

# The Cumulative Impacts of Coors

By Tom Steele

A few issues ago, in a Dear Shit for Brains letter, someone asked us all to lay off Coors now that the company and labor unions have made amends. The request was premature. Yes, the AFL-CIO got Coors to concede on two issues — Coors will use union labor to build all new facilities, and won't interfere in the brewery workers' unionization vote. In return, the union federation called off its ten year boycott. However, as I'll explain later, others say the AFL-CIO's "victory" was hollow and incomplete, and are still pushing the boycott.(1)

Fortunately, the SFB letter came at about the same time I saw a Coors advertisement in *Buzzworm*, a new environmental magazine published in Colorado. The ad pictured a discarded beer bottle at the base of a USFS Wilderness sign. The caption read "We wouldn't be caught dead in some places," and the text stated the following:

Some companies talk about the environment. At Coors, we've done something about it. We've taken a leadership role in the industry.

We know that when a person walks through a forest he changes it, just with his footsteps. We also know there are some natural resources which can never be replaced once they are consumed or lost. That's why Coors has devoted so much time, and so many resources, to programs that can help protect the environment....

The combined impact of these two Coors pieces jolted me into literary action. I'd heard enough of this "Coors ain't bad" drivel. What follows is a detailed look at the "Coors Dynasty" — both company and family.

An analogy is appropriate here. Frequently, we environmentalists play the game and work on environmental impact statements. This article is an EIS on the Coors Dynasty. As is frequently the case, no single impact within the document is overwhelming. Rather, the cumulative impacts are what makes the project inexcusable.

## THE COORS FAMILY

The Coors family has been on this continent for five generations, all the while in the Colorado Rockies. They have been brewing beer (though many question whether "Colorado Kool Aid" is really beer) since 1873, except during Prohibition.

At present, the hierarchy of the Adolph Coors Company and its subsidiaries closely resembles the Coors family tree.

\*William (Bill) Coors, oldest of the third generation, is chairman of the company. \*Joseph (Joe) Coors, Bill's brother, is vice chairman of the company.

\*Jeff Coors, Joe's second son, is president of the company.

\*Peter Coors, Joe's third son, is president of the Coors Brewing Company.

\*Joe Coors Junior is president of the Coors Ceramics Company.

\*Grover Coors, brother number four, is president of Microlithics (one of the Adolph Coors Company's "technology companies").

\*John Coors, youngest of the brothers, is head of Coors Customer Satisfaction Division.

Joe Sr. is the leading public figure of the family, though he claims he's trying to keep a low profile.(2) Known as an ultraconservative zealot, Joe, according to one investigative reporter in 1982, "has been cultivating more than hops and barley. Power is his main crop. After decades of muttering right wing causes and politicians, Coors is now ready to reap the benefits of his harvest ... and it reaches all the way to the White House."(3) Joe stated that "The election of President Reagan — with his basic philosophies and ideas and programs — is like a lifetime's dream come true for me."(4) Coors was one of Reagan's "Kitchen Cabinet," and is dedicated "to the work ethic, to hard-core capitalism, a strong America and to an absolute minimum of government interference in practically everything."(5) Joe's political activities have been so extreme as to cost him the potential to be a public official. His nomination by Presidents Reagan and Ford to the board of Public Broadcasting Corporation, and his hopes for a postion as White House Counselor to Reagan (after Meese left), were shot down due to his right-wing extremism.(6)

Bill Coors is similar in his political conservatism. His comments regarding various ethnic groups have earned him a reputation as a racist. In 1964 Bill held a mandatory meeting for his workers at which he "urged the employees of the Adolph Coors Company to write their Congressman opposing the Civil Rights Act. The employees were paid to attend this meeting. At the

meeting, Coors talked of the possibility of blacks replacing whites if the act was passed."(7) In his 1980 editorial in the *Rocky Mountain News* titled "Without Nuclear Power: Crippled Economy" came the following: "[M]any of the visible leaders of the anti-nuclear power movement are identifiable with the New Left — the most active wing of the Communist Party in America."(8) The company's chairman justifies his support of the far right by his economic views: "I believe in the free-market system."(9)

