

## Election Endorsements

Editors' picks for  
next week's primary

(p. 25)

# SEATTLE Weekly

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75¢

### NEWS & COMMENT

## The Battle for Queen Anne

*The balance of state  
power turns on a mega-  
bucks campaign (p. 26)*

## Bye-Bye Busing

*As schools open, the  
anti-busing forces  
enact a new plan (p. 28)*

### ARTS & LEISURE

## Remembering Jimi Hendrix

*A new book tells how  
the guitarist changed  
music forever (p. 39)*

## Arrowhead Cafe Hits the Mark

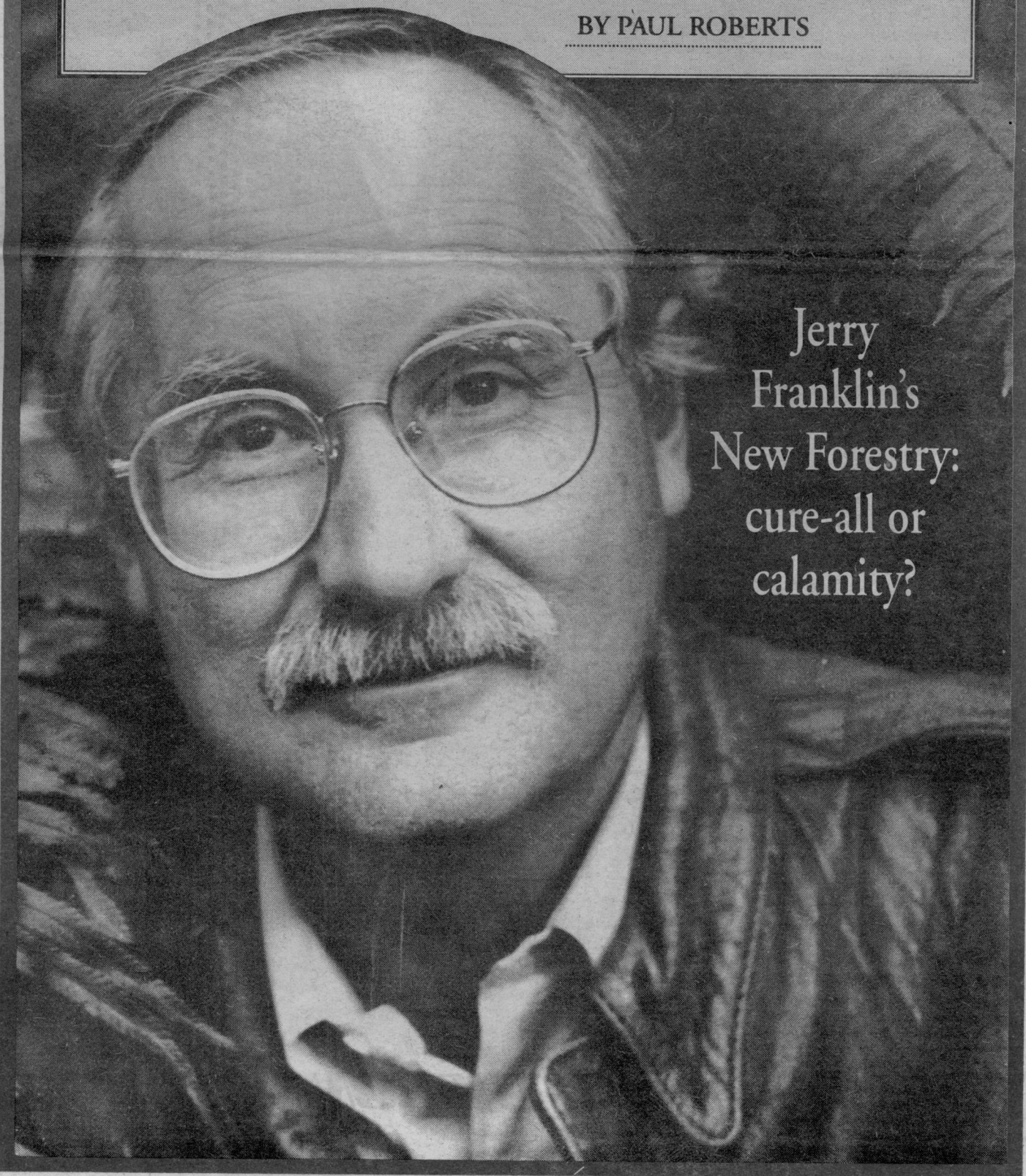
*Sophisticated Pacific  
Rim cuisine comes to  
Lake Union (p. 51)*

## Babies on My Mind

*Rebecca Wells  
listens to the  
biological clock (p. 75)*

## A 'KINDER, GENTLER FORESTRY'

BY PAUL ROBERTS



Jerry  
Franklin's  
New Forestry:  
cure-all or  
calamity?



BIG LEAGUES / Fred Moody

## Seattle without the Mariners

*Quick now—is that a disaster beyond imagining?*

**T**HE SEATTLE TIMES' RICHARD LARSEN has lately taken to fulminating about the worthlessness of cities without professional sports. Only those blessed with pro franchises, he reasons, are worthy of civic greatness. The argument for government investment in pro sports is twofold: sports franchises confer legitimacy on a city, raising it to the level of Rome, Paris, London, or New York; and franchises are so prized

that a city that refuses to dole out millions to an owner will lose its team to any one of a number of cities willing to pay up. Larsen advanced this argument on September 2, when he wrote, "Across America, other states, counties, and cities have recognized that major-league sports—especially baseball—provide a big economic plus, give special vitality and character to a place, and lift the self-esteem of the region."

There is a mystique about sports that seems to blind Americans (particularly older, male Americans) to reality. Larsen revealed the degree of his blindness by means of a single word: "recognize." He would do better to state that Seattle, in taking a hard and reasonable line in its negotiations with pro-sports owners, risks losing its Mariners, Sonics, and Seahawks to a city that "imagines" that pro sports bring big bucks and upbeat spirits to their environs.

The costs to a city of pro-sports investment are palpable, while the benefits are amorphous at best. This is particularly true of the "vitality" and "self-esteem" that sports are said to bring to their cities. Any visitor to a New York on the brink of anarchy, to a

decaying, violence-ridden Chicago, or to a broke and demoralized St. Louis would be hard-pressed to find the marvelous pep and progress brought there by major-league baseball.

There also has never been a convincing economic case made for taxpayer subsidy of sports franchises. Politicians, sportswriters, and team owners always trot out economic-impact studies purporting to show marvelous direct and indirect monetary benefits accruing to pro-sports cities. But these "scientific" reports are always based on unprovable assumptions. In the case of Seattle's recent negotiations with the SuperSonics, for example, the city chose to assume that 100 percent of the money spent at Sonics' games would go unspent if the team were to leave town. Based on that bizarre belief, the city concluded that the Sonics were worth \$2.7 million per year to local government, and ultimately decided to subsidize the team to the tune of \$80 million over the next 30 years.

These days, pro franchises inspire urban zest only when they contend for championships. In 1985, the Minnesota Twins (the franchise regarded by Mariner owner Jeff Smulyan as being in the market most similar to Seattle) threatened to leave the Twin Cities if government and business didn't team up to invest heavily in keeping them there. Minneapolis-St. Paul rallied, and the Twins not only stayed, they won the World Series just two years later. "The team was given major financial concessions," wrote Larsen, "[bringing] a brighter era for the Twins."

That "brighter era" consisted of a single championship that ultimately proved the Twins' downfall. Success so inflated the team's salary structure that the taxpayer-subsidized franchise was dismantled. Teams from huge, lucrative markets began bidding for Minnesota's stars. Within a year of their championship, the Twins lost their best starting pitcher, Frank Viola, to the New York Mets, and another pitching stalwart, Bert Blyleven, to the bottomless pockets of the California Angels. A year later, their best reliever, Jeff Reardon, was lured away by the Boston Red Sox. Today, the Twins are solidly entrenched in last place, while Boston and New York are in first and second place, respectively, in their divisions.

Given baseball's current economic policies—which so favor the rich big-city teams over the poor small-city ones that Minnesota's fate is the best the Northwest can hope for—Seattle in 1996 will be faced with a choice between letting a glamorous, but losing, proposition go or investing so heavily in it that its real problems will remain unaddressed.

