

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

www.bredl.org



Inside Line:

Director's Report:
Asymmetrical
Campaigns

Puppets and Street
Theater in
Community Action:
Organizers Target
State Representative

Racial Equity - A Path
to Community
Change

End Poultry and
Swine Set-asides
Now!

Secret Information on
Galvanizing Remains
Sealed...For Now

Six-foot Chicken
Testifies at Hearing

The Fox Guarding the
Henhouse: or Who is
Minding the Fracking
Store?

At the Crossroads

BREDL's New
Mobile Website



copyright
all rights reserved

2012

The LEAGUE LINE

FALL 2012

League Fund Honors Founder



The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Board of Directors has recently approved the establishment of a fund to honor the work of Janet Marsh Zeller, who founded the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and served as its executive director for over two decades.

In her early adult life, Janet was a successful teacher and a rising star in the educational establishment of North Carolina. Blinded by a congenital disorder, Janet's career was cut short. Nevertheless, in 1984 she organized Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League to fight a national nuclear waste dump, at first near her mountain home, then in other communities throughout the South and across the nation.

Under Janet's leadership, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League expanded in size and scope, with new issues, new communities, and new methods. A woman who shouldered much responsibility without fanfare, Janet poured herself into the organization she founded.

A fund to honor Janet's achievements was conceived by Laura Drey, a long-time friend and a volunteer for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. The honorary fund is a current fund (as opposed to an endowment fund) which will support the ongoing mission of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. It will be a continuing fund, with individual gifts accepted throughout the year. All donations to BREDL are tax-deductible.

Contributions to the fund will benefit the organization while honoring the woman who gave so much to make our world better, one community at a time; the woman who still says: "One person speaking alone may not be heard, but many people speaking with one voice cannot be ignored." ♦



BREDL grants permission to other publications, including websites, to reprint materials from The League Line. All reprinted material should contain a statement acknowledging that the material was originally published in The League Line, BREDL's quarterly newsletter.

BREDL: Who and what we are

In March 1984, fifty citizens of Ashe and Watauga Counties met in the Mission House of Holy Trinity Church in Glendale Springs, North Carolina. Teachers and farmers, home-makers and merchants listened to the report of the Episcopal Church Women on the US Department of Energy's siting search for a high-level nuclear waste dump in the rain-rich east.

Recognizing that the North Carolina mountains were a region at risk, the assembled group organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) to protect their own backyard and those of other threatened communities.

Grassroots organizing was a cornerstone of our early all-volunteer organization. One of our first multi-county boards of directors adopted our credo, which embodies our mission statement:

BREDL Credo

We believe in the practice of earth stewardship, not only by our league members, but by our government and the public as well. To foster stewardship, BREDL encourages government and citizen responsibility in conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in order to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL functions as a "watchdog" of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions. BREDL networks with citizen groups and agencies, collecting and disseminating accurate, timely information. BREDL sets standards for environmental quality, and awards individuals and agencies who uphold these standards in practice.

Moving into the future

Since then, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has grown to be a regional community-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Our founding principles - earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice and community empowerment - still guide our work for social change. Our staff and volunteers put into practice the ideals of love of community and love of neighbor, which help us to serve the movement for environmental protection and progressive social change in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

Grassroots Campaigns

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign - and our chapters have a history of winning. For twenty-eight years Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

In the 1980's and 1990's, BREDL prevented a multi-state ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator, a southeastern nuclear waste dump and a national nuclear waste dump. In the 2000's, our coordinated grassroots citizens' campaigns have had further victories. We won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. Our Person County chapter convinced their Board of Commissioners to reject expansion of the Republic Services landfill. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. We eliminated mercury waste from the Stericycle incinerator, shut down a tire incinerator in Martinsville, won the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, NC. Further, with our chapters we have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is the most effective strategy for lasting change. ■

A quarterly publication of:

**Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
(BREDL)**

P.O. Box 88, Glendale Springs, NC 28629

Tel: 336-982-2691 Fax: 336-982-2954

email: bredl@skybest.com

www.bredl.org

Editor: Beverly Kerr 336-376-9060

beverlykerr@triad.rr.com



Contributing writers:

Elizabeth O'Nan, Michael Noll, Lou Zeller,
Therese Vick, Charles Utley, Mark Barker,
Beverly Kerr

