

# SPAN

State PIRG Alumni Network

State PIRG Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2005

## Student PIRGs Work For Affordable Higher Ed

**Chris Lindstrom and campus organizers campaign to strengthen student loan programs**

This fall, the PIRG student chapters have launched a national field effort to increase aid for higher education.

Alumnus **Bob Shireman's** Institute for College Access & Success, with the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts, has partnered with the PIRGs to shine a spotlight on the country's dire need for a higher education system that doesn't break the financial backs of students.

In the last year, tuition at four-year public institutions increased 10.5 percent while state and federal aid significantly decreased.

It's no wonder the average student debt burden, currently at \$17,500, is rising. To make matters worse Congress is in the midst of cutting \$14 billion out of student loan programs.

**Chris Lindstrom**, the state PIRGs' new Higher Education Project program director, is working with campus organizers and a new cadre of campus field organizers to mobilize college students to preserve federal student loan programs.

In addition to working at our established campus chapters,

campus field organizers—like **Erin Eccleston** and **LeighAnne Cole**—are working in Arizona, Iowa, Wyoming, Idaho, Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maine.

Organizers will be documenting personal examples of student debt burden and publicizing their findings online and in the news to demonstrate the severity of the problem.

The campaign strives to move the debate away from the loan industry's facts and figures and to focus on the real names and faces of students affected by college debt.

Students must speak up now before the problem gets worse.

Proposed solutions include: expanding federal grant aid; expanding loan refinancing options for student borrowers; creating loan forgiveness for students who choose careers in the "helping" professions; and linking loan repayment to income after college to make repayment more manageable.

For more information on the campaign, check out: [www.pirg.org/highered](http://www.pirg.org/highered). ■



*The Student PIRGs' Chris Lindstrom and the United States Student Association's Jasmine Harris work with students to stop the raid on student aid.*

## In this issue . . .

### **Arctic Refuge Action Day . . . pg 2**

Thousands converged in D.C. to oppose drilling in the Refuge.

### **Halting Predatory Lending in New Mexico . . . pg 2**

NMPIRG teamed up with the Attorney General to fight payday loans.

### **Featured Alumna Shannon Raborn . . . pg 3**

She is Southern Nevada Regional Deputy Director for Sen. Harry Reid.

### **Alumni Socials . . . pg 6**

Portland, Seattle and Boston hold alumni socials.

### **Alumni Achievement Award Winner Ed Lloyd . . . pg 7**

PIRG honors a pioneer in environmental litigation.

## Campaign Highlights

### Thousands Converge For Arctic Refuge Action Day

Thousands of activists from across the country, including at least 350 PIRG members, alumni and staff, gathered at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday, Sept. 20 for Arctic Refuge Action Day.

The day was organized to push Congress to protect the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas drilling.

The Arctic Refuge is one of America's last wild places and provides habitat to hundreds of animal species and vital tribal lands to the Native Gwich'in people.

U.S.PIRG's **Athan Manuel**, **Sam Goldman**, and **Rose Garr** worked with a large coalition, including **Tyler Edgar** (Green Corps '05) of the Alaska Wilderness League to organize bus

loads of activists to attend the rally and lobby day.

Following the rally on the Capitol's west lawn, participants swarmed House and Senate office buildings to lobby their members of Congress to protect this critical area. The rally was a successful demonstration of America's support for protecting the Arctic Refuge.

### OSPIRG's Campaign For Clean Cars In High Gear

In a victory for OSPIRG's **Mo Kirk**, **Jeremiah Baumann**, **Laura Etherton** and the entire Clean Cars For Oregon campaign, Gov. Ted Kulongoski vetoed an auto industry-supported provision to a budget bill that would have blocked the Clean Cars program.

The state's Clean Cars program will cut emissions of global warming pollution from cars and light trucks and require automakers to sell a minimum number of advanced technology vehicles, such as hybrids.

Gov. Kulongoski has pledged to make Oregon the ninth state to adopt the standards. When the governor announced his veto, he also instructed state agencies to begin preparing to issue regulations putting the Clean



**Gov. Kulongoski, with OSPIRG's Mo Kirk, announces his support for the Clean Cars Program.**

Cars program in place—the announcement OSPIRG has been urging him to make.

