

RACHEL CARSON COUNCIL, INC.

An Association for the Integrity of the Environment

REPORT CARD - 2007

Contents:

I.	Milestones	p. 1
11.	RCC's Recent Contacts with Individuals	p. 4
III.	A Look at Thank You Letters We Received this Past Year	p. 5
IV.	Appreciation	p. 6

I. Milestones:

RACHEL CARSON'S CENTENNIAL YEAR – CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVALS:

This year marks the centennial of Rachel Carson's birth and the 45th anniversary of the publication of *Silent Spring*. The year has seen a renewed interest in Rachel Carson, her accomplishments, and her role in starting the modern environmental movement. Rachel Carson Council (RCC) has been a key player in informing the public about these topics. This has made for a very exciting and fulfilling year. Through participation in numerous outreach events, our staff and various Board Members met well over a thousand people. Highlights include the following:

- **RCC OPEN HOUSE:** On May 19th we celebrated the centennial of Rachel's birth at our annual Open House, held at Rachel Carson's former home in Silver Spring, Maryland. Over 250 people attended the open house (190 of whom signed our visitor's log). The Open House was co-ordinated with two other local events celebrating Rachel's Centennial: the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's annual trail walk on the nearby "Rachel Carson Greenway" and the week-long events sponsored by The US Geological Survey and the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Wildlife Visitors Center. We were listed on their agenda and they on ours. The featured speaker, at the Open House was Dr. Mark Lytle, of Bard College. He discussed his book, *The Gentle Subversive: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, and the Rise of the Environmental Movement*. Other speakers and their topics were: Dr. Luke Iwanowicz, Fish Biologist, USGS-BRD, "Contaminants and Intersex Fish in the Potomac," Mitch Baker, Horticulturalist, American Plant Food Company, "Successful Gardening without Chemicals," and Dr. Rolf Halden, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, "U.S. Environmental Quality 45 Years after the Publication of *Silent Spring*." Entertainment was provided by the musical duo Emma's Revolution. We also offered a children's program on insects. Organic treats were served.
- **FESTIVALS AND OTHER EVENTS:** This year RCC set up numerous displays at a wide range of public events.

- 1) **Co-op America's Green Festival** at the Washington, DC Convention Center in October was a two-day event drawing people from all over the East Coast. RCC had a constant stream of visitors stopping by our booth throughout this major environmental event.
 - 2) **Bird Festivals**
 - a) "Migratory Bird Day" at the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC, in May.
 - b) "Raptor Day" at the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Zoo in October.
 - 3) **The 3rd Annual Green Man Festival** in Greenbelt, Maryland in May.
 - 4) **RCC set up exhibits** at environmental fairs at several nearby churches. Also, we supplied materials for out of town events.
- **EVENTS IN COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:**
 - 1) **Exhibits:**
 - a) "*Awakening Nature's Voice*" an exhibit on Rachel Carson, sponsored by the historical division of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, was held at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster, Massachusetts from May 18th – Nov. 30th.
 - b) RCC joined with the Society of Woman Geographers to stage a Rachel Carson Centennial photographic exhibit, "*Rachel Carson: A Visionary Remembered in Photographs*," held at their headquarters in Washington, D.C. The exhibit was opened with a reception held on June 16, 2007. Priscilla Coit Murphy, author of *What a Book Can Do: The Publication and Reception of Silent Spring*, was the featured speaker. The exhibit ended in October.
 - 2) **RCC joined with the US Geological Survey and the US Fish and Wildlife Service** for their event, "Rachel Carson, Wildlife Management and Conservation: Where have we been, where are we now, where are we going?" in May, at the National Wildlife Visitor Center in Laurel, Maryland. Our Open House was planned in conjunction with this celebration of Rachel Carson.
 - 3) **RCC participated with the US Environmental Protection Agency** in a "Sense of Wonder" essay and photo exhibition contest. The winners were announced on June 15th.
 - 4) **RCC co-sponsored an educational event at The Silver Spring Boys and Girls Club.** This after-school program featured a presentation by Diana Post along with environmental songs by the musical duo Magpie. The children also made colorful posters about Rachel Carson's legacy.
 - 5) **RCC participated in the Rachel Carson Middle School's celebration** for Rachel Carson in May. We gave a power-point presentation and a trivia quiz on Rachel Carson. The students generated an impressive body of work honoring Rachel's centennial.
 - 6) **The Washington Ethical Society's Earth Ethics Committee** invited RCC to participate in their April 22nd tribute to Rachel Carson. Diana Post made a presentation. A portion of the Society's donations for the month of April was given to RCC.
 - **SCREENINGS OF THE 1963 DOCUMENTARY, "THE SILENT SPRING OF RACHEL CARSON:"**
 - 1) **The National Archives in Washington DC** hosted a screening in May. Diana Post, RCC President, was a panelist along with Roger Christie, Rachel Carson's adopted son.
 - 2) Dr. David Pimentel, RCC President Emeritus participated in a panel discussion / screening of the documentary at **The Department of the Interior Library** on September 11, 2007.