BREDL Board Executive Committee

Co-Presidents

James A. Johnson
Sam Tesh

Eastern North Carolina Vice President

Pat Hill

Western North Carolina Vice President

Elizabeth O'Nan

Virginia Vice President

Mark Barker

Tennessee/Alabama Vice President

Sandy Kurtz

Georgia Vice President

Rev. Willie Tomlin

Youth Representative

Daisy O'Nan

Community Organizing Staff

Executive Director

Louis Zeller

Associate Director/Communications Coordinator

Beverly Kerr

Environmental Justice Coordinator

Charles Utley

Development Director

Ann Rogers

Sustainable Economic Development Coordinator

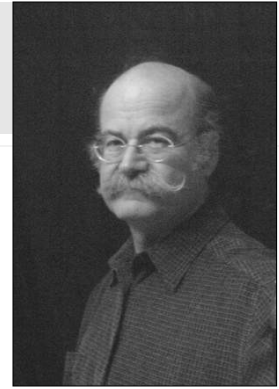
Therese Vick



**100% recycled, 100% PCW,
non-rebleached paper stock**

Director's Report: Asymmetrical Campaigns

~ By Louis Zeller



When confronted with a superior force, do you meet your opponent head on? Or, is it better to exploit your opponent's weakness, to find a gap in their defenses? Sports analogy: Facing a fantasy baseball team with Hank Aaron, Mickey Mantle and Babe Ruth coming up to bat, does a smart manager simply plan to have his team hit lots and lots of home runs? Or does he bunt and steal his way to victory?

Propaganda of the Deed

After words comes action. After speeches, pamphlets, and other normal channels of persuasion have been tried and have been seen to fail, the best publicity for advancing your cause is direct action. And the best kind of action is one which puts the opponent in a dilemma. That is, whichever response the opponent makes, either you win or your opponent loses. Faced with overwhelming British military power, Gandhi made a considered decision to practice a non-violent strategy. But even non-violent strategies must build their own power in order to counter a greater power. Gandhi said, "It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces."

Strategy is the conscious, deliberate plan for building the power to compel someone to give your organization what it wants. Not to be confused with tactics, strategy is the design of the campaign combined with an analysis of power relationships. Tactics are the steps in the campaign; for example, press conferences, lawsuits, public hearings, etc. Strategy is the ladder to a goal.

Dilemma Demonstrations

Fighting for women's suffrage, Alice Paul based her organizing on moving public opinion. In 1916 she said, "If a creditor stands before a man's house all day long demanding payment of his bill, the man must either remove the creditor or pay the bill." She organized pickets at the White House, with huge banners asking, "Mr. President, how long must women wait

for liberty?" Eventually President Wilson paid the bill.

During the 1960 lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, store managers either had to eject the four peaceful black students or allow them to stay. The public saw the action and the movement spread. Hundreds joined the sit-ins. Tensions mounted and a boycott was organized. Six months later, Woolworth's department store capitulated and ended segregation at all of its stores. And the movement continued, resulting in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which mandated desegregation of all public accommodations.

In 1984, facing the US Department of Energy armed with the power of the federal government and sanctioned by law to find a waste dump for tens of thousands of tons of radioactive waste, BREDL's leaders met the irresistible force with an immovable object: people's organizations in every county and city. For example, a handful of people in rural Madison County North Carolina organized a public meeting which drew over 300 local residents, filling the county high school gym. Television and newspapers carried the story. The public saw farmers, homemakers and preachers unified against the waste dump. The prosaically named Madison County Nuclear Waste Education Committee and other local committees across the state and later across the nation were the Davids to the government Goliath. In 1987 Congress changed the law and ended the project.

In 2009 Surry County residents organized the Citizens' Alliance for a Clean Healthy Economy to fight their county government's agreement with an incinerator company. Initial efforts included meetings with officials and public hearings. But their information was countered by industry information, ending in a stalemate. Residents were treated rudely and told it was a "done deal" by the county. But a triggering event occurred at a street festival, unanticipated but quickly used by the group. And it was provided by the pro-incinerator chamber of commerce itself. The Pumpkin Festival Incident is best told by one who was there, Betty Tesh.