The city would do well to follow the example of San Francisco, one of the country's urban jewels. Over 20 years ago, SF let its basketball franchise leave town. Somehow, it has remained thriving, respected, and prosperous. Last February, the San Francisco city government, rather than deciding on its own to build a new baseball stadium as demanded by its storied Giants, opted to put the issue to a vote of its citizens. The stadium was nixed. At last look, no one was predicting the kind of dire consequences for that city that Larsen and others routinely predict for Seattle should it lose its Mariners.

Seattle and King County need to recognize that there is nothing local government or business can do to make baseball competitive in the current out-of-whack economic environment. They should begin bargaining not from the position that major-league baseball is invaluable, but that baseball should consider itself privileged to have a team in Seattle. Local government needs to set a monetary and cultural value on the franchise, then refuse to budge from this bottom line. To do less is to give in to blackmail, and to sink to the level of America's second-rate cities. ■

### SUSAN BRISTOL'S EXOTIC DETAILS ON A CLASSIC STYLE.

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## THE BON MARCHÉ



and, as in the past, adjust its standards to Seattle's. Sidles dismisses concerns over federal magnet funds on the opposite grounds: "We're in jeopardy of losing them anyway, because we haven't produced the [desegregation] results we said we would. The federal government is not interested in our plan, but in results." And those results could still improve under free choice, she continues to insist, once the district loses the "easy out" of mandatory busing and is forced to really try to induce voluntary desegregation.

Nevertheless, the \$2.8 million in federal magnet money became an urgent question Friday. Then, according to the next day's dailies, Superintendent Kendrick announced that the federal Department of Education would withhold funds that had already been approved pending review of the new racial-balance definition. Kendrick's spokesperson, Patty McDonald, who has been vocal in criticizing the new definition, rang the alarms over its disastrous impact on school funding. The *Seattle Times* responded with a panicky front-page banner, "City schools lose magnet funds."

That alarm is premature at best, and rings very different from the statement of the Education Department's designated spokesperson for magnet funding. "It doesn't make any difference how [the Seattle schools] define racial balance. The only thing that matters to us is whether they meet our definition of minority-isolated schools"—that is, whether the schools that the magnet money goes to are at least one-half "minority." No problem there. Those schools must also, as Sidles notes, show progress in attracting white students.

Only one School Board member, board president Marilyn Smith, upheld the gospel of integration above all and by any means. "I cannot support limiting our vision," she declared before voting against Eastlack's scheme. "It's like taking a champion high jumper and telling them to shoot low. This definition would mean we're not even trying." This invocation of busing as a higher quest rings quaint and lonely amid the cresting enthusiasm for parental choice. ■

SERVICE STATIONS / Paul Roberts

## DIVIDING UP THE MARKETS

*As Shell sells its local stations to Texaco, is competition dwindling?*

ONE NEEDN'T BLAME THE MIDDLE EAST for the latest shakeup in the oil industry. In what has become an increasingly familiar tale, Shell Oil plans to sell its 55 stations in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties to Texaco. The transaction, begun last spring, should be completed in January.

For motorists, the sale (pegged by analysts at \$25 million) means more than a simple swap of signs. Some Shell dealers expect an immediate jump in gas prices, which they blame, in part, on the higher costs of the new franchises. "Shell has never offered cheap gas," concedes one unhappy Shell dealer. "But when you drive down the street, the most expensive gas is at Texaco, and one would imagine it's going to be like that all over." Texaco officials say price increases are unlikely. Shell dealers also say that Texaco plans to raise station rents and that dealers won't be able to compete with any of Texaco's company-operated stations.

The longer-term implications are difficult to call. Nationally, deals like this have become commonplace as oil companies focus their efforts in their most profitable markets—often where they maintain refineries—and move out of slow areas. "Companies

are no longer trying to be everywhere and everything to everybody," explains George Bickel, special projects manager at Texaco's Seattle Marketing Division.

Shell, which is struggling to maintain its position as the nation's top gas seller, reportedly has wanted out of the Pacific Northwest for the last decade. Texaco, the fourth-largest seller, has been pushing for a stronger presence here. Last year, Texaco



Say goodbye to Shell stations.

bought 50 Gull stations in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties, and has emerged as a force in Eastern Washington as well.

Some market observers see a trend toward less competition among oil companies in any particular region. Nationally, oil companies are swapping stations in less profitable markets for better sites in other areas. (Shell, for example, is shifting its emphasis to Northern California—an area partially vacated by Texaco, which recently exchanged its Bay Area stations for several belonging to Exxon in Southern California and in Portland.) The companies end up with a stronger presence in favorable markets, but consumers, says Tim Hamilton, who lobbies for Washington state gas dealers, "get less benefits of free competition." Adds another Shell dealer: "I don't see any nefarious plot to divide up the country, but that's what's happening."

Bickel and other industry officials argue that the oil business remains one of the country's most competitive industries. Indeed, roughly 15 companies now share 85 percent of the market. Regionally, however, the number is often considerably smaller—and shrinking. Last year, Unical announced plans to phase out most of its stations in this state; according to industry observers, the company plans to retain only 23 sites along the I-5 corridor. Within a few years, some dealers expect the Northwest market to be dominated by four majors: British Petroleum, Texaco, Chevron, and Arco (which has bought out many of the old independent stations and now occupies the low-cost niche.)

Whether or not this trend is harmful to competition—a question for the Federal Trade Commission—it seems to be picking up steam. According to several dealers and other industry insiders, BP is soon expected to buy Exxon's Puget Sound-area stations. BP officials won't comment on the likelihood of such a purchase, but the company's Northwest presence has been growing. Early last year, BP officials wouldn't comment on rumors that they intended to buy Mobil Oil's Ferndale refinery and its 100-plus stations in Washington. On May 1, 1989, BP announced precisely that purchase. ■

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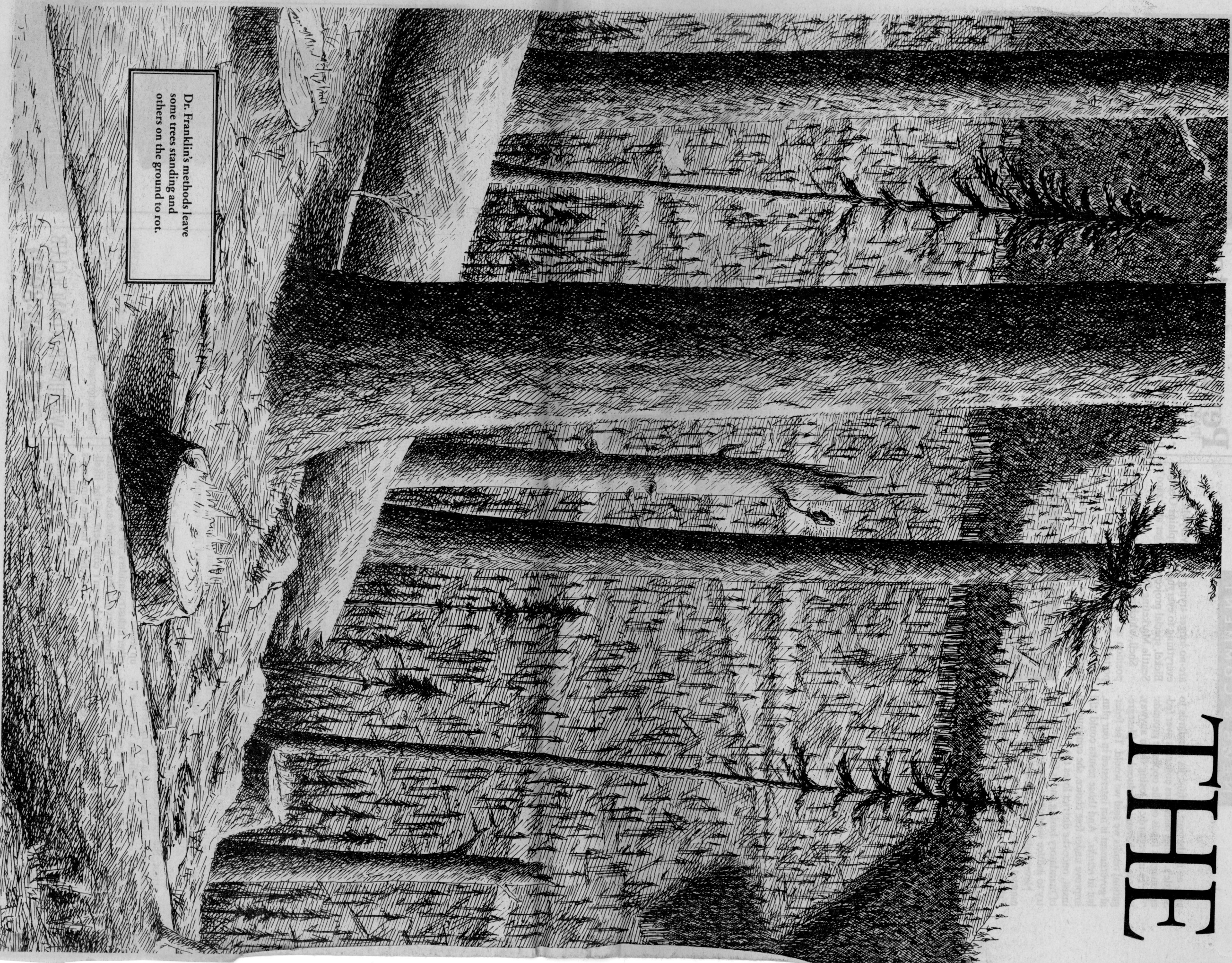