“The Legislature caved in to the auto industry, but the governor moved to make Oregon a national leader in the fight against global warming,” said **Jeremiah Baumann**, OSPIRG's clean energy advocate.

The state's Environmental Quality Commission will vote in December on whether to implement the program. Unfortunately, the auto industry has filed a lawsuit challenging the governor's veto and is now threatening a ballot measure to block the program.

OSPIRG welcomes Program Associate **Isaac Silverman** as he joins Jeremiah in running the Clean Cars for Oregon campaign, which is the fall campaign for the OSPIRG canvass and Telephone Outreach Project.

OSPIRG is firing on all pistons to make sure the Clean Cars program is enacted in Oregon.

### Attorney General, NMPIRG Oppose Predatory Lending

In September, New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid called NMPIRG Director Jeanne Bassett and invited NMPIRG and other consumer partners to discuss predatory lending by the payday loan industry.

At the meeting Madrid announced tough new protections and credited NMPIRG with bringing the issue to her attention.

New Mexico is one of the poorest states in the country and many of the state's working people need access to credit to make ends meet. Payday lenders take advantage of this by charging an average of 508 percent APR for a short term \$300 loan.

Bassett is working to end abusive lending and cap interest at 36 percent. **R.J. Prushnok**, former NMPIRG consumer advocate, launched this campaign during his years in New Mexico. ■



**U.S.PIRG's Rose Garr with volunteers at the Arctic Day of Action.**

## Alumni Profiles

# Shannon Raborn: New Job With Sen. Harry Reid

Some people find it hard to believe that alumna Shannon Raborn, the outdoors enthusiast, is living in Las Vegas. But the neon lights and slot machines are surrounded by some of the country's most amazing public lands, which she explores with her 4-year-old golden retriever, Sage.

Shannon recently moved to Vegas to take the Southern Nevada Regional Deputy Director post for U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, where she continues to work on environmental, public lands, growth and transportation issues. During

the 2004 election, Shannon ran the field effort for the Democratic Coordinated Campaign in northern Nevada to help re-elect Sen. Reid.

Shannon spent most of her PIRG career working with MASSPIRG as a campus organizer at Salem State College and an assistant organizing director.

She has fond memories of the campaigns she worked on in Massachusetts including the 1992 recycling initiative, the 1992 toxics initiative and the MASSPIRG fee bill. In 1995 she

shipped out to California to be a field organizer for CALPIRG's Proposition 212; she worked in San Diego County and still shares war stories with alumni **Jon Golinger** and **Bill Thiele**.

Immediately following her work with the PIRGs, Shannon took some time to hike the Appalachian Trail and then moved out to Lake Tahoe to work for the Tahoe Rim Trail, a nonprofit recreational use organization.

During her five and a half years with them, she helped to complete a 20-year project to build



**Shannon Raborn**

the 165 mile stretch of trail that runs along the ridge tops of Lake Tahoe.

Prior to her new job, she was working with alumna **Joanie Clayburgh** at the Sierra Nevada Alliance as the organization's Lands Coordinator.

To contact Shannon, e-mail her at: [scraborn@aol.com](mailto:scraborn@aol.com). ■



**Jeffrey Tufenkian enjoying his move to Armenia.**

# Jeffrey Tufenkian: In Armenia

This spring Jeffrey Tufenkian (formerly Jeff Francis) and his organization were key participants in an unprecedented victory to save the last unspoiled forest of his ancestral homeland of Armenia.

Through a coordinated campaign, Jeffrey and his colleagues were able to convince the Armenian government to reroute a proposed highway so as not to cut a unique and precious nature reserve in half.

This development would have destroyed hundreds of thousands of trees and further threatened

endangered species such as the Persian leopard, Grey Bear and the Armenian Mouflon.

Jeffrey moved to Armenia in February 2003 to fight for these environmental victories. He is currently the president and cofounder of Armenian Forests NGO.

