

'Green' Bush insulting to activists

Bush policies continue to be detrimental to environmental health.

This week's celebration of Earth Day was met by the usual presidential photo-ops (look, George W. Bush in the Adirondacks!) as well as a deluge of protests from environmental

Kat Spangler
STUDENT COLUMNIST

advocates declaring that Bush is allowing the environment to go to hell in a hand-basket.

For example, Friends of the Earth, the largest international network of environmental groups, ran full-page newspaper ads accusing Bush of putting the earth up for sale.

Eric Schaeffer, who quit last month as the chief of civil enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency gives a scathing indictment of the Bush administration in his letter of resignation, saying the EPA was "fighting a White House that seems determined to weaken the rules we are trying to enforce."

The *New York Times* ran a column by former vice president Al Gore that minced no words, saying, "On the environment, this administration has consistently sold out America's future in return for short-term political gains."

So, is Bush really bedding the energy industry while leaving the environment out in the cold, or is that just tired political rhetoric from a defeated candidate and tree huggers, as many a White House spokesman would have us believe?

The facts speak for themselves. In February, Bush proposed his "Clear Skies" plan, which replaces regulations of power-plant pollutants with a "cap and trade" system that sets mandatory caps for emissions reductions but lets industry decide how to meet them. Environmentalists say Clear Skies is so weak it would be preferable to stick with existing law. On the same day as the Clear Skies proposal, Bush also introduced his "new approach" to global warming.

Requirements for industry to report its carbon dioxide output were conspicuously absent, however, and industry compliance with the law was also voluntary. I wonder, if a law only asks voluntary cooperation, is it still a law?

In late March, Bush announced that the United States would be trashing the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement on stopping climate change, because of the cost to U.S. businesses on the reduction of emissions.

Documents released by the Energy Department in early April show that officials gave 11 environmental groups a meager 48 hours to submit proposals for consideration in Vice President Dick Cheney's 2001 energy report, while industry lobbyists were given

Mr. President, you insult your constituents when you declare that "for (Laura and I), every day is Earth Day." You can't paint yourself green once a year and expect that after a while, we won't come to resent being lied to. Don't allow the issue of the environment to sink deeper into the chasm of partisan politics.

dozens of meetings over several months.

During the debacle over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Congress, the White House remained in favor of drilling, despite evidence of inevitable damage to the environment and flat contradictions of many of Bush's arguments for drilling in the first place.

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton went so far as to distribute an oil-industry produced video depicting ANWR as a frozen tundra, ripe for exploration.

In early April, a U.S. environmental group was leaked a memo to the White House from fuel giant ExxonMobil asking the United States to remove the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Robert Watson.

Indeed, after intense lobbying, government representatives voted last week to replace Watson, one of the most outspoken scientists on the issue of climate change, with engineer and scientist Rajendra Pachauri, whom environmentalists fear will not be as strong an advocate for change in global energy policies as Watson.

Perhaps we have all just been kidding ourselves if we ever believed that two oilmen could impartially regulate the country's environmental and energy policies. That's like electing Timothy Leary president and then being surprised when he wants to make LSD legal.

We're also kidding ourselves if we think that these votes are not being bought and sold right under our noses. For example, the senators who voted against a measure to raise fuel economy standards received an average of \$18,000 from the auto industry, more than three times the amount received by senators who supported it. And guess who received the most auto dollars of all? Bush.

Bush has shown that he is willing to enforce protections for the environment when there is political incentive. He stepped up to the plate and supported a ban on off-road vehicles in Florida's Big Cypress Park and approved an \$8 billion plan to restore the Everglades to give his brother Jeb some street credibility with the green voters who could ultimately decide Florida's gubernatorial election.

However, Bush is letting the off-road vehicles stay in Yellowstone National Park (apparently, keeping tourism money flowing into Wyoming takes precedence).

Norton has said the two cases are "like apples and oranges,"

and pointed out that snowmobiling in Yellowstone would be allowed only on snowed-over, paved roads, but her argument doesn't have a leg to stand on.

A 2000 study conducted by the Colorado School of Mines found "an unnatural level of pollution" above the snowmobile route in the Maroon Creek Valley in central Colorado. On windless days in Yellowstone, a haze of pollution is visible.

Park workers have experienced sore throats, runny noses and burning eyes because of pollution; now fresh air is being pumped into their enclosed kiosks and the National Park Service is providing respirators for workers.

Imagine - even in a national park the air isn't clean enough for us to breathe! It's almost as ironic as wanting to drill for oil in a wildlife refuge!

What I don't understand is why the Bush administration is so committed to maintaining the status quo of dependence on the fossil fuel trinity of coal, oil and gas, with byproducts like environmental destruction and dependence upon unreliable foreign sources.

Some countries like Norway are already using alternative sources of energy such as hydroelectric power. A cleaner, more responsible future can be built upon renewable energy sources like solar power, wind and wave energy and crops grown for fuel.

The Sierra Club is encouraging the use of wind and solar power for 20 percent of the nation's energy by 2020, but Cheney is holding fast at 2.8 percent (by the by, he also wants \$33 billion in subsidies for the energy industry, including \$13 billion for oil and \$2 billion for coal).

