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Parasitology, Harold W. Manter Laboratory of

Summer 2005

American Society of Parasitologists Newsletter, v. 27, no. 2, Summer 2005

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Volume 27, No. 2

Summer 2005

American Society of Parasitologists

NEWSLETTER



Newsletter:

Released on the ASP web-server [<http://asp.unl.edu>]
June 30, 2005

From the *Editor* of the Newsletter

The ASP newsletter accepts information and news of a parasitological nature from all disciplines. Please assist me in making the content of the ASP newsletter highly relevant. We will be posting material on the web as they are generated by you, the **reader** and **contributor**.

Scott L. Gardner, Curator
Harold W. Manter Laboratory of Parasitology
University of Nebraska State Museum

NEWS

Survey Reminder::

Dear ASP members:
The American Society of Parasitologist continues to be a critically important focal point for parasitological investigation and education in North America and, increasingly, in the world. However, in the rapidly changing economic, social and scientific environment we are currently facing, it is only prudent that we periodically assess who we are, and the directions we

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as a professional society are taking to remain a vibrant organization. To this end, the ASP leadership is requesting your help by providing updated information on your professional activities and, importantly, your thoughts on how the ASP, as an organization, is doing to promote general parasitology, provide service to its members, and in attracting and retaining new members. We therefore ask that you take time to complete and submit the following survey (attachment below) that will provide us with direct member input into the strategic planning of ASP's future. **As an added incentive for participating in this important project, the name of each participant will be entered into a lottery pool from which four (4) names will be drawn at random to receive a \$50 gift certificate redeemable at the next ASP auction.** Also please note that all specific information and comments provided by you will be kept completely anonymous, with data being presented in aggregate only or as anonymous summarized comments. Many thanks in advance for your thoughtful participation in this important survey.

Dennis Minchella, ASP President
Tim Yoshino, ASP President-elect
Steven Kayes, ASP Vice President
ASP Council - 2005

General instructions for filling out and submitting the ASP survey

- 1. Open and save the attached survey and provide information as requested**
2. Forward completed survey to: **yoshinot@svm.vetmed.wisc.edu**
NOTE: Do not return completed survey by "Reply" back to the Listserv administrator.
3. Alternatively, this survey may be found on the Home Page of the ASP website (<http://asp.unl.edu/>). Just complete the form and send it to **yoshinot@svm.vetmed.wisc.edu** as per instructions.
4. You will automatically be entered into the prize drawing upon receipt of completed survey.

WINNERS!! The following people will receive \$50 certificates to redeem at the Annual ASP Student Auction in Mobile, Alabama.

Jackie Bird
Harold E. Laubach
Gerald Esch
Gerhard Schad

Congratulations to the winners, and to all others who participated in this important survey.

Note: It is not too late to participate in the survey – if you haven't already done so, please take a few minutes to complete a survey and send it in.

Positions:::**ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY PARASITOLOGY**

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences (CVHS) requests applications for the tenure-track position of Assistant/Associate Professor of Veterinary Parasitology. The position will be 60 percent research, 40 percent teaching, with a 9- or 11-month appointment in the College of Veterinary Medicine. The faculty member will be responsible for teaching introductory parasitology (one 3-credit course in the spring semester) in the professional curriculum, developing and teaching one or more graduate course(s) in parasitology, and will be expected to establish an extramurally funded research program involving the training of graduate students. The starting date for this position is anticipated to be October 1, 2005.

Candidates should have earned a PhD in parasitology or medical entomology with a DVM/PhD being desired. Candidates should have a documented history of teaching. Candidates should also have a record of research accomplishments indicating a potential for future research success or demonstrating sustained funding support, depending on professorial rank of the initial appointment. The particular area of research emphasis is open to the interest of the candidate. Salary will be commensurate with the candidate's qualifications and experience.

The OSU College of Veterinary Medicine has a proven history of commitment to parasitology teaching and a nationally recognized program in infectious and tick-borne disease research with a strong graduate program. There is a growing emphasis on biomedical research at OSU and the CVHS has collaborations with the new Oklahoma Technology and Research Park in Stillwater.

Oklahoma State University is a land-grant institution founded in 1890. Stillwater is located in north-central Oklahoma, approximately 80 miles from Tulsa and Oklahoma City, with 40,000 residents and a low cost of living. Stillwater was recently named one of the best small towns in America and has a wide variety of activities available including camping, hiking, golf, tennis, parks, lakes, boating and fishing, theatre, rodeos and the excitement of Big XII sporting events.