His group works to stop the illegal cutting of forests through public pressure, stronger policy, enforcement, coalition building and media advocacy. They also conduct hands-on reforestation projects which hire community members to plant, care for and

protect forests. In the last three years they have restored approximately 560,000 trees on 375 hectares (approx. 926 acres) of land.

Jeffrey joined the PIRG staff in 1985 as an OSPIRG campus organizer. He then went on to direct canvasses in Denver and the Midwest and direct the Midwest TOP in Chicago, before moving back to the west coast as CALPIRG's consumer program director based in San Diego.

Some of Jeffrey favorite memo-

**Continued on page 5**



Alumna **Teri Olle** (CALPIRG) and John Comerford welcomed their new daughter, Roxanne Olle Comerford, on Sept. 22.



Theo Wolfgang Kuehn, born July 15 to alumni **Roland Kuehn** (COPIRG) and **Kim Nelson** (MASSPIRG).

## Alumni Updates

### Weddings & Babies

**Kirpal Singh**, former canvass director, and his wife, Sara, were married on June 25. **Eileen Brancale**, former MaryPIRG campus organizer, was recently married to Steve Farmer. **Krista Delaplane**, former canvass director and direct mail assistant, and Carrie Weikel were wed by Vermont Civil Union on August 6. Krista currently works for the Brattleboro Food Coop.

**Leslie Drozen Knight**, former INPIRG campus organizer, is a newlywed; she and her husband, Andy, are both teachers in the Boston area. **Avalyn Taylor**, former OSPIRG associate, was married to Corey Cartwright in September.

**Elke Sporseen**, former CALPIRG canvass director, and Kenny Betonte are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Gianna Annemarie on Oct. 1.

### Movers & shakers

**Larry Eason**, former national canvass director and partnership program director, was recently awarded the Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet's 2005 Golden Dot award for Best Statewide Internet Campaign. The award was for Larry's work developing and directing the online presence for the YesOn63.org campaign—a successful ballot measure that will add \$1 billion per year in funding for mental health services in California. The measure was approved by voters in November 2004.

**Ray "RJ" Prushnok**, former NMPIRG consumer advocate, is currently the special assistant to the Office of the Secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. **Nora Rubel**, former NJPIRG student, recently joined the faculty at Connecticut College in the Department of Religious Studies. **Mike Leone**,

former MASSPIRG campus organizer and long-time staffer at Green Century Capital Management and Ecopledge, is working for SEIU in Harrisburg, PA.

**Daniel Rosenberg**, former USPIRG advocate, recently started working in the office of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (NJ). **Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong**, former TOP caller and OSPIRG organizer, is the Policy Manager for Neighborhoods and Education in the mayor's office in Portland, OR.

**Daniel Engelhart**, former NJ Community Water Watch organizer, is currently lead organizer for nursing homes for SEIU in Pennsylvania. **Jason Shure**, former assistant to the Fund Associate Director, is working with Housing Works to organize a march through the Lincoln Tunnel as part of the Campaign to End AIDS' 21-day NYC to DC march. **Amy Temple**, former Arizona NVP director, is currently a lead organizer for California Common Cause and

recently launched a campaign for clean elections in San Diego. **Lauri Aunan**, former OSPIRG advocate, started as the new administrator for the Water Quality Division of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality on June 6.

**Page Albertson**, former NJ and MA campus organizer, is currently the Western Massachusetts Program Coordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

**Jeana Frazzini**, former canvass director, was recently spotted buying a hammock on an episode of TLC's Clean Sweep.

**Lyndsey Godwin**, former canvass director, is currently attending graduate school at Vanderbilt University. **Jeffrey Bean**, former Portland, OR canvasser, is working towards his MFA in creative writing in Alabama. **Derek Haskew**, former MASSPIRG energy advocate, says hello from London where he is working for a small family law firm. ■



Alumnus **Marc Osten** (MASSPIRG/CALPIRG), his wife **Colleen**, and kids **Daniel** and **Olivia** enjoying their two-year stay in Europe.

## Campaign News

### WISPIRG Works To Clean Up Waters

After three years of campaigning, new regulations to protect Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes from excessive development are moving forward.

