

weather in decades."

Viewed in historical perspective, Heim concludes, the hot, dry weather of 1988

was "simply the latest in a long series of similar fluctuations that characterize the climatic history of our country."

### *Reforming EPA*

"Are Today's Institutional Tools Up to the Task?" by Michael Gruber, in *EPA Journal* (Nov./Dec. 1988), Superintendent of Documents, GPO, Washington, D.C. 20402.

On April 22, 1970, millions of Americans celebrated the nation's first Earth Day—and within three years Congress had created the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and passed sweeping new anti-pollution laws.

Today, writes Gruber, an EPA staffer, there is not only public disappointment with the results but a "widening gap" between what Americans expect and what "EPA can deliver." The federal agency (budget: \$1 billion) has been told by Congress to eliminate water pollution, eliminate *all* risk from air pollution, prevent hazardous waste from reaching the ground water, and register, and "re-register," all pesticides.

"None of these things," Gruber notes, "has been accomplished," nor could they be. To blame, he says, are the sheer uncertainty of scientific knowledge (notably about various pollutants' true effects on health), a patchwork of environmental laws, Congress's multiple mandates, and Americans' two-faced attitudes towards the environment. Opinion polls show

strong support for environmental clean-ups. Yet, Americans dislike government interference, prize their automobiles, enjoy cheap foodstuffs and plastics, resent land use controls, and like to throw things away.

Congress, says Gruber, must allow the EPA to concentrate on major hazards, to focus realistically on "reduction of risk" to public health and the environment rather than, as at present, on ineffective, generalized "pollution control." Instead of requiring the use of certain types of technology, the EPA should adopt marketplace incentives and penalties to curb pollution.

Of late, Gruber adds, the EPA has frittered away its efforts in response to public outcries over much-publicized but relatively minor threats, notably those involving pollutants which may expose the public to some risk of cancer. "This is a long way," he contends, "from the original ideal of the environmental movement, which was nothing less than to bring technological society into harmony with the natural world."

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## ARTS & LETTERS

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### *The Peales*

"Philadelphia Story" by Phoebe Lloyd, in *Art in America* (Nov. 1988), 542 Pacific Ave., Marion, Ohio 43306.

Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) is remembered as a Philadelphia impresario and portrait artist who painted Washington, Franklin, and other heroes of the Revolution. His eldest son, Raphaelle (1774–1825), a well-regarded still-life painter in his day, is now remembered, if at all, as a drunk and wastrel. For that, and

for his premature death, says biographer Lloyd, one can blame the twisted envy of Raphaelle's noted father.

Of the younger Peale's talent there can be no doubt, writes Lloyd. His pictures hung in Philadelphia's prestigious Pennsylvania Academy. But father and son clashed early and often. At 23, Raphaelle married

an Irish beauty, Martha McGlathery, much to the dismay of his stiffly Anglican parent. He persisted, against his father's advice, in painting still lifes rather than entering the lucrative portrait market.

The elder Peale rebuked his son in clever paintings; he offered to give him painting lessons that he did not need. ("I have a colorick [sic] disposition, and, therefore, I am obliged to keep a bridle constantly tight reined to stay my tongue and hands from mauling anyone that approaches me," Charles once told his daughter.)

But Charles' "surpassing perversity" came in 1799, when he appointed his son chief taxidermist of the Peale Museum (the first such institution in the United States). No man was in a better position than Peale to know that his son would be "fatally affected" by the arsenic and mercury then used in taxidermy, Lloyd notes—Charles had given up taxidermy to avoid what he suspected were the ill effects.

Raphaëlle took the job to please his father. But he began drinking, small quantities at first, to ease the pain and other ills caused by the toxic chemicals. His painting faltered. His father chastized him for "high living and drink," and even went so far as to publish a pamphlet containing thinly-veiled criticisms of his son.

Raphaëlle died, in agony, in 1825. In memoirs and books stretching into the mid-20th century, Charles' descendants upheld the father's explanation (alcoholism) of his son's demise. Raphaëlle's body lies in an anonymous Philadelphia grave, the "bright serenity" of his paintings his only memorial.

## *A Decathalon*

"It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94), "better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick room."

And that is how the tireless author of



*In 1795, Charles Willson Peale painted this trompe l'oeil showing his sons, Raphaëlle (foreground) and Titian. Framed in a door jamb, it was so lifelike, according to Peale family lore, that George Washington was fooled into doffing his cap to the boys. Later, in a typically perverse gesture, the father painted a second version, substituting himself for Raphaëlle.*

"The Short Happy Life of Robert Louis Stevenson" by Joseph Epstein, in *The New Criterion* (Nov. 1988), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

*Treasure Island* lived his brief life. Enduring respiratory ailments and numerous other maladies, the novelist moved from his native Edinburgh, to California, back to Scotland, then to Switzerland, France, England, upstate New York, and finally to