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# THE



Dr. Franklin's methods leave  
some trees standing and  
others on the ground to rot.



# NEW FORESTRY

BY PAUL ROBERTS

Jerry Franklin, the Dean of Old Growth, has pieced together a 'kinder, gentler forestry.' Its promise of sustaining biological diversity even after partial logging may be too good to be true, however, and the idea is drawing fire from wood-centric and owl-centric extremes.

ON THE SHOULDER OF A steep, gravel logging road that snakes up through the western slopes of the Oregon Cascades, a man named Loran Stewart sits on a stump, dumbfounded. Laid out before him, on a patch of hillside large enough to accommodate a dozen football fields, are the remnants of a 400-year-old stand of Douglas fir.

Born and raised near Eugene, some 45 miles west of this forest range, the stocky, white-haired 79-year-old is no stranger to clearcuts. But there is something very odd about this particular cut. Only four-fifths of the trees are gone; dozens have been left standing at various points across the shattered landscape, as if the loggers were too rushed to finish what they had started. Unsettling as well are the many remaining snags—dead, tinder-dry trees that, if set afire by a summer lightning strike, could flare up like

Roman candles and shower the surrounding forest with lethal embers. But perhaps the most offensive sight

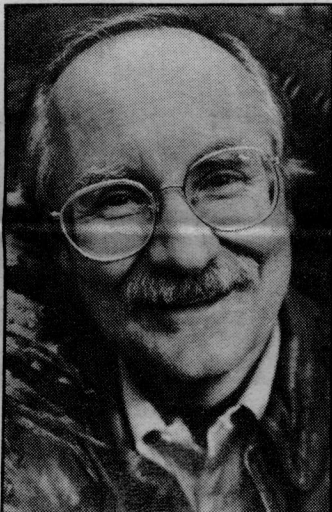
for Stewart, director of the Eugene-based timber company Bohemia Inc., as well as for many of the other timber professionals on this day's tour, is the amount of wood lying on the ground.

Scattered across the vast decline are dozens of huge Douglas fir logs, many of which contain enough high-value, clear-grained lumber to build a large house. All have been left to rot—left, if Stewart understands correctly, to provide food for beetles and fungal organisms in accordance with something called New Forestry and someone named Jerry Franklin. "This isn't *New Forestry*," Stewart quips to a Portland reporter assigned to the old-growth

beat. "This is *No Forestry*."

Moments later, Franklin himself, a tall, bespectacled man in khaki and hiking boots, moves away from the main tour group and ambles down to Stewart's side. The men shake hands. Franklin motions to his 15-acre experiment and asks Stewart's opinion. "I don't think you're living in the real world, Franklin," Stewart replies. "This is a disaster."

Franklin steps away and takes a few deep breaths. In a few minutes, the 53-year-old Forest Service ecologist and University of Washington forestry professor is expected to stand in front of a Portland TV news camera and explain how such a "disaster" is really part of the an-



John Bowdren





## THE NEW FORESTRY

answer to the Pacific Northwest's mounting timber woes. He will describe the problems inherent in the old practice of clear-cutting and replanting, and explain how his New Forestry, by leaving behind some of the trees and other natural structures, is better for forest wildlife.

And yet, all morning long, Franklin, his ideas, and his life's work here on the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest (part of the Willamette National Forest) have suffered an extraordinary lack of respect. Since 8am, when the group of timber-industry foresters, forestry officials, and reporters boarded two tour buses near Eugene, Franklin has been called "crazy," "out of touch," and "full of shit." At one point during the day-long expedition, in a cathedral-like grove of ancient Douglas fir, a rival forest ecologist likened Franklin to Chairman Mao and de-

nology, into a glossy new program called New Perspectives.

Not surprisingly, the stated goal of New Perspectives, "to maintain the stability of both the forests and the human communities that depend on them," has had enormous appeal to congressional members from timber-heavy districts. Representative Jolene Unsoeld, whose environmental stands have irked many in the logging communities within her district—and may blunt her bid for re-election this fall—says Franklin's ideas will feature prominently in her campaign strategy. Others are following suit. "Elements of New Forestry have shown up in just about every timber bill under consideration," Unsoeld says. "It's catching on."

Yet as the idea has moved out of scholarly journals and into public policy, it has drawn fire from at least two of the parties affected. The timber industry, which has long favored clearcuts and tree farms for their efficiency and economy, is skeptical of a largely untested method that appears to require far more effort and expense in return for far less product. Environmental

the same forest threatens environmentalists' arguments that old growth must be preserved, whole and intact, in order to save at-risk species such as the northern spotted owl. "It doesn't give either side what they want," observes a Senate staffer in the Northwest congressional delegation. "Environmentalists are looking for assurances that old growth will be preserved. Timber communities are looking for assurances of a consistent allowable cut, and New Forestry tries to be somewhere in the middle." That middle now looks like the middle of a crossfire, rather than the common ground of a peace treaty.

**C**limbing to an altitude of about 2,500 feet, the two silver tour buses halt at a fork in the gravel road. Franklin, among the first to disembark, leads the group up a log-strewn path to his laboratory—a grove of Douglas firs more than 600 years old. The trees, many of them several yards in diameter, rise like gothic columns and disappear in the dark green canopy. The members of the tour

grown up here.

Hyperkinetic and intense, Franklin seems nonetheless to be at ease with himself and his research. He gestures energetically. He talks with a trace of a twang in a forceful one-two cadence that jumps a tone or two at the end of each sentence for exclamatory effect. He is comfortable in front of groups, whether they be a class of forestry students, a panel of congressional members, or a nationwide television audience. "You cannot get something through a congressional subcommittee hearing without a certain amount of flair, an ability to give dry scientific principles some pizzazz," observes Harvard ecologist Richard Forman, who has worked with Franklin on New Forestry. "Jerry definitely has that."

From the log-tents and ambrosia beetles, Franklin moves into an explanation of what he and his colleagues have been doing in the Andrews Experimental Forest for the last three decades. Established at the end of World War II, the forest has been the site of some remarkable research into old growth. It was here, for example, that two forestry biologists, Eric Forsman and Charles Meslow, collected much of the data that suggested that the northern spotted owl was endangered. That landmark finding, and its codification last year by the Endangered Species Act, closed off hundreds of thousands of acres of prime timberland to loggers.

It was also here that scientists first began to look beyond the eye-level realm and explore the myriad processes that take place high in the forest's canopy and far below the forest floor. From this has emerged the concept of structural diversity. In the natural forest, Franklin says, one finds every different phase in the life of a tree—seedlings, saplings, mature trees, old growth, snags, and fallen, rotting logs. Each plays a crucial part in the cycle of forest regeneration, and each serves some role in providing habitat for the incredibly vast range of species—microbes, insects, birds, and mammals—that live in or near the forests. Remove that diversity, Franklin says, and you diminish a forest's ability to support life.

