

Envirotech Newsletter

Volume 4 number 1

March 2004

Envirotech: What is “Envirotech”?

By Betsy Mendohlson

Envirotech gathers together 300 people on the listserve, about 35-40 of whom get together formally at the meetings of the American Society for Environmental History (ASEH) and the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT). After joining Jim Williams as co-chair last fall, I talked and emailed with a half dozen people who have been Envirotech mainstays. It seems that despite low traffic on the listserve, Envirotech hums along based on the newsletters, website and semi-annual meetings at ASEH and SHOT. An Envirotech subscriber list features names you would recognize from book reviews on h-net, committees of professional societies, published articles and books (and prizes for them!), and emails to h-environment or h-sci_med_tech.

The article prize suggests that Envirotech has turned a corner. Now we act not only as a meeting place for people with similar interests, but also as an organization that honors particular scholars who “focus on the interrelationship of technology and nature.” ASEH and SHOT meetings host

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Co-Chair Nominees Needed

By Erik Conway

When Sara Pritchard and Jim Williams started organizing Envirotech at the Munich SHOT meeting, they intended that the leadership rotate. Last year, Sara stepped down, and this year Jim Williams will step down. If you’re interested in joining Betsy Mendelsohn as co-chair of Envirotech, or know someone who might be, please send nominations to Betsy: b_mendelsohn@hotmail.com.

We intend to announce the new co-chair at the SHOT meeting in Amsterdam this fall.

Envirotech Breakfast at ASEH!

Envirotech will meet over breakfast at the ASEH meeting in Victoria on Thursday, April 1, 2004, at 7:00 a.m. The breakfast will take place across the street from the conference hotel in the Royal British Columbia Museum. Forty people are registered!

Frank Uekoetter will announce the prize on behalf of the committee. We'll chat about our ongoing research, request annual dues of \$5, and discuss whether Envirotech should change in any way.

Prize Committee Report

By Hugh Gorman

Two years ago at the Denver meeting of the ASEH, attendees at the Envirotech lunch asked how best to use the group's relatively small amount of money to further the interests of historians, especially newer scholars, working at the intersection of technology and the environment. The decision was to establish an award that would recognize an article that examined the interplay of society, technology, and the natural environment in an innovative way. The first award will be announced at the Envirotech breakfast in Victoria. A prize of \$250 will accompany the award.

The awards committee—consisting of Sylvia Washington, Frank Uekoetter, and Hugh Gorman—received nine nominations. Despite the modest sized pool, there was a wide variety of approaches evident, making comparisons between the articles both interesting and somewhat difficult. (Reading and comparing the various articles would make an interesting seminar!) In the next newsletter, we will summarize the nominated articles and the different ways in which the authors conceptualized the interaction between technology and the environment.

One member of the award committee will rotate off each year, which means that we will be

looking for someone to join the committee. As of now, we are thinking that the next Envirotech prize will be awarded at the 2005 Society for the History of Technology Meeting (SHOT). Envirotech is a SHOT SIG (special interest group) and receives some matching funds from SHOT. We are also the first SHOT SIG that decided to award its own prize, prompting the need for SHOT to put some guidelines in place. The gist of those guidelines is that we needed to make it to make it clear that this prize is an Envirotech-initiated award, not a general SHOT award.

By the way, thanks to those of you who nominated articles. It is nice way to draw attention to work being done in this area.

Montana State University Program in Science, Environment, Technology, and Society

By Sara Pritchard

The Department of History & Philosophy at Montana State University is developing a number of programs in the “Envirotech” area.

- New Ph.D. program: The doctoral program has concentrations in the history of science and technology, environmental history, the history of the American West, and public history.
- New undergraduate major in “Science, Environment, Technology, and Society” (SETS): The SETS major offers students a multi-disciplinary course of study that analyzes science, technology, and the environment within their broader cultural contexts, including intellectual and social history, environmental history, religious studies, and philosophy.
- “Mile High, Mile Deep: Imagining and Modifying Topographical and Subterranean Environments”: Pending funding from the National Science Foundation, the "Mile High, Mile Deep" project seeks to integrate the history of science and technology with environmental history and historical geography through a comparative and cross-cultural analysis of the construction of space. The project supports graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and annual conferences.