Both Bill and Joe are thought to be billionaires. Their success has earned them acceptance into the Bohemian Grove, an elite club to which Reagan and other "ruling class" members belong.(10)

Joe's five sons have been more politically diverse than their father and uncle, but only a bit. Grover, a one-time hippie and anti-war demonstrator, confessed in a 1988 *Los Angeles Times* article that he could imagine voting for Dukakis. "I'm an economic conservative, but I'm a social liberal, in many ways." In reference to why the family opposed the Teamsters' union vote, Joe Jr. was quoted in the same article as saying "We had a union before, and it didn't hurt us." These comments are almost blasphemous amidst the rest of the family's beliefs. On the subject of unions, brother Jeff said "What else should we do? Just give them the keys to the place?... It's just like inviting the Russians in to take over America." Pete has considered taking his politics into the public arena.(11)

All five of Joe Sr.'s sons agree on key issues. They are all "born-again" Christians who feel that selling alcohol is morally acceptable; that moderation is essential; and that alcoholism isn't an illness, but rather a sin (as is homosexuality).(12)

## PUBLIC LIMELIGHT

The Coors Dynasty has been in the public eye over many issues in the past two decades, though their actions deserved public attention prior to the 60s. Following are the events that caused most of the controversy.

\*While on the University of Colorado Board of Regents (1967-1972), Joe Coors called for the government to penalize radicals and "pleasure-loving parasites" such as welfare recipients and hippies. Displeased with the progressive opinions voiced in the campus newspaper, Joe financed an alternative paper. This paper eventually attacked him for trying to force the resignation of the university president, who refused Joe's request to ban the Students for a Democratic Society from campus. Coors also opposed other "permissive" activities on campus, among them, giving birth control information to female students.(13) Joe was criticized while on the board of regents for passing John Birch Society literature to other regents. (He had given \$6000 over a ten year period to the society).(14)

\*A boycott by labor groups, which has been called off after ten years by some groups, has given the company the adverse most publicity. At times various groups, including racial minorities, gays, feminists and environmentalists have been involved in the boycott of Coors products. Coors officials consider recent events to have put the issue to rest, but others, both in and outside of the labor unions, still support the boycott.(15)

\*Rumors have circulated in the gay community that the Coors company discriminated against homosexuals, and had given financial support to Anita Bryant.(16) Joe Coors has been outspoken in his opposition to the ERA.(17)

\*Joe Coors helped propel several of his Colorado colleagues into key administration positions, including James Watt as Secretary of Interior, Anne Gorsuch Burford as head of the EPA, and Robert Burford as head of the BLM.(18)

\*Bill, in what has been referred to as the "slave trader" speech of 1984, told a meeting of minority business executives in Denver that one of the best things slave-drivers did to American blacks "is to drag your ancestors over here in chains" because blacks in America have greater opportunity than in those Africa. He further said that Zimbabwean blacks "lack the intellectual capacity to succeed..."(19) He added that descendants of Mexican "wetbacks" should also give thanks that they got here, even if they had to swim the Rio Grande.

Shortly thereafter, Joe addressed the plight of the Native Americans: "...Indians chose to stay on the reservations, versus becoming Americans. And now they're upset that the government didn't give them more money. But they were given a choice.

They could have come in to any community in America, like the Mexicans did, and become a part of it. But they couldn't cope with it..." Coors is now helping fund drug rehabilitation programs on the reservations, and spending money trying to appease minority groups. They have a public relations staff to extol the virtues of these ostensibly progressive efforts.(20) Nonetheless, some minority members remember that back in the 1920s, the KKK held meetings and cross-burning ceremonies on the brewery property, with the permission of Adolph Coors.(21)

## THE ADOLPH COORS COMPANY

The Adolph Coors Company has their fingers in many pies: Coors Brewing Company, Coors Ceramics Company, and Coors Technology Companies, including Golden Aluminum, Graphic Packing Corporation, Coors Biotech, Inc., Coors Energy Company, and Microlithics Corporation. A look at what these entities do sheds light on the depth of the dynasty's impact on our planet. Most of what follows comes from the company's 1988 Annual Report.