"We're going to have to ask you to leave," the policeman said. "You're not allowed here." It was about 10 o'clock Saturday morning in downtown Elkin, and three of us were standing in front of a Main Street business. I was holding a "Stop Fibrowatt" sign; Sam and Joan were holding information sheets. We were all wearing stickers that identified us as member of CACHE. We were not blocking traffic. We had the store owner's permission to stand in front of his store. Sam pointed to the badge identifying us as members of CACHE. "Do we have to take these off?" he asked. "Yes, sir, you do." "What if I don't? Will you remove it?" "No, sir, I won't. But you will, or I will arrest you." Joan and I removed our badges, but Sam, whose badge was on his shirt, simply zipped up his windbreaker.

The three quietly left the area, but they reported the incident to the newspaper. The Elkin Tribune printed their story on the front page. People who had been indifferent to the pollution issue reacted strongly to the restriction of free speech. CACHE received an apology from the town and the police department. Eight months later the same county commission which had approved the incinerator project reversed itself. Done deal, indeed.

When the normal channels for public input fail, your strategy must adapt to the situation. Otherwise, action leading to action leads to action leads nowhere. But if the perception of injustice is elicited by the action, and the tactics of the opponent are exposed and used against him, it becomes a pivot which turns public opinion. ♦

Making Street Puppets Adds Fun to Any Public Event

~ By Elizabeth O'Nan

Elizabeth has served as director of Protect All Children's Environment (PACE) since 1987. PACE is a national organization established to support individuals who have been injured or disabled by chemical exposures (primarily pesticides). Elizabeth and her daughter, Margaret, were disabled by the now banned pesticide, chlordane, and have first hand experience of the difficulties of living with chemical injuries. They both serve on the BREDL board and continue to do what they can to stop the poisoning and inform the public of chemical risks. According to Elizabeth, "Making puppets and seeing how much fun they add to an event has been very rewarding."

I started with a search on the internet for basic instructions and inspiration:

<http://www.squidoo.com/make-giant-puppet>

http://www.ehow.com/how_2183612_own-muppetstyle-puppet.html

<http://www.schoolofpuppetry.com.au/tutorials.php/what-are-caricature-puppets>

<http://www.gis.net/~puppetco/>

The foam puppet instructions are what we used to start making our first puppet head of NC Rep. Mitch Gillespie, NC's fracking bill sponsor. After we made the foam head we bought Mitch a 3-piece suit, shirt, and tie at the local Goodwill store. This size puppet can be worn by someone, or stuffed with balloons or plastic bags, newspapers etc. and sat in a chair, or place a stick up his back and carry it after it is stuffed. We have not tried the stick up his back yet but think it would work.

<http://www.gis.net/~puppetco/page62.htm>

Foam Puppets

Note: Make a pattern with paper or cardboard, then sew foam pattern pieces between two pieces of cloth, and sew these pieces together to form the puppet. Foam puppets are soft and comfortable, and their faces can be distorted to change expression.

Eye glasses can be made with coat hangers

Enlarged photos taken off the internet can be used for patterns of facial features or simply tacked onto the foam face directly.

Don't be discouraged just keep poking the fabric and foam where you want them and stitch into place from the inside.

This took us about two weeks and material costs were around \$75 depending on how large a puppet you make.

The foam is the greatest expense.

I would advise you to be sure that your puppet is only used by responsible people who will treat it with respect and care as the natural instinct is to want to tar and feather, punch and abuse these characters, unfortunately the puppets are rather delicate, require quite a bit of time and effort to make, and some expense.



PUPPETS AND STREET THEATER IN COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZERS TARGET STATE REPRESENTATIVE

~ By BREDL Community Organizer, Therese Vick

For 3000 years people have used puppetry to tell stories about courage and fear, power and despair, and right and wrong. It is a powerful tool. Recently, BREDL staff and volunteers made use of this ancient art to target a classic villain, a pollution politician.

This summer Therese Vick, Elizabeth and Daisy O'Nan staged an event in McDowell County to educate the public on the twin dangers of fracking and air pollution. Their target: Rep. Mitch Gillespie, who backed bills which gutted air toxics regulations and legalized fracking in NC.

Not wanting to give the real Gillespie a platform, the organizers went one better, sending a stand-in puppet to a street demonstration in front of the county courthouse which featured participants from McDowell, Anson, Wake, Chatham McDowell, Burke, and Rutherford counties. They had a real insurance agent on hand informing landowners that their homeowner's insurance would not cover damage from fracking, as well as a doctor and several patients explaining and displaying the diseases caused by pollution. A 10 foot tall scroll of shame was unrolled at Puppet Mitch's feet, which detailed the over 100 toxics which will be emitted in higher amounts in North Carolina communities.

