

## Cut Some Trees—Save the Forests

These are not opposing slogans. They have become complimentary actions in parts of the Northeastern United States, as more enlightened foresters and environmentalists have come to understand that to protect the life of the forest, cutting down some trees is an essential act, not a threat.

In the elite suburban town of Weston, a community outside of Boston, local tree surgeon Brian Donahue gives chain-saw lessons and environmental history at Brandeis University, as well as tips on log-splitting. Each year the town removes some 200 trees in its 1,700 acre forest and sells them for firewood and lumber.

Sacrilegious? No. Weston's logging practice of cutting down some trees not only protects its forest, but is an example to parents and children that this is okay, and even wise, to cut down some trees and use them.

This is a hard sell to a generation of residents who have for more than 30 years been bombarded in schools and in the media from environmentalists that forests must be kept pristine and untouched. Since the 1970s, environmentalists advocated saving forests by getting people out of them. Sierra Club, Earth First, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, to name a few green groups have campaigned that not a shrub or tree branch be removed and that no roads be maintained or constructed in our forests "primeval."

A new enlightenment has been arising, especially since recent disastrous forest fires in the western states, that not managing forests for use and preservation is not helpful to preserving forest land.

Mr. Donahue has been proclaiming this message for 25 years in Weston, "the best way to save forest and farm land from developers is to get local residents to value it by using it in a hands-on way. Become part of a working landscape like farmers of old," he says.

Lumber has to come from some place. Providing some of it locally is more environmentally responsible than slashing wilderness areas elsewhere. Responsible, managed tree cutting is helpful to the forest, does not impose environmental damage and can boost a forest's overall health by promoting regeneration, improving wildlife habitat and increasing species diversity.

Donahue is one of nine authors of a paper recently released by the Harvard Forest Unit, a research unit of Harvard University, outlining the same approach for protecting Massachusetts' forests and the rest of the Northeast from urban sprawl. David R. Foster, director of the Harvard Forest Unit, was lead author of the report.

Many residents of the Northeast don't know they live in one of the greatest natural reforestation success stories in modern times. Most suburbanites are one or two generations removed from hands-on rural life. Many grew up hearing logging is bad for redwoods, spotted owls and the climate. They don't have a clue where their wood comes from. Most of it comes from Canada, or Central and South American rainforests. But, responsible forestry management can help to preserve all of these.

Originally an estimated 75% of U.S. forests were in the eastern one-third of the U.S. in the late 19th century. As richer, flatter, less rocky land in the Midwest opened up farms in the east were abandoned. In the past 150 years, much of the forest grew back. In some states, such as New York, it's still growing at a rate of one-thousand acres a year.

In the 12 states of the Northeast, an estimated 72% of the land that was forested in 1630 was reforested by 1997,

*continued on page 4*

## ACLU! SHED ITS COMMIE PAST?

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has come to have an increasing influence on America in everyday life in recent years. One of its mission statements is to protect the civil liberty of individual citizens, as well as groups, from *attack* upon their liberty and freedom of expression. Another more passionate mission the ACLU has chosen more recently is to assail any relationship between the state and religion—and more aggressively the Christian religion.

Some of the ACLU's accomplishments have been banning creches at city hall, Christmas carols at public schools, prayers at college graduations, influencing San Diego to remove a cross atop Mount Soledad War Memorial and urge the National Park Service to remove plaques inscribed with Bible verses from the Grand canyon overlook, *but did not protest the names of park buttes—Brahma Temple, Vishnu Temple, Shiva Temple, and others—commemorating Hindu and Egyptian deities.*

ACLU actions appear somewhat biased. Perhaps an examination of its history will enlighten. Roger Baldwin, a member of the Wobblies—Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a Chicago based radical labor group, founded the ACLU in 1919 at the close of WWI.

Baldwin was a Unitarian, a denomination that believes in God but not in the divinity of Christ.

An early ACLU cause was defending John Scopes, arrested in Dayton, Tennessee in 1925 for teaching the theory of evolution in defiance of state law.

"The ACLU was the legal arm of militant labor," says Bill Donohue, founder of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, whose 1980 doctoral thesis examined the group. "From the beginning, they were tied to the politics of the left. It was hard-core left. They justified Satanism."

Baldwin visited the Soviet police state in 1923 and in 1927 and praised it in his book *Liberty Under the Soviets*. To help remove the taint of Communism Baldwin disassociated himself from Stalin's regime when the dictator signed a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany and the following year expelled ACLU top Communist board member, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

Baldwin apparently altered some views when he resigned as ACLU director in 1949. In fact, General Douglas MacArthur appointed him as a consultant on civil liberties in Japan and Korea. Baldwin continued to espouse left-wing causes until his death in 1981.

*continued on page 4*

## Placer County or Placer Empire?

Several years ago, the Shah of Placer County decreed that a stately pleasure dome, well maybe not quite a stately pleasure dome, but at least an overly ornate, certainly an overly expensive building, be constructed at De Witt Center to accommodate the county offices of the County Clerk, the Assessor and the Tax Collector. The critics of this enterprise satirized and lampooned this edifice as the Taj Mahal.

An excess in physical construction resulting in misuse of taxpayer money is deplorable enough. An excess in the structure of government, expanding the bureaucracy is at least an order of magnitude more wretched.

For lo: along came an Empress to succeed the Shah.

In several actions the structure of Placer County government has been expanded during the past year with a

consequent increase in bureaucracy and decrease in efficiency, first under the guise of the innocuous sounding term "salary compaction." Placer County senior managers requested, and received, a licentious and capricious ordinance mandating an arbitrary 15% differential between any two in-line managers, regardless of merit or requirements for the positions. More recently, a new level of super-department has been created between the county Chief Executive Officer and department heads, further raising the stature and potentially the remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer.

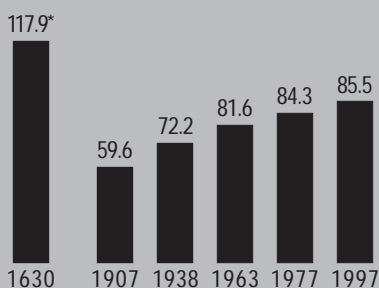
The rule of the Empress at the Taj Mahal becomes tighter. Some day, Placer county voters will elect the equivalent of the Maharajah to return the purple throne to the taxpayers.

—Dan Sokol

### Nature's Comeback

Much of the forest in the Northeastern United States, destroyed by European settlers, has grown back in the past century.

Estimated acreage, in millions



\*Based on current estimates of forest cover and historic land-clearing information in 12 states. (Source: USDA Forest Service)