

Foundation. The conference was dedicated to Gil Murray, the California Forestry Association president killed April 24 by a package bomb attributed to the Luddite "Unabomber," and Sunday's agenda featured Donn Zea, the association's vice president for industry affairs, and firebrand Idaho Representative Helen Chenoweth, who sits on congressional task forces dealing with reform of the Endangered Species Act and with property rights and term limits advocacy.

One newcomer to the meeting was Steve Lindsey, a family rancher from Southern Arizona. The mild-mannered rancher turned a bit red while naming the forces bearing down on him: a glut of Mexican cattle coming across the border at Douglas (undermining the rock bottom prices of 30-35 cents a pound he gets for his cattle), a federal government that wants to raise the rent on the land it allows him to graze his cattle on, and, perhaps worst of all, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service. The agency's Phoenix office has told Lindsey that he will likely have to fence off pasture land on his own private property since a flower covered by the Endangered Species Act, the Canelo Hills Lady's Tresses, is found there.

Arnold, who argued the need to reach out to New Conservationists, says the audience responded with "surprise. Shock. Some resistance." Arnold expects as much from wise users today but says they must take the New Conservationists seriously, because, as he sees it, they are the only environmentalists who accept people as part of any equation in discussing natural resources, endangered species, habitat, etc. Of the three current types of environmentalists—the foundation-controlled, the deep ecologists, and the eco-socialists—Arnold says, "we look for the middle ground, and that's the eco-socialists," whom he praises for their keen sense of economic justice. For example, while a New Conservationist may advocate a zero-cut policy in the national forests, he wouldn't fool himself into believing that a government program could retrain lifelong loggers into software programmers. According to St. Clair, both greens and natural resource workers may realize that "it comes down to connecting people to place" and that "you do that in the communities."

A New Conservationist may even resent the unemployment resulting from mainstream environmentalists' activism,

which, as *Getting Rich* documents, is a flourishing industry. For instance, the Surdna Foundation, a member of the Environmental Grantmakers Association and an Andrus family foundation built with money from gold, oil, timber, and real estate businesses, approved a donation of \$35,000 in April 1992 for Environment Now, which trains activists in filing appeals to stop federal Timber Harvest Plans. The foundation has also awarded \$90,000 to the Sierra Club ('91-'92), \$30,000 to the Oregon Natural Resources Council ('92-'93), \$197,000 to the Wilderness Society ('90-'93), \$175,000 to the Western Ancient Forest Campaign ('92-'93), \$100,000 to the Audubon Society ('92-'93), and \$357,000 to the Natural Resources Defense Council ('89-'93)—all of which have also filed appeals for "stopping timber harvests and log supplies to mills in the Sierra Nevada market area. Thirty-six sawmills in Northern California have shut down because of log shortages since 1990, rendering 8,000 unemployed."

"As a result," according to *Getting Rich*, "timber prices on Surdna Foundation's private lands have increased dramatically. Some of the Timber Harvest Plans that were appealed lie in the same watershed as the timberlands owned by Surdna Foundation and Andrus timber partners, yet no appeals were filed on the State Timber Harvest Plans submitted by Surdna Foundation under California law." During 1992-1993, *Getting Rich* also reports, the "Surdna Foundation realized \$2.7 million income from its Northern California timberlands."

Rural populists have long objected to distant bureaucrats telling them how to be stewards of the land. Locally oriented greens alienated by groups trying to dominate all environmental politics—and making enemies of neighbors who may be ranchers, loggers, and miners in the process—may find many areas of common interest. Rozek is open to the notion. "Early on in the environmental movement we needed power and size," he says. "Having accomplished that we saw the results of centralization."

Rozek doesn't seem to be alone: since 1990, the Sierra Club, one of the environmental mainstream's most powerful organizations, has lost more than 50,000 members.

A former policy analyst with the Independent Institute, Jim Christie is a Seattle-based writer.

WOMEN

Bitch, Bitch, Bitch

by Laurie Morrow

Earlier this year, when Connie Chung duped Newt Gingrich's mother into confiding that Newt considered the First Lady a "bitch," victim feminists went into a frenzy. Gingrich's mother and father hardly expected this treatment from Chung, as they had spent eight hours treating her like a guest in their modest home (Gingrich's father had even baked Chung a cake). Had Newt's mom spat on the cross, there would have been fewer cries of outrage (and she might have gotten an NEA grant for performance art). Shocked—*shocked!*—into an acute case of the vapors by Newt's alleged use of an indelicacy, Woodstock-era media babes proclaimed their sensibilities offended and lamented that even now, men just cannot handle strong women.

This frenzied response to "bitch" rests on an evasion of the word's meaning. Consider, for example, Margaret Carlson's column in *Time*, "Muzzle the B Word": "Why," she puzzles, "should women be reduced to animals in heat?" In current slang, however, "bitch" has long been divorced from its literal, "doggy" meaning; a "bitch" is, rather, "a malicious, unpleasant, selfish woman, esp. one who stops at nothing to reach her goal" (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*). Rather than achieve her ends through honest and direct action, the bitch employs indirect tactics, such as whining, griping, or resorting to guile, e.g., urging a confidence she has no intention of keeping by saying, "Just whisper it to me." The insult "bitch" is thus actually worse than Carlson suggests, as it goes beyond mere dehumanization to evoke specific qualities of character and motive; by focusing on the word's literal meaning, victim feminists evade the more serious charge at the heart of the insult. To them, words matter more than deeds: instead of inquiring about the accuracy of the charge (is she a bitch?), victim feminists focus on the breach of etiquette (how *mean* he

is to say so!).

