

HOT AIR

By the Numbers

By Barbara Currier Bell

--Number of Americans who say they worry a great deal or a fair amount about the quality of the environment: **62%**
[Gallup poll, March 2004]

--US place among 146 countries in terms of success at improving the environment: **#45**
[“Nations Ranked as Protectors of the Environment”, NY Times, 1-24-05.]

--Key word counts from President Bush’s second inaugural address:
“Freedom”/“Liberty”: 42
“Justice”: 5
“Environment”: **0**
[1-20-05]

--Key word counts from Democratic strategizing:
“Advancement”/“Progressive”/“Innovation”: 19
“Balance”/“Tolerance”/“Unity”: 5
Environment: **0**
[“What Now? A discussion on the way forward for the Democrats”, Washington Monthly (December, 2004)]

--Amount of 2004 CT state legislature cut in funding for the Council on Environment Quality, CT’s chief monitor of progress toward meeting state environmental goals: **50%**
[CT League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, CT Environmental Briefing Book, 2004]

--CT’s place among 50 states in terms of breast cancer incidence: **4**.
[Council on Environmental Quality, Environmental Quality in CT: 2003 Annual Report]

--Number of plants near Milford ranked among the top 25 polluters in New England: **3**.
(Harbor Station power plant in Bridgeport, #9; Cytex Industries in Wallingford, #21; Spongex Int. Ltd. in Shelton, #25.)
[EPA Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), 2000]

--Number of people in CT who say that water supply and quality is their main environmental concern: **4 out of 5**.
[Regional Water Authority brochure, 2000]

--Number of people in Milford who understand the vulnerability of water supplies and are willing to conserve water in drought conditions: **5 out of 5**.

[Photo Forum, Milford Mirror, 9-5-02]

--Average level of mercury in soils, New Haven County: **0.08** ppm (parts per million)

[USGS website, 12-12-03]

--Mercury found in soils at two Cascade Blvd. properties, Milford, 1998: **“Contaminated”**

--Mercury in contaminated soils sampled after first court-ordered cleanup: **0.4** ppm

--Mercury in nearby “background” soils, 2003: **>0.2** ppm

--Mercury DEP wanted Cascade Blvd. property-owners to attain in second cleanup: **0.1** ppm

--Mercury court finally ordered property-owners to attain in second cleanup: **0.2** ppm

--Mercury in food that causes harm to humans: **1.0** ppm (per US) – **0.4** ppm (per Japan)

--Mercury in food that causes harm to mallard ducks: **0.1** ppm

--Mercury in nearby “background” soils now: **“No fishing.”**

[“Judge orders more mercury cleanup”, New Haven Register, 1-12-04; GZA Geoenvironmental test results from August 14, 2003; Attorney General’s Office Press Release, April 2003; Science News, November 10, 2004; “Mercury found at Ryder site”, CT Post, 1-04-05]

--Number of people in Milford who think nature-related areas and activities are important; and are willing to pay more in taxes for parks and open space: **74%; 57%**

[Oyster Festival poll, 1993]

--Portion of Milford’s budget devoted to the Inland Wetlands Agency, Conservation Commission, Tree Commission, and Open Space Acquisition: **less than a quarter of 1%**.

[City of Milford, Connecticut, 2004-2005 Board of Aldermen Adopted Budget]