WISPIRG began building support among property owners, recreational businesses and the public for stronger protections for Wisconsin's lakes after the Department of Natural Resources Board voted to send the rules out for public comment in May 2005.

Boating, fishing and swimming on many Wisconsin lakes are marred by huge algae blooms and fish kills due to overdevelopment. WISPIRG staff, led by field director **Bruce Speight**, successfully recruited hundreds of citizens to attend statewide hearings this past summer to demonstrate citizen support for stronger protections amid fierce opposition from realtors and developers.

Clean Water Associate **Eliza Simon** and all the WISPIRG staff are currently working to convince the Legislature to approve these rules and clean up Wisconsin's lakes. ■

### California Solar Roofs Bill Killed In Assembly

The Million Solar Roofs bill, the most expansive solar power policy ever considered in the U.S., was killed again by the California Assembly on Sept. 9.

The bill was derailed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee after three amendments, supported by two labor unions, were added to the bill.

"Not air pollution, nor blackouts, nor soaring energy costs were enough to elevate the Million Solar Roofs bill above the politics of the day," said **Bernadette Del Chiaro**, clean energy advocate for Environment California, who has worked on this bill for three years.



**Eliza Simon talks about the need for stronger protections for WI lakes.**

The Million Solar Roofs bill, supported by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and more than 200 cities, businesses and organizations throughout the state, aimed to build 3,000 megawatts of solar panels on 1 million roofs, including half of all new homes built in the state.

Solar advocates will now turn their attention to the Public Utilities Commission, which has the authority to establish a rebate program on its own.

For more information, visit [www.environmentcalifornia.org](http://www.environmentcalifornia.org). ■

## Aspen Countdown

If you haven't already booked your flight for the Aspen Shared Vacation, now is the time! We'll be celebrating our 21st year in Aspen and you don't want to miss it.

The week (Dec. 9-17) will be packed with a wide variety of events and activities that will ensure everyone—from couch potatoes to outdoor fanatics—will have an ideal vacation.

Here's a sampling of events:

- \* the Alumni Welcome Reception to reconnect alums;
- \* the annual Campus Organizer Breakfast cooked by our own **Andre Delattre**;
- \* Shakespeare in the Condo hosted by alumnus **Chris Chatto**;
- \* an Art Show & Sale hosted by alumnae **Kim Nelson** and **Carrie Doyle**;
- \* the Big Dinner at the St. Regis Hotel;
- \* the Fourth Annual Fun Run led by **Andy MacDonald**;
- \* the annual basketball tournament at the Aspen Club with veteran players **Doug Phelps**, **Gene Karpinski** and **Ed Mierzwinski**.
- \* And don't forget skiing on Ajax and hot tubbing at Cha-teau Roaring Fork.

For more information, check out [www.pirg.org/alumni](http://www.pirg.org/alumni) or contact Emily Francis at [alumni@pirg.org](mailto:alumni@pirg.org).

## Jeffrey Tufenkian (continued from page 3)

ries include driving to Aspen with **Bob Jenks** and **Cathy Duvall** in 1985; his first \$100-plus night canvassing as a new canvass director in Denver, CO with **Amy Simpson** as his trusty assistant-directing partner; and introducing the San Diego consumer office to its first fax machine and computer!

After leaving the PIRGs in 1992, Jeffrey continued working on

campaigns. He helped elect Lynn Shenk to Congress, worked briefly for Jerry Brown to explore a campaign finance initiative, and consulted on health, environment, human rights and animal protection issues.

Jeffrey also began a small nonprofit organization that produces WorldFest ([www.worldfestevents.com](http://www.worldfestevents.com)), which

still continues in LA. Since leaving the States, he has co-authored a book on hiking and rock climbing in Armenia, which was published last year.

For more information about Jeffrey's organization see: [www.ArmenianForests.am](http://www.ArmenianForests.am). You can contact him at [jeffrey@ArmenianForests.am](mailto:jeffrey@ArmenianForests.am). ■

# Alumni Socials

Over the past two months PIRG staff and alumni have connected at a few alumni socials.