Carlson deems "bitch" the "epithet of choice against uppity women . . . a reminder that women have not come such a long way." She claims that "there is no equivalent epithet about men. Bastard and son of a bitch have less sting, in part because society expects—and rewards—toughness in men." This same point was made by Barbara Ehrenreich, again in *Time* (apparently, calling you-know-who a "bitch" really yanked the chain of somebody at *Time*). Ehrenreich agreed with Carlson that neither "bastard" nor "s.o.b." has "anything like the force of bitch. The meanest things you can say about a man boil down to attacks on a woman: the mother insult, implying sub-human status and morals—and men can experience its sting only indirectly, at a generation's remove."

A similar point was made by Leona Helmsley on the *Sally Jessy Raphael* show: "When a man loses his temper, he is aggressive; I'm a pushy bitch. . . . Were I a man, I would be termed an 'excellent executive.'" Ironically, a few minutes later, Mrs. Helmsley blamed her tax problems on her employees, apparently unaware that an "excellent executive" hires competent help, supervises their work, avoids publicly criticizing them, and takes responsibility for their actions.

Contrary to the assumption of Carlson, Ehrenreich, and Helmsley, a man who fires an employee on Christmas Eve for a minor infraction (as Helmsley did) would not be considered an "excellent

executive"; rather, he would be called a "bastard" or a "son of a bitch," which are terms of derision, not respect. Like "bitch," these terms indicate character defects involving a profound lack of human decency. Perhaps "bastard" and "son of a bitch" have "less sting" for Carlson and Ehrenreich because each knows these terms cannot be applied to her. (Among Dave Letterman's "Top 10 Good Things about Leona Helmsley" was: "Knows the first name of each of the hundreds of employees she arbitrarily fired.") While it is true that "bastard" and "s.o.b." attack a woman, the attack is launched *in addition to*, not *in place of*, the attack on the man; few men consider it more pleasant to have their mother insulted along with them than to be insulted alone. "Bastard" and "s.o.b." are also more offensive than "bitch" because they suggest inherent defects, whereas "bitch" alludes merely to the behavioral: one is a bastard by chance, but a bitch by choice.

How can you tell a bitch from a strong woman? Bitches bully others while simultaneously claiming victim status. Consider Madonna (whom David Koresh, by the way, called "the ultimate woman"): as a guest on David Letterman's show, she uttered a cable-only expletive 14 times and indulged in dull and vulgar dithering. When the American public was not charmed by her antics, Madonna whined that her failed performance was *Letterman's* fault, as "he knew all along what [she] was going to do," and that she was "being punished for being a single female, for having power."

Or consider Roseanne, America's most beloved bitch—at least while her bitchiness was a comic persona. Men and women alike laughed at her assertion that "If the kids are still alive when my husband comes home, I've done my job," or how she and her husband found "birth control that really works: every night, before we go to bed, we spend an hour with our kids." Back then, Roseanne was able to laugh at herself, something bitches never do. Gradually, however, Roseanne's pseudo-bitchy persona became actualized, and the plots on her show are in danger of degenerating into self-pitying self-dramatization.

Bitches suffer competitively, their pain always greater, their problems more significant, than yours. Nowadays, Roseanne's humor often issues from ludicrous pronouncements, such as those found in her autobiography *My Lives*: "I have my first memory of being molested by my mother at age six months," or "I survived my childhood by birthing many separate identities to stand in for one another in times of great stress and fear."

Certainly, successful women are sometimes unfairly characterized as bitches. Clement Freud, for example, used to call Margaret Thatcher "Atilla the Hen," and Secretary of State George Shultz said that "If I were married to her, I'd be sure to have dinner ready when she got home." Mrs. Thatcher laughed at the clever cracks, smiled politely at the stupid ones, and focused her attentions on doing her job rather than on reinventing her image.

Contrary to Carlson, not all upwardly mobile women are called "bitches," nor are all those who refer to obnoxious women as "bitches" men. The term is used by both sexes, and it refers not to the degree of a woman's ambition but to the spirit informing it. Truly strong women worry about equal opportunity and equal pay, not about being called names by people they don't esteem. Strong women are too busy accomplishing things to dawdle over their press clippings, and too self-confident to suggest muzzling the "b" word, or any word at all.

Try making a list of ten epithets used to describe a hated boss: you will probably find that most such terms refer primarily to men. Perhaps in the future we will develop new, female-directed insults to identify women we don't like. Then, when another First Lady decides she's the "Co-President" and starts bossing around elected officials, we can say she's "a genuine H.R.C." And when a female journalist uses a cutesy "just between you and me" to broadcast a mother-son confidence, we can identify her as "a real Chung."

Laurie Morrow is a professor of English at Louisiana State University and 1993-1995 Salvatori Fellow of the Heritage Foundation.

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