Applications should include a CV, statement of teaching philosophy, statement of current and proposed research and the names and contact information of three references.

Applications should be sent to: Search Committee for Professorship in Veterinary Parasitology; c/o Dr. Anthony Confer, Head; Department of Veterinary Pathobiology; 250 McElroy Hall; College of Veterinary Medicine; Oklahoma State University; Stillwater, OK 74078-2007. (aconfer@cvm.okstate.edu) Applications should be received by August 1, 2005, for full consideration, but the search will continue until position is filled. Additional College information is available at www.cvm.okstate.edu and inquiries can be made at (405) 744-6747. OSU is an AA/EOE.

The Department of Infectious Diseases, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor position in parasitology. Applicants must have a DVM and/or PhD, post-doctoral experience and evidence of research accomplishments. Of special interest are investigators with research programs in molecular helminthology, but individuals in a broad range of parasitology-

related disciplines are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate will be expected to establish a nationally recognized and externally funded research program and contribute to teaching in the professional and graduate curricula. The University of Georgia and the College of Veterinary Medicine offer a highly innovative and vigorous research environment including biocontainment animal health research facilities, the Biomedical Health Research Center, the Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases and the Filariasis Research Reagent Resource Center. For more information, log onto http://www.vet.uga.edu/id/parasitology_search.htm. Interested applicants should submit a letter of application including a statement of research plans, career goals, and teaching interests, along with a curriculum vitae and three references to Dr. John W. McCall, Chair of the Search Committee, Department of Infectious Diseases, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, 30602. Applications received before August 1, 2005, are assured consideration. The University of Georgia is an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action employer.

POST-DOCTORAL POSITION IN MALARIA / CELL BIOLOGY STUDIES

An NIH-funded postdoctoral position is available to work on mosquito injection of malaria parasites (sporozoite stage) into mammalian skin to initiate the malaria infection. Project aims are to characterize this process further and to study the roles of (1) anti-sporozoite immunity against the parasite and (2) host immediate-cutaneous-hypersensitivity against mosquito bite in modulating infection of the host by sporozoites. Studies will emphasize digital imaging. Applicants must have expertise and authorship in digital imaging, including digital capture and manipulation of time-sequence studies done by fluorescence microscopy and/or in confocal microscopy. Prior experience with malaria is helpful but not essential. Further information on the nature of the project is in "Vanderberg & Frevert. 2004. Intravital microscopy demonstrating antibody-mediated immobilisation of *Plasmodium berghei* sporozoites injected into skin by mosquitoes. *International Journal of Parasitology* 34(9):991-996." And at <http://www.med.nyu.edu/parasitology/faculty/jvanderberg.html>

General information on post-doctoral positions at our institution is available at <http://www.med.nyu.edu/sackler/postdoc/>

Send resumé (preferably by email) to:
Dr. Jerome Vanderberg
Department of Medical Parasitology
New York University School of Medicine
341 East 25th Street
New York, NY 10010

Dr. Stan Eisen sent the following request.

I know the question of acquiring insects with live *Hymenolepis diminuta* cysticeroids has come up in the past, and I apologize for dredging up the subject again.

I will be teaching parasitology in the fall, and I've always had a lab on the excystation behavior of *H. diminuta* cysticeroids...until Carolina Biological Supply Company discontinued the product.

Do you know of anyone who has live beetles infected with the cysticercoids whom I could contact at the appropriate time?

Stan

Dr. Stan Eisen, Director
Preprofessional Health Programs
Biology Department, Christian Brothers University
650 East Parkway South
Memphis, TN 38104
Telephone: (901) 321-3447
FAX: (901) 321-4433
e-mail: seisen@cbu.edu
<http://www.cbu.edu/~seisen/>

POLICY STATEMENT ON TEACHING EVOLUTION AND COSMOLOGY from the American Association of Physics Teachers

The Executive Board of the American Association of Physics Teachers is dismayed at organized actions to weaken and even to eliminate significant portions of evolution and cosmology from the educational objectives of states and school districts.

