

To: Robert Bovenschulte, Brian Crawford
From: Alan Newman
Date: March 22, 2006
Re: Dr. Carroll's concerns about recent ES&T stories

Let me begin by offering Dr. Carroll or anyone who disagrees with the story an opportunity to respond with a letter to the editor. Our policy is to link letters to the editor to the web story and print them in the front of the issue.

Brian asked a number of tough, good questions about the 2 articles Dr. Carroll cited, and I will use those questions to frame my response.

Are these stories controversial? Yes. That is why both stories include extensive documentation. The Weinberg Memo includes the original work proposal to DuPont and a full transcript of Paul Thacker's interview with Matthew Weinberg, CEO of Weinberg Group. The Hidden Ties story includes the IRS forms that link Project Protect—the self-declared grass roots environmental group—directly to the timber industry. We have made every effort to be transparent with our information; readers are free to come to their own conclusions. All the material was obtained legally and affected individuals were offered a chance to respond.

Are these stories anti-industry? I strongly reject this charge.

The Weinberg Memo is the 3rd in a series of articles by Paul Thacker examining how environmentally-related science is being used, or misused, in contemporary society. The first examined the “junkman”—Steve Milloy, a conservative science commenter who writes an “attack” column for foxnews.com (it will amuse you to know that Milloy has attacked Madeleine: <http://www.junkscience.com/news2/jacobs3.html>). The second story chronicled how an obscure global climate skeptic publishing in an obscure journal got a front page story in the *Wall Street Journal* and subsequently was cited by Rep. Joe Barton in an attack on leading climatologist Michael Mann, whose articles have appeared in *Nature* and *Science*.

The Weinberg Memo focuses on a product defense firm that had offered to aid DuPont in its growing problems with PFOA. The story specifically states that we have no evidence that the agenda in the memo was adopted by DuPont. The story instead discussed the type of services that the Weinberg Group offers. The people quoted in the story are prominent experts on the activities of product defense firms. Matthew Weinberg was also interviewed. We deliberately did not quote anyone from an environmental group to keep the story as professional and as above board as possible.

The story on Project Protect grew out of an investigation into how the Bush Administration's Healthy Forest legislation used forestry science; we did not start out to target the forest industry. The same folks behind Project Protect are now engaged in rewriting the Endangered Species Act in a way that ecologists find problematic. The story targets the actions of Pac/West communications, a PR firm. This is second story Paul has written about the Endangered Species Act; the first one looked at how the Department of Defense changed its position on the Act. We continue to look at the forest-ecosystem science and its role in the debate over forestry management.

We feel that these stories belong in the purview of *ES&T* because the journal has a long tradition of connecting the lines between science and policy. We are not the only publication writing these types of stories. We feel that these stories provide a benefit to our core readers.

Who approves news stories? Every Wednesday the staff collectively discusses news pitches and makes assignments. Various staff members edit stories and approve them for publication. I personally edited and approved both of Paul's stories. Jerry Schnoor has no role in making assignments or approving stories. This is also the procedure that I followed as managing editor of *Analytical Chemistry*.

Is *ES&T* anti-industry? No. Under my leadership *ES&T* has published features and stories that might be construed as "pro-industry", including a feature on Responsible CARE by Terry Yosie of the American Chemical Council (*ES&T* 2003, 37 (21), 400A-406A); a feature on Perchlorate Biodegradation by Paul Hatzinger of Shaw Environmental (*ES&T* 2005, 39(11), 239A-247A), a feature on chromium and sediment toxicity by authors from Rifkin & Associates and AMEC Earth and Environmental (*ES&T* 2004, 38 (14), 257A-272A), and a monthly column entitled Technology Solutions that regularly describes products entering the market place in a favorable manner. An upcoming feature for the June 1, 2006 issue discusses Pharmaceuticals in Water by authors from GlaxoSmithKline, Merck, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, and Schering-Plough

Is *ES&T* a liberal publication? I would dispute this charge as well. We have published interviews of top Bush administration officials that the administration has praised, a feature highlighting President Bush's Clean Coal plan (*ES&T* 2003, 37(1), 27A-34A), the technology supporting EPA's controversial plan to reduce mercury from coal (*ES&T* 2006, 40(5), 1385-1393), and, every year, President Bush's fiscal year budget request for environmental programs.

These stories are not news; they are more "muck racking". Several years ago, we established a category called News Perspectives to give writers a chance to step back and provide an overview on a topic. Paul's stories fall into that category. Another recent News Perspective examined what is known about the connection between global warming and increases in infectious diseases.

Investigative reporting has a long history at ACS. Lois Ember of *C&EN* received a prestigious George Polk Award in 1985 and a National Association of Science Writers award in 1984 for her investigative reporting on yellow rain.

What has been the response to Paul's story?

Mark Shapiro with the Center for Investigative reporting told Paul: "Congratulations on an important story."

Scott Mabury with the Univ. of Toronto (Mabury was recently cited by ISI as a hot scientist based on citation activity): "I wanted to write and say how much I enjoyed your current story in *ES&T* on the

April 17, 2007

Weinberg group and relation to a topic of interest to us...PFOA. I applaud the initiative and am impressed with the output.”

Steve Ashkin with the Ashkin Group: “I just wanted to drop you a note telling you how much I valued your article on The Weinberg Proposal. I especially appreciated that you actually attached the ODF of the Weinberg letter to DuPont so that I could read it for myself, and then draw conclusions to the accuracy of your article.”

Scientific American interviewed Paul for a podcast that was mounted on their site on March 15.

Editor Jerry Schnoor read both stories and has expressed his support for the stories and this type of journalism in *ES&T*.

Conclusion: *ES&T* is an eclectic journal; it both reports environmental problems and solutions. As such, it is conservative, liberal, anti-industry, pro-industry, anti-government, and pro-government. It is also compelling reading; we scored over a million page views in 2005 to our online news and A-page section.

A recent feature in *ES&T* on the problems with the flame retardant HBCD drew a strongly worded response from the HBCD working group, an industry organization. We published the letter to the editor along with a response from the authors of the feature. Anyone or any organization is welcomed to submit a comment on our stories. Frankly, I am deeply troubled that some individuals feel that they can “go to the top of ACS” as their way to respond. This is not a genuine attempt to engage in an open and transparent conversation on issues of national importance.

I have killed stories in the past and I am ready to do it again. I stand behind the reporting in Paul’s stories and believe that they provide important information to the environmental science community.