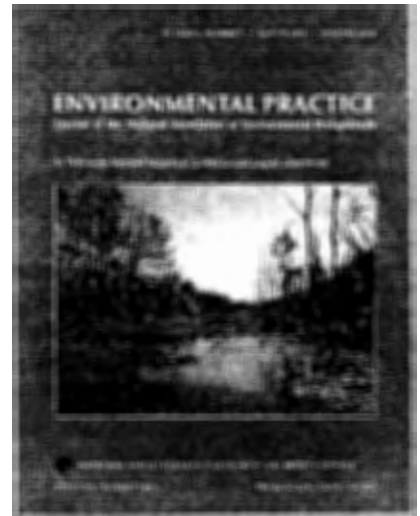
SECOND-YEAR MESA PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE

Since last summer, second-year student Robin Shoal has been working as Assistant Editor of Environmental Practice, the peer-reviewed journal of the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP). With MES faculty member John Perkins serving as editor-in-chief and MES graduate Cathy French as managing editor, the editorial office of Environmental Practice has been located on the campus of The Evergreen State College since 1998.

Robin's recent article, entitled "ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems – Hype or Hope?" has now been published in the December 2000 issue of Environmental Practice. In the article, Robin reviews critiques of ISO 14001, an international environmental management system standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization.

The journal aims to provide an interdisciplinary treatment of national and international environmental issues with an emphasis on the practice of environmental science and policy. Current students can work with John and Cathy via internships and individual learning contracts to develop news stories and even research articles. And, as Robin puts it, "This is a great job, and I've certainly learned a lot about the rigors of publishing a professional journal."

MES alumni out there in the trenches can submit their work to the journal, alert the editorial office to interesting news stories, and serve as reviewers for manuscripts and books. For more information on the journal including specific details for contributors, or to volunteer to serve as a reviewer, contact Cathy French, Mailstop SEM 3127, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505; phone (360)867-5955; email <frenchca@evergreen.edu>.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM: AMY BLASEN, COORDINATOR FOR GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES

Hello MES students and MES alumni!

As you all know, MES and the graduate programs have been undergoing some restructuring so that we can better meet the needs of students. Already we have been working hard to set up the Graduate Program Office and learning how to combine the interests of all three programs.

- ❖ I have been updating email lists this past month--to be sure that addresses are current and correct. If you have not been receiving emails about job or internship opportunities and would like to, contact my office or send in the "send us an update" form from this newsletter.
- ❖ If you know of good job or internship opportunities that exist or would like to discuss developing an internship for current MES students, please feel free to contact me! If you are looking for MES related employment opportunities, internships, or conferences stop in and visit. We have hanging files and a bulletin board outside of my office dedicated to this information.
- ❖ Looking for money for school? I have a box of fellowship and scholarship resources in my office. This updated information should be attached to the website in January (look at www.evergreen.edu/mes under financial aid, external scholarship sources).
- ❖ If you want to discuss the program, have any suggestions or concerns, let me know! You can reach me at 360-867-6181, LAB I room 3022 or by email at blasena@evergreen.edu.

I am excited to be working with the Master in Environmental Studies program and look forward to meeting each of you!

**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
1ST-YEAR STUDENT VICKIE WHITNEY**
By Debora Holmes

Vickie Whitney is an environmental engineer with the job title of Environmental Protection Specialist. She is employed by the Navy at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, and resides in Port Orchard with her husband, Mike, a mechanical engineer at the Shipyard. She and Mike have four children whom she encourages to volunteer and become active participants in life. Vickie grew up in Sequoia National Park. "We lived in the backcountry and our recreation was enjoying ourselves outside." Vickie's parents work for the National Park Service, and she thinks her current perceptions have to do with how she was raised.