Evolution and cosmology represent two of the unifying concepts of modern science. There are few scientific theories more firmly supported by observations than these: Biological evolution has occurred and new species have arisen over time, life on Earth originated more than a billion years ago, and most stars are at least several billion years old. Overwhelming evidence comes from diverse sources - the structure and function of DNA, geological analysis of rocks, paleontological studies of fossils, telescopic observations of distant stars and galaxies - and no serious scientist questions these claims. We do our children a grave disservice if we remove from their education an exposure to firm scientific evidence supporting principles that significantly shape our understanding of the world in which we live. _____

No scientific theory, no matter how strongly supported by available evidence, is final and unchallengeable; any good theory is always exposed to the possibility of being modified or even overthrown by new evidence. That is at the very heart of the process of science. However, biological and cosmological evolution are theories as strongly supported and interwoven into the fabric of science as any other essential underpinnings of modern science and technology. To deny children exposure to the evidence in support of biological and cosmological evolution is akin to allowing them to believe that atoms do not exist or that the Sun goes around the Earth. We believe in teaching that science is a process that examines all of the evidence relevant to an issue and tests alternative hypotheses. For this reason, we do not endorse teaching the "evidence against evolution," because currently no such scientific evidence exists. Nor can we condone teaching "scientific creationism," "intelligent design," or other non-scientific viewpoints as valid scientific theories. These beliefs ignore the important connections among empirical data and fail to provide testable hypotheses. They should not be a part of the science curriculum.

School boards, teachers, parents, and lawmakers have a responsibility to ensure that all children receive a good education in science. The American Association of Physics Teachers opposes all efforts to require or promote teaching creationism or any other non-scientific viewpoints in a science course. AAPT supports the National Science Education Standards, which incorporate the process of science and well-established scientific theories including cosmological and biological evolution.

This statement was adopted by the Executive Board of the American Association of Physics Teachers on April 24, 2005

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Please Send to ASP Members Listserv
Date: Fri, 27 May 2005 11:19:38 -0500
From: Stephen Kayes <skayes@usouthal.edu>
To: <bwilkins@unl.edu>, <jjanovy@unlserve.unl.edu>

The starting date, July 8th, of the 80th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Parasitologists in Mobile, AL is fast approaching. The Local Committee wants to remind everyone that if you have not made hotel reservations, the deadline to do so is a week away on Saturday on June 4, 2005.

Hotel reservations must be made using the Hotel Reservation Form available on the ASP website (<http://asp.unl.edu>) or contact the local committee care of Dr. Steve Kayes at the address given below and a form will be sent to you.

Please think about donations for the Student Auction. The success of the auction depends on quality and quantity of the items up for bid. Lee Couch and Kelli Sapp are hard at work to make sure this is one of the best auctions in recent memory.

Steve Kayes, Ph.D.
Chair, ASP Mobile Committee

Stephen G. Kayes, Ph.D.
Professor
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skayes@usouthal.edu

Ms. Melissa D'Archangelo, the Marketing Manager at Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), has indicated that a newly revised CLSI educational reference document, *Procedures for the Recovery and Identification of Parasites >From the Intestinal Tract; Approved Guideline—Second Edition (M28-A2)*, is scheduled for publication and available for purchase in June. Communication of instructions to the patient, specimen collection and handling techniques, diagnostic tests, and result reporting are key components in proper patient management. Major sections of this document cover these topics, as well as equipment, reagents, and specific techniques used in diagnosing intestinal parasitic infections.

Ms. D'Archangelo has also wondered whether ASP members may be interested in participating in the development of an upcoming consensus project. CLSI volunteers, experts in the medical-testing community, share and enhance their technical expertise and work together to write reliable and practical consensus standards and guidelines to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clinical laboratory practices and medical testing. Check out the latest edition of their newsletter at <http://enews.clsi.org/clsi/issues/2005-05-05/>

For additional information, contact:

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1. White House Official Softened Global Climate Change Findings - NYTimes
2. National Academies Release Statement on Climate Change/Greenhouse Gases
3. Invasive Species Hit Big-Time in the Media
4. "The Golden Spruce" by John Vaillant - NPR Audio Archive
5. World Environment Day - Summer Activities
6. Just for Fun - Live View of "Big Bucky" (Titan Arum)

1. Bush Aide Softened Greenhouse Gas Links to Global Warming - New York Times, June 8, 2005. Andrew Revkin. Copyright 2005 The New York Times Company

A White House official who once led the oil industry's fight against limits on greenhouse gases has repeatedly edited government climate reports in ways that play down links between such emissions and global warming, according to internal documents.