When normal methods fail, we cannot depend on doing things in the same old way. BREDL and PACE brought the event to McDowell County Representative Gillespie's backyard to emphasize the effects his decisions will have on all North Carolina backyards. They used clever ideas for framing the message and creating interesting and eye-catching visuals. BREDL had a banner made and a laminated sign pointing out that Mitch represented polluters, not people, and PACE constructed a larger-than-life image of Mitch. It was a beautiful day and an energetic and fun event. Denise Lee from PeeDee WALL engaged with several onlookers. Elizabeth O'Nan had several people from the area express interest in becoming involved with PACE which was an excellent addition to the day. ♦

Both Daisy and Elizabeth O'Nan are BREDL Board VPs and leaders of PACE. Therese Vick works full-time as a BREDL NC Community Organizer. Denise Lee is a BREDL volunteer who has founded two chapters in her community.



Racial Equity - A Path to Community Change

~ By Lou Zeller

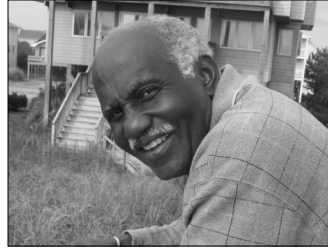
*"The past is never dead.
It's not even past."*

~ William Faulkner

In September the NC Center for Non-profits offered a day-long workshop on racial equity. Sponsored by Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the workshop centered on the history of racism in America with the goal of a better understanding of how it still affects work both in the non-profit world and society in general. BREDL's EJ Campaign Coordinator Charles Utley and I attended with the goal of expanding our own environmental justice campaign. We agreed that the lessons and techniques learned there could be applied to strengthening the community organizing of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and its many chapters.

Community organizing is about people, not issues. Social change is about justice, not policies. And racial equity is about fairness, not equality. The essay by Charles in this issue of the League Line asks a series of questions which are designed to promote thoughtful examination of your work. In order to make our world better, one community at a time, we must confront the ghosts of the past. To ignore this legacy would permit shadows to undermine us and what we would do. ♦

Racial Equity and Equality



~ By Charles Utley

Congratulations to Rev. Charles Utley, who recently celebrated his 10th anniversary as BREDL's Environmental Justice Coordinator. Charles and his wife Brenda have been blessed with a happy marriage of 38 years and have two sons. Charles is Pastor of McElmurray Spring Branch Baptist Church, located five miles from Plant Vogtle, a nuclear facility in Burke County, Georgia. Charles also works full time as a School Counselor at Spirit Creek Middle School in Hephzibah, GA.

There are times that we must look at ourselves and ask the question, where I am and who am I? Shakespeare said, "To thy own self be true". Therefore, it is with this self-examination that we must look at our organization and ask the tough questions:

- Are we racially equitable within our organizational structure?
- Are the norms of the organizational structure designed so that racial equity is equally shared with all the member of the organization?
- Do we accept the fact that our racial ethnicity or nationality may cause us to respond differently, and if so why? Could it be based on the biases that society has embedded in our minds from the founding fathers of this nation?
- Does the norm of our organization represent the racial makeup of the communities that we serve, or is the racial make-up considered at all?
- Have we really considered race and equality to be needed in order to achieve our goals of truly being a wholesome organization? In other words, an organization that strives to set goals that has the best interest of the communities being served.
- Do we accept that the norms of our organization are to be equitable when it comes to race?

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is always looking for new and energizing ways to make this organization one of the best. Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League's desire is to ensure those who we serve understand that the norm of this organization is to be always racially equitable. As community organizers we must be cognizant of the community racial makeup in order to effectively move forward resolving the complex issues that affect all those we represent.

Therefore, let us examine our organization and when all is said and done, we will be found to be an organization that exemplifies the true philosophy of Racial Equity. ♦



Judge Allows Emissions Information to be Hidden from the Public

~ By Beverly Kerr

Background: Since 2006 Alamance County neighbors have been fighting for relief from a galvanizing plant that slipped into the neighborhood and started operating next to a child care center and private residences, creating concerns about air pollution, noise, chemical smell and traffic issues. Since then, environmental and public health concerns continue to be a source of stress to families in this rural community.

