

# **Steve Curwood**

Executive Producer and Host



Nominated by

**Joan Countryman**

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# Steve Curwood

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Journalist, author, public radio personality and actor **Steve Curwood** was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts on December 11, 1947, and brought up as a Quaker in Yellow Springs, Ohio where his mother Sarah Thomas Curwood was a sociology professor at Antioch College. In 1970 as a writer for the Boston Phoenix just out of Harvard, Steve broke the story that Polaroid instant photo system was key to apartheid pass system in South Africa. Steve moved on to the Boston Globe as an investigative reporter and columnist and shared the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service as part of the Boston Globe's education team. His production credits in public broadcasting include reporter and host for NPR's Weekend All Things Considered, producer for the PBS series the Advocates with Mike Dukakis, and creator, host and executive producer of Living on Earth, the prize-winning weekly environmental news magazine heard on NPR. Book credits include An Uncommon Hero. Acting roles include Randall in the Loeb Drama Center's production of Slow Dance on the Killing Ground. Steve lives at his family's farm in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire and spends much of the year in Cape Town, South Africa.

## NPR LAUNCHES 'LIVING ON EARTH'

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Susan Bickelhaupt, Globe Staff **Date:** April 20, 1991 **Page:** 28 **Section:** LIVING

The environment has become a hot topic, but it has had only spotty success in the broadcast media. Take the recent example of the TV show "GreenWatch," which Channel 56 shelved for lack of sponsors.

But **Steve Curwood**, a Cambridge writer and radio personality, is hoping to change that. The former weekend host of "All Things Considered" and host of a weekly National Public Radio opera show is host and producer of "Living on Earth," which debuts locally tomorrow night at 10 on WBUR-FM (90.9). **Curwood**, who has written a book that hasn't yet been published because it's tied up in lawsuits, said he contemplated writing a book on the environment.

"But I wondered if it would be relevant two years later, so I thought of doing a radio series," he said.

The half-hour show starts with a world and national roundup of environmental news, followed by a newsmagazine format of reports that revolve around one theme. This week, it's hydropower, and **Curwood** said he's intent "not on the latest device, but on how we deal with it."

"The thrust is the people and politics of environmental change," he said.

**Curwood** said he's confident that a show based on environmental news will catch on. So far, about 100 NPR stations have signed on for the show.

"There's a whole field of environmental concerns that don't fit into any one category," he said. "It might be science, business, politics, economics -- so it's not a field unto itself. It draws from so many different things, and they all need to be synthesized."

## FOR CURWOOD, ENVIRONMENT IS 'BEST STORY GOING'

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Clea Simon, Globe Correspondent **Date:** March 30, 2000 **Page:** D18

**Section:** Living

CAMBRIDGE - This week, as the Bio 2000 convention brought out the scientists and the protesters, journalists across the city focused on the threats and promises of biotechnology. In the small Harvard Square studio that houses "Living on Earth," however, the interaction of humanity and nature was nothing new. For nearly nine years, the public radio show (which airs on WBUR-FM, 90.9, Saturdays, 6-7 a.m.) has focused on the meeting of science, ecology, politics, ethics, and sociology that makes up environmental news.

"I used to think that wars and politics were the big stories," says host and executive producer **Steve Curwood**, a onetime weekend host of "All Things Considered" and former Boston Globe reporter. "But environmental degradation is likely to become a leading cause of war. Societies break down over water. This is the best story going. To tell that story, and to make it compelling week after week, requires as much knowledge of radio as of the environment. "Living on Earth" has adopted the public radio newsmagazine format of interviews and produced pieces, which let subjects' voices tell the stories. Recordings - a bird call before a section on migration, for example, or the ringing of a cash register in a segment about genetically altered foods - reinforce the points made by **Curwood's** questions, or by his interview subject's answers.

What keeps this sharply focused show lively, however, is the range of those questions. Ethics, for example, come into play in a discussion of urban sprawl. "Now that I have my home in the suburbs, is it right to pull up the drawbridge?" asks **Curwood** hypothetically. Cultural studies factor into the show as well: The program's new science editor, Diane Toomey, is preparing pieces on alternative medicines, examining the contributions of Tibetan and Chinese healers. Above all, says **Curwood**, "we've really started looking at our relationship of our species to all the other species." Because living on earth, the Harvard alum says, means finding our place among the other living creatures here.

"Scientists are more creative if they can go for a walk," he says. "People heal faster if they have a view of green spaces and running water. If looking out the window lowers your need for pain medication after surgery, how else does our deep genetic history influence us?"