In handwritten notes on drafts of several reports issued in 2002 and 2003, the official, Philip A. Cooney, removed or adjusted descriptions of climate research that government scientists and their supervisors, including some senior Bush administration officials, had already approved. In many cases, the changes appeared in the final reports.

The dozens of changes, while sometimes as subtle as the insertion of the phrase "significant and fundamental" before the word "uncertainties," tend to produce an air of doubt about findings that most climate experts say are robust.

Mr. Cooney is chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the office that helps devise and promote administration policies on environmental issues.

Before going to the White House in 2001, he was the "climate team leader" and a lobbyist at the American Petroleum Institute, the largest trade group representing the interests of the oil industry. A lawyer with a bachelor's degree in economics, he has no scientific training.

The documents were obtained by The New York Times from the Government Accountability Project, a nonprofit legal-assistance group for government whistle-blowers.

The project is representing Rick S. Piltz, who resigned in March as a senior associate in the office that coordinates government climate research. That office, now called the Climate Change Science Program, issued the documents that Mr. Cooney edited.

A White House spokeswoman, Michele St. Martin, said yesterday that Mr. Cooney would not be available to comment. "We don't put Phil Cooney on the record," Ms. St. Martin said. "He's not a cleared spokesman."

In one instance in an October 2002 draft of a regularly published summary of government climate research, "Our Changing Planet," Mr. Cooney amplified the sense of uncertainty by adding the word "extremely" to this sentence: "The attribution of the causes of biological and ecological changes to climate change or variability is extremely difficult."

In a section on the need for research into how warming might change water availability and flooding, he crossed out a paragraph describing the projected reduction of mountain glaciers and snowpack. His note in the margins explained that this was "straying from research strategy into speculative findings/musings."

Other White House officials said the changes made by Mr. Cooney were part of the normal interagency review that takes place on all documents related to global environmental change. Robert Hopkins, a spokesman for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, noted that one of the reports Mr. Cooney worked on, the administration's 10-year plan for climate research, was endorsed by the National Academy of Sciences. And Myron Ebell, who has long campaigned against limits on greenhouse gases as director of climate policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian group, said such editing was necessary for "consistency" in meshing programs with policy.

But critics said that while all administrations routinely vetted government reports, scientific content in such reports should be reviewed by scientists. Climate experts and representatives of environmental groups, when shown examples of the revisions, said they illustrated the significant if largely invisible influence of Mr. Cooney and other White House

officials with ties to energy industries that have long fought greenhouse-gas restrictions.

In a memorandum sent last week to the top officials dealing with climate change at a dozen agencies, Mr. Piltz said the White House editing and other actions threatened to taint the government's \$1.8 billion-a-year effort to clarify the causes and consequences of climate change.

"Each administration has a policy position on climate change," Mr. Piltz wrote. "But I have not seen a situation like the one that has developed under this administration during the past four years, in which politicization by the White House has fed back directly into the science program in such a way as to undermine the credibility and integrity of the program."

A senior Environmental Protection Agency scientist who works on climate questions said the White House environmental council, where Mr. Cooney works, had offered valuable suggestions on reports from time to time. But the scientist, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because all agency employees are forbidden to speak with reporters without clearance, said the kinds of changes made by Mr. Cooney had damaged morale. "I have colleagues in other agencies who express the same view, that it has somewhat of a chilling effect and has created a sense of frustration," he said.

Efforts by the Bush administration to highlight uncertainties in science pointing to human-caused warming have put the United States at odds with other nations and with scientific groups at home.

Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, who met with President Bush at the White House yesterday, has been trying to persuade him to intensify United States efforts to curb greenhouse gases. Mr. Bush has called only for voluntary measures to slow growth in emissions through 2012.

Yesterday, saying their goal was to influence that meeting, the scientific academies of 11 countries, including those of the United States and Britain, released a joint letter saying, "The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action."

The American Petroleum Institute, where Mr. Cooney worked before going to the White House, has long taken a sharply different view. Starting with the negotiations leading to the Kyoto Protocol climate treaty in 1997, it has promoted the idea that lingering uncertainties in climate science justify delaying restrictions on emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping smokestack and tailpipe gases.

