

# Our planet is calling for us to care