Now airing on 230 stations and available on the Web at <http://www.livingonearth.org>, the show began as a side project for **Curwood**. The host, then working on the weekend edition of "All Things Considered," wanted to write a book on the changing atmosphere, and thought a few radio shows would be a good way to promote the project. The first special ran on Earth Day in 1989, and by then, **Curwood** says, he was hooked. The

following Earth Day, the pilot for the series aired on 60 stations and soon became a once-a-week concern. For this year's Earth Day, April 22, "Living on Earth" is planning a special two-hour live call-in show, which should run 2 to 4 p.m. (WBUR has not yet decided whether it will be airing the show.)

Like the planetary life forms it covers, "Living on Earth" has evolved over the years. The main areas of reporting remain alterations in the global climate (which includes changes in rainfall and serious storms as well as global warming) and world pollution. However, the approach has gotten broader, with less reporting of "regulatory squiggles" or rulings, and more discussion of social and cultural impact, **Curwood** says. And more playful.

An upcoming segment, he explains, focuses on one of science's sweeter discoveries: that chocolate may have health benefits that include boosting the immune system.

"We're expanding," he says. "The thing I continually learn is that I don't know the answers, I know the questions."

## IT'S A TOUGH SELL FOR STATIONS, BUT 'LIVING ON EARTH' RETURNS

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Clea Simon, Globe Correspondent **Date:** August 13, 2005 **Page:** D7  
**Section:** Living

Once again, those who want to think globally can listen locally. After a nearly yearlong hiatus, the Cambridge-produced environmental news program "Living on Earth" is back on the Boston airwaves. The hourlong program, which last weekend began airing Sunday mornings at 7 on WBUR-FM (90.9), was first launched at the Boston University public radio station in 1991, when host **Steve Curwood** (a former weekend host for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered") traded some on-air hosting duties for production time. The show was most recently broadcast by WUMB-FM (91.9), but the University of Massachusetts public station discontinued it last October.

That doesn't mean that "Living on Earth" hasn't been a success, or even that it has lacked local listeners. The program currently airs on more than 280 public stations across the country and on Sirius satellite radio, and, according to **Curwood**, it gets numerous hits on its website, [www.loe.org](http://www.loe.org). Considering that it's a science program, **Curwood** theorizes that many of its listeners are likely to be Internet-radio savvy: "Probably a quarter of our audience is coming from the Web," he says. Still, the host says he understands why his show has been a hard sell to station program directors and underwriters. "Environmental journalism is hard-hitting," he says. "We have to sometimes ask questions that make people uncomfortable." Such topics as the effect of sprawl on human health, for example, raise questions about how we live and the American dream of the single-family home.

Explanations can be complicated as well. Discussions of the long-term impact of chemicals, for example, require listeners to understand how such pollutants can affect our bodies. "A little bit can disrupt the whole system," says **Curwood**, whose program has looked, for example, at the links between lead and antisocial behavior.

"There's really compelling evidence that very small amounts of certain chemicals, ranging from the heavy metals like lead and cadmium and mercury to synthetics, disrupt our hormone systems and neurotransmitters and immune systems in nonconventional ways."

Because of this detailed, often controversial reporting, he says, environmental journalism is also often dismissed as "advocacy," an argument rather than a news report. "Industry," says **Curwood**, "often uses scientific doubt as a kind of tool to parry public inquiry into their practices. Which, if it weren't for the fact that the public isn't getting enough of this information, would be amusing."

As an example, he talks about global climate change, which he calls "the undercover story of our time."

"Would you get on an airplane that had a 50 percent chance of crashing?," asks **Curwood**. "Let's say that the [current] science of climate change has a 25 percent chance of being someplace close to right, which quite a number of scientists are saying. Is that an acceptable level of risk? The skepticism is getting pointed to far more often than the story would warrant."





ABOUT LIVING ON EARTH

## Steve Curwood

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### Steve Curwood

Host / Executive Producer



Steve Curwood is Executive Producer and Host of *Living on Earth*. Steve created the first pilot of *Living on Earth* in the Spring of 1990, and the show has run continuously since April, 1991. Today, *Living on Earth* with Steve Curwood is aired on more than 300 National Public Radio affiliates in the USA. Steve's relationship with NPR goes back to 1979 when he began as a reporter and host of *Weekend All Things*

*Considered*. He also hosted NPR's *World of Opera*. Steve has been a journalist for more than 30 years with experience at NPR, CBS News, the *Boston Globe*, WBUR-FM/Boston and WGBH-TV/Boston. He shared the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service as part of the *Boston Globe's* education team. Steve Curwood is also the recipient of the 2003 Global Green Award for Media Design, the 2003 David A. Brower Award from the Sierra Club for excellence in environmental reporting and the 1992 New England Environmental Leadership Award from Tufts University for his work on promoting environmental awareness. He is president of the World Media Foundation, Inc. and a Lecturer in Environmental Science and Public Policy at Harvard University. He lives in Southern New Hampshire on a small woodlot with his wife Jennifer and children Noah and Amlira, and loves whatever time he can get with his adult progeny, Anastasia and James.