First, OSPIRG's **Mo Kirk** and **Laura Etherton** hosted an alumni picnic on September 25 at Willamette Park in Portland.

**Chris Piuma** showed up with his homemade snickerdoodles and **Meg Rowe** brought an excellent roasted vegetable salad.

Thanks to all the host committee members and alumni who were able to attend the event.

The following weekend, **Edie Gilliss**, Green Corps class of '99, and **Zach Silk**, former Center for Campus Free Speech Organizer, hosted WASHPIRG's

## Staff And Alumni Meet Up In Portland, Seattle and Boston



Alumni **Angela Crowley-Koch**, **Eliza Jones**, **Lillie Jones** and **Chris Piuma** at the Portland alumni social in September.

alumni event in their new Seattle home.

Current state PIRG staffers **Wendy Wendlandt**, **Kimberly Larson** and **Megan Blanck-Weiss** were joined by former

PIRG staff and students spanning the years, including **Michael Gilbert**, former 1980s board chair, **Mike Mahoney**, former TOP director, and **Therese (Heliczer) Casper**, Green Corps class of '93.

Most recently, on Oct. 6, MASSPIRG and the alumni host committee welcomed alumni to the "new" MASSPIRG office for a casual office social.

Over 100 Boston area alumni and staff from across the country spent the evening catching up.

**Frank Gorke** updated the group on MASSPIRG's energy efficiency bill and **Rachel Heller** expressed her delight in living in a city with so many PIRG alumni who continue to engage in the public interest fight.

If you missed this event, keep your eyes peeled for the next get together.

You can view pictures from the events at [www.pirg.org/alumni/photos](http://www.pirg.org/alumni/photos). ■

## Current Career Opportunities with the State PIRGs and Affiliated Organizations

If you would like more information on these or other career opportunities, please visit [www.pirg.org/jobs/experienced](http://www.pirg.org/jobs/experienced) or call Amy Perry at (617) 747-4360.

### • Direct Mail Program Director, State PIRGs

Location: Boston, MA  
Oversee the PIRGs' in-house direct mail program, including consulting on fundraising campaigns and messages, editing and coordinating the production of appeals and other pieces, and developing

strategies for boosting the organization's membership through the mail.

### • National Consumer Program Coordinator, State PIRGs

Location: Denver, CO and Boston, MA  
Work with PIRG advocates nationwide to strengthen the PIRGs' consumer program by providing strategic and tactical assistance on campaign development and implementation.

### • Demographic and District Targeting Analyst, State PIRGs

Location: Washington, DC  
Collect and analyze data from the local, state and national levels on the electorate, voting records, and demographic trends, and use this information to recommend district targets and appropriate grassroots strategies for current PIRG legislative campaigns.

### • Communications Director, Environmental Action

Location: Boston, MA  
Promote Environmental Action's national environmental campaigns by crafting

messaging strategies for a variety of audiences, building relationships with reporters and editors, and generating state and national press coverage of key issues such as clean air.

### • Executive Director, WASHPIRG

Location: Seattle, WA  
Direct statewide campaigns, set policy priorities, build organizational influence in the state and oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization.

## Ed Lloyd: Alumni Achievement Award

The state PIRGs have always been staffed with good people who are smart, talented and have a passion for making the world a better place.

So it should come as no surprise that many of these wonderful and committed staff continue to advance the public good in their careers after PIRG.

To recognize alumni who have made important contributions to the public interest, the PIRGs have created the Alumni Achievement Award.

This year, we are proud to recognize **Ed Lloyd** for his pioneering role in environmental litigation.

To his friends, Ed is an inspirational, warm and supportive individual—and a senior environmental statesman in New Jersey.

To his opponents, Ed stands out as a hard-working and formidable strategist and litigator.

### An Enduring Legacy

After working as the staff attorney and executive director of NJPIRG from 1974 to 1983, Ed moved on to found the Environmental Law Clinic at Rutgers University, where he served as director for 15 years (1985-2000).