"In the end," says Franklin, pausing and clasping his hands, "we've been forced to come to the very uncomfortable conclusion that because of the need for this structural complexity, what's good for wood production isn't necessarily good for wildlife habitat." The implication is not lost on his listeners, many of whose employers—Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek, Bohemia, and others—have cut down millions of acres of natural, presumably structurally diverse, forests and replaced them with single-species, single-age tree farms.

Heretofore, Franklin says, this conflict has tended toward a simple conclusion. Some forest lands were opened for clear-cutting and replanting; others were legislated out of the loggers' path. This either/or paradigm is, in Franklin's estimate, the root of much of the current timber crisis. And, he thinks, it doesn't need to be that way.

New Forestry suggests, instead, that in areas designated for logging, a certain proportion of the forest—green trees, snags, logs, and other so-called woody debris—be left behind. True, Franklin concedes, the results look nothing like a natural forest. Aesthetically speaking, in fact, New Forestry resembles a sloppy clearcut, which makes it all the more difficult for the environmentally minded to accept. But for Franklin and other researchers, the important question is whether the residual structural diversity provides sufficient wildlife habitat.

The answer to this question, so central



Environmentalists call the New Forestry a kinder, gentler form of rape.

scribed as obsolete a fundamental tenet of Franklin's New Forestry—namely, that the traditional practices of clear-cutting and replanting have wiped out much of our forests' crucial biological diversity. "Man!" says an exasperated Franklin as his tour bus rumbles back down the logging road to the next experimental site. "This is the hardest group I've tried to talk to."

**S**uch open hostility is a new experience for Franklin. Since the late 1960s, when he and others began exploring the complex and, until then, largely secret lives of the Northwest's ancient forests, Franklin has been far more accustomed to accolades, not insults. Acknowledged in many circles as the dean of old-growth researchers, a star witness at countless congressional timber hearings, this articulate, charismatic, and highly quotable academic has been instrumental in shaping the debate over the future of the nation's forests.

His ideas for what he calls a "kinder and gentler forestry," one that balances needs for wood products with ecological awareness, have generally enjoyed a warm reception. The Forest Service, for example, once a bastion of the clearcut philosophy, has incorporated many of the concepts of New Forestry, and much of its appealing termi-

nology, into a glossy new program called New Perspectives. Not surprisingly, the stated goal of New Perspectives, "to maintain the stability of both the forests and the human communities that depend on them," has had enormous appeal to congressional members from timber-heavy districts. Representative Jolene Unsoeld, whose environmental stands have irked many in the logging communities within her district—and may blunt her bid for re-election this fall—says Franklin's ideas will feature prominently in her campaign strategy. Others are following suit. "Elements of New Forestry have shown up in just about every timber bill under consideration," Unsoeld says. "It's catching on."

Yet as the idea has moved out of scholarly journals and into public policy, it has drawn fire from at least two of the parties affected. The timber industry, which has long favored clearcuts and tree farms for their efficiency and economy, is skeptical of a largely untested method that appears to require far more effort and expense in return for far less product. Environmental

groups are no happier. Front-line old-growth defenders like the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and the Oregon Natural Resource Defense Council, organizations inclined toward total preservation as opposed to any style of logging, consider Franklin's ideas simply a sophisticated justification for the continued cutting of ancient forests. To the extent that it is applied to old growth, says the ONRDC's Andy Kerr, "New Forestry is simply a kinder and gentler form of rape."

form a rough semicircle in the middle of the path and peer into the green gloom.

Around the site, several mammoth logs lie at various angles, enclosed in long tents of fine mesh screen. The tents, Franklin explains, are there to exclude a voracious insect known as the ambrosia beetle. Researchers want to know how much slower the logs decompose without the beetle's help. "This is probably going to be a 200-year-long experiment," Franklin concedes, drawing a few chuckles from the audience and, at the same time, suggesting something of the time scale he and his colleagues must consider.

In his numerous articles on such subjects as "Tree Death as an Ecological Process" and "Creating Landscape Patterns by Forest Cutting," Franklin sounds erudite and sensible, if somewhat dry. In person, and particularly in such a grand setting as this, he is considerably more provocative. Six-foot-2, trim, with a tanned face, gray mustache and hair, and a preference for olive and khaki, Franklin comes off as that rare cross between outdoorsman and academic—the naturalist. He can speak for hours on a subject as obscure as a rare lichen's nitrogen-fixing properties, yet he moves about the uneven, log-strewn forest floor with the grace of someone who has



to New Forestry, appears to be yes. In experimental sites on the Andrews, for example, where approximately one-fifth of the green trees, snags, and piles of woody debris have been left behind, bird populations are reportedly 30 percent higher than on similarly situated clearcuts. More conclusive proof, Franklin says, is some years away, but the long-term outlook is very promising: timberlands, whether they be a 300-year-old natural forest high in the mountains or a lowland plantation with 60-year-old second-generation trees, can be managed for both commercial logging and wildlife habitat.

Finished with his pitch, Franklin takes a seat on a fallen log. Bill Atkinson, former researcher with Crown Zellerbach and now head of the Department of Forest Engineering at Oregon State University, takes the forest floor. In articles and speeches, Atkinson has described Franklin's work as "hobby silviculture," a concept "dreamed up by academics working as a closed group on the H.J. Andrews," which, owing to the timber crisis, has had a "lemming effect" on politicians and Forest Service bureaucrats.

A slightly built man, dressed in a blue pinstripe shirt, black trousers, and logger's boots, Atkinson says Franklin's ideas are difficult to criticize because of their ambiguity. New Forestry, he adds, is being sold as "all things to all people," a single solution to a complex problem. New Forestry is becoming gospel, Atkinson says, spreading like wildfire, despite a lack of data and an abundance of practical problems. It's getting to the point where people are afraid to speak out against it, to defend the time-tested practice of plantation forestry. It is, he says, after a pause, almost like China dur-

voice edged with anger. Atkinson walks on, staring straight ahead, as a gaggle of reporters and a TV cameraman struggle to keep up behind. Finally, Atkinson says, "You should've controlled what's being done in the name of New Forestry, Jerry. You let it get out of control."

Franklin says, "Bill, the same thing could be said for plantation forestry, that's it's gotten out of control."

"Well, it has," Atkinson admits, somewhat peevishly.

"Well, why didn't you stop it?" Franklin asks. Atkinson doesn't answer. "Bill, we've got to start working together on this, or the industry's going to be wiped out." Atkinson nods and walks toward his bus.

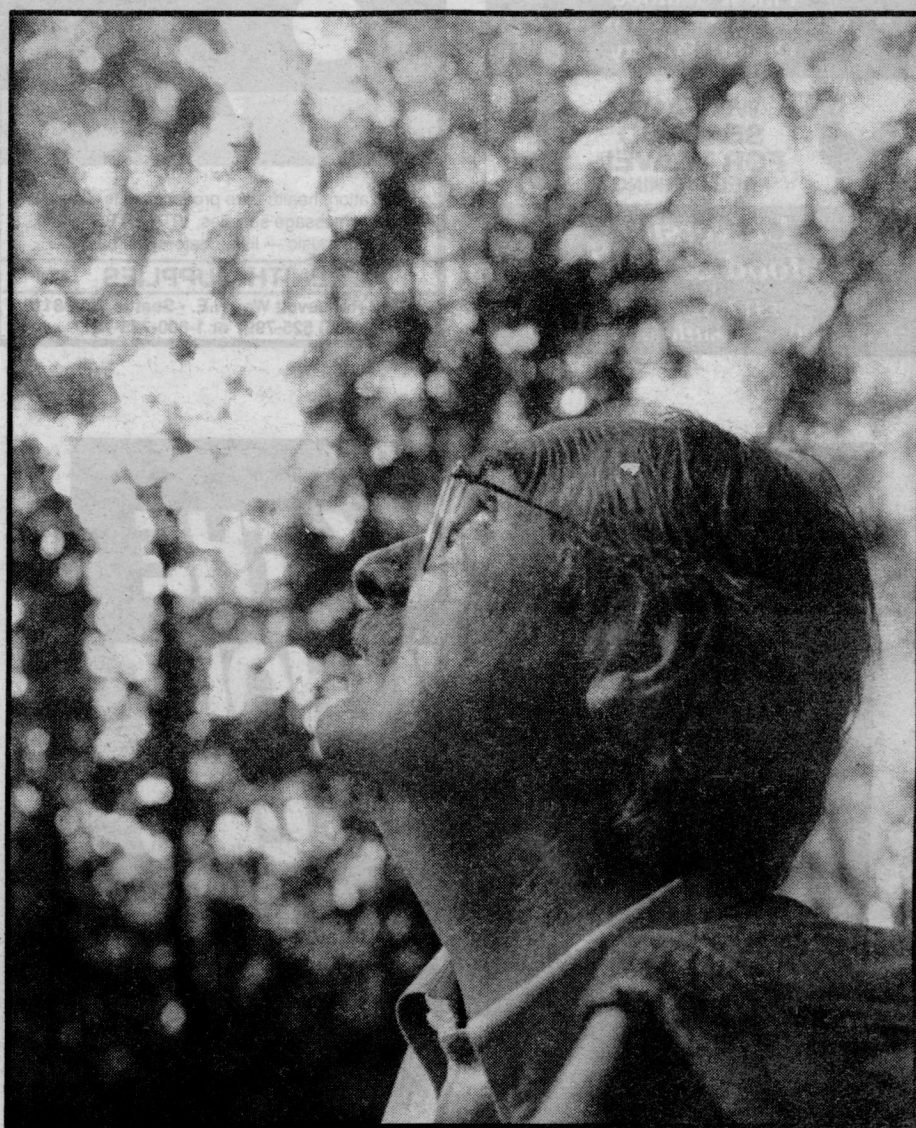
Back in his window seat, Franklin scribbles *Not a single approach. Flexible objectives* in a notebook, preparing for a rebuttal at the next stop. "I must have horns," he mutters. "I wish I had half the power ascribed to me."