Soil Contamination Health Risk: At the request of citizens who live near the SAG plant, BREDL obtained a lab analysis of soil samples collected in the vicinity of the plant. The lab analysis confirmed soil conditions and concentrations of heavy metals cadmium, chromium, lead and zinc that clearly indicated a significant risk to human health. All four heavy metals are emitted from galvanizing plant operations. According to the EPA, soil contaminated with heavy metals can pose a public health risk, especially for children. With this information in hand, neighbors requested help from sources including Alamance County Health Department, Planning Board and County Commissioners, North Carolina Department of Air Quality and the EPA.

NEW BREDL Chapter forms: Even though no local help was provided, the campaign continued, not only for relief from SAG, but also to help Alamance County decision makers realize the importance of proper placement and regulation of polluting industries. In 2010, Neighborhood Environment Watch (NEW) formed a BREDL Chapter and continues to research the galvanizing process and to call for the enclosure of the plant and the permitting of the emissions.

Secret Documents Discovered: In August 2011 BREDL discovered documents that revealed a secret pact between SAG and NC Division of Air Quality to keep certain air emissions data confidential. BREDL called for that information to be released based on Federal and State law.

Legal Battle: On October 2011 NC Department of Air Quality agreed with BREDL that documents should not have been kept confidential and agreed to release them to BREDL for review. Soon after, SAG appealed to the NC Environmental Management Commission, who concurred with DAQ and BREDL. However, SAG then appealed to Superior Court and a hearing was held on June 4, 2012. Judge Howard Manning ruled for SAG and directed DAQ to return the documents to SAG. BREDL requested to intervene in the case and was denied.

Future Plans: BREDL is considering legal and administrative actions. BREDL and the affected communities call for NC-DAQ to uphold the law and not allow the documents to be returned to SAG and be destroyed. SAG's emission records must be made public in order to know the real exposures of those living nearby. Many other galvanizing plants have accepted their environmental responsibility and have implemented more sustainable business practices. These facilities show us that it is possible to reduce environmental impact, but SAG will never feel the need if they are allowed to continue to hide the truth from the public. The question that remains is this: Why has SAG spent so much money on keeping emissions data covered up and what are they trying to hide? Is there more information buried at the DAQ that will give us a better picture of what is going on?

Positive Results from improper cover up: Although environmentalists are disappointed in Judge Manning's ruling, the outcome has led to positive results. The local news media has covered the campaign well and citizens have been made aware of the hazards of galvanizing. There is appreciation for the NC-DAQ, the Attorney General's office and the NC Environmental Commission for their correct application of public records law to this case. However, neither the news media nor the citizens of Alamance County seem to appreciate the contrary order by Judge Manning. Although emissions information is clearly public information, Judge Manning allowed the emissions information to be hidden from the public, despite State and Federal law. Those who were not previously interested are now expressing concern and speaking up for a more transparent and open government process. This is not the end of our concern, or our campaign. BREDL and NEW challenge citizens and especially young people to become aware of local environmental issues and to take action to heal and protect the earth. ♦



Beverly and Julius Kerr's home and child care business of 28 years adjoins the galvanizing plant property. Beverly is BREDL Associate Director and Communications Coordinator. Julius is a dedicated BREDL volunteer and member of NEW.



Chicken with Jimmy Bruce and Sam Tesh

Six-foot Chicken Testifies at Hearing

You know the joke: Why did the chicken cross the road? But did you know that you could get a man dressed in a chicken suit to get past security guards and walk into an official hearing of a state utilities commission? Well, in September the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League did. Why? As explained in this issue of the League Line by community organizer Therese Vick, the commission is entertaining proposals by the chicken manure incinerator industry to allow them a few more years to find a pigeon who will allow them to set up shop in their community. But the asymmetric campaign approach, also explained further in this newsletter, requires tactics which do not meet the opponent head on. So, we played chicken with the state's officials. The industry's message was: "The sky is falling." Our message was, "Don't chicken out."

Let the Sunshine In

Now's the time to end Poultry and Swine Waste Set-asides once and for all

~ Story and Photos By Therese Vick

At our last Board meeting, we talked about BREDL continuing our intervention in the issue of burning poultry and/or swine manure to generate electricity. While not wanting to side with the energy giants in their desire for a mere delay, BREDL saw this as a "teaching moment" for both the North Carolina Utilities Commission and the public about the green washing being done about this nasty practice.