1) Coors Brewing Company in 1988 moved from number five to number four among the nation's top brewers, and shipped out 16,534,000 barrels of "beer." In addition to Coors, Coors Light, and Extra Gold Draft, they brew several "specialty" beers, including Herman Joseph's Original Draft, JH LIGHT, Killian's Irish Red and Winterfest (a holiday production). Bad news for all you Molson Ale drinkers is that in Canada Coors and Coors Light are brewed by Molson Breweries of Canada Limited.

2) Coors Ceramics Company is the second largest business under the Adolph flag, employing nearly 2000 people at 14 locations worldwide. This company is producing ceramic material for a military defense contractor and is expanding its aerospace, defense and industrial markets. They recently acquired the assets of a company that fabricates and installs material handling equipment for the coal, mineral processing, power generation and steel industries.

Years ago, Coors Porcelain (now Coors Ceramics) opened a plant in Brazil, where they made ceramic de-watering devices for paper-making machines. The president of the company at the time said one reason for choosing Brazil was the rapid growth of the Brazilian pulp and paper industry. This, of course, relied upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests.(23) The Coors Porcelain Co. has advertised in the John Birch Society's magazine, *American Opinion*.

3) Coors Energy Company was formed in 1980 to provide an uninterrupted supply of natural gas and coal to the many Coors facilities. It has evolved into a complete oil, natural gas, and coal exploration company. Coors Energy drills for natural gas in eastern and western Colorado, and has coal holdings on the Eastern Slope. Abe Phillips, a company vice president, has said that they will aggressively continue to explore for oil and gas in the Rockies and elsewhere.(24) In September of 1982, a road was bulldozed into a BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA) outside of Grand Junction, CO, for the purpose of oil and gas exploration by the Coors subsidiary. Entry into the WSA was allowed because of a controversial federal court decision in Wyoming that allows the development of certain oil and gas leases to override wilderness protection.(25)

4) Golden Aluminum Company was formed in 1980 "to reclaim and recycle used beverage cans."

5) Graphite Packaging Corporation makes packaging for pet food, consumer food, personal care, photographic film, chemicals, and other products.

6) Coors Biotech, Inc. operates a corn wet-milling plant, a fermentation facility, and produces and markets ingredients for the animal feed industry (livestock, fish, and pet foods).

7) Microlithics Corporation was formed in 1988 to produce interconnect boards and standard electronic modules used in military computer systems.

## EXAMPLES OF FREE ENTERPRISE?

Joe Coors is well-known for his desire to minimize government interference. This sort of goal probably appeals to most EFi readers, too; however, such independence demands respect for the natural, social, and political environment. Joe and the rest of the gang don't incorporate that respect in their business dealings, as the following incidents demonstrate.

\*Joe and Bill, gaining control of the company, diversified both horizontally (with investments in oil and gas leases, coal,

and real estate) and vertically (by growing their own hops, barley, and rice; making their own aluminum cans; transporting with their own trucks; and maintaining an exclusive network of dealers in 11 Western states).(26) Through an exclusive dealership scam, Coors gained control of the beer market in the West. This violated anti-monopoly laws, and the Supreme Court upheld a Federal Trade Commission ruling that found the company guilty of restraint of trade. The FTC charged that Coors engaged in price-fixing, coercion, refusal to allow its beer to be sold to retail chains, exclusive dealing, intimidation and appropriation of territory.(27)

\*In fall 1975, the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a complaint against Coors, charging the company with race and sex discrimination. Twice in the early '70s the Colorado Civil Rights Commission found Coors guilty of discrimination against black employees.(28)