If there is a single element in the mounting critique that bothers Franklin most, it is the claim that New Forestry is a literalist, simplistic dogma. No one understands better than Jerry Franklin that there is no such thing as a generic forest. Natural forests vary tremendously, by species, terrain, age class, climate, wildlife populations, and a myriad of other, interrelated, factors. It is, therefore, ludicrous to posit a monolithic solution. "The problem with equating New Forestry to a single practice," says Franklin, during an interview in his cluttered office at the University of Washington's School of Forestry, "is that it immediately closes out the ability to grow and incorporate and adapt to different management objectives and forestry conditions."

That many of those who promote the practice of monoculture—single-species plantations—often characterize New Forestry as a single, inflexible approach is more than ironic. It also does a major disservice to one of New Forestry's most fundamental tenets: chaos. In the natural forest, Franklin explains, "order and symmetry aren't necessarily a good thing. They may help you produce wood fiber more efficiently, but from an ecological point of view, heterogeneity and variability are the valuable attributes. To a certain extent, a little chaos can have a lot of ecological benefits."

This chaos refers not only to Franklin's penchant for structural diversity, but also to something a growing number of researchers in the living sciences call *biological diversity*. Most natural habitats or ecosystems, whether a patch of moss, an old-growth forest, or the western slopes of the Cascades, are ecologically fit only to the extent that they contain a richly varied plant and animal population. At its highest level, biodiversity implies a full spectrum of whole ecosystems—forests, watersheds, tidelands, and others—each of which is necessary to support certain plant and animal species and all of which work together in the service of the larger, planetary picture. At its most basic level, biodiversity implies a well-stocked gene pool, which gives an ecosystem the power to respond to changing environmental conditions. Any loss of biological diversity can mean an ecological disaster.

Yet throughout much of history, humans have waged war on diversity. Agriculture, forestry, the reclamation of swamps: all embody a desire to simplify and regulate that which strives toward complexity and disorder. Uniformity has great advantages, Franklin admits. It has allowed us the efficiency to feed, clothe, and house billions of people. But it has also brought tremendous costs.



Lisa Stone

Looking for ways to balance wood-product needs and environmental concerns.

One of the best examples of these costs is the transformation taking place in the woods. Older forests, with their wide range of tree sizes and ages, are rapidly being replaced by younger, more uniform stands. From a strictly economic standpoint, this is rational. "All things being equal, young and mature trees add more wood per acre than old-growth trees," writes ecologist Elliott Norse in his book *Ancient Forests of the Northwest*. "Therefore, it makes one kind of economic sense to cut ancient trees (especially since their wood is worth more) and to replace them with fast-growing young trees."

But, Norse notes, all things are not equal. Indeed, while managed forests can produce as much as 30 percent more timber than their natural brethren, they do not support the same bounty of life. "The sound wood of young, living trees is hard," Norse writes. "As a result, forests provide homes for more species when they have large, old rotten trees, snags, and downed logs, which claws, beaks, plant roots, and fungal hyphae can penetrate." The spotted owl is but one of thousands of species that are disappearing, or have already disappeared, largely because the habitats on which they depend, ecosystems perfected through millions of years of evolution, are undergoing massive simplification.

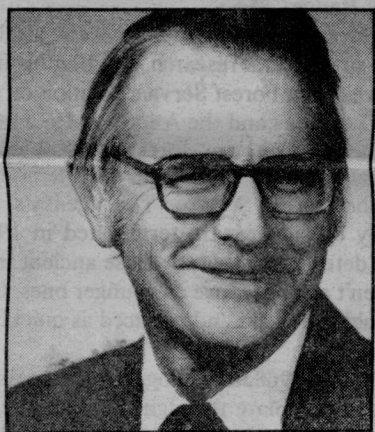
Numerous forestry experts, including until recently Forest Service officials, have argued that many species are actually more prolific in clearcuts and plantation forests than in the deep gloom of ancient forests. They claim that clearcuts serve to increase biological diversity. This seems to be supported by studies showing that, on clearcuts, there is a rise in the numbers and varieties of certain open-country species, such as the dark-eyed junco and the brown-headed cowbird. "On that particular tract of land," concedes the Wilderness Society's David Wilcove, "species-richness would be

increased. However, this increase should not be confused with an increase in biological diversity. Quite simply, there is no shortage of habitat for dark-eyed juncos and brown-headed cowbirds in the Pacific Northwest, whereas the species associated with old-growth coniferous forests are diminishing as the old-growth forests themselves are logged."

Conclusions like these have been particularly difficult to swallow for those who make their living cutting trees. Loran Stewart, whose great-grandfather homesteaded in Oregon in 1847, whose father and grandfather were both loggers, and who himself has worked in the woods for more than half a century, is deeply pained by suggestions that he and other professional foresters are breaking natural laws. "You're not violating nature when you go clear-cutting a Douglas fir forest," he says. "You're doing exactly what she would do. She'll burn down an entire drainage, then turn around and re-seed it with Douglas fir."

Stewart's point is well taken. Logging is but one kind of forest calamity. Fires, like those that rampaged through Yellowstone in 1989, destroy tens of thousands of acres each year. Before the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management initiated widespread suppression and prevention policies, blazes routinely charred hundreds of thousands of acres at a time. Judging by evidence found at the Andrews, Franklin says, a massive conflagration, most likely set by lightning strikes, swept through the Pacific Northwest about 800 years ago, consuming upwards of several million acres.

Landslides, slumps in the earth, and outbreaks of insect infestation and disease can kill an entire forest range. The eruption at Mount St. Helens flattened 160,000 acres in seconds. And researchers, including Franklin, have determined that windfalls



The new forestry is spreading like wildfire, despite a lack of data and an abundance of practical problems.

—Bill Atkinson

ing the Cultural Revolution, when Mao Zedong proclaimed flowerbeds an ideological distraction. "The next morning," Atkinson observes, "everyone is outside, pulling up the flowerbeds. Of course, we don't have Chairman Mao. We've got Jerry."