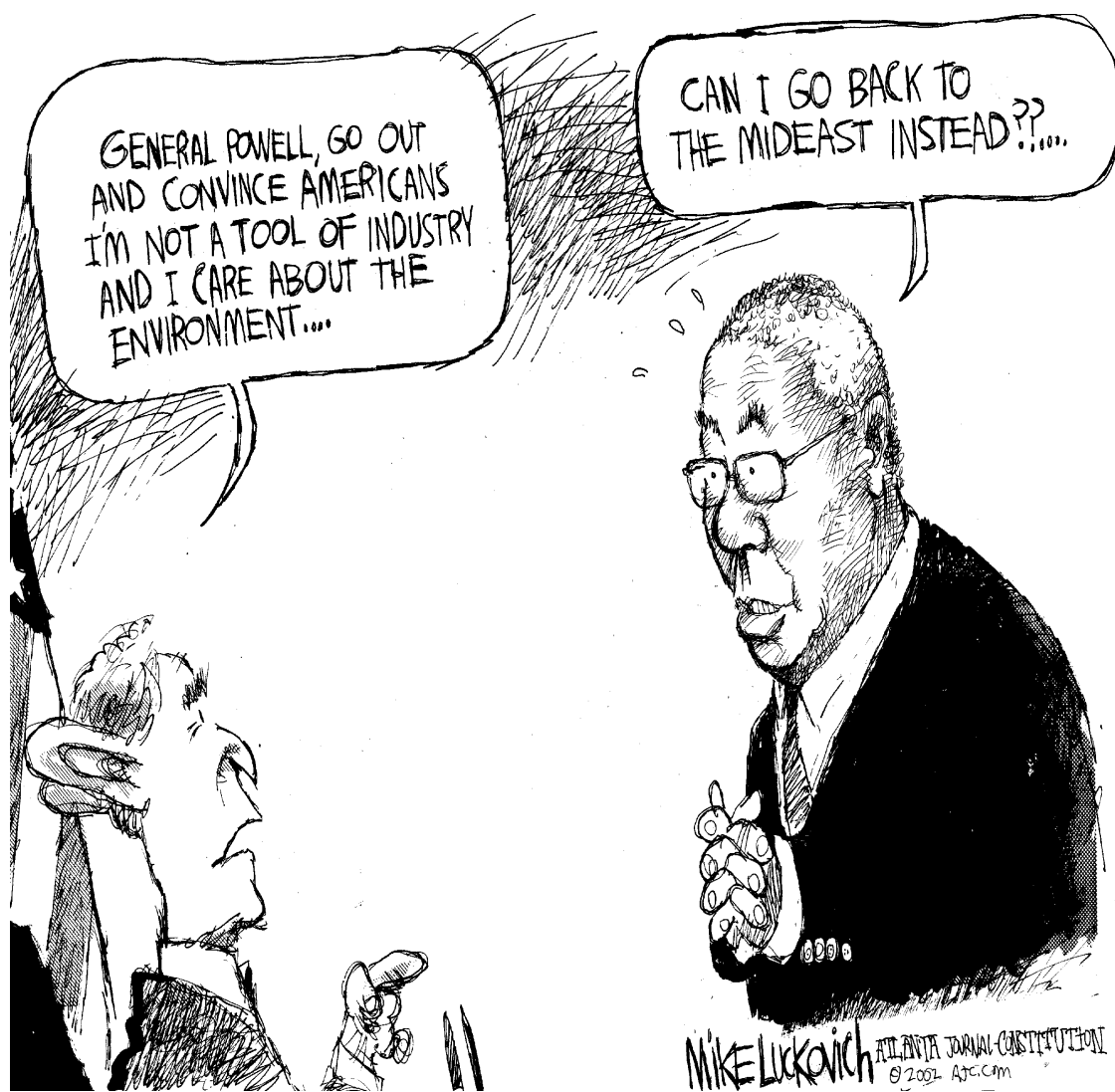
Mr. President, you insult your constituents when you declare that "for (Laura and I), every day is Earth Day." You can't paint yourself green once a year and expect that after a while, we won't come to resent being lied to.

Don't allow the issue of the environment to sink deeper into the chasm of partisan politics. Recognize that economic growth and environmental stewardship both require change: change in our sources of energy, change in the American lifestyle, perhaps even change in your personal priorities.

Remember that your stay in the White House is fleeting (thank God), but your damage to the environment can last generations. Go hiking on a mountain overlooking Los Angeles like I did this summer and look at the cloud of smog that covers the city.

Come down to my place in Georgia and look at the millions of cars that are belching exhaust into the air every day and the pine forests that are being cleared to make room for more identical subdivisions, more identical shopping malls.

We don't need another photograph of you standing in front of a snowy forest or your empty words about environmental stewardship - we need you to do your job and protect our planet.



Heavy metal stuck 'down in a hole' on campus

The heavy metal subculture is giving way to more mainstream music groups.