On learning of the White House revisions, representatives of some environmental groups said the effort to amplify uncertainties in the science was clearly intended to delay consideration of curbs on the gases, which remain an unavoidable byproduct of burning oil and coal.

"They've got three more years, and the only way to control this issue and do nothing about it is to muddy the science," said Eileen Claussen, the president of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, a private group that has enlisted businesses in programs cutting emissions.

Mr. Cooney's alterations can cause clear shifts in meaning. For example, a sentence in the

October 2002 draft of "Our Changing Planet" originally read, "Many scientific observations indicate that the Earth is undergoing a period of relatively rapid change." In a neat, compact hand, Mr. Cooney modified the sentence to read, "Many scientific observations point to the conclusion that the Earth may be undergoing a period of relatively rapid change."

A document showing a similar pattern of changes is the 2003 "Strategic Plan for the United States Climate Change Science Program," a thick report describing the reorganization of government climate research that was requested by Mr. Bush in his first speech on the issue, in June 2001. The document was reviewed by an expert panel assembled in 2003 by the National Academy of Sciences. The scientists largely endorsed the administration's research plan, but they warned that the administration's procedures for vetting reports on climate could result in excessive political interference with science.

Another political appointee who has played an influential role in adjusting language in government reports on climate science is Dr. Harlan L. Watson, the chief climate negotiator for the State Department, who has a doctorate in solid-state physics but has not done climate research.

In an Oct. 4, 2002 memo to James R. Mahoney, the head of the United States Climate Change Science Program and an appointee of Mr. Bush, Mr. Watson "strongly" recommended cutting boxes of text referring to the findings of a National Academy of Sciences panel on climate and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations body that periodically reviews research on human-caused climate change.

The boxes, he wrote, "do not include an appropriate recognition of the underlying uncertainties and the tentative nature of a number of the assertions."

While those changes were made nearly two years ago, recent statements by Dr. Watson indicate that the administration's position has not changed.

"We are still not convinced of the need to move forward quite so quickly," he told the BBC in London last month. "There is general agreement that there is a lot known, but also there is a lot to be known." (END)

2. Joint Academies Statement Request Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Citing the responsibility of the G8 nations for much of the past greenhouse gas emissions, the heads of the National Academies (of Science) of Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and the US have signed a formal statement urging the G8 leaders, who will meet in July at Gleneagles (UK), to take concrete steps to alter the course of climate change through research and other actions.

Noteworthy that scientists in China and India, which will in the foreseeable future become energy consumers at rates that equal or exceed the US, are actively participating in the scientific statement.

According to Associated Press (June 7), the statement "was released as British Prime Minister Tony Blair was meeting with President Bush in Washington. Mr. Blair has made action on climate change a priority for the July G-8 summit. Mr. Bush opposes the Kyoto Protocol on fighting global warming, and his administration questions scientists' views that man-made pollutants are causing temperatures to rise."

For a full copy of the statement, go to:

<http://nationalacademies.org/onpi/06072005.pdf>

3. Invasive Species Hit Big-Time in the Media

The impact of non-native species on America's waterways, legacy lands, crops and natural resources is making the big-time in the media. In the past few weeks, "Parade Magazine" (the ubiquitous supplement in most Sunday newspapers) and CNN have included major coverage to make the public more aware of the issue.

The June 7 edition of CNN's "Lou Dobbs Show" featured an impressive array of experts in prime-time to discuss how unwanted invaders such as the Asian carp, nutria, and Asian longhorn beetle are becoming dominant species that cause an estimated \$130 billion in damage to US lands and crops annually, and are killing endangered native species. Dobbs's interviews included Sen. Carl Levin; US Geological Survey's Invasive Species Program Coordinator Sharon Gross; USGS Chief Biologist Sue Haseltine; and National Invasive Species Council's Director Lori Williams.

To read the transcript, go to:

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0506/07/ldt.01.html>

The May 22 issue of "Parade Magazine" offered a 2-page spread on the 7,000 invasive plants, animals and insects that are moving into US waterways, forests, farms and cities. Writer Earl Swift also includes a sidebar story with information on what homeowners can do. The online story features a photo gallery of invasive species and links to additional web resources.

http://archive.parade.com/2005/0522/0522_poison.html

4. "The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness, and Greed" - Audio

The June 3 edition of "All Things Considered" (National Public Radio) featured an interview with John Vaillant, author of the new work, "The Golden Spruce," which tells the tale of a shocking act of environmental protest in British Columbia with the destruction of the Golden Sitka Spruce in 1997. The tree was so revered by the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands that it was the only tree they had ever named. Standing 165 feet in height, the Golden Spruce was a major attraction for environmentalists and travelers until it was felled on the night of Jan. 20 1997, by Grant Hadwin, a BC-born former logger and environmentalist. Hadwin cut through the tree in such a way that the prevailing winds toppled it across the river. The outpouring of grief resulted in a funeral for the tree, and threats to lynch Hadwin. Why did he do it? Where did he escape to? And what happened to the tree?