### From the show of April 21, 2000, Steve writes:

*Thirty years ago, when the first Earth Day rallies got underway, I was slow to get in line. As an African-American I was busy marching about civil rights and fighting poverty. As the son of a single mother, I was busy marching for equal rights for women. As a concerned citizen and Quaker, I was busy marching against the war in Vietnam. Let the white guys march for the environment, I said. Let them rally to keep open space so they can ride to hounds, while I work for a better world.*

*But over the next 20 years things changed, and I changed, too. As a society, we made a lot of progress on many of the problems of 1970. Poverty and racism didn't disappear, but far more African-Americans and other minorities won more good jobs and acceptance. There is now a national holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. Women started to close the pay gap with men. Many run companies, serve in government, and enjoy more protection from gender discrimination. And while it still haunts our memories, the Vietnam War ended and we learned important lessons.*


*Meanwhile, I became a journalist and a parent. By Earth Day 1990, my own young son was telling me that environmental change was the most important, under-covered story going. And I realized that he was right. Of all the issues Americans marched about in 1970, only the environment has gotten worse. Population has almost doubled since the first Earth Day. Species are going extinct faster and faster. Open space and wilderness are disappearing. Evidence is mounting that pollution not only causes cancer but a host of other disorders, including asthma, heart attacks, immune system breakdowns, reproductive problems, and even criminal behavior.*


*Pollution is also changing the climate in ways that scientists could barely imagine back in 1970. In short, life as we know and love it is changing profoundly. Living on Earth doesn't advocate any particular point of view, except that our relationship to our environment, and what we do to it, is as important as any other part of our lives. And it's our job to bring you the information you need to make the choices that will determine our future.*


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## LOE Student Productions

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Living on Earth's Ecological Literacy Project engages middle and high school students in a science-based exploration of their local environment and trains them in professional radio production.

The following are some examples of the students' work:

- [Camden High School, New Jersey](#)
- [Queen of Peace High School, Chicago](#)
- [Northside College Preparatory School, Chicago](#)

### STORY IDEAS?


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
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## Camden, N.J. High School Web Show

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For the past three years, Living on Earth has worked with inner-city and rural schools across the country teaching environmental radio journalism to high school students. Each year, students produce their own radio shows about the environmental issues that surround them. This week the LOE website will

feature the work of Camden, New Jersey high school students who cover issues that affect them, their families, and their community such as high asthma rates, to a neighborhood butterfly garden.

### Listen to the entire show

To find out more about how students with help from teachers and Living on Earth mentors learn radio writing and production from the ground up, [click here](#).

### The Children's Garden

Four year's ago, the Children's Garden opened in Camden. Since then, thousands of people from the community have visited the park, where children can learn about gardening, science and math. Natalie Rodriguez reports that the butterfly garden is one of the most popular sites.

### Air Pollution and Asthma

More African Americans and certain Hispanic populations have asthma than other Americans and the disease is more severe in urban settings. A Camden High School junior thinks a nearby factory is causing breathing problems among members of her family.

### Cooper River

Thirty years ago, Camden County's Cooper River was so polluted by sewage that fish and other wildlife had all but disappeared. Camden High School's Lequisha Thomson reports that a new sewage plant is helping to change that.

### Water Contamination

One of the biggest health issues in Camden public schools is lead contamination of the drinking water. Water in the city of Camden has the highest levels of lead in the state and families and schools are spending precious resources buying water, instead of things like books and food. Student Ben Steward has this commentary.

Also: A survey of students' knowledge of water issues, including -

how much water is used in a typical five-minute shower? Click here to find out.

To find out more about the Living on Earth Ecological Literacy Project, [click here](#).


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
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## QoPHS Student Produced Web Show

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Tiana Clemens of Queen of Peace High School.

### LOE's Student Produced Web Show - Queen of Peace High School

For the past several years, Living on Earth has been teaching kids in inner-city schools across the country how to be environmental journalists.

The project melds science and journalism and, with help from mentors at nearby public radio stations, grounds them in the basics of professional radio production.

Today we're featuring the work of students from the Queen of Peace High School, an all-women Catholic high school located in Burbank, just outside of Chicago. The school describes itself as a community that thrives on the Sinsinawa Dominican values of truth, compassion, justice, partnership, and community.

[Click here to hear the entire student produced show.](#)

#### Individual Audio Segments

"Queen of Peace Interview":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Gabriela Santiago's "Gangs In my Neighborhood":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

"Cafeteria Voices":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Jameese Sykes's "The Grass is Always Greener on the Other Side":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Jenell Radojevich & Tiana Clemens's "Bus Ride":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Natalie Zoltek's "Windows of Communication":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Mary Gazdziak's "The Mailbox":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Ann Ruiz's "Neighborhood Tour":

[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

To learn more about this school, go to [www.queenofpeacehs.org](http://www.queenofpeacehs.org).