Many BREDLians were interested in coming before the Commission on this issue to resoundingly voice their vow to fight these proposals anywhere they popped up. They would not allow this practice in their communities. The North Carolina Utilities Commission had stated that there would be a period of public comment before the evidentiary hearing. At the eleventh hour, this was cancelled. Some Chapter members still attended, coming long distances to be present. Julius Kerr, dressed as a very dignified chicken epitomized the NCUC's reluctance to hear from the public.

With the recent changes in North Carolina's health-based Air Toxics standards facilities incinerating poultry manure would emit even more arsenic and other toxics. The North Carolina Science Advisory Board has recommended to the Environmental Management Commission that allowable arsenic ambient levels be increased "nine fold." Just last week, that same Board expressed concern of the synergistic effect between arsenic and cadmium. Interestingly, cadmium can be a component of phosphate fertilizer that would likely replace the rich chicken manure used now.

BREDL's position at the hearing was that now was not the time to delay; rather put this issue to bed once and for all. It's a bad idea environmentally and economically. At the hearing, Emily Felt, the Director of Renewable Strategy and Compliance for Duke Energy stated that solar power was cheaper than any kind of biomass. We agree. If health costs were required to be factored in these proposals, we would see a very different energy spectrum. ♦



Public Hearing: Six-foot Chicken Julius Kerr Testifies with Lou Zeller

The Fox Guarding the Henhouse or:

Who is minding the Fracking store?

~ By Therese Vick

North Carolina Session Law 2012-143 or the Clean Energy and Economic Security Act became Law in July 2012. All remember the late night vote when Governor Beverly Perdue's veto was overridden—with an honest mistake, slick procedural maneuver and sellout that legalized fracking in North Carolina.

All of this drama set the stage for North Carolina's newest state regulatory board—The Mining and Energy Commission. This 15-member group is heavily weighted with industry representatives, those almost rabid in their support of fracking in North Carolina, a few agency representatives and one or two members who are truly concerned with public health and the environment. This is the group that the public must depend on to protect public health, the environment and landowner rights.

Perhaps the most egregious impropriety was House Speaker Thom Tillis tapping Dr. Ray Covington in a conservation spot. Covington is a principal in the firm North Carolina Oil and Gas LLC (NCOG) that formed in

2010. NCOG's website states the companies goals as: *"We want this land drilled, we want it done safely, we want some control over who drills, we want it drilled in a certain time frame, [and] we want to provide effective representation throughout the entire process."*¹

At their organizing meeting in early September, the Commission had a briefing on ethics and some bristled at having to abide by North Carolina's Ethic's Laws. Interestingly enough, Jim Womack, a current Lee County Commissioner expressed his feelings about the public's access to records as a threat. Womack is quoted in the News and Observer as saying, "You get a little taken aback when someone threatens you that you can't communicate with each other". It would seem that he should be very familiar with the public's right to information.² In a later WRAL news story article, Womack was quoted as saying, "I don't think there's any question that the shale gas industry is good for North Carolina," he explained. "Anybody who argues against that is arguing from an emotional, not a logical or factual standpoint."³

At the September 28 meeting, Womack was voted Commission Chair after nominating himself. He later apologized to the Commission making it clear that they were his personal feelings-- not the Commission's.

And off we go...



¹ *Who is North Carolina Oil and Gas*

² *"Fracking Commission Gets Tutorial on Ethics Laws" News and Observer September 6 2012*

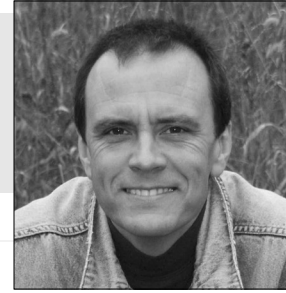
³ *"State Fracking Chair Hopeful: Enviro Warnings 'emotional', overblown" WRAL September 24 2012*

At the Crossroads

~ By Dr. Michael Noll

Wiregrass Activists for Clean Energy, (WACE.)

BREDL Chapter in Lowndes County, Georgia.