Franklin, wearing an expression of open-mouthed disbelief, says nothing. When the crowd moves back toward the buses, he strides quickly up to Atkinson's side. "What are we doing out here, Bill?" he asks, his



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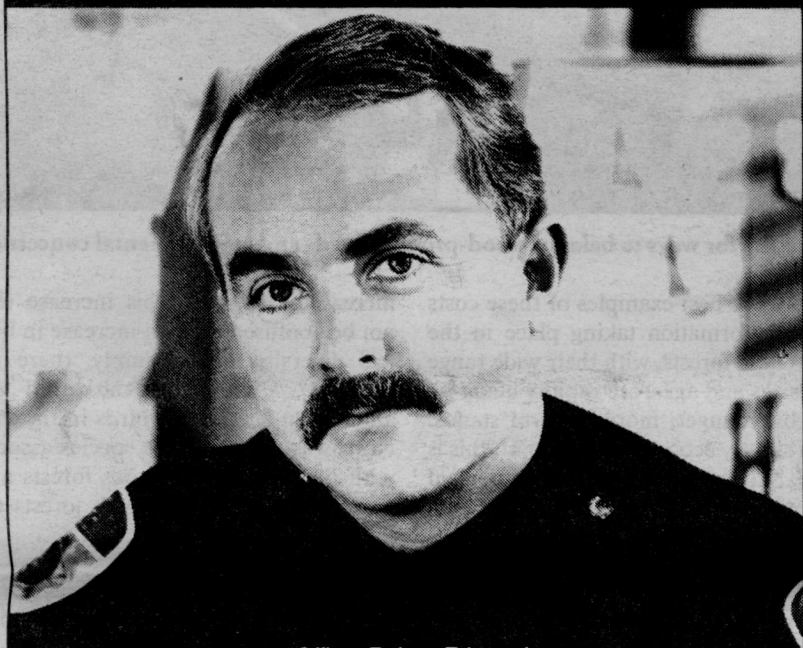
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## THE NEW FORESTRY

account for as much 83 percent of tree deaths among certain species and in certain locations.

But the central question is how closely manmade disturbances resemble the natural variety, and whether they have similar impacts on wildlife. Fires, if they burn hot enough, can clear a forest as effectively as clear-cutting (in fact, a clearcut may be burned in preparation for replanting).

But more often, fires leave things behind. Mature and ancient conifers, by dint of their thick bark, may survive a blaze intact. The ash of less fortunate trees serves as vital fertilizers for succeeding generations. And windfelled and volcano-blasted trees remain on the site, providing structural diversity and habitat until they, too, become fertilizer.

In part, it is this less orderly pattern of destruction and regeneration that Franklin's New Forestry hopes to mimic. "New Forestry says: stand back and look at what the natural-disturbance regimen had been, how it had worked the landscape," explains Fred Swanson, a Forest Service geologist who has worked with Franklin since 1974. "Then, we think about how we want to work our landscape, how we can replace the wild disturbances with management."

Quantifying natural disturbances, whether they be fires, slides, or windfall, requires a sophisticated computer analysis that blends a variety of research disciplines. Scientists must determine the size and duration of the disturbance, as well as how frequently it is likely to occur in a particular area. They must study how its impacts change with altitude, temperature, slope, species, age, and season. They must look at its impact on wildlife, both in the short- and long-term. Finally, they must determine whether their management objectives, usually timber production, can be met though such mimicry.

Given the widely varying sizes and durations of natural disturbances, the scope of such analyses must go far beyond the traditional boundaries of the monthlong, 25- to 40-acre clear-cutting operation. Instead, Franklin wants management plans that encompass entire ecosystems—watersheds, mountain ranges, and the like—over periods that might stretch into decades. If the first tenet of New Forestry is the retention of structural and biological diversity, the second is to enlarge our perceptual increments of time and scale. We must, in other words, start thinking big.

Jerry Franklin has not always held such a giant-size world view. Born in 1936, he grew up in Camas, a tiny town on the north bank of the Columbia River, 10 miles southwest of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Camas in that era owed its existence to timber. The social status of most of the town's 4,000 inhabitants was determined in large part by their place in the hierarchy of the nearby Crown Zellerbach pulp mill. His father, Edward Franklin, worked on the mill's "log pond," a slough off the Columbia into which huge rafts of timber were floated on their way to the chipper.

Franklin spent a great deal of time in the woods. It was, he says, the one place he felt comfortable, having little interest in the activities of his peers and little success at school. "I had been late in maturing," he says. "I didn't relate well to other kids and

didn't spend a lot of time doing whatever it was that teen-agers did."

But early on, Franklin had little trouble amassing a great deal of information about the trees and other inhabitants of the forest. Edward Franklin used to pack the family into their 1937 Plymouth for weeklong camping trips in the Gifford Pinchot. On one of these, at age 4, Franklin and his father took a long hike through the woods to a fishing hole. "I remember walking back and listening to him telling me about the different sounds that each kind of tree made in the wind," Franklin says. "At one point, we stopped and we both lay down on the path and looked up at the treetops."

By his ninth birthday, Franklin says, he had decided on a career in the Forest Service. He graduated from high school in 1954, about the same time the Forest Service began selling off large tracts of the national forests to private timber companies, whose own holdings had been exhausted by the war effort and the postwar building boom. After high school, Franklin tried to enlist in the Air Force, but was rejected for poor eyesight. He spent a year at Clark College in Vancouver, then another at Washington State University in Pullman—"two years, basically, of finding myself, regaining some of the confidence I lost in high school."

At WSU, Franklin studied chemical engineering for a while, then transferred to the forestry school at Oregon State University. There something clicked. Franklin began getting straight A's. During his first winter in Corvallis, he was hired by the Forest Service as a student-trainee, and, within days, had made his first trip to the Andrews. On Forest Service funds, he went back to WSU for a doctorate in botany, which he earned in 1966 with a thesis entitled, "The Subalpine Forest Community and Soils of the Southern Washington Cascade Range."

Out of school, Franklin went straight into silvicultural research, splitting his time between the Forest Service's station on the OSU campus and the Andrews. He was intrigued by ancient forests, although, as research topics, these were of little interest to the Forest Service. The agency's last study of old growth, terminated in 1961, had determined that, because ancient trees weren't as productive as younger ones, they should be logged and replaced as quickly as possible.

But by 1968, as ecological awareness began to percolate through the mainstream, there developed an official fascination with ecosystems. Research money, through the National Science Foundation, became available. In 1969, the Andrews/OSU group crafted a grant proposal to study conifer ecosystems. To Franklin's delight, the group elected to focus on old growth.

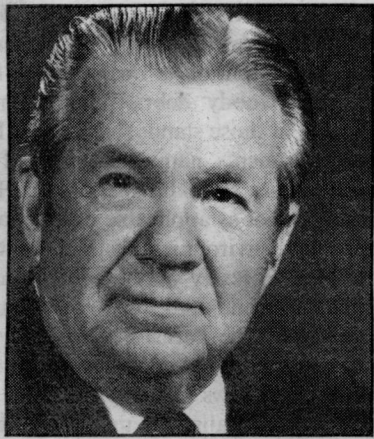
"Almost as soon as we got out there," Franklin says, "and began looking into the canopy and looking underground, we began making some amazing discoveries." One was that the numbers of resident plants and animals, particularly of the small and microscopic varieties, far exceeded earlier estimates. What's more, each lifeform seemed to have a specific function in the life of the forest. It was found, for example, that certain lichens in the old-growth canopies absorbed free-floating nitrogen, releasing it in a biologically usable form. Nitrogen is crucial for all plant life; these nitrogen-fixing lichen are rarely found in younger forests.

Downed, rotting logs were found to play a multiple role: they provided food for nitrogen-fixing microbes, they regulated storm runoff to curtail erosion, and, where they fell in streams, they regulated the flow of



water so that fish could spawn and return downstream. There was also a vast new world beneath the forest floor. Scientists found that 40 percent to 60 percent of the energy created by photosynthesis in an ancient tree's needles was shunted below for the maintenance of the root systems. The roots, in turn, sloughed off vast quantities of organic material, which was absorbed as food by nearby plants or trees.

The accumulation of such facts began, however slowly, to modify government forest policy, both here and in other countries. In 1970, when a controversy erupted over the cutting of subalpine forests in Japan, Franklin was loaned as an adviser to the Japanese government. "I was brought in as a stalking horse," Franklin says. "They were cutting down subalpine forests and replanting them with larch. The Japanese scientists



You are not violating nature  
when you go clear-cutting  
a Douglas fir forest.

—Loran Stewart

knew it wasn't such a good idea, but, being Japanese, there was a limit to how candid they could be with each other. I think I was brought in to state the obvious." That he did, writing an article that was immediately translated and published in the country's leading forestry journal. Shortly thereafter, the cutting of Japanese subalpine forests ceased.