Affiliated faculty include Rob Campbell, Tim LeCain, Sara Pritchard, Michael Reidy, Robert Rydell, and Brett Walker, among others.

More information is available online:

<http://www.montana.edu/~wwwhi/index.htm>

Feel free to contact:

Tim LeCain: tlecain@montana.edu

Sara Pritchard: spritch@montana.edu

for more information.

Envirotech: What is “Envirotech”?

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many panels in this area, and we thrive as a group of individuals who are integrated into more established professional associations. With the beginning of the prize, however, it seems important that we be intentional about describing “envirotech.”

Envirotech members can characterize the intellectual terrain while retaining the low-impact and friendly nature of the organization. For example, we could invest more energy into a virtual community now that we’re awarding prizes but have met formally only in North America. Listserv subscribers reside primarily in Canada, the United States, and Europe, but also in Japan, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, Singapore, Turkey, Israel, and Venezuela. Perhaps in the coming year we can share more scholarly and classroom materials, animating an online community to create an “envirotech” that transcends region-based literatures or that makes regional comparisons.

There are several ways that Envirotech could stay the same and yet increasingly create “envirotech” as a focus of inquiry.

Online and listserv sharing

- Individuals’ descriptions of research and teaching
- Syllabus exchange modeled on ASEH’s
- Case studies or teaching units
- Notes about books, articles, videos, or websites

Activities

- Guest editing focus issues of journals, as Envirotech members
- Organizing local conferences about a particular place’s “envirotech” history
- Mentioning Envirotech when we thank colleagues in print

News from the Membership Current Membership Dues

Erik Conway has finally submitted his dissertation to Smithsonian Institution Press. [It only took the lazy bum 5 years. . .Ed.] He has also finally gotten his first NASA book, *High Speed Dreams: the Technopolitics of Supersonic Transportation*, off to Johns Hopkins University Press. For those of you who haven't figured this out yet—don't bother writing a 500 page manuscript. NASA contracts are out of step with modern publishing desires.

Dreams examines the impact of environmental politics on aircraft design (among other things), and he hopes to see it appear in time for the fall conference circuit.

Edmund Russell received the Edelstein Prize from the Society for the History of Technology for [War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2001). The prize is for an outstanding book on the history of technology published in the previous three years. Russell is an associate professor of Technology, Culture, and Communication and History at the University of Virginia.

Below are the names of people who paid our annual dues at the 2003 SHOT meeting in Atlanta.

Ross Bassett
 Joyce Bedi
 Kevin Borg
 Erik Conway
 Steve Cutcliffe
 Sarah Elkind
 Mark Finlay
 Deborah Fitzgerald
 Gerry Fitzgerald
 Hugh Gorman
 Ann Greene
 Shane Hamilton
 Richard Hirsch
 Paul Israel
 Paul Josephson
 Jordan Kleiman
 Michael Kucher
 Nina Lerman
 Frank Luecke
 JoAnn Luecke
 Clapperton Mauhunga
 Joy Parr
 John Perkins
 Gabriella Petrick
 Marty Reuss
 Donna Rilling
 Ed Russell
 Sonja Schmid
 Daborah Slavin
 Bill Storey
 Joel Tarr
 Ed Todd
 Geena Venborg
 Jim Williams
 Audra Wolfe
 Tom Zeller

CALL FOR PAPERS: The HSS 2004 Annual Meeting

The History of Science Society will hold its 2004 Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, 18-21 November 2004.

Proposals for sessions and contributed papers must be submitted by 1 April 2004 to the History of Science Society's Executive Office, PO Box 117360, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-7360; phone: 352-392-1677; fax: 352-392-2795; e-mail: meeting@hssonline.org.

Submissions on all topics are requested. All proposals must be submitted through:

http://www.hssonline.org/meeting/mf_annual.html

OR on the annual meeting proposal forms that are available from the HSS Executive Office.