Listen to the full interview, go to the NPR audio archive:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4679760>

5. World Environment Day: <http://www.wed2005.org/>

The United Nations "World Environment Day" celebration in San Francisco (June 1-5) is over, but many resources remain online -- information about green buildings, green cities, new urbanism and other topics. You can still participate if you choose to "Take the CO2

Pledge." And there is a lineup of exhibits and other events taking place this summer. **
Once online, you need to go to "postWED" and browse using this link:

<http://www.wed2005.org/programs-listing.php>

6. Just For Fun - Take a Look at "Big Bucky" (Titan Arum)

Big Bucky's back. The rare, big and extremely stinky flower that caused a sensation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison when it last bloomed in 2001 could become the world's largest flower when it blooms again next week. The titan arum stood at 6 feet, 4 inches (on June 2) in a University of Wisconsin-Madison greenhouse, on pace to rival the world record for cultivated flowers when it blooms and releases its trademark roadkill scent in the coming days. Botanists hope it will surpass the 9-foot height of the Arum that bloomed two years ago in Germany.

Log onto the web site below and look for the link to the streaming video (live); <http://www.news.wisc.edu/titanarum2005/>

Subject: Update from Washington - Proposal to End CPB Funding

June 13, 2005

TO: Update from Washington Readers

Congress Proposes to End CPB Funding (for Public TV) in 2 years

I'm taking the liberty of sending you the front-page Washington Post article (June 10) about the House of Representatives' "plan" to end federal support for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (i.e. PBS) within the next two years. We have all joked about the "hoax" to end funding for National Public Radio, but unfortunately, today's story is no hoax.

We all know that the best of television in the science arena -- Nova, Nature, Scientific American, National Geographic Explorer, as well as Frontline specials that focus on environmental issues -- has worked to communicate basic research and address the need for a more informed, science literate public. The National Science Foundation has also assisted these efforts with its support of public tv programs through informal science education grants.

Please don't wait until the proverbial "barn door" is closed. Eliminating federal support -- for CPB and therefore ending public funding for public television -- is like extinction for people who want science and public affairs, not reality tv.

For those of you who want to contact your Congressman -- of course you can always call the home office(s) in your state-- here is a simple way to get through to him/her in Washington and make your voice heard ! Call: 202-224-3121 (US Capitol Switchboard). Don't be afraid to write a letter -- or ask your science society to take a stand. And please feel free to forward this story to your friends-colleagues. --(Bobbie Faul-Zeitler)

Public Broadcasting Targeted By House
Panel Seeks to End CPB's Funding Within 2 Years
By Paul Farhi, Washington Post Staff Writer, Friday, June 10, 2005; A01. C
2005 The Washington Post Company

A House subcommittee voted yesterday to sharply reduce the federal government's financial support for public broadcasting, including eliminating taxpayer funds that help underwrite such popular children's educational programs as "Sesame Street," "Reading Rainbow," "Arthur" and "Postcards From Buster."

In addition, the subcommittee acted to eliminate within two years all federal money for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting -- which passes federal funds to public broadcasters -- starting with a 25 percent reduction in CPB's budget for next year, from \$400 million to \$300 million.

In all, the cuts would represent the most drastic cutback of public broadcasting since Congress created the nonprofit CPB in 1967. The CPB funds are particularly important for small TV and radio stations and account for about 15 percent of the public broadcasting industry's total revenue.

Expressing alarm, public broadcasters and their supporters in Congress interpreted the move as an escalation of a Republican-led campaign against a perceived liberal bias in their programming. That effort was initiated by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's own chairman, Kenneth Y. Tomlinson.

"Americans overwhelmingly see public broadcasting as an unbiased information source," Rep. David Obey (Wis.), the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, said in a statement. "Perhaps that's what the GOP finds so offensive about it. Republican leaders are trying to bring every facet of the federal government under their control. . . . Now they are trying to put their ideological stamp on public broadcasting."