Franklin returned from Japan to find that his star was rising. In 1973, after several years on the Andrews, he was invited to Washington, DC, to administer the National Science Foundation's ecosystem grants. In 1975, he took over as project leader at the Andrews group, which was just then developing its first summary of the characteristics of old growth. In 1980-1981, Franklin led an Andrews/OSU research team onto the blasted slopes of Mount St. Helens. Here was a biological legacy on a grand scale; here also was a massive media event. The mountain was covered with reporters, scrambling to find experts in anything—geology, morphology, forestry. Franklin and others became regular interviews, not so much for any expertise, he concedes, "but because we were there."

In 1983, the Mount St. Helens media event subsided, and old growth took its place. The spotted owl was about to make news, and the Forest Service, racked by the rebellion of its researchers and staff and squeezed by public pressure, was tripping

all over itself in an effort to become ecologically sensitive. Franklin began making more congressional appearances and became the administrator for the Andrews, coordinating research and attending to the endless and competitive business of writing research grants.

"One could use all the clichés about a dedicated, hard worker," says Steve Eubanks, a former Forest Service chief ranger in Oregon and early New Forestry convert. "Jerry is all of those. But his main strength was as a catalyst, in pulling together a whole, diverse group of researchers and keeping them working together." It was Franklin's vision, Eubanks says, aided in no small part by his mastery of grant writing, that allowed such diverse experts as soils specialists Kermit Cromack and Dave Perry, biologist Chris Maser, insect specialists Jack Lattin and Tim Schowalter, fisheries expert Stan Gregory, forest vegetation scientist Art McKee, and biogeographer Tom Spies, to name but a few, to come together and develop a new way to look at the forest.

Yet such a role was also burning Franklin out. With limited breaks, he had been on the Andrews for 28 years. Corvallis, too, was getting small. Franklin's marriage of 27 years was dissolving. At OSU, his relationship with the forestry school's administration was wearing thin. Colleagues say that because the forestry school received a portion of a timber tax, which rose and fell with the level of the allowable cut, the administration was somewhat fearful of research, such as Franklin's, that made life difficult for the timber industry. "A lot of things were going on in Jerry's life," says one former OSU colleague. "So he went to Harvard and invented New Forestry."

In point of fact, Franklin went not to Harvard, but to Harvard Forest, a sort of Ivy League annex located in the central Massachusetts town of Petersham, about 80 miles west of Cambridge. Franklin brought with him some troubling questions about the keystone of the Forest Service's management policy, the clearcut. In 1983, half a billion board feet of timber had blown down in the Mount Hood National Forest. In viewing the damage, Franklin began to suspect that the Service's traditional staggered pattern of clearcuts, a policy he himself had favored, had actually contributed to the size of the disturbance. "Are we," he asked, "creating landscapes that have a high potential of unraveling? Are we pre-disposing our forest lands to catastrophes?"

In Petersham, situated in a vast, second-growth hardwood forest, Franklin found the solitude he needed to examine the issue. He also found Richard Forman, a Harvard professor and a practitioner of the new field of landscape ecology. Beginning with a set of penciled sketches, Franklin and Forman outline the ecological consequences of the clearcut. For nearly a decade, conventional wisdom held that small clearcuts, set about the landscape like checkerboard squares, wrought the least ecological impact. This was so, the theory held, because small cuts both minimized habitat destruction in any single area and maximized the "edge," or barrier, between clearcut and uncut forest. Edge was considered a good thing, as it gave wildlife access to the remaining forest. Further, edge could be maximized by making clearcuts as small as possible.

Now, however, it seemed that edge wasn't such a good idea. What the Mount Hood blowdown suggested was that weather and climate effects found on a clearcut—in this case, very high winds—penetrated far more deeply into the uncut forest

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## THE NEW FORESTRY

than had been previously thought. The same was true for temperature, humidity, light—many of the things that can upset the delicate balance of a forest ecosystem. This, in turn, meant there was actually much less of an untouched interior forest and, therefore, much less unmolested wildlife habitat.

The implications for the Forest Service's 40-year-old policy were obvious. "We hadn't even given a paper yet and Jerry had already presented the idea to the chief of the Forest Service," Forman recalls. "I was aghast. I told him the research was still in progress. Jerry knew that, but he also knew that this had extremely important management implications, and that the sooner we got this into practice, the better off the forests would be."

Much of what is now subsumed under New Forestry, research developed by dozens of forestry scientists on several continents, had been around for several years. What Franklin now set out to do was to synthesize his own work at Harvard with this larger body of knowledge and offer it as a unified set of prescriptions. As always, biological and structural diversity would be the cornerstones.

To that end, operational techniques should be modified: a varying percentage of trees, old and young, dead and living, should be left standing, while others should be left intact on the ground. Slash and other woody debris should remain as fertilizer. Where clearcuts had once been spread out, larger patches of untouched forest (and, therefore, forest interior) should be left intact. As important, "corridors" of uncut forest should be left between habitat areas to give wildlife access to wider areas of natural habitat.

New Forestry, once gathered together into a unified theory, also needed to be sold to a largely skeptical audience. "Franklin served as the communicator," Eubanks

says. "One of his biggest skills was in the packaging and marketing of all these different ideas."

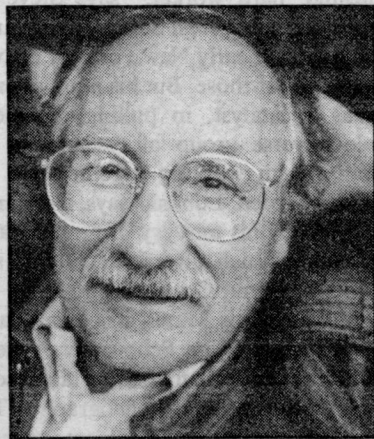
Franklin has trouble with terms like packaging and marketing. As he sees it, his job has been one of gathering and presenting the facts, and letting the powers-that-be make the decisions. Nonetheless, following his Harvard experience, Franklin became exceedingly active in pressing New Forestry as the new way to look at the timber question. His perseverance paid off. Congressional members, including Jolene Unsoeld, became advocates. The Forest Service, already in the process of retooling its timber sales along the lines of earlier old-growth research, developed its New Perspectives program. Versions of New Forestry are now cropping up in various state logging plans, including the recent roundtable discussions between Washington's Department of Natural Resources, state timber companies, and local environmentalists. It is easy to understand how opponents like OSU's Bill Atkinson might liken New Forestry to a wildfire.

In opposing some of Franklin's ideas, representatives of the environmental community and the timber industry have found an unlikely patch of common ground. Both groups are alarmed at New Forestry's populist potential. They note that elements of the concept—touted by some policymakers as a "solution" to the old growth/spotted owl question—have already been incorporated into dozens of congressional timber bills. They chafe as well at Franklin's refusal to take sides. Last spring, Franklin told Congress: "Programs which are oriented to single resources, whether they be wood-centric, as in the past, or owl-centric, are not appropriate."

At a more fundamental level, however, timber interests and environmentalists see New Forestry as compromising their goals. For the timber industry, the issues seem to be chiefly efficiency and feasibility. While some companies, most notably Plum Creek, are experimenting with versions of New Forestry, others are withholding their em-

brace. There are serious doubts that the same stand of timber can ever be managed for both commodity values and wildlife habitat, particularly as the requirements for that habitat keep growing more complex.

New Forestry also looks mighty expen-



Programs oriented to a single resource, whether wood-centric or owl-centric, are inappropriate.

—Jerry Franklin

sive. Weyerhaeuser research forester Paul Figueroa says that, based on what he and other company specialists saw on the Andrews, New Forestry cuts the timber yield by as much as half. (Franklin says it's closer to 20 percent, although this, too, could vary, depending on site conditions and management goals.) Add in increased management costs for fire suppression (when lightning strikes snags), liability (when falling snags strike loggers), plus the expense of logging each acre more carefully, and

you have, to Figueroa's eye, a fairly unattractive bottom line. "What board of directors or group of shareholders would stand for it if you went to them and said, 'Hey, we're going to lose 50 percent of our value—buy our stock?'" Figueroa asks. "I don't think a lot of the legislators who are jumping on this bandwagon really understand the impact of what they're doing."