One Wednesday night a couple of years ago, I was up in the *Old Gold and Black* office with a few editors, staring at a photograph of a construction worker standing in a hole outside Calloway Hall.

The photograph needed a "kicker," which

Jay Cridlin

STUDENT COLUMNIST

is newspaper slang for the title that goes underneath a picture; it's sort of like a headline for the photo caption.

"How about 'Down in a hole'?" I offered.

A few seconds of silence.

"Our Alice in Chains fans on campus will appreciate it," I said.

We went with "Down in a hole" - the title of a 1992 song by that now-defunct grunge outfit - but you know what? I think I might have been the only one who fully appreciated it. Not just in the newsroom - on the entire campus.

Obviously, I bring this up because of the death last week of Alice in Chains singer Layne Staley.

I'm not the world's biggest Alice in Chains fan, though I very much enjoy their music, and I certainly recognize their influence and talent. Of the four Seattle bands who broke big in the early 1990s - along with Nirvana, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden - Alice in Chains probably got the least love from the music world, largely because of the darker, sludgier sound they ground out.

They still haven't received the respect they deserved. Can you believe this band, with all its inner demons, drug abuse and infighting, has never been featured in its own episode of *Behind the Music*?

But I digress. As I wrote a few paragraphs up, there may not have been many students on campus who really *got* the kicker.

I wouldn't consider myself a huge heavy metal fan. But after four years, I've come to realize that there simply aren't any huge heavy metal fans on campus.

I'm not quite sure why this strikes me as odd, but when you think about it for a minute, it really is. Wake Forest students are fans of diverse artists from Kid A to Jay-Z, from Abba to Zappa, from George Clinton to Clint Black to Black Flag. But tell me, when's the last time you rubbed shoulders with a dude wearing a Cannibal Corpse T-shirt?

Sure, a number of students - myself included - may own albums by System of a Down, Linkin Park, Andrew W.K. or Rage Against The Machine, but the roots of these artists reach as deeply into rap, funk, industrial and goth as they do into heavy metal.

(And I am aware that for all their raw heaviness, Alice in Chains was much more grunge than metal, and remarkably melodic to boot. But they still shunned the punk sensibilities held in esteem by their grunge brethren in favor of a more Black Sabbath-like heavy sound.)

I'm not alone on my theory. Ziggy's owner Jay Stephens said that Winston-Salem has a strong heavy metal scene, but when a hard rock or metal band takes

We - and when I say "we," I mean both "we as a society" and "we as a campus" - like to fit in with the rest of the cultural world. I think it's funny how we all enjoy listening to Daft Punk and Outkast, when in fact very few of us actually are daft punks or outcasts.

Heavy metal is, in a lot of ways, a reincarnation of punk, simply because it's no longer cool to like.

the Ziggy's stage, attendance by Wake Forest students virtually drops off the charts.

Three hard rock/heavy metal bands played at Ziggy's during this past week - Kittie, Prong and the Alice-influenced Sevendust - and Stephens said Wake students were nowhere to be seen.

Stephens said Wake students really come out only for shows by pop artists like Athenaeum or Edwin McCain or crossover hard-rock acts like 311 or 2 Skinnee J's.

"I think Wake Forest is kind of a socialite kind of place - if more than one kid goes there, they're all going to go there," he said. "People that listen to metal tend to be more independent, not really group-oriented. I think that may have something to do with it."

The perception that you are a heavy metal fan does, I think, carry with it a stigma not normally associated with Wake Forest students.

For example, this year, WAKE Radio has seen an explosion in the number of DJ's it employs, and while some shows feature emo or punk music, there are no shows geared toward metalheads. There simply isn't an audience base to support one. But at Guilford College in Greensboro, the student-run station WQFS - which is consistently cited as one of the top college radio stations in the country - has a fairly high metal quotient in its daily rotation.

General manager Michela Maxwell said that a handful of DJ's have their own metal-based shows each week.

We - and when I say "we," I mean both "we as a society" and "we as a campus" - like to fit in with the rest of the cultural world. I think it's funny how we all enjoy listening to Daft Punk and Outkast, when in fact very few of us actually are daft punks or outcasts.

Heavy metal is, in a lot of ways, a reincarnation of punk, simply because it's no longer cool to like. It scores the day-to-day lives of many of America's societal rejects, just as three-chord punk did in the early days of the Ramones.

People who "don't fit in" have always sought shelter in their music. Heck, maybe this was the case with Layne Staley. Maybe his passion for his music was the only thing that kept him alive even this long.

On the morning of the day that Staley was found dead in his apartment, I was actually flipping through the Alice in Chains rack at Best Buy. I hadn't heard a thing about Staley's death. I had just been listening to a lot of Alice recently, and I was thinking about picking up their *Greatest Hits* album.

It was a strange, eerie coincidence. Musical diversity is a wonderful thing, and Layne Staley and Alice in Chains brought a little of that to the landscape of mainstream modern rock.

I know there are some closet Alice in Chains fans out there. Do me a favor. Pull out some flannel, for nostalgia's sake. Call up a radio station and request "Down In A Hole." And for about five minutes or so, let your inner rocker have his moment in the sun.