Ed built the clinic from the ground up, taking a tenuous idea and turning it into an enduring institution, without compromising its principles.

Ed saw an opportunity to train law students in environmental advocacy and give them real-world experience—while making New Jersey's environmental community more effective.

The idea worked—meaning the clinic had to be protected from attack during every annual university budget debate. Because of Ed, the clinic survived and prospered. Now it is a key part of the environmental landscape in New Jersey.

While at Rutgers, Ed launched a citizen litigation project with his colleagues at NJPIRG. Ed, clinic students, and supporting firms filed 53 lawsuits against polluting companies that were illegally dumping waste into waterways or blatantly violating their wastewater permits.

The suits, filed against companies like Exxon, Chevron and Georgia-Pacific, resulted in \$32 million in fines. As co-counsel on many of these cases, Ed helped win more Clean Water Act lawsuits than any other single organization, individual or government agency—including states and the EPA.

Ed's pioneering lawsuits continue to have an impact today. In 1991, Ed helped negotiate the founding of the Environmental Endowment for New Jersey with \$900,000 from a court settlement.



Ed Lloyd making headlines in 1989.

Today, the Endowment is the second largest New Jersey environmental giver and annually awards over \$400,000 in grants to state environmental organizations.

Ed also helped start the National Environmental Law Center, which continues to bring citizen suits against polluters to this day.

Ed currently serves as the Evan M. Frankel Clinical Professor in Environmental Law at Columbia Law School in New York. He lives with his wife, NJPIRG alumna **Janine Bauer**, and their son in South Orange.

Congratulations on receiving the Alumni Achievement Award for 2005, Ed! And thank you for all of your work! ■

### Do You Know These Alumni?

Thousands of individuals have worked with the PIRGs, the Fund and affiliated organizations as staff, canvassers, callers and students.

We'd like to stay in touch with every single one of them, but unfortunately we've lost track of some alumni and we need your help to find them.

Below are some names of "lost" alumni. For a longer list check out: [www.pirg.org/alumni/lostalumni.html](http://www.pirg.org/alumni/lostalumni.html). If you know how to reach these individuals, let us know by e-mailing [alumni@pirg.org](mailto:alumni@pirg.org) or calling 303.573.3871 x327.

- Dawn Abrams- FFPIR '96-'98
- Scott Anaya- FFPIR '94
- Suzanna Bartoldus- FFPIR '96
- Bonnie Berger- COPIRG '94
- Mike Brustad- Florida PIRG '98
- Kim Croffoot- OSPIRG '87-'93
- Ron Eckstein- NSCAHH
- Jonathan Guzzo- FFPIR '94
- Ellen Huffaker- OSPIRG '94
- Glenda Marshall- OSPIRG '98
- Priyanka Matthew- USPIRG '97
- Katie Reinisch- COPIRG '83
- Jeanne Stayer- USPIRG '90
- Julie Trupke -CALPIRG '94

## Save The Date

You're invited to an alumni social near you!  
Staff and alumni are organizing social events all across the U.S. this year.  
Check out the dates below.

For more details or to RSVP visit: [www.pirg.org/alumni/calendar.html](http://www.pirg.org/alumni/calendar.html).  
If you'd like to host a social event in your city, contact Emily Francis at [alumni@pirg.org](mailto:alumni@pirg.org).

**San Francisco, CA** **Nov. 12, 2005**  
*Contact Emily Rusch at [erusch@calpirg.org](mailto:erusch@calpirg.org) for information.*

**Madison, WI** **Nov. 15, 2005**  
*Contact Jen Giegerich at [jennifer@wispirg.org](mailto:jennifer@wispirg.org) for information.*

**Western Massachusetts** **Nov. 20, 2005**  
*Contact Tonya Sabo at [tsabo@masspirg.org](mailto:tsabo@masspirg.org) for information.*

**Aspen, CO** **Dec. 9-17, 2005**  
*Career alumni should save these dates for the Aspen Shared Vacation.*



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**MASSPIRG campus organizers from 1983 at the Boston social: Alumni Anne Collins & Nat Cary with FFPIR Planning Director Kirk Weinert.**

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