\*In 1975, the company finally went public with a stock offering, and 4.1 million shares of Class B (non-voting) stock sold out in less than half a day at \$31 a share.(29) All Class A (voting) stock is now held by the Adolph Coors Jr. Trust. The Trust is probably composed of family members, though a company corporate communications spokesperson said he did not know who was on it. Only Class B stock is available through public trading.(30)

\*In April 1984, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) called for an investigation of "apparent favoritism" within OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration), which may have ordered the removal of two Coors Porcelain plants from the top priority inspection list. Kennedy pursued this based on the testimony of Curtis Foster, a former head of OSHA's Denver region who has since been fired, and who believes Coors pressured OSHA into firing him.(31) According to the *Kansas City Star*, this sort of favoritism "may have contributed" to the death of two brewery workers back in 1982. A US representative whose staff investigated the Coors case said "numerous serious violations... appeared to have contributed to the accident." OSHA never cited the company for these violations. Foster said inspectors tried to enter the plant two months before the accident but were turned away by Coors officials who demanded a search warrant.(32)

## LABOR DISPUTES AND BOYCOTTS

Coors is the last major brewery operating a non-union facility.(33) It has been 12 years since members of the Brewer's Workers Local 366 went on strike over such issues as contractual disputes, the use of polygraph tests for applicants and the search and seizure of workers' personal property by the company's security force.(34) Eighteen months after the strike started, non-striking workers voted the union, which had been there since 1934, out of the brewery.(35) Numerous black, latino, gay, women's and environmental groups had been boycotting Coors prior to the strike. The AFL-CIO joined the boycott when Coors broke their union, and the union issue became the focal point for boycotting Coors products.

As mentioned above, in August 1987, the AFL-CIO reached an agreement with the company, and called off their boycott. Coors made two concessions: 1) all future plant construction will be done under negotiated labor agreement; and 2) Coors will not intervene in future AFL-CIO union election campaigns at the brewery.(36) The labor federation felt they had won a great victory. There was heated competition between unions (the Teamsters Brewery Conference and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers) for the support of the 4000 hourly wage workers at the plant; but they did agree that the AFL-CIO should not have called off the boycott while the Coors brewery continued to resist unionization.(37) The Teamsters won the right to head the union campaign at the Coors facility, but then were voted out of the brewery. Not surprisingly, both Joe and Bill Coors have contributed money to the anti-union National Right to Work Committee.(38)

## THE COLORADO MAFIA

In 1983, the AFL-CIO claimed that 35 people appointed by the Reagan Administration came from the "Coors Connection," a network of conservative organizations and foundations financed in part by some aspect of the Coors dynasty.(39) On some level, Joe Coors was responsible for the appointments of all these individuals, each of whom adhered to his philosophy that

business should run the government and not vice-versa.(40) They became known as Reagan's "Colorado Mafia," and a Republican politician once said "If there is such a thing as a Colorado mafia, then there is no doubt that Joseph Coors is the godfather." (41) Some of these people — especially the aforementioned James Watt, Anne Gorsuch Burford, and Robert Burford — have gained infamous standing in the history of environmental non-preservation.(42)

James Watt had previously headed the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF), which Joe Coors helped found and fund with a group of wealthy ranchers, oil men, and mining executives; and which he served for awhile as chairman.(43) The MSLF is a private organization that defined its purpose under Watt as fighting "excessive bureaucratic regulations and the stifling economic effects resulting from the actions of extreme environmentalist groups and no-growth advocates." (44) MSLF lawyers specialized in suits against the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior that slowed enforcement of clean air and water and wilderness protection laws.(44) Early on, MSLF argued against an affirmative action program at the University of Colorado School of Law, and supported the state of Idaho in an attempt to rescind its ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. It tried to block lower utility rates for the elderly, as well as battling against the likes of the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund, and fighting OSHA over business inspections.(45)