To find out more about the Living on Earth Ecological Literacy Project, [click here](#).


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
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# NCPHS Student Produced Web Show

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Franklin Ettinger of Northside College Preparatory High School. radio production.

## LOE's Student Produced Web Show

For the past several years, Living on Earth has been teaching kids in inner city schools across the country how to be environmental journalists.

The project melds science and journalism, and with help from mentors at nearby public radio stations, grounds them in the basics of professional

Today we're featuring the work of students from the Northside College Preparatory School.

This is the first high school class to make a complete LOE show with the pieces that they created. They recorded the hosts who talk in the show, worked with music between pieces, and compiled everything for the final edition.

[Click here to listen to the entire student produced web show.](#)

### Individual Audio Segments

Mark Spreitzer's "Cats and Birds":  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Jan Olowski's "Ola-My Connection with Nature":  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Dan Neely's "The Chicago River":  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Franklin Ettinger's "Cycling in the City":  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Kevin Edgecombe's "Street Repair Frustration":  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

Anna Kwidzinska and Owen Reynolds's interview with the founders of the Black Rhino Foundation:  
[mp3](#) | [realaudio](#)

To learn more about this school, go to [www.northsideprep.org](http://www.northsideprep.org).

To find out more about the Living on Earth Ecological Literacy




Project, [click here](#).


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
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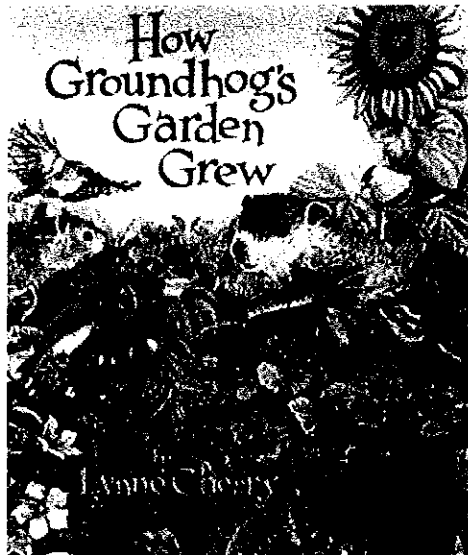
## Lynne Cherry

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### Readings by children's author, Lynne Cherry

Lynne Cherry is the bestselling author and illustrator of numerous books for young readers. Many of her books concern environmental issues.

[Click here](#) to listen to Lynne Cherry read "How Groundhog's Garden Grew" and to see illustrations from the book. *(requires Flash media player)*



Hear Lynne Cherry read the book "Where Butterflies Grow"

[\[buy this book\]](#)



Hear Lynne Cherry read the book "A River Ran Wild"

[\[buy this book\]](#)



Hear Lynne Cherry read the book "Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush"

[\[buy this book\]](#)



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
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
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# GUARDED COMMUNICATION

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– Steve Curwood

This country is built on a foundation of open and free communication. While this is an ideal we need to work toward, food safety is an area in which we need to understand a great deal more before opening communication channels to all people. The government and big businesses are often not trusted, and activist groups play on public fears, regardless of scientific facts. People don't know what to believe or whom to trust.

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**A scientific law is typically perceived as true; when a scientist speaks in terms of possible or even probable risk, the public is confused.**

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One of the problems in communicating risk about safety problems and health issues is the big difference between what is considered the scientific standard of proof and the standard the public accepts as proof. The public perceives science to be the absolute truth, so when a scientist says that something is potentially hazardous, the public perception is that the hazard is real. Instead, they want the scientist to say that no hazards are associated with the science and/or technology. However, scientists have long realized that zero-risk is unattainable.

To close this gap and build trust, scientists, industries and the government need to develop a language that says, "We are concerned. We don't know for sure, but there are links that give us some concern." Often there is a trade-off. Pesticides, for example, may not have been the best option for the health and well-being of people and wildlife, but the case can be made that more people would have starved without the green revolution that extensively used pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

Additionally, many people do not have a clear understanding as to the origin and source of their food. In earlier years, there was a face on food, and consumers knew where it came from and could see first-hand who raised it and how it was produced. Now, the general public is removed from food production and processing and have little understanding

of the scale and methods used to keep the cost of food low and readily accessible. While some are able to pay for locally grown or organic foods, these are still beyond the means of many. Opening the flow of communication from food producers and processors to the general public is an invitation to higher food prices and higher outrage.

The potential good resulting from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is astounding, but we have not begun to use and develop this technology. As new technologies are developed, we make mistakes. If history is any guide, GMOs are going to cause problems along with the miracles. Rather than to force the issue and impose products onto the customers, industry should say, "We think this has tremendous potential, but we really have to look at the down side. We want to work with you, the public, so that we make sure what we are doing is okay."

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**In earlier years, there was a face on food, and consumers knew where it came from and could see firsthand who raised it and how it was produced.**

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Industry and government must become more proactive in their approaches to risk communication, seeking areas that could be potentially harmful or beneficial, instead of waiting for a crisis to emerge. In addition, more groups should be invited to participate in decision-making processes.

It has been said that the world eats because farmers produce. This is an extremely important franchise. It is not something that agriculture should lose, nor can the United States afford to lose the trust of the rest of the world. The future of agriculture is not one of information wars, but it depends upon looking at critical issues and making constructive changes so that agriculture can continue to supply the world with safe, nutritious and delicious food.

## US AND SOVIET UNION PLAN STUDENT EXCHANGE

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Steve Curwood, Globe Staff **Date:** January 31, 1988 **Page:** B27 **Section:** LEARNING

In a major step forward for international education, the United States and Soviet Union have begun rapidly expanding the numbers of undergraduate exchange students.

This year, according to Mikhail G. Myasnikov, deputy chief of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education, only about 150 undergraduate students from the United States and the Soviet Union participate in exchange programs. By contrast, Harvard University alone has more than 150 students from China studying in Cambridge this year. We hope to double the exchange to 300 soon," Myasnikov said in an interview at Harvard.

Myasnikov and Olga Balakireva, a graduate student at Kharkov University, came to Harvard last week to make the final arrangements for the two-week visit of 12 Harvard students in March to the Kiev State University in the Ukraine, and the return visit of Soviet students in November. The arrangement will mark the first time that Harvard undergraduates have been involved in an official exchange with the Soviet Union.

Harvard is among 10 universities that have nearly completed exchange arrangements with the Soviet Union through the auspices of the Citizen's Exchange Council in New York City. An additional 11 colleges and universities will join the program next year, a council spokesman said.

The current project began with Yale University, which, in 1985, began brief exchanges with Moscow State University. Last fall, for the first time since the beginning of Cold War, Soviet undergraduates came to the United States to study for a full semester. Five were chemistry majors who went to Yale in New Haven, and five were physics majors who went to the University of Maryland in College Park.

Susan Karp, assistant director of the International Institute of Education in New York City, who helped to engineer the Yale and UMaryland swaps, said, "We agreed to an all-science exchange program in the first year, but we hope to host students in non-science fields as well."

Among the students that Harvard is sending for its two-week exchange period is music major and composer Vanessa Lann.

"The Soviet Union has a rich culture that we know almost nothing about in the United States," she said last week. "There is more to understanding the Soviet Union than just its politics and economics.

## TUFTS TO HAVE A SHARE IN GLASNOST

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Steve Curwood, Globe Staff **Date:** September 11, 1987 **Page:** 2 **Section:** NATIONAL/FOREIGN

MEDFORD -- In a major step forward in international education, Tufts University will teach a course next spring on nuclear arms control jointly with Moscow State University, with four full class meetings by satellite.

Tufts University president Jean Mayer, speaking at a news conference yesterday, said he believes that "this is the first time a college-level curriculum of this sort will be shared by the US and the USSR." Mayer conceded that without the new openness, or glasnost, in Soviet society, his initiative to set up this semester-long course would have failed. Mayer said glasnost also means Soviet officials are now apparently more willing to make available to American and Soviet academic researchers their official government documents relating to the history of arms control.

Evgeny P. Velikhov, vice president for applied physics at Soviet Academy of Sciences and the scientist who oversaw the cleanup of the Chernobyl nuclear plant accident last year, is leading the Soviet academic team for the course, Mayer said.

"Velikhov is a principal adviser on nuclear arms to Soviet Secretary- General Mikhail Gorbachev and probably the most influential scientist in the Soviet Union," Mayer said.

Martin J. Sherwin, historian and director of the Tufts Nuclear Age and Humanities Center, and author of "A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance," a book that was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1976, is leading the American team.

Sherwin and Mayer said the intent of the course is to try to teach each side to understand the other's perspective.

Velikhov and Sherwin have already begun meeting to develop a course outline. The course will also result in the publication of a United States- Soviet Union reader on the history of arms control.

"We will teach more or less the same things at more or less the same time during our regular lecture and section meetings," Sherwin said. He said that because of the limited amount of material in translation currently available, students at Tufts and Moscow State would not read all the same books and pamphlets, though they will share some texts.

Also, while Tufts students will have a variety of tests and papers, the Soviet students will likely have only one final examination, which is the European style.

Then four times during the semester, using simultaneous translators, and a two-way satellite television link, the American and Soviet students and professors will meet to exchange views and question each other.

"Our first satellite session will be on putting strategic stability in historic perspective -- that is, what we think is the value of nuclear weapons," Sherwin said. Two other satellite sessions will be on the early history of the attempts to have international control of nuclear weapons, and the Cuban missile crisis. The topic for the final meeting has not been decided.

"We'd like to do the economic, cultural and political impact of nuclear arms. The Soviets would like to do SALT II," Sherwin said. SALT II is the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks draft treaty that was negotiated by President Carter but never ratified by the US Senate. "We'll work it out. Three out of four so far isn't bad."

As many as 350 American students will be allowed to take the course, most of them Tufts undergraduate and graduate students and students at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. The course will also be open to a limited number of students at other Boston area colleges, Sherwin said.

The course is a byproduct of Mayer's efforts to develop an international curriculum for peace studies that will be taught around the world. A conference of the world's college presidents is planned for a year from now in France to try to set that in motion.

In February, Mayer wrote directly to Gorbachev suggesting the joint course on the history of arms control. Six months later the Soviets agreed, Mayer said.



## BOK LOOKS TO FUTURE ACROSS THE SEA

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Steve Curwood, Globe Staff **Date:** June 29, 1987 **Page:** 2 **Section:** NATIONAL/FOREIGN

The United States may no longer be competitive in the world when it comes to making steel or cars, but it offers the best when it comes to higher education, Harvard president Derek Bok says.

Which is why Harvard University should seriously consider expanding internationally, he believes, perhaps with more foreign students in Cambridge and a substantial Harvard presence abroad. Bok, still relaxed from his three-month sabbatical this spring in which he visited India, Spain and Israel, chatted in a recent interview in his office. He said that although he has no master plan for Harvard, he does want the university to begin thinking about how it can take better advantage of its enormous prestige and clout to move more into the arena of international education.

Bok said he is not offering his own blueprint because "that's not a good way to run a university."

"I think the right way is to stir people up to think about these things. Nothing gets done very well if it's just the president's point of view," he said.

Bok gave a broad outline of his point of view earlier this month in what was viewed as a highly provocative commencement speech. The address included a fictionalized account of Harvard in the 21st century that visualized 5,000 foreign students in Cambridge and 20 campuses abroad.

Calls and comments are still coming in, he said, some from people who were delighted with the speech, and others from those not as thrilled.

"The purpose of this speech was to try to get people's attention and also get them to understand that, over the next 10 or 15 years, there really is an unusual range of choices," Bok said. The speech contained no trial balloons, he added. "There were no hidden balls."

In the nonfiction portion of his speech, Bok declared that Harvard needs "to recognize just how unusual our opportunities really are. American universities are preeminent at a time when education and new discoveries are more important than they ever have been to societies around the world. Among institutions of learning in this country, none has greater visibility abroad or greater resources than Harvard."

Bok stressed that Harvard can serve the greater cause of enlightenment by helping to raise the quality of education, especially in the Third World.

"I do think we have something to contribute without being arrogant or imperialistic," Bok said. He recounted how 25 years ago Harvard Business School helped start a school of management in Ahmadabad, an industrial city northeast of Bombay. "It is the leading school of management in the country, and it's a fine institution," he said.

Since then, Bok said, several other management schools have opened in India, inspired by the Ahmadabad model. "It seems to me whatever contribution we made in starting that is immensely important," he said.

"I don't mean there aren't lots of problems starting institutions abroad, but there is a contribution to be made. A lot of local educational systems have very serious troubles."

Bok noted there are risks. "We also helped found a management school in Tehran. It was an excellent school, but . . ." His voice trailed off and he smiled.

"But I do think there is a contribution we can make at this particular juncture in our history due the quality of education abroad that we shouldn't overlook, just because it's difficult, just because it's awkward, just because it's unconventional," he said. "And if we decide not to do it, we ought to have really good reasons not to do, not just because it's hard."

If Harvard chooses to become more involved with starting schools overseas, perhaps in conjunction with local universities or agencies, Bok says the likely emphasis will be on professional schools for management, medicine, public administration, architecture and public health.

Bok said the US undergraduate system is much harder to translate overseas, as many cultures use more advanced high schools and then send students directly into the professional schools. Even so, during his trip to India, among a number of requests he received was one to start another Harvard College there, he said.

According to Bok, hearing from foreign Harvard alumni offered the most striking moments of his trip.

"Despite the cultural differences that separate this university from universities in India, Israel and Spain, these students were lavish in their praise of the experiences that they had had here. What mattered to them was invariably the same: the talent and variety of the student body, the wealth of intellectual and cultural opportunities, and above all, a more active process of education that challenged them to think more rigorously than they were accustomed to doing at their own universities at home."

At Harvard, 2,000 of 15,000 students are from abroad. An important question, Bok said, is: should those numbers be raised, and, if so, by how much.

Bok also said the typical Harvard undergraduate's experience with foreign cultures now

tends to be "sort of fragmented. I mean they take a course here, they take a language there, maybe they travel in the summer, and often the whole of those experiences turns out to be less than the sum of the parts."

Bok said a more "integrated package" of study of foreign cultures might make more sense, with area studies, language and travel better coordinated. But he said he would rather see Harvard students spend a term at a foreign university than open little Harvard campuses abroad for Americans.

"You don't make as many foreign friends when you have each other," he said.

"Sometimes less-structured experiences have a way of forcing students to come to terms with a foreign culture and the students who live in it," Bok said.

# IN ACADEME, THE SUCCESS OF ASIAN AMERICANS OFFERS LESSONS

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Steve Curwood, Globe Staff **Date:** June 28, 1987 **Page:** B31 **Section:** LEARNING

Women are leading a dramatic surge in the number of Asian-American students at America's elite colleges and universities, part of a revolution that offers us all a novel opportunity to understand how home life, work and equity can enrich education. Let's look at statistics for a moment. More than any other ethnic group in the United States, Asian-American society includes a disproportionately large number of haves and have-nots sandwiched around a tiny middle class.

While the proportion of adult Asian Americans who earn more than \$50,000 a year is twice that of whites, Asian Americans also have a higher poverty rate than whites and are three times as likely as whites never to have completed elementary school.

Yet Asian Americans at both ends of the economic spectrum perform well in school. On the high-income side, adult Asian-Americans are twice as likely as whites to have college degrees, and they have flocked to such elite and pricey schools as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard and Stanford.

In fact, while Asian Americans make up only about 2 percent of American society, fully 22 percent of the entering freshmen at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology last fall were Asian Americans, up from 5 percent a decade earlier. What's more, a majority of those new Asian-American enrollees at MIT were women. At Harvard last year, Asian Americans were about 12 percent of freshmen, and 14 percent at Stanford. The especially high number at MIT reflects Asian American preference for technical study, in part because many Asian Americans speak English as a second language and tend to perform better on the mathematics Scholastic Aptitude Test and achievement tests in math and science.

On the lower-income side, here in inner-city Boston, where Asian-American family incomes are at or below black incomes, Asian Americans enjoy the lowest high-school dropout rates and have flocked in record numbers to UMass-Boston, where Asian-American enrollments are up by 23 percent in just two years.

These figures illustrate that, despite deep income differences, the Asian-American poor do not see themselves as part of a permanent underclass locked out of society without the intelligence or connections to get ahead.

And this is a message that the rest of us need to hear. We need to accept, as the Asian American does, that hard work and study by both parents and children make the

difference, and, despite discrimination, poverty can and will be escaped.

In all fairness, Asian Americans do have a special advantage: Many subscribe in varying degrees to the Confucian ethic, which not only places heavy stress on loyalty to one's parents but also traditionally grants the highest social status, or Mandarin rank, to the best scholars. Strong scholarship thus brings the highest honor to one's family and highest validation to the individual. It may not be easy to translate that into American society.

But we ought to be able to swallow the dose of the pragmatism that lets many Asian-American women aim for more traditionally male jobs. Asian-American women are three times more likely to be engineers and 12 times more likely to be physicians than white women, and Asian-American women have median earnings that are 20 percent higher than those of white women.

That Asian-American men, despite their better educations, still have median income levels below those of white men, means that discrimination has not been overcome, and, indeed, some have questioned whether some colleges discriminate with anti-Asian quotas.

But the overall lesson from Asian Americans is that, with a strong home life, a work ethic and more equity for women, the American system of higher education works just fine.

# MASS. TEACHER TRAINING CALLED SUBSTANDARD

*The Boston Globe*

**Author(s):** Steve Curwood, Globe Staff **Date:** February 11, 1987 **Page:** 1 **Section:** METRO

The state's programs to prepare elementary and high school teachers have become substandard and need a complete overhaul, a panel of experts told the Board of Regents of Higher Education yesterday after a yearlong study.

"At the present time, no program in the state colleges meets accepted standards for graduate study," the study reported. The study also found that no Massachusetts public college or university offers the proper undergraduate curriculum for high school teachers in training.

The 150-page report additionally warned that quality control problems and a shortage of faculty in the doctoral program in education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst have created "an unmanageable situation which must be gotten under control before it blows up."

The panel urged major reforms in teacher training practices at Massachusetts' nine state colleges and three state universities. The study was commissioned by the regents in 1985. Its expert panel was chaired by Daniel Griffiths, special assistant to the chancellor of New York University, with the assistance of Max Weiner, dean of the school of education at Fordham University in New York.

Immediately after receiving the report yesterday the regents voted unanimously to impose a moratorium on the creation of any new teacher education programs on public campuses until Oct. 1. That vote blocks the University of Lowell from proceeding with a joint doctoral program in education with UMass-Amherst.

Franklyn G. Jenifer, chancellor of the Board of Regents, said yesterday that the report, while disturbing, is not shocking.

"The same thing could be said about teacher training in many states across the country," Jenifer said. He said the concerns raised by the panel will be analyzed by the State Task Force on Teacher Preparation that is being jointly chaired by Jenifer and the state commissioner of education, Harold Reynolds Jr. That task force will also study the issue of possible teacher shortages.

"I don't think any other state will be making as broad-based a review of teacher education as we will make," Jenifer said. Among the Griffiths panel's other key findings:

- Most of the state's education faculties at public colleges try to do too much with too

little, with small faculties and an exceptionally large number of programs and courses. There is a critical need for priorities to be set.

- There are few minority students and even lower proportions of minority faculty compared to the elementary and high school student population.
- Graduate studies at the state colleges are plagued by a "lack of state funding, no full-time faculty, low or no admissions standards in most units, redundant course work, low exit standards and poorly constructed programs."
- The quality of students has sharply declined. Undergraduate students who want to become teachers have significantly lower than average Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, except at UMass-Amherst and Westfield State College, where they were above the national mean in 1985. At that time, the mean national combined score for verbal and math SATs was 893. At UMass-Amherst, the mean combined score was 948; at Westfield, it was 910. The lowest was Worcester State College at 758, followed by Salem State College at 774; North Adams State College at 805; and Fitchburg and Bridgewater state colleges, both at 825.

The panel urged that potential teachers be given remedial work so that they can read and write properly. The panel also urged that ways be found to improve the quality of students who want to become teachers.

- An extremely high percentage of education faculty are tenured, with the result that many are no longer "intellectually alive." Retirements should be encouraged to make it possible to employ carefully selected young professors who would bring vitality to the field.
- Preparation for high school teachers should be consolidated from 12 campuses onto six.
- The general teacher education program at Southeastern Massachusetts University should be closed, and staff should be transferred to the art education program.
- No new teacher education programs should be started until there is a full-scale evaluation and setting of priorities for the system.
- The Institute for Learning and Education at UMass-Boston should be upgraded into a full-fledged school of education with doctoral offerings. "Having a major center in Boston would make it possible for the bulk of the population of Massachusetts to have access to all of the types of programs needed to staff its schools."

The study also recommended that the length of time it takes to become a certified teacher be increased from four years to five so teachers in training could receive more liberal arts instruction. It called for less emphasis on professional education courses.

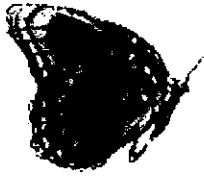
"The doctoral situation at UMass-Amherst is fraught with danger," the study added. "The

82 professors (not all qualified to supervise doctoral students) have matriculated 1,082 doctoral students. The situation can only get worse, since the faculty is recruiting more doctoral students across the state."

Regent Nicholas Boraski yesterday spoke out strongly in favor of consolidation of teacher training programs.

"When each campus tries to be a comprehensive university, they dilute resources and weaken. We should implement a program to examine programs and consolidate them where needed. That way we can get a higher quality at a lower cost," Boraski said.





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### **Steve Curwood** *Moderator*

Steve Curwood is the Executive Producer and Host of National Public Radio's Living On Earth. Curwood created Living On Earth in the spring of 1990, and the show has run continuously since April 1991. Living On Earth's proven track record of fair and balanced journalism includes its presence in eight of the top ten American markets,

reaching more than a million listeners each week on over 240 affiliate stations across the United States. Additionally, Living On Earth broadcasts to nearly 130 countries around the globe on the 400 stations of the Armed Forces Radio Network. The program has a proven track record of fair and balanced journalism and has won numerous awards, ranging from the Edward R. Murrow Award of the Radio and Television News Director Association to the top documentary award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Steve's relationship with National Public Radio extends back to 1979, when he was a reporter and host of the weekend edition of All Things Considered. He has reported on science, politics, and the environment for National Public Radio, The Boston Globe, and WBUR-FM and WGBH-TV in Boston. He shared the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service as part of The Boston Globe's education team. Steve also hosts National Public Radio's World of Opera and has hosted the Voice of America's Radio Earthwatch. He was the recipient of 1992's New England Environmental Leadership Award for his efforts to promote environmental awareness.

Steve's recent reporting includes a groundbreaking series on chemical compounds that disrupt the endocrine system and their effects on human health and fertility, now the subject of the course on Public Communication and Environmental Change he teaches as a visiting lecturer at Harvard University. In addition, he serves as thesis advisor for seniors completing their work in the environmental science and public

policy concentration and is a member of the University's Environmental Committee.

Steve's education includes an AB degree from Harvard University; he attended high school at the Westtown School in Westtown, Pennsylvania.

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