Vickie recently found herself standing in front of the Environmental Analysis class at Evergreen after being asked to be a guest lecturer. Vickie told the class of her current projects involving cleanup dredging in Sinclair Inlet, beach rehabilitation, hazardous waste management, and other projects requiring an environmental background. Vickie herself was a student in the first EA class, and during the last two quarters of her senior year at Evergreen she did an internship with Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, which led to this current job. Vickie continues her employment even as she has started her first year in the MES program at Evergreen.

Though her undergrad background includes two years at Evergreen in environmental fluid dynamics and chemistry, this wasn't always her chosen field. Vickie owned a construction company for close to a decade. She folded the construction company after a bout with cancer, and subsequently set her sights on being an environmental engineer. She decided to go into the MES program to advance her career; she feels that having her masters will give her an edge, since many people in her field have only bachelor's degrees. "I had a goal in mind: I wanted to be an expert in this field." The MES program ties in well with these goals, according to Vickie. "And it's fun to see the difference in the way students look at things – I have a science background, but we have people in the first-year class that are economists, philosophers, and historians."

Essentially, Vickie's job is to help ensure compliance with current laws and regulations regarding hazardous waste – to read through and interpret what the EPA, Department of Ecology and other agencies are saying. In this case, it means she deals with hazardous waste issues on a daily basis. So what types of hazardous waste are involved? Says Vickie, "Hazardous waste comes from many

sources; since this is an industrial shipyard, we've found copper, PCBs and lead. In addition, Bremerton has been here since the war, so we also find contaminants like mercury. Some of the waste has been here for over a hundred years, and stems from old logging and forging operations, steam and coal-fire plants, even contaminants from old car emissions, which are still present in the roads. Because Sinclair Inlet is down-gradient, that's where these contaminants all went, and the Navy is doing its part to try to clean this area up." Fortunately, things have changed. "Today we are leaders in redefining our processes: we have pollution prevention; we try to find alternate materials to use and employ processes where we don't have to use dangerous chemicals."

For instance, the Navy is currently doing a navigational dredge of Sinclair Inlet; this has involved interaction between the Navy, state agencies and stakeholders on a weekly basis. The dredge falls under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability



Act (CERCLA), which requires the EPA to prepare a prioritized list of substances determined to pose potential threats to human health. The goal is to restore the inlet to its natural state and to ensure there is no contaminated sediment by the piers or beach areas.

Concerning current hazardous waste, Vickie reports, "A lot of what we're seeing now is that most of the water districts are concerned with *E. coli*. Most older Bremerton homes still have old sewage and storm drain systems, and that's a big thing. The Shipyard has one of the most aggressive storm water systems in the county; nothing goes down the storm drain, and we have good wastewater facility plants. We still see occasional spikes of copper where we're not sure of the source – is it us or from Bremerton? – but whatever the source, the Navy is the one that is taking care of it. You can't sit around trying to decide who has done what damage; all of us have to pull together. You do your part."

"It is important for us to take care of our environment. I know I can't save the world. But if I just do my job well, day in and day out, and I do it to the best of my ability, I'm making a difference. I don't need someone to come along and pat me on the back and say, 'job well done,' because I know that myself."

Vickie's advice to other students? "Take advantage of the internships that are available through Evergreen." Most importantly, she adds, "Just do your best."

Send Us An Update

Many graduates of the MES program have gone on to do creative, original, and exciting things in their professional and personal lives. We would like to hear about some of these things! Use the form below, or email Amy Blasen, and tell us what you've been doing since you graduated.

If you have any questions, please call Amy Blasen at (360) 867-6181 or e-mail her at blasena@evergreen.edu.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Address: _____

Year graduated: _____

Phone Number: (Home) _____

(Work) _____

What has been your career path since graduating?

Would you like to receive job postings and other weekly updates by e-mail?

Yes

No

Would you like to share any personal events in your life?

We would like to spotlight different MES alumni in each edition of the newsletter. Would you like to take part in this?

Yes

No

-----Please cut on the dotted line and return this portion to the address found below-----

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Graduate Program in Environmental Studies
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Presidential Election 2000, New MES Support Services, Alumni Updates, Grad Student News, More!