We strongly encourage electronic submissions. HSS members are asked to circulate this announcement to colleagues who are not members of HSS but who may be interested in presenting a paper at the Annual Meeting. Particularly encouraged are session proposals that include: a mix of men and women; a diversity of institutional affiliations; and/or a balance of professional ranks (e.g. mixing senior scholars and graduate students).

Only one proposal per person may be submitted. For additional information concerning the 2004 meeting, contact the HSS Executive Office or see:

http://www.hssonline.org/meeting/mf_annual.html

Before sending a proposal to the HSS Office, we ask that everyone read the Committee on Meetings and Programs' "Guidelines for Selecting Papers and Sessions" available at the above links; these will be used in determining the acceptability of session and paper proposals for the Cambridge meeting.

Technology and the Environment – Europe 2004

The International Committee for the History of Technology (ICOHTEC) will hold its 31st Symposium, **(Re-)Designing Technological Landscapes**, in Bochum, Germany, from 17 to 21 August 2004. For several years, ICOHTEC has included extended sessions with several panels that have focused on various aspects of technology's role in the human-nature relationship. This year's symposium is no exception. Timo Myllantaus of the University of Helsinki, Finland, and Jim Williams of De Anza College, California, have pulled together five panels dealing with *Technology and the Environment*.

Panel I – Forests and other Natural Environments

Jan Kunnas, University of Helsinki, Finland

A Dense and Sickly Mist from Thousands of Bog Fires: Environmental Effects related to the Burning Cultivation of Peatlands

Timo Myllyntaus, University of Turku, Finland

The Environment – Technology's Pillory or Playground? Interactions in History

Seija Niemi, University of Turku, Finland

The Status of the Birch Tree in the Contemporary Finnish Forest

James C. Williams, De Anza College, California, USA

From forests and wetlands to industry and recreation: The changing landscapes of a maritime community

Panel II – Rivers and Landscapes

Waldemar Affelt, Gdansk University of Technology, Poland

The Lower Wisla river technological landscape and its landmarks: Saline, bridge, and the river mouth

Eyvind Bagle, Norway

Redirecting a River History: The Aker River in Oslo

Sami Louekari, University of Turku, Finland

Designing Landscapes: The Draining of Lakes and Marshlands in the Kokemäenjoki River Delta in SW Finland

Helena Ruotsala, University of Turku, Finland

"When my home rapids fell silent for ever." How people experienced the environmental changes caused by water regulation in northern Finland

Panel III – Built Environment

Outi Ampuja, University of Helsinki, Finland

Towards Artificial Soundscape? Can We Design Modern Soundscapes as We Please?

Joe L. Anderson, Iowa State University, USA

Making the Chemical Corn Belt: Pesticide and Fertilizer in Rural Imagination and Reality, 1945–1970

Jane S. Day, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida, USA

It's a Long Way to Old Miami: The Building of the Tamiami Trail

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Technology and the Environment – Europe 2004

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Kari Miettunen, University of Oulu, Finland
Meaning Giving Dynamics in Hi-Tech Building in Oulu Region

Edmund N. Todd, University of New Haven, USA
"Landscaping the Ruhr as a Vacation Wonderland:" The Seventeenth Century in the Twentieth or the Simultaneity of the Non-Simultaneous

Panel IV – Mining and Energy

Timothy J. LeCain, Montana State University, USA
"See America the Bountiful:" Mining Landscapes and Tourism in the American West

Sandy Norman, Florida Atlantic University, USA
Mining in Florida - Controversies Surrounding Phosphate Mining in Florida

Joy Parr, University of Western Ontario, Canada
Nuclear Generating Stations as Landscapes and Taskscapes in Canadian Hinterlands

Lynda H. Schneekloth and Robert Shibley, State University of New York at Buffalo, USA
Niagara: Reimagining a Technological Landscape

Frank Uekoetter, Bielefeld University, Germany
The Königsdorf Forest and the Giant Mound: A Case Study on Landscape Planning and Preservation in Western Germany's Lignite Region

Panel V – Landscape as Arena: Science, Institutions and Discourses on the Environment, 1800-2000

Organiser: Bo Sundin, University of Umeå, Sweden

Jan af Geijerstam, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
Ådalen – A Landscape and History Abandoned?