Environmentalists generally concede that Franklin's ideas may well be appropriate for tree farms, where there is a lack of biological and structural diversity. But "improving" old growth is about like sending God to college. "New Forestry is a change from the industrial clearcut, where you take everything," agrees Andy Kerr of Oregon Natural Resource Defense Council. "But it's not going to result in a forest being left there. You'll have parts of a forest, the so-called biological legacy, but most of the biomass will have been removed."

Another problem is that you can't confine New Forestry to the tree farms. Some suggest that New Forestry's key requirements—the retention of snags, fallen logs, and other woody debris—make it most applicable in those stands that already have these components, namely mature and old-growth forests. Franklin answers that New Forestry is just as applicable on plantation forests, but environmentalists claim that, while New Forestry may be theoretically feasible on second- and third-growth stock, it's viewed by the Forest Service and various desperate lawmakers as a substitute for ban-the-chain-saws preservation. This, say the environmentalists, is unacceptable for two reasons. First, New Forestry fails to preserve the aesthetics of old growth; second, according to Andy Stahl of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, "The promoters of New Forestry are not sufficiently candid in disclosing that it is not a substitute for spotted owl protection."

The owl is once again at the heart of the question. If New Forestry does not preserve wildlife habitat—particularly for endangered species like the spotted owl, which enjoys court protection—there will be little impetus to apply it. But if New

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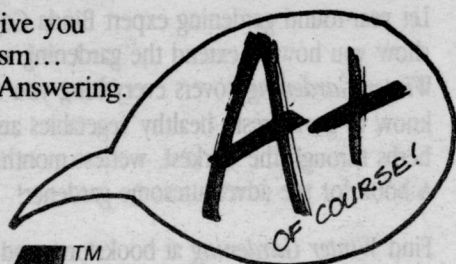
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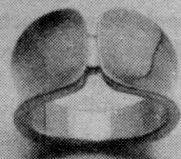
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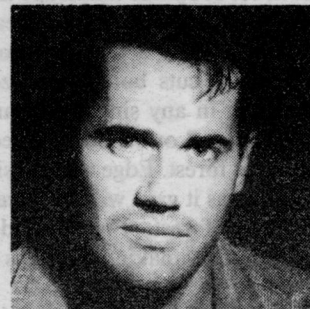
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Forestry does retain enough structural diversity to save habitat, or is perceived as doing so, environmentalists may have lost the linchpin of their campaign to preserve old growth. If threatened species like the owl can live in Jerry Franklin's New Forests, then there is no *legal* reason to keep the old ones. (There might, of course, be lots of public-policy reasons to preserve them, and even economic ones, such as tourism.)

Spotted owls notwithstanding, Franklin says he does not, as some have implied, advocate that New Forestry become the federal government's substitute for preserving old growth. In fact, he recommends that "significant, additional amounts" of ancient forests be put off-limits to any kind of forestry. What Franklin is really concerned with, he says, are the forests *outside* the wilderness preserves. Franklin and other researchers do not believe that a species can be confined to a single preserve; habitats and ecosystems do not adhere to the boundaries of national parks or officially designated wilderness areas. "The idea of allocating so much land to timber [harvesting] and so much land to preservation just isn't going to make it anymore. We have to learn to practice ecologically sound forestry management *everywhere*, and not just on the timber preserves."

This, too, troubles environmentalists. "Ecologically sound forestry" implies less yield per acre on managed forests, which can translate into a timber deficit. That

deficit must be made up elsewhere, probably on those same mature and old-growth stands in the national forests. Franklin concedes the tradeoff. "The more timber land you lock up in preserves," he says, "the more intensely managed the forests will be outside the preserves." Conversely, if more land is opened up for lumber, the less harsh will be the overall ecological impacts. An argument like that springs a deft logical trap on the environmentalists, who end up appearing to oppose a broad ecological solution.

Franklin says he isn't pushing a particular position on old growth, or spotted owls, or set-asides. At the same time, however, he confesses a lack of faith that lawmakers, under pressure by the timber industry, will give environmentalists what they want by substantially reducing the allowable cut on the national forests. This willingness to concede a certain loss of mature and old-growth forests, environmentalists say, shows where Franklin's politics and loyalties lie: with the Forest Service and a timber policy that, no matter how well-cloaked with New Forestry terminology, is essentially anti-environmentalist.

"I think Jerry has a very real concern for the forests," says Rick Brown of the National Wildlife Federation. "But whether he's addressing the Congress or the public, Jerry has a tendency to meld his political perceptions with his ecological understandings. People think they are hearing an eco-

logically correct interpretation, and what is mingled in with that are Jerry's perceptions of what is feasible and realistic."

It is not clear, however, that Franklin's perceptions of what is politically feasible run that far from the mark. Late last month, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan said that in order to reduce timber-job loss though set-asides of spotted owl habitat, he was recommending to President Bush that the allowable cut on federal lands be bumped up nearly 400-million board feet beyond the level recommended by his own wildlife biologist, Jack Ward Thomas.

Implicit in the growth of New Forestry's popularity is the hope that political disputes over timber, many of which stem from scientific findings, can be settled by science and that all sides can agree with a minimum of bloodshed. But the science is too new, and it may take centuries to prove itself one way or the other. What is left is the messy business of political compromise.

On that score, the chances for a solution do not seem to be improving. Senator Slade Gorton, who has long championed a higher allowable cut, is, according to aides, "intrigued" by Franklin's ideas, but is far from convinced that New Forestry can "move us down the road toward a settlement of the current debate over old-growth preservation vs. timber harvest." Congresswoman Unsoeld wants to see New Forestry applied in some of the forests that, as designated spotted owl habitat, are currently

off-limits to logging. As such, her position will surely provoke the powerful environmental lobby and spark a new series of court-ordered shutdowns.

Nor is the scientific community unified behind New Forestry. Thomas, who chaired the committee of scientists that led to the spotted owl set-asides, and who enjoys a reputation and influence on a par with Franklin's, has also taken issue with the idea that New Forestry be tested in owl habitat. Others in the research community complain that New Forestry's acceptance by policymakers far exceeds its accumulation of factual support, and that convincing evidence—pro or con—won't be available for years.

Franklin is the first to admit that New Forestry requires massive testing. "Existing research and education programs are grossly inadequate," Franklin told congressional members last May. "What is needed is a natural-resource equivalent of the Apollo and Manhattan projects." At the same time, Franklin says, to hold off New Forestry's implementation until the last shred of evidence is in place is to continue dividing the forest pie—a virgin forest here, a clearcut there—in a way that fragments our ecosystems and confines biological and structural diversity to meaningless squares.

"It's true," he tells his audience beneath the Douglas firs, "we *can't* say for sure that New Forestry preserves these [wildlife] values. But at the same time, we *know* that the old forestry doesn't work." ■

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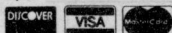
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\*Two-year minimum contract for 24-hour monitoring. Basic connection fee includes three perimeter sensors, interior movement detector, an automatic warning siren, a control pad, the master unit, a backup power supply and Brink's warning signs. Additional equipment is optional. © 1990 Brink's Home Security, Inc.



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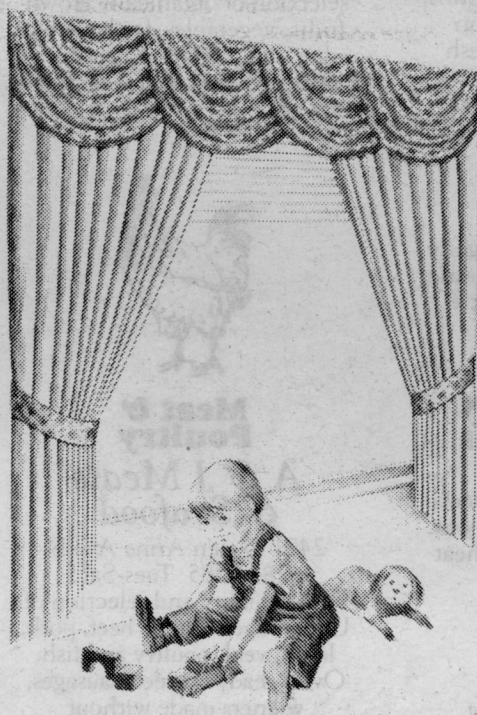
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