From the Colorado State Senate came Robert Burford (who later married Anne Gorsuch). He was named director of the BLM, and was thus situated under Interior Secretary Watt.(46) Burford was a rancher and a mining engineer, with grazing rights on 32,000 acres of BLM land at the time of his appointment. He had been a leader of the Sagebrush Rebellion, a counterattack by ranchers against a series of court orders and congressional efforts in the '70s to force the BLM to crack down on overgrazing on public lands.(47)

Then there was the group of young, politically unknown people who were elected to the Colorado House of Representatives, and later referred to as the "House Crazies." They were anti-regulation, and several were later given high posts in the Reagan Administration. Joe Coors was a major contributor to the election campaigns of these Republicans. Of particular concern to preservationists, Anne Gorsuch was appointed to head the EPA. She became embroiled in the "Sewergate" scandal. Gorsuch appointed Steve Durham to head the EPA's Region VIII, an appointment worth mentioning given that he once said that if he ever found that he had an endangered species on his property, he would "go out and stamp it out immediately" so it would not influence what he could do on his land.(48)

Gorsuch placed Coors lawyer James Sanderson third in command at the EPA.(49) Sanderson's job was to help "reorganize" the agency, which resulted in dropping many of its enforcement officials and shifting others to positions where they would have little authority. Thornton Field, who, as an Adolph Coors Co. lawyer, had lobbied the Colorado state legislature to free the brewing company of certain environmental protection guidelines, became head of the EPA's enforcement division, further crippling the agency with yet another highly placed official who came from the very industries he was meant to regulate.(50) Field and Sanderson were both involved in allowing the dumping of 1500 barrels of toxic waste by the Coors Company into a landfill site outside Denver which the EPA had ruled should be closed.(51) (Since that time, the company has received notification from the EPA that it is a "potential responsible party" for the Lowry Landfill Site under Superfund regulations, and may be required to contribute toward the cost of study and clean-up. Predictably, the company has contested the EPA's estimates of the amount and nature of the waste.(52)) Field was actively involved, when with Coors, in a Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry panel on hazardous wastes. The panel declared that at least half of the federal EPA regulations that Field would eventually oversee were unnecessary.(53)

A former specialist on the EPA at a Coors-supported think tank was given the job, during the Gorsuch years, of compiling a "hit list" of EPA officials who were tough on industry.(54) A former campaign worker for two Coors-backed candidates for Congress became the EPA's press spokesman

under Gorsuch. He was given the task of deleting unpleasant words, such as 'hazardous' and 'explosive', from EPA news releases concerning chemical accidents.(55)

The Coors's present influence in the White House is less than in the Reagan years. They are so unimpressed with our new President that, for the first time in memory, not a single family member went to the Republican National Convention.(56) As the discussion on the Adolph Coors Foundation below shows, however, Coors remains a powerful and destructive force.

#### HELPING BREW UP A WAR

Wars may well be the greatest type of industrial pillage humans have yet devised. They damage vast areas of land, while inciting economic growth and thus resource exploitation. Today, Central America is experiencing these phenomena. (For information on the destruction there, write Earth Island Institute, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA 94133, for their *Journal* and *Green Papers* on the subject.) Joe Coors's newest contribution to environmental disaster comes in the form of support to the Contras.

During the congressional committee's investigation of the Iran-Contra affair, Joe Coors testified that he had given \$65,000 to Oliver North's covert supply operation. The money was used to buy a plane for the Contras.(57) And according to Colonel Flaco, a US civilian commando unit leader who has helped the Contras, "Coors Brewery is one of the Contras' biggest supporters." Joseph has also been (and may well still be) a principal backer of the US Council for World Freedom, which, according to a 1985 *Miami Herald* article, channels upwards of \$500,000 per month from wealthy business and conservative groups to the Contras.(58) Holly Coors, Joe's wife (though they are now separated), heads another pro-Contra group called Citizens for America (CFA).(59) CFA has sought to win congressional support for the Contras by bringing 20 of them to campaign in person for more aid in 200 congressional districts across the US.(60) The group was established in 1983 with \$1

million in "seed money," and Joe was a contributor.(61)