- **GROUPS OF VISITORS TOUR THE RACHEL CARSON HOUSE:** The Rachel Carson House in Silver Spring saw many visitors during 2007, including several small groups: One consisted of twenty students from a private school. Another was a group of local naturalists. A third, sponsored by *Welcome to Washington*, consisted of women from all over the world. RCC has put together a special tour program for these groups. These visitors are quite interested in the life of Rachel Carson, and have told us they greatly appreciate the high quality of our tours.

NEW RACHEL CARSON COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS – Work continues on the *Basic Guide to Pesticides Update* and on several new publications on important topics:

- **EXCITING BROCHURE ON RACHEL CARSON (enclosed):** This year, Rachel Carson Council created a lovely and informative, full-color brochure on Rachel Carson for her Centennial. This was conceived and developed as a means of providing a brief but accurate statement about Rachel and her impact on the environmental movement. It was introduced at the National Archives event in mid-May and has been featured at all subsequent RCC activities as well as events sponsored by our associates, and at some events abroad. In all, over ten-thousand Rachel Carson Centennial brochures have been distributed to the public so far this year, including students doing reports on Rachel Carson, and those viewing “The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson,” which we lease out for educational purposes.
- **“GREEN MANTLE™ INITIATIVE – May 2007 – 20 SUGGESTED GREEN PRACTICES:”** This timely and informative document addresses the topic of inaugurating green practices in a user-friendly manner. Three different action levels of intensity are provided for each of 20 “Areas of Action.” (Copies were included in a prior mailing. If you need a copy now, please let us know).
- **“A FAMILY ALERT:”** Children especially are being exposed, often unknowingly to a variety of hazardous chemicals in the home. This paper discusses “Twelve Chemicals to By-pass for a Healthy Family Home,” “Options for a Safer Home and Garden,” “Choices that Contribute to a Safer Earth,” and “Exciting Adventures for the Family and Other Alternatives to Toxic Toys.”
- **“DDT, POLITICAL PESTICIDE:”** A current look at the discussions on malaria control and DDT shows that proponents of the use of DDT generally overstate its merits while excluding adverse effects associated with its usage. Some refer to *Silent Spring* as “junk science” (see page 6 for origin of this term). Research reveals that DDT’s adverse effects are supported by current data and furthermore, additional adverse effects have been discovered since Rachel Carson’s day. An examination of the history of malaria control measures reveals that economic factors and the availability of more effective means of disease control were largely responsible for discontinuing the use of DDT. We recommend, as did Rachel Carson, that those affected by possible DDT usage be informed of all the facts affecting malaria control, so they can advocate for better malaria control measures.
- **RACHEL CARSON DISPLAY:** We also created a new three-panel display: “Rachel Carson: One of the 20th Century’s Greatest Minds.” It features 14 photographs of Rachel from our collection, biographical and bibliographical material, and information on her “sense of wonder.”

II. RCC Recent Contacts with Individuals:

Rachel Carson Council, Inc., had over 900 contacts with the public, by phone, letter or e-mail, during the year that began on November 1, 2006 and ended on October 31, 2007 – this was in addition to the 1,000 + we contacted through our outreach activities. Our RCC website received more than 25,000 hits and the Council staff and participating Board Members had contact with over one thousand people at the more than twenty events we took part in during the past 12 months.

A SAMPLING OF THE REQUESTS RCC ANSWERED IN THE PAST YEAR:

- A college student in Singapore requested and received our help in setting up an exhibit about Rachel Carson to increase environmental awareness in his country.
- An environmental educator from Kerala, India e-mailed us, requesting any information we had that would be useful for “various anti-pesticide programs” being planned in the area. We sent a packet of information on environmental education and on celebrating the centennial of Rachel Carson’s birth.
- A woman from Michigan requested information on pesticides that harm dogs. She received copies of the publications we have produced that deal especially with this topic.
- A minister in Rhode Island asked us to respond to the article in *The New York Times* by John Tierney that disputed Rachel Carson’s science. We sent him a copy of the letter we had submitted to *The New York Times*, as well as current information on malaria control and DDT.
- A Maryland cancer survivor requested our assistance in writing a letter to the editor of her local paper discussing the relationship between cancer and pesticides. We mailed her many publications prepared by RCC and others that would provide background for the letter she was planning to compose.
- A musician in Boston asked us for help with a concert celebrating the 100th anniversary of Rachel Carson’s birth. We supplied him with the name of a possible speaker and copies of our centennial brochures.
- A student at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York asked to borrow our “Wildlife at Work” display to set up in the college library. We were happy to supply the display.
- A chemically sensitive woman in Chicago requested and received more information on 2,4-D.
- We received a request from a man in Ohio who wanted to take a number of our brochures to distribute at the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association Conference. We were pleased to provide these for the event.
- From New York, we were asked to help a person by supplying information on nonchemical methods to combat invasive plants. We requested that one of our friends in the field respond to her with specific information.
- A gardener from a retirement community requested our help with a sign that would encourage her fellow gardeners to practice pesticide-free gardening. We suggested language that would be helpful on the sign. We also sent brochures that would help educate the other residents.

- From Florida, a teacher wrote to us requesting a teacher training packet. We sent the packet as well as information on ways to celebrate Rachel Carson's 100th birthday with her students.
- A filmmaker from Los Angeles asked us for contacts. She was working on a documentary film investigating the scientific theories being discussed to explain the "Colony Collapse Disorder" in bees. We gave her the names of various experts in the field that would be willing to discuss this issue with her.
- A woman in Maryland asked for the name of an environmentally friendly pest management company that could help her deal with a termite infestation. As in the past, we were happy to suggest a reliable company.
- An advanced placement high school student in Vermont requested and received our student packet on toxic substances and pesticides.
- Teachers, schools, and organizations throughout the country contacted us to rent videos about Rachel Carson and her legacy. The videos were sent to each group for a period of one month. In all, we sent out over 25 videos on Rachel Carson. RCC sent other materials on Rachel Carson along with these rentals. In addition, we received requests for and sent out a dozen videos on a host of environmental topics.

III. A Sampling of Thank You Letters We Received this Past Year:

- **From a college student in Singapore:**
"This information helps our group a lot in our proposal and report. Moreover, we are more than glad to receive your brochure on Rachel Carson. I am sure it will help us more in our project."
- **From a woman in Brooklyn, New York:**
"...You are an organization I can trust for straight answers on environmental issues. You have helped me with a previous problem and after searching for a long time, you were the only ones who gave me a prompt and complete solution."
- **From the head of an organization that requested and received a tour of the Rachel Carson House:**
"We are still getting accolades. Everything was so well organized. Everybody enjoyed it. It was the best program we've ever had."
- **From the Director of the USGS's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, to Diana Post:**
"We are writing to personally thank you for partnering with the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and the National Wildlife Visitor Center to celebrate the 100th birthday of Rachel Carson. We hope that you concur that this was a wonderful partnership. Your talk at Patuxent's ceremony was inspirational and eloquent, and helped capture the facets of Rachel Carson's life and contributions to the conservation of our nation's resources."
- **From Kerala, India:**
"Thank you so much for the packet containing one of the most precious of materials on someone who is as close to us as if we have seen her. The material will be put to good use and we plan to circulate it widely. I shall send you a short write-up on the program with a picture which I hope you can show people there."

- **From a teacher in New York:**
“I appreciate your many thoughtful communications and hope all is well with the Council....
Rachel Carson had such an important message and *Silent Spring* was ever a wake-up call to us all. I’m glad I made that first chapter required reading for my biology class.”
- **From a College librarian in Iowa:**
“Thank you! The professor was very pleased [with the video, ‘The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson’] and highly recommended it.”
- **From a man at the Marshy Point Nature Center in Baltimore:**
“Thank you for the use of the *CBS Report: Silent Spring of Rachel Carson*. We showed it to a public audience at our monthly environmental film night. A Harvard educated scientist commented: ‘What she said then is just as pertinent today!’ ”
- **From Hawaii:**
“Thank you for the packet of interesting and useful information. The booklet ‘Celebrating Rachel Carson’ is a treasure to keep and re-read.”
- **From a man in Wisconsin:**
“The Rachel Carson Celebration brochure is splendid! Fine and inspiring authorship.”
- **From a school in Virginia:**
Thank you so much for joining us in honoring Rachel Carson’s 100th birthday! The students raved about the celebration.”
- **From an environmental activist in California:**
“You and the Rachel Carson Council are doing such important work.”
- **From a young mother:**
“I’ve enclosed a check to your organization, and wanted to tell you that it is coming from my son, Sam, who is 9 years old. He read Rachel Carson’s biography in school last year, and it furthered his commitment to treating the earth well. My children and I have begun a tradition of giving to organizations we believe in for the holidays, and Sam picked yours. We are happy to support you and your educational efforts on the dangers of pesticides... Happy New Year!”
- **From a woman in Kansas:**
“Thank you so much for all you have done and are doing!”
- **From a woman in West Virginia who received an assortment of our publications:**
“Great info! Thanks!”
- **From South Carolina:**
“We shall never forget your kindness in giving us a tour of Rachel Carson’s former home and answering our many questions. It had been a dream of mine to visit her home and learn as much as possible about this incredible woman.”

IV. Appreciation:

We want to express our thanks to our volunteers, advisors, friends, consultants, and Board Members. They have so graciously taken time to assist us again and again, sharing our concerns, helping us maintain the integrity, accuracy, and even the visual appeal of our work. Special thanks to: Roswitha Augusta, Mitch Baker, Anne Ball, Nancy Carpenter, Ann

Caulfield, Mary S. Cooper, Bill Currie, Marilyn Fioravanti, Joseph Gainer, Kristina Gilbertson, Cliff Hall, Michael Liddel, Rich Mandel, John More, Jane Morse, David Pimentel, J. Gwen Shlichta, Tjaart Schillhorn van Veen, Barbara Yoffee, and to Caitlin Younts (Oberlin College Intern) for help during this past year.

Heartfelt thanks to our knowledgeable Board Members, whose advice and guidance are so useful.

Lastly, none of the exciting accomplishments and activities of this past year would have possible without the continued support and encouragement of our generous donors. You are our inspiration and strength. Together we carry the work of Rachel Carson forward!

Diana Post, President, Munro Meyersburg, Secretary, and RCC staff

Origin of terms: “Junk Science” and “Sound Science” (attributed to a Tobacco Industry consultant)

“‘Junk science’ meant peer-reviewed studies showing that smoking was linked to cancer and other diseases. ‘Sound science’ meant studies sponsored by the tobacco industry suggesting that the link was inconclusive.” (HEAT: How to Stop the Planet from Burning. George Monbiot. p. 33, 2007)