

'Help the Earth'

**From Susan Chapp
Cave Junction**

To me a bleeding heart environmentalist is one who grieves over the harm they are doing to the Earth, but declines to accept their share of responsibility. Their sensitivities are so fine they need to be spared close proximity to the consequences of their own behavior.

We have moved through various ages — the Stone Age, the Iron Age, etc. We are now in the Metal and Plastic Age. There is no modern activity that does not involve the consumption of mineral, that does not involve mining. To hate mining is to hate ourselves.

There are three things I believe a person needs to do to help the Earth. They are not easy.

One is to consume less, at all times, in all ways.

The second is to cultivate friendly and harmonious relations with the producers of one's consumption. War only produces more war. It is the most wasteful and destructive way of doing things that I know of.

The third thing may be the hardest. You have to be sure the processes of production of your consumption take place close enough at hand so you can deal with the realities of the process and share the Earth's pain and destruction.

The person who carries on about how much they care — but who does not take responsibility for their consumption and who wants the processes of supply to take place somewhere else where they do not have to deal with them — is not offering the Earth very much.

A Letter To Environmentalists From A Small Western Gold Miner

Humans are natural scammers. We chug down the road of life dreaming of the free ride. We blow exhaust on everything behind us and are angry at the car in front for fouling the air and spoiling the view.

We live on earth that is clearcut, flattened, and paved for our convenience. We cocoon ourselves with floors, walls, insulation, carpets, drapes, glass, plastic, wires, pipes, ducts and mains; all of which have to be mined, logged, manufactured, transported and stored on more land that has been clearcut, flattened and sealed.

We spend most of our time in a relation of isolation and dominance. And wonder why we feel unexpressed. We measure success in terms of profit, in how much more we get than we give. And wonder why we feel diminished and belittled.

I have not been able to learn harmony from people. I am only able to learn it from the earth and the sky. Harmony is not the appreciation of nature during one's leisure time. It is the formation of a responsible material sustenance relationship that sustains the earth as much as it sustains oneself. I learn this relationship best as a small western gold miner.

Small because only small can move slowly and listen to the quiet voices of the earth. Large forms itself to the laws of money and equipment, and makes too much noise.

Western because that is where the public land is. Being owned by all of us is like being owned by no one. Ownership corrupts and diminishes both owner and owned.

Gold because of the spiritual quest in the miner's dream of gold.

Mining because it pursues the earth's secrets, and because of the 1872 Mining Law. This is the most extraordinary law I know of. It permits an independant, long-term, responsible material sustenance relationship with land one does not own. It provides absolute equality between rich and poor, large and small, materialist and non-materialist. I know of no other law which does this. Most laws enforce profit and prohibit harmony.

The 1872 Mining Law has been under attack since the day it was enacted. I believe it is through the magic connection of the earth itself that miners have so far successfully defended its essential aspects. If the miners of today fail to defend the spiritual freedom guaranteed by this law, we will have failed the earth, and I will be ashamed.

The two essential aspects of the 1872 Mining Law are the manner of filing a mining claim and the manner of holding a mining claim.

To file a claim, one must discover mineral. One does not have to find a lot of mineral. There simply has to be mineral there. One is not forced into largeness at the start.

To hold a claim, one must perform \$100 worth of assessment work annually. There are no rents, taxes or fees to pressure one toward size and profit, or to destroy the religious quality of the relationship. One is actually free to labor humbly in the vineyard.

Laws cannot guarantee good conduct. Only good intentions can do that. Are you an environmentalist? Do you care about the world? Do you believe there is a better way to mine than we are doing today? Then become a miner and show us the way. Share your awareness in a positive manner. We need your help. Set an example. Be kind.

Susan Chapp
Cave Junction, Oregon
January 1991



Mining

This is the year of the big crunch. This is the year we sink or swim. We have the Bumper and Rahall bills and the \$100 annual assessment budget request on the federal level. On the state level we have HB 2346 to impose a tax on gold extraction and SJM-1 urging Congress to reform the 1872 Mining Law. The BLM and FS are moving to withdraw further vast areas of public land from mineral entry.

We small miners are little Davids. All we have is our slingshots and the 1872 Mining Law.

In defending our right to be small we are defending the right of people everywhere to be small. In being small we are defending the earth. We produce a steady flow of mineral with a maximum of personal interaction and a minimum of impact, and we leave some for the future.

Biological diversity is a very big thing today. A senator and representative from the state of New York have introduced a bill to require biological diversity. The small miner fills the people niche filled by the mosses, lichens and ferns in the plant world. We are the earth's true defense against large mining. If we fill the space, then they do not.

We already pay normal taxes. Loggers and ranchers pay extra because they are buying a known product that is already laid out. We explore and develop at our own expense. We are not subsidized and we do not collect unemployment. We are low-impact and require a minimum of regulation. We tend to make very little profit precisely because we are low-impact. To isolate us for special extra taxation is unjust, punitive and destructive in the end of the environment.

We already have laws instructing the government to supervise for environmental mining. And that about peaks the usefulness of the law. You cannot force people to be good by passing more and more laws. Today's challenge lies in personal growth and fruitful relations.

The environmentalists need to cultivate an awareness of their own destructive effects. In the classic addict pattern, they are sure the consequences of their own material consumption must be someone else's fault.

The Eastern Oregon Miners Association are asking us to support a bill to form a commission to study the situation. There would be no amendments to the existing mining location law until the commission reports its findings and recommendations to Congress. This is an excellent idea. Given a little time the environmentalists should calm down some on the anti-miner fit they are throwing, come to terms a bit with their own responsibilities, and stop trying to throw out the baby and keep the bath water.

Any changes to be made in a law as wise, rational and enduring as the 1872 Mining Law should be done in a calm and unhurried manner.

Annual elections will be held at the May meeting. Only paid-up members qualify to vote. \$10.00 a person, \$12.50 a couple. Starting in June, newsletters will only be mailed to paid-up members and courtesy mailings.

Gerald R. MacLeod, District Fish Biologist, Southwest Region, Oregon Department of Fish and Game, will be speaker at a public meeting sponsored by the Waldo Mining District to be held Monday, April 15th at the Pizza Deli at 7:00 PM. He will explain the federal procedure for classifying endangered species, and tell us how we can make our input. At the March WMD meeting, public invited, we will put together a further list of questions and subjects to be covered.

The March meeting will be held Wednesday, March 20, 1991, at 7:00 PM at the County Building, Cave Junction.

Susan Chapp, Secretary

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