Hardly a day passes when I am not shaking my head in disbelief at the nonsense that is uttered by commentators in newspapers and on TV stations across the nation. Being in the middle of another election season does little to change that, but I cannot help it and wonder why it is so difficult for some to simply step back and carefully reflect on the situation we find ourselves in. Now I have to admit that my antidote for surviving the current climate of ideological blindness is a regular dose of Jon Stewart's Daily Show. After all humor is the best and least expensive medicine. But perhaps I can entice folks to pause for just a moment and reflect on matters of arithmetic, regardless of what their political and ideological background might be.

When you consider the record of human occupation on our planet it is quite eye-opening to look at demographic developments. Despite thousands of years of human history, it took us until 1800 to reach our first billion in terms of global population numbers. Humanity took that long to reach this landmark because we depended on current sunlight. In other words, the amount of sunshine we received in any given part of the world impacted the amount of food stuffs we could grow and live off. However, something extraordinary happened in the 18th century when ancient pockets of sunlight were discovered, or what we call fossil fuels. These pockets mainly formed during a geologic period referred to as the Carboniferous, some 300 million years ago. The equivalent of millions of years of stored sunlight has been used up ever since its discovery on an increasing scale and

at an incredible pace. With these fossil fuels we not only jumpstarted the Industrial Revolution but we also have been able to subsidize a way of life that allows us to grow exponentially while putting enormous pressures on our planet's ecosystems.

By 1930, at a time of relative calm between the two largest wars our planet ever experienced, we reached our second billion people. Around the time John F. Kennedy took office and dealt with the Cuba Crisis, we added a third billion. During Jimmy Carter's presidency, when we experienced our first Oil Crisis, we reached four billion. As our exponential population growth continues we now have seven billion citizens on our planet, and if latest projections are right, we will have as many as nine billion by 2050.

Now we find ourselves in a big mess. Simply put, there are too many of us using too many resources too fast, and like drug addicts we are living in denial about our situation and stumble from mining to drilling to fracking. But we can't solve our energy crisis without understanding what created it. What happened to Benjamin Franklin's "Want Not, Waste Not"? What we find instead is a resounding "Want More, Waste More", as if terms like conservation and efficiency have no meaning. And while we live it up in the developed world and portray our way of life as something worth aspiring to, we forget simple principles of arithmetic. When a global rich minority of roughly 20% uses up 50% or more of all resources (including fossil fuels) the other 80% cannot possibly do the same. This is not just a matter of degraded environments, tropical deforestation, global warming, and

increasing rates of cancer, heart, and respiratory diseases, it's about principles of environmental stewardship, sustainability, and simple logic.

Winston Churchill once said that "Americans always do the right thing after they exhaust all other options." I surely hope that we can prove him wrong and follow not only the wisdom of Benjamin Franklin, but also the vision of early champions of renewable energy like Thomas Edison who once said: "I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that."

Thus it is crucial that we finally admit to ourselves that we all live off borrowed time, a time given to us in the form of sources of energy which are not only finite but harmful, and neither biomass nor nuclear power do anything to change that assessment. Therefore let's usher in a second solar age as envisioned by Thomas Edison, or a wind age, or a geothermal age, or an age of energy conservation and efficiency. We already have the technological know-how, we just need a drastic change in will, both cultural and political, so that we may make the right decisions at the crossroads we have reached.

P.S.: I often wonder where we would be today if Ronald Reagan had embraced the ideas of energy conservation and renewable energy production instead of tearing down the solar panels Jimmy Carter installed on the White House more than thirty years ago. Don't you?

www.bredl.org

BREDL's website and our social connection websites continue to expand in 2012. This year we have added to our website links and information for our facebook, twitter, blog and youtube pages. These social media options provide quick ways to get the word out on our campaign work while directing people to our website for more detailed information. Through Sept. 30, 2012, we have increased our average daily website hits to 2,850. This compares to 2,795 hits in 2011 and 2,711 in 2010. On June 11, we had 8,238 hits and 1,732 visits, our highest website hit total since we changed website formats in 2003. This was the Monday following the Friday court ruling on Nuclear Waste Disposal. On June 8, the DC Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and two other public interest groups on nuclear waste disposal.