But the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on labor, health and human services, and education asserted that the panel was simply making choices among various worthy government programs, and that no political message was intended.

The subcommittee's action, which came on a voice vote, doesn't necessarily put Big Bird on the Endangered Species List. House members could restore funding as the appropriations bill moves along or, more likely, when the House and Senate meet to reconcile budget legislation later this year. The Senate has traditionally been a stronger ally of public broadcasting than the House, whose former speaker, Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), waged a high-profile but ultimately unsuccessful campaign to "zero out" funding for the CPB a decade ago.

The cuts nevertheless surprised people in public broadcasting. In his budget sent to Congress in February, President Bush had recommended reducing CPB's budget only slightly.

Several denounced the decision by the panel, which has 10 Republicans and seven Democrats, as payback by a Republican-dominated House after years of complaints from

conservatives who see liberal bias in programs carried by the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio. Broadcasters noted, for example, that the 25 percent cutback in next year's CPB budget was a rollback of money that Congress had promised in 2004.

PBS, in particular, drew harsh criticism in December from the Bush administration for a "Postcards From Buster" episode in which Buster, an animated rabbit, "visited" two families in Vermont headed by lesbians. And programming on both PBS and NPR has come under fire in recent months from Tomlinson, the Republican chairman of the CPB, who has pushed for greater "balance" on the public airwaves.

A spokeswoman for NPR, Andi Sporkin, directly blamed Tomlinson for yesterday's action, saying, "We've never been sure of Mr. Tomlinson's intent but, with this news, we might be seeing his effect."

Tomlinson did not return calls seeking comment. In a statement, he said, "Obviously, we are concerned [by the cuts], and we will be joining with our colleagues in the public broadcasting community to make the case for a higher level of funding as the appropriations measure makes its way through Congress."

John Lawson, the president of the Association of Public Television Stations, a Washington-based group that lobbies for public broadcasters, called the subcommittee's action "at least malicious wounding, if not outright attempted murder, of public broadcasting in America." He added, "This action could deprive tens of millions of American children of commercial-free educational programming."

Rep. Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), the subcommittee's chairman, said the cuts had nothing to do with dissatisfaction over public radio or TV programs. "It's pretty simple," he said in an interview. "The thinking was, there's not enough money for everything. There are 'must-do,' 'need-to-do' and 'nice-to-do' programs that we have to pay for. [Public broadcasting] is somewhere between a 'need-to-do' and a 'nice-to-do.' "

The subcommittee had to decide, he said, on cutting money for public broadcasting or cutting college grants, special education, worker retraining and health care programs. "No one's out to get" public broadcasting, Regula said. "It's not punitive in any way."

In fact, none of the Republican members of the subcommittee publicly denounced public radio or TV funding at yesterday's markup. Public broadcasting drew supportive statements from Obey and Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.).

Regula suggested public stations could "make do" without federal money by getting more funding from private sources, such as contributions from corporations, foundations, and listeners and viewers.

But the loss of \$23.4 million in federal funds for children's educational shows -- which PBS calls its "Ready to Learn" programs -- could mean the elimination of these programs, said an official at Alexandria-based PBS who asked not to be named because the network still hopes to regain the funding. PBS's revenue totaled \$333 million in fiscal year 2004.

The Ready to Learn group includes "Sesame Street," "Dragontales," "Clifford" and "Arthur," among others.

The House measure also cuts support for a variety of smaller projects, such as a \$39.6 million public TV satellite distribution network and a \$39.4 million program that helps public stations update their analog TV signals to digital format.

Small public radio stations, particularly those in rural areas and those serving minority audiences, may be the most vulnerable to federal cuts because they currently operate on shoestring budgets.

"This could literally put us out of business," said Paul Stankavich, president and general manager of the Alaska Public Radio Network, an alliance of 26 stations in the state that create and share news programming. "Almost all of us are down to the bone right now. If we lost 5 or 10 percent of our budgets in one fell swoop, we could end up being just a repeater service" for national news, with no funds to produce local content.

Stankavich, who also runs a public radio and TV station in Anchorage, said public radio is "an important source of news in urban areas, but it's life-critical in rural areas," especially in far-flung parts of Alaska unserved by any other broadcast medium.

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