



EnviroBriefs



Indiana Groans. Harrison Ford, star of the Indiana Jones movies, had his chest hair waxed as part of a public service announcement for Conservation International to raise awareness about the effects of deforestation on global warming. He winced “Every bit of rain forest that gets ripped out over there, really hurts us over here.” Ford next plans to be eaten by polar bears to publicize their plight as a result of melting arctic ice.

Recycling Remorse. Although recycling is supposed to be good for the environment, crude recycling practices in the town of Guiyu in southeastern China have harmed not only the environment but the residents. Family-run recycling workshops (mostly in homes) specialize in the dismantling of circuit boards which contain lead, zinc, copper and other metals. Researchers collected surface dust samples

from the workshops, markets, schools and residences in the town. They found very high levels of lead and other metals everywhere but especially in the workshops (2,400 times acceptable levels). It appears that people spread the contaminated dust as they walked around.

Mind Your Manners. You were probably taught by your mother not to make noise when you chew your food. Apparently sea urchins never got the message. New Zealand scientists have confirmed that the spiny sea creatures are responsible for a twice-daily underwater uproar caused by their teeth scraping on reefs as they feed on algae and other tasty snacks. The nocturnal creatures have their big meals just before sunrise and just before dusk. The incorrigible invertebrates are also notorious for scraping their nails on the blackboard just to annoy passing schools of fish.

Koala Grille sounds like a good name for a restaurant. However, don't count on Ely the koala to be a patron. Ely was struck by a Lexus going 60 mph, north of Brisbane, Australia, and traveled more than 7 miles with his head stuck in the car's grille. The driver didn't realize that there had been a collision until another motorist asked “Do you know that you've got a koala dangling from your car?” The stunned koala was rushed to a wildlife hospital where vets found no serious injuries. Ely is expected to make a full recovery and will eventually be released back to the wild. However, he is also thinking about entering the automotive field and is weighing several job offers to work full-time as a hood ornament.



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Did you Know?

- On the island of Mauritius (off the coast of Madagascar), the last Dodo bird died in 1690. Both hunting and the introduction by settlers of non-native pigs, rats, dogs and cats to the island were responsible for this infamous animal extinction.
- The term “smog” was coined by Henry Antoine Des Voeux at a London meeting in 1915 to express concern over air pollution.

Environmental Moments in History

2600 BC: Flush toilets and sewage systems are constructed in the Indus Valley area of India and Pakistan.

200 BC: World's first nature preserve and wildlife sanctuary is established in Sri Lanka.

400: Decline and fall of the Roman Empire

partly due to lead poisoning of aristocrats by lead-sweetened wines and foods.

1388: British Parliament passes an act forbidding the throwing of filth and garbage into ditches, rivers and lakes.

1739: Benjamin Franklin petitions the Pennsyl-

vania Assembly to stop waste dumping and remove tanneries from Philadelphia's commercial district.

1872: Yellowstone, the first national park in the US, is established.

1970: Millions of people gather in the US for the first Earth Day.

OGI Environmental

Kevin Pentony, Managing Partner
830 S. Durango Drive, Suite 103
Las Vegas, NV 89145

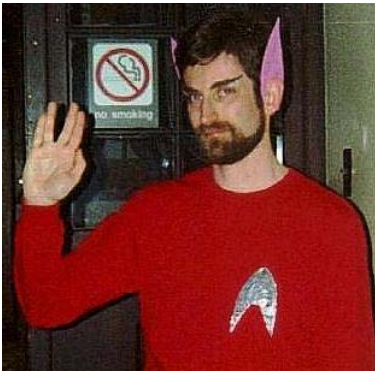
phone: 702-804-5545

fax: 702-804-4649

email: kpentony@ogienviro.com

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"Live long and prosper" (see No. 4) →

Top 10 Signs You Might be Unpopular

10. Caption under your high school yearbook photo reads "Unidentified Student"
9. In meetings, you grow exceptionally large and green whenever someone takes the chocolate donut that you had your eyes on
8. As you unpack at summer camp, you discover that your mother has sewn "Loser" tags into all your clothes
7. Collecting your Xmas bonus usually involves hitting a piñata
6. At the Senior Prom, your date dumps a bucket of pigs blood on you which prompts you to use your psychic powers for revenge
5. When you sit down at your desk, the people in your family photos stop smiling
4. Women don't seem to be impressed by your homemade Star Trek uniform (see photo at left)
3. The Pope asks you for tips on celibacy
2. You finally get an office with a door, but you have to share it with a mop
1. Daily wedgies

Enviro-quote: "We've got to pause and ask ourselves: How much clean air do we need?" - *Lee Iacocca (former CEO/Chairman, Chrysler Corporation)*

Whale Woes

Sakhalin Energy has completed the installation of its third oil and gas production platform off Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East. Whale experts warn that the construction noise has driven the endangered western gray whales from their feeding grounds. These waters off Sakhalin Island are the only known



feeding ground for the western gray whales, which migrate between southern China and eastern Russia. The western gray whale population totals about 120 individuals (with only 30 reproductive females). It is listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's oldest and largest global environmental network.

The Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel, an independent panel of scientists set up by the IUCN, and the Russian World Wildlife Fund (WWF) recommended that Sakhalin Energy adopt strict criteria for noise management related to its construction activities in the whale feeding grounds. Sakhalin Energy responded that it was "not technically feasible to

implement the proposed criteria."

The panel warned "Without more rigorous noise

management and mitigation efforts on the part of Sakhalin Energy ... their activities may have significant long-term effects on gray whales attempting to feed in this area." The Russian WWF added that the "low-frequency noise may affect healthy feeding patterns of whales and harm their auditory system, which is crucial for their orientation capability."