Joe has been supporting the Contras in other ways as well. He has been on the board of governors for the Council for National Policy (CNP), an elite and highly secretive policy formulation group composed of former high government and military officials, religious leaders, legislators, and corporate executives. CNP serves as a fundraising network for the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).(62)

#### RECYCLING AND BOTTLE BILL OPPOSITION

The 1988 Adolph Coors Company Annual Report claims the following: "Thirty years ago, Adolph Coors Company developed the aluminum can and concept of recycling to preserve resources and protect the environment. Today, the Recycling Division of Golden Aluminum Company buys billions of pounds of used beverage cans from which the rolling mill manufactures high quality sheet stock..."

Such propaganda might lead one to think the Coors Company is conservation-minded. In a sense, this is true. Last year, the Golden Aluminum Co. supplied not only 100% of the end and tab stock used by the brewing company to make their beer cans, they also increased sales to other can manufacturers. This spring, Golden Aluminum produced its first body stock (can siding), and now claims to be the first company in the world to "close the recycling loop" by making the entire can from at least partially recycled aluminum.(63) William Coors admits that the move to recycling was prompted by economics, but says that both it and the company's development of the stay-with-the-can pop tab stand as tributes to the positive results of long-term planning for both the business and the environment.(64)

Despite its use of appropriate recycling technology, the company is not at the forefront of the recycling battle. To the contrary, Coors has lobbied heavily against mandatory deposit legislation. In 1976, the Coors Company, along with the Columbine

Bottling Company, launched a media campaign to defeat a Colorado state "bottle bill" initiative. The two companies jointly outspent the recycling proponents 30 to 1, and successfully convinced the Colorado voters that the bill was unnecessary.(65)

#### ADOLPH COORS FOUNDATION

The Adolph Coors Foundation, the family's private foundation, gets its funds from two different family bequests. Money derived from one of the two wills is slated specifically for use within Colorado, while the other allows funding of activities outside the state. The Foundation's primary areas of interest are health, education ("which should provide a balanced perspective of our nation's free-market economy..."), preservation of historic sites, youth groups; and, "to build a stronger, healthier society and economic environment," most of the Foundation's activities outside of Colorado "...endeavor to preserve and promote traditional values and the principles of a free-market economy." Much of the money that supported programs or organizations within Colorado during 1987 went to efforts that would be considered progressive, but not threatening to the Coors political philosophy.

Appropriate funding projects — such as Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition, Big Brother/Big Sister programs, public television, and the Denver Museum of Natural History — win the family and the company much needed positive press.(66) They don't, however, balance out the insidious impact that the remainder of the Foundation's funding projects have on Earth. The rest of the Foundation's recipients are extremely conservative and detrimental to the planet. The following is a partial, but telling, list of the 1987 Adolph Coors Foundation recipients. The information comes largely from the Foundation's '87 Annual Report.

\$272,586 to the Colorado School of Mines Foundation.

\$25,000 to Colorado Alliance of Business, funding a Work-For-Yourself program, which "helps students develop entrepreneurial skills."





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mental skills for job alternatives."

\$50,000 to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, for construction of the Reagan Presidential Library.

\$100,000 to the SSC Partner Corp. to help increase the public's understanding of the Super Collider.

\$25,000 to the Rocky Mountain Billy Graham Crusade.

\$5000 to the Mineral Information Institute, whose mission is "improving public awareness of the importance of minerals and energy resources." (67)

\$5000 to the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy.

