

*Finally  
met a  
greenie*

**A**fter all these years of reading and writing about “eco-warriors” — the nameless and faceless foot soldiers who fill the ranks of the green legions, I finally got to meet one. Well, sort of meet one. I never did get his name, but I won’t soon forget him.

Jerry Redden and I had met for a drink and a bite to eat at a local waterfront restaurant and overheard our zealous “greenie” chatting with the barmaid

between his duties bussing tables (I highly suspect the barmaid was of similar generation, but she just listened and kept her thoughts to herself while Jerry and I debated the young zealot, probably worried that her tip would be compromised.) We intruded into their conversation — or more precisely, his dissertation — when he began haranguing pesticide use on lawns.

From there our debate shifted to golf courses and groundwater, organic produce and natural vs. synthetic toxins, insect-borne diseases, the economics of environmentalism, population and growth, and several other topics, culminating in his summation of the many things he personally did to help preserve and protect the environment.

For his early age (early 20s), he was fairly knowledgeable, but only with the one-sided and all too familiar

propaganda from the major environmental organizations. Dissenting opinions were not considered — he believed what he wanted to believe and everyone else was lying and corrupt. Scientists were bought off. The EPA always compromised and did little to affect necessary changes. Business cares for nothing but profits.

When I tried explaining the ever-increasing high cost of environmental regulation and its strangling effects on the economy and people’s income, he shrugged that off with the rejoinder that “People who can’t afford it need to get better-paying jobs.” When Jerry talked about the lives saved from the use of pesticides punctuated with examples of bodies lying along the side of the road in underdeveloped parts of the world without access to pesticides, he replied, “So! Maybe we need more dead bodies lying along the road to help save this planet.”

That cold and callous remark made my blood boil at him and all the other greenies that show such concern for other species but little to none for their own. How can anyone look at another human being without some compassion, but instead, evaluate their life against a measure of their use of the earth’s resources?

How arrogant to judge themselves so deserving and worthy of life on this planet while those who don’t think and act similarly are unworthy.

Aren’t humans worthy of an effort to educate them to environmental

**Mark My Words**



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awareness? Wouldn't our dollars be better spent on this education, and on population-control measures, rather than being wasted on environmental legislation that does little or nothing for the environment, but strangles the economy? I wanted to punch the young punk out!

He was young. He was cynical. He was passionate. He was a fanatic. Passion without compassion. Though all involved in the environmental movement are not fanatics, this "elitist" attitude seems to be held by quite a few. How a movement founded on concern and compassion for living things produces adherents without concern or compassion for human beings is beyond me.

Maybe all of us have a limit to our compassion, and we have to pick and choose the objects of our care and concern. The Information Age brings the world's problems to our doorstep on a daily basis, and we just can't deal with it all. Maybe a shift from traditional reli-

gious values has made us less tolerant of others and their beliefs. Whatever the reason, it does seem like society is divided into warring camps on so many issues, with too many fanatics and too little tolerance (myself included for wanting to punch out the young Captain Planet). Fanaticism always seems to lead to conflict and violence.

The point of this article is to emphasize that there are extremists flying the environmental banner — I have finally met one face-to-face rather than just read about them — and our first reaction may be that we need to fight fire with fire. After calmer reflection and deliberation, I realize that what is needed is a continued effective, intelligent, and resolute response, gambling on the Silent Majority's ability to apply a little commonsense and logic to environmental concerns if they are given both sides of an issue.

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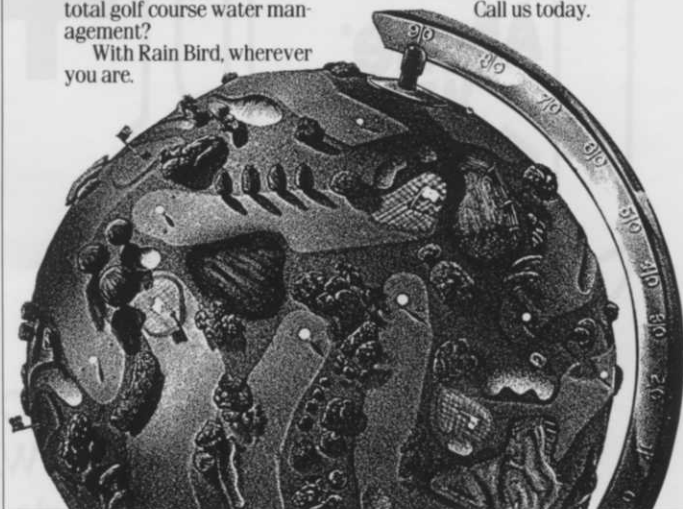
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