

Heroes and Champions: Recognition and Thanks

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With its October 5, 1998 issue, *Time magazine (volume 152, no. 14)* added a new section to its Environment Column, "Heroes for the Planet." This initiative is part of an ambitious two-year endeavor to include special quarterly reports profiling individuals who have dedicated their lives to protect the environment. The environment is no foreign topic to *Time*; it named the Endangered Earth as "Planet of the Year" in 1989 and has ongoing coverage of environmental topics.

The first installment of "Heroes of the Planet," "A Tribute to Our Oceans another Bounty," features the ongoing efforts the following dedicated individuals:

Sylvia Earl, a marine biologist advocating on behalf of the Pacific Coastal zone;

Guy and Maria Neca Marcovaldi, who run Brazil's National Sea Turtle Conservation Program;

Princess Basma Bint Ali of Jordan (cousin of King Hussein), President of the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society;

Richard Wheeler, marine life advocate and educator who used the extinction of the Great Auk as a theme for an educational 1,500 mile kayak trip from Newfoundland along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean to Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts;

Niaz Dorry, a veteran Greenpeace activist, who fights against the commercial over fishing of the oceans;

Francine and Jean-Michael Cousteau, who continue the legacy of their late husband and father, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who showed us all the underwater environmental wonders of our oceans, seas, and great lakes.

Soon thereafter, *Audubon*, the magazine and flagship publication of the Audubon Society (December 1998, volume 100, number 6), published a special 100th Anniversary Edition, "The Century of Conservation." This special issue traces the history of America's conservation movement

from 1899 when, in February of that year, Frank M. Chapman (ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History) began publication of the magazine *Bird-Lore*. This bimonthly periodical was eventually renamed *Audubon*. The special Centennial Issue of *Audubon* highlights ten legacies of land saved from human ravages (Alaska; Opal Creek, Oregon; Monterey Bay and Mono Lake, California; The Grand Canyon, Arizona; the Tall Grass Prairie, Oklahoma; the Cuyahoga River, Ohio; the Everglades, Florida; the Hudson River and Adirondack Park, New York). Also featured, as ten species saved from the brink of extinction, are the peregrine falcon, the furbish lousewort, the black-footed ferret, the grey wolf, the sea otter, the greenback cutthroat trout, the American burying beetle, the wild turkey, the pronghorn antelope, and the gray whale. Included is a time-line spanning one-hundred years of highlights: from the publication of *Bird-Lore* to a Republican plan for the cleanup of California's Salton Sea as a tribute to Representative Sony Bono, as well as Audubon's first Great Backyard Bird Count (14,000 individuals, classrooms, and families participated) and the naming of Lisa Gosselin as Editor of *Audubon* in 1998.

Yet, perhaps the most impressive collection of environmental advocates and activists is the "Champions of Conservation," one hundred tributes to individuals, who conceived, birthed, nurtured, tutored, and embraced the conservation and environmental movements of the 20th century.

From Ansel Adams, whose artistic talents stimulated and sustained countless personal appreciation for the aesthetics of nature, to Howard Zahnister, who led an eight-year struggle (after a lifetime of devotion and advocacy) to the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. I am awestruck by these one hundred individuals whose collective talents and contributions carved this country's environmental spirit and left indelible marks in the hearts and minds of tens of thousands of us, who have tried to follow in their footsteps.

I would like to give tribute to and acknowledge several people who just might appear in a future *Time* column or on some notable list of persons who have made a difference for our environment's sake. So, here is my personal list of "Heroes for the Planet" and "Champions of Conservation," from an information and library perspective:

David Blockstein, Senior Scientist with the Committee for the National Institute for the Environment, who has spent nearly a decade lobbying for improved means to fund basic environmental research and advocating the creation of a National Library for the Environment;

Kathy Deck, Technical Information Specialist for the National

Center for Environmental Health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), whose sense of dedication to her work is exceeded only by her willingness to share her results and expertise, often anonymously and with little ceremony;

Marta Dosa, Professor Emerita from the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University who, along with Mary Anglemeyer, represented the Special Libraries Association at the United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972 (leading to the formation of SLA's Environmental Information Division in 1976) and for more than two decades taught a graduate reference course devoted to Environmental Information and assisted scores of environmental agencies across the world in developing special information and data programs;

Michael P. Farrell, Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Center for Global Environmental Studies, who took the Alvin Weinberg concept of the Information Analysis Center to establish the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center in 1982 and developed new means to share scientific data and information across disciplines and bridge the gaps between information generators, providers, and users;

Maria Anna Jankowska, Editor of *The Electronic Green Journal* and librarian at the University of Idaho, who for nearly ten years has served as steward for the only professional journal devoted to environmental information and those librarians who serve the communities of environmental and natural resources researchers, policy makers, educators, and advocates;

Anne LaBastille, a prolific writer, whose books – the *Woodswoman* series and *Beyond Black Bear Lake: Life at the Edge of the Wilderness* - have brought readers a new sense of wonder, and whose doctoral research lead her on a quest to save a bird from eventual extinction, an attempt which is sadly and eloquently told in her book, *Mama Poc: An Ecologist's Account of the Extinction of a Species*;

Hazel O'Leary who, as Administrator of the Department of Energy in the early 1990's, ushered in a new era of openness and declassified countless documents that, among other things, revealed the extent and magnitude of radiation experiments conducted by the U.S Government on its own citizens;

Terry Link, Librarian at Michigan State University, whose tenacity and desire to seek change helped create and sustain the American Library Association's Task Force on the Environment;

Pat Murray, librarian, technical writer, and photographer, who for more than 13 years served as Editor of the newsletters *Environmental Information* and *ERMD Newsletter*, published by the Environmental Information and (presently) the Environment and Resource Management Division of the Special Libraries Association; her dedication to EID and

ERMD contributed to the ongoing success of this division and has allowed EID and ERMD to survive;

Elizabeth Thorndike, President of E collaborative and founding Director of the Center for Environmental Information, who in 1974 established CEI as a community resource to serve the environmental data and information needs of the Rochester, Genesee, and Western Finger Lakes region of New York; CEI recently held its 14th conference on climate change, publishes the current awareness bulletin, the *Global Climate Change Digest*, and will celebrate its 25th anniversary next year.

They all deserve our thanks and appreciation.

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