\$10,000 to the Foundation for Teaching Economics, which is one of the nation's leading economic education organizations. Among the many pro-growth efforts is the teacher's guide called "Wood, The Everyday Miracle," which was created in conjunction with the Weyerhaeuser Company. Their corporate and foundation patron list includes such business giants as Bechtel, Boise Cascade, GE, IBM, and Union Carbide. (68)

\$12,000 to the National Association of Christian Educators, "... a grassroots Christian ministry ... dedicated to involving and serving parents and families ... enabling them to restore academic excellence, godly morals and traditional American values in the classroom." This association addresses such "crucial issues" as Creation/Evolution, Homosexuality and AIDS, and Humanism/Atheism. Their Special Report #16 is titled "Why Creation Science Belongs in Science Classes." (69)

\$20,000 to the National Strategy Information Center, a public policy think tank set up to "provide information on international security," and a principle advocate of "psychological operations" (propaganda campaigns) and low intensity conflict strategy. (70) NSIC stresses the need for coordination with the private sector, and one of its officers has been Joe Coors, vice-president of the Coors Foundation. (71)

\$20,000 to the Capital Research Center, which is "committed to a vigorous private sector, the cornerstones of which are: the free market economy; constitutionally limited government; individual liberty; and a strong sense of individual responsibility." (72)

\$20,000 to the Pacific Legal Foundation, whose "primary objectives...are in support of the concepts of free enterprise, private property rights, and individual freedom ... A major portion of our manpower and resources is directed against excessive regulation of land use and unreasonable, wasteful government actions." PLF was organized by the California Chamber of Commerce in 1973 as a pro-business counterpart to Ralph Nader and the Sierra Club. PLF has submitted comments in support of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas exploration. In a hypocritical move in California, the group opposed an attempt by the state to regulate federal lands, even while opposing the federal government's attempts to mandate steel and mercury wastewater bonding (saying the feds were usurping the states' right to manage waterfowl resources). PLF is a member of the Limited Government Project Coalition, which, along with the likes of National Cattlemen's Association, Public Lands Council, American Sheep Industry Association and California Farm Bureau Federation, fights bureaucratic intrusion. (73)

\$20,000 to the National Legal Center for Public Interest, which has direct ties to PLF. In 1976 Coors and NLCP collaborated to establish the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF). James Watt, having met Joe Coors earlier at a NLCP function, was chosen as MSLF's first president. Coors has served on the MSLF's board of directors. (74)

\$100,000 to the Heritage Foundation. In 1973, Paul Weyrich, Joe's right hand man since 1968, started what is considered the most influential conservative think tank in the country. (75) This was Joe Coors's first political mouthpiece. He is now on the board of trustees. The foundation's 1980 report, *Mandate for Leadership*, served as a Reagan administration policy blueprint. The group had a budget of over \$14 million for 1987. The AFL-CIO News recently wrote that "President Reagan will leave Washington ... But the Heritage Foundation won't. It will remain a keeper of the flame — or even a government in exile..." A look at people and events listed in the group's 1987 Annual Report is revealing. Speakers included President Reagan, CA Governor George Deukmejian, Congressman Jack Kemp, and Nicaraguan resistance leader (Contra) Adolfo Calero. (76)

\$150,000 to the Free Congress Founda-

tion (FCF), another of Joe's projects. The president of this ultra conservative group is Paul Weyrich, whose report in the Foundation's 1988 Annual Report opened with this, "As we begin the Free Congress Foundation's second decade, I am pleased to report that we are boldly moving forward in training and educating conservatives nationwide in the art of governing." Jeff Coors is FCF's chairman of the board. FCF, along with the Heritage Foundation, created a three volume conservative agenda for the '88 presidential campaign. Both these groups have since been contacted by the Bush administration, but both feel Bush may not easily embrace all their ideas. (77) In 1982, FCF formed a network of national support committees for various "anti-communist" movements, including the Contras. (78)

Joe Coors also helped found the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, which has trained over 7000 workers for the Moral Majority, Phyllis Schlafly's anti-ERA Eagle Forum, right-to-life campaigns, and anti-union groups. (79) In 1977, the Committee identified 32% of congressmembers as "radicals," though former KKK member Robert Byrd of West Virginia was merely labeled "very liberal." (80) In addition, the John Birch Society, the King Ministry dedicated to "saving" homosexuals from their "sinful lifestyles", the anti-ERA Eagle Forum, and Concerned Citizens (a CA group pressing for reinstatement of criminal penalties for homosexuality), have all been aided by the Coors Foundation. (81)