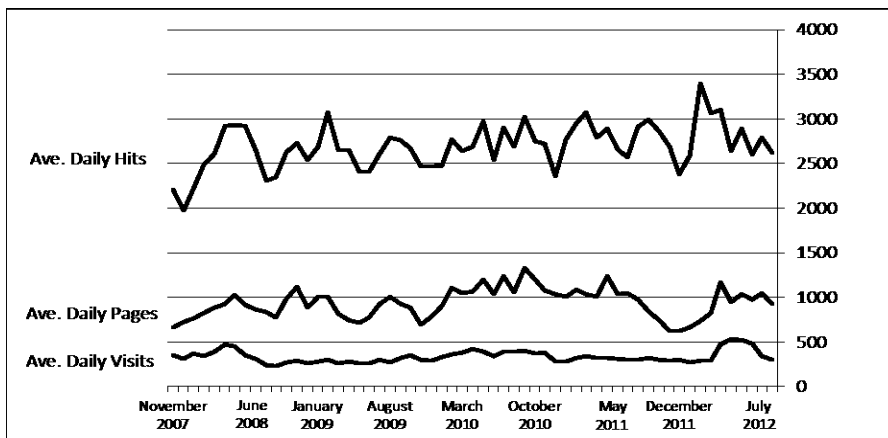
We have also added Google Analytics to our html and asp webpages. This is in addition to our Purehost web stats. Purehost web stats, which include our nearly 600 pdf files, show that in September 2012, we had 78,504 hits for an average of 2,616 daily hits, 932 daily page views and 305 daily visits. Google web stats, which do not include our pdf files, indicate that in September we had 75 percent new visitors and 25 percent returning visitors to bredl.org. Visitors came

from 52 countries and 43 U.S. states. Countries outside the U.S. with the highest usage included Canada, India, United Kingdom, Japan, Belgium, and France. In addition to the southeastern states that BREDL serves, other states with high usage included California, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas. Google stats indicate that 52 percent of our website traffic comes from search engines, 31 percent is direct traffic and 17 percent is referred from links on other websites.

During September, top downloads for our pdf files included: 4,684 for our Waste Gasification Report, 362 for the Jan. 2001 Minority Report on asphalt plant emissions, 319 for our Nov. 2010 BMWNC Air Modeling Report, 291 for our Summer 2012 *The League Line* newsletter, and 239 for the Smoke and Mirrors Biomass report. Other top pdf files included FAQ-Sludge Report, NC Air Toxics Report, Poultry Waste Gasification, 2003 Hydrogen Sulfide fact sheet, and asphalt plants fact sheet. Web pages with high hit totals included pages for Vogtle, Bellefonte, and North Anna nuclear facilities as well as pages for several coal-fired power plants.

Along with our website and social media pages, bredl will soon introduce a mobile website so that our mobile users can access current information faster and easier. Our new mobile site will also provide a link to our full bredl website. ♦

www.bredl.org web stats (Source: Purehost Web Stats)



Mark Barker is a 1984 graduate of James Madison University and is employed by WDBJ Television in Roanoke, Virginia. He has worked for WDBJ for twenty-five years and is currently the Master Control Supervisor. Mark began his service on the BREDL Board of Directors in 1992 when he represented Mountain Heritage Alliance as their chapter rep. He currently volunteers as BREDL's website manager and serves on the Executive Committee as SW Virginia Vice President.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Mission Statement

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is a regional, community-based non-profit environmental organization founded in 1984. BREDL encourages government agencies and citizens to take responsibility for conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement to empower whole communities in environmental issues.

We are a true league of grassroots chapters working in rural communities in the Southeast. For twenty-six years the same organizing principles have guided our work: public health protection, environmental democracy, earth stewardship and social justice. Our mission is to prevent harm from air and water pollution and to create sustainable alternatives for sound waste management and economic development. Protecting children's health from environmental poisons, empowering whole communities to engage in crucial decision making, and changing the balance of power to prevent injustice are key components of our work.



It's easier than ever to **join**, **renew** and **donate** online.

Check out our secure online donation forms at www.bredl.org. Help us save trees and other resources by donating online.

Yes, I support BREDL's work! Send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629

or use your credit card at **www.BREDL.org**. For more information **contact BREDL at 336-982-2691**.

All donations help BREDLs mission and are tax deductible.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____ Email: _____

Date _____ Chapter _____



BREDL

PO BOX 88

Glendale Springs, NC 28629

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Glendale Springs, NC 28629
PERMIT NO. 1