Erland Mårald, University of Umeå, Sweden
Sandslån: Between the Primeval Forest and the World

Christer Nordlund, University of Umeå, Sweden
How the Coast Became High: An Historical Introduction to World Heritage Site the High Coast (Höga kusten) in Sweden

Bo Sundin, University of Umeå, Sweden
Reflections on a milk-can loading platform – antiquarian values and the transformation of the landscape

SHOT 2004 Annual Meeting Call for Papers

The Society for the History of Technology will hold its annual meeting in Amsterdam from October 7-10. The Program Committee is seeking proposals for both individual papers and complete panels. In particular, the committee welcomes work-in-progress from researchers of all stripes (including graduate students, chaired professors, and independent scholars), and papers from those new to SHOT who believe that an engagement with history can help their own work, regardless of discipline.

This year the program will focus on the specific themes outlined below. While the committee is open to proposals not falling strictly within the themes, we nevertheless do encourage submissions that enter a dialogue with them.

**Water*

The geography and history of the Netherlands lends itself to a focus on water; this, broadly defined, forms one of the conference themes. Access to and control of water has been central to human life, and it is a long-contested resource; this has inevitably had a technological component. Agricultural, domestic, industrial, hygienic, and therapeutic applications of water have been components of all civilizations. The committee seeks papers and panels on technology and water in oceans, lakes, rivers, canals, aquifers, spas, springs (including geothermal), and on rain, plumbing, sewers, or any other water-related topic, including political, social or cultural relationships organized around or influenced by water.

**Transatlantic Community*

Building on the water theme, we also welcome papers and panels related to the creation, maintenance, and expansion of the Atlantic Community, defined here as including North and South America, Europe, and Africa. Possible topics include technological components of transatlantic interactions, competitions, exchanges, and the circulation of goods, services, people, ideas, and artifacts.

**Camouflaged Technologies*

We are looking for papers addressing the historical and political trajectories of technologies in camouflage, whose actual uses were hidden to avoid political or social controversy, or to avoid prosecution under the law. Examples might include controversial technologies such as nuclear power, and illicit activities such as drug use, burglary, prostitution, or music piracy, where producers and consumers camouflaged actual uses of these devices.

**Non-Aligned Technologies*

The committee also seeks proposals considering what we call non-aligned technologies — technologies that remain outside or resist larger networks, systems, geographical regions, or historical settings.

**Information Technology (IT) and Media Studies*

Information technology and media are frequently the separate subjects of specialized academic fields. The program committee seeks proposals that problematize their intersections and/or their distinction in a historically informed fashion.

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SHOT 2004 Annual Meeting Call for Papers

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Deadline is April 1, 2004.

Please submit your proposals to: **shot2004@tm.tue.nl**.

Proposals for individual papers must include:

- 1) a one-page abstract;
- 2) a one-page curriculum vitae, including current postal and e-mail addresses.

Proposals for complete sessions must include:

- 1) a description of the session's theme;
- 2) a list of the presenter's names and paper titles;
- 3) a one-page abstract and one-page c.v. for each of the presenters (with postal and e-mail addresses);
- 4) a one-page c.v. for the commentator, chair, and session organizer (if s/he is not one of the session's panelists).

The session description should clarify how individual papers contribute to the session's overall theme.

Applicants may submit as follows:

* Electronic application: send one single e-mail message to the program committee e-mail address: shot2004@tm.tue.nl with electronic copies of all elements of the complete proposal as attachments, formatted in Microsoft Word (any version of Word is fine, but it must be in Word).

Guidelines for submission:

- Whether submitting an individual paper or a complete panel, the program committee needs to receive a separate attachment for each item (vitae, paper, and so on).
- Please save your proposal with your last name and the word proposal, (for example brown.proposal.doc).
- Please save your c.v. (idem for panel members) also with your last name and the word vitae, (for example brown.vitae.doc).
- In case of a panel, please save their abstracts with their last name and the word abstract, (for example brown.abstract.doc).
- The file names for all attachments should end in .doc (for example hounshellvitae.doc).

Once the program is fixed the committee will make arrangements to make the accepted abstract available on the World Wide Web (details pending and to be announced).