Two other groups that received funds from the Coors Foundation in '87, and that reveal the incestuous nature of these right-wing public policy groups, were Committee for the Free World (\$20,000) and Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge (\$25,000). In 1978, the Heritage Foundation received the "prestigious" Americana Award from the Freedoms Foundation, while a Heritage board member, Midge Decker, is the executive director of the Committee for the Free World. (82)

Aside from his obvious involvement with the family foundation, Joe has also independently served as an officer for, or supported through speeches and fund-raising, the following right-wing organizations:

the Heritage Foundation, National Conservative Political Action Committee, Conservative Caucus, John Birch Society, American Conservative Union, Citizens for the Republic, and CPSC. (83)

## RECTIFYING THEIR REPUTATION

Coors's huge public relations campaign has two goals: 1) increase their sales and 2) improve their reputation. Their efforts go far beyond TV spots showing blacks and whites drinking together. Coors is sponsoring events ranging from menudo cook-offs in the Hispanic community to tours by black rodeo performers. They are trying to bury lingering animosities with black and Hispanic groups by forging economic pacts with them. (84)

Coors has acknowledged the high costs of this campaign, in their 1988 Annual Report and in articles. The annual report listed among its reason for a lower net income in '88 an "aggressive and very expensive sales and marketing program in the beer business..." In November 1984, a five year financial agreement was signed between Coors and various minority coalitions such as NAACP and the Hispanic La Raza Council, presumably in response to boycotts over the years by the Hispanic and the black communities. This agreement calls for the company to hire minorities, establish more minority-run distributors, and invest money in minority-owned banks and businesses in proportion to the amount of money the minority communities spend on Coors products. It has been called a "\$625 Million Leverage" and a "buy-off", but Bill Coors refers to the deal as a "covenant with the black and Hispanic communities." (85) Response to these agreements in the black community has not been completely favorable, largely because Coors has insisted on linking the financial promises to increased sales in minority communities. In the black community, Coors had spent only \$36 million out of the promised money by spring of 1986. (86)

The Coors Foundation gave the Denver Center for the Performing Arts \$20,000 in 1987, to fund a presentation of Hispanic folklore. This bought the Foundation the first slot on the funding list, printed in the

project's brochures.

Dave Siskler, national coordinator of the AFL-CIO Coors Boycott, said, "If you can get two cockroaches to race, Coors will show up with T-shirts and sponsor it. They will rip off any celebrity or public figure who gets near them by implying that Coors products are being endorsed." His comment was in regard to California Assemblyman Willie Brown's denouncement of Coors for using his picture to promote their beer. (87)

Though the company has been seeking big events to sponsor, it recently ended its nine-year-old sponsorship of the Coors International Bicycling Classic. According to Sandy Bean, media relations coordinator for Coors Sports at the time, "an event like this that involved three states over two weeks just didn't fit." Instead, they are looking for more national events. (88) Some events don't fit because of the fans they draw. Coors has turned down golf and tennis events because they feel fans of those sports prefer wine and hard liquor to beer. They focus on events like motocross, since enthusiasts of that "sport" consume more beer than any other group of sports fans. (89)

## THE SOLUTION: SPREAD THE WORD, CONTINUE THE BOYCOTT

Even though (as Mikal writes in *Live With Or Die*) boycotts are the real culprit (by merely shifting the profits from one mega-merchant to another, rather than attacking mass consumerism in general), they do help. So, boycott all Coors products. Demonstrate at any event they sponsor. Call their consumer hotline (1-800-642-6116) and their corporate communications office (1-800-525-3786) and voice your concerns. Copy and distribute this article. For you adventuresome types, someone suggested you pop the tops on Coors cans and bottles while buying other kinds of beer. Whatever your fancy, help stop the spread of bad "beer" and bad politics.

Tom Skeels, EFL Wolf Action Group coordinator, conducted this study with help from the EFL Journal Research Fund. The endnotes for this report can be obtained by sending an SASE to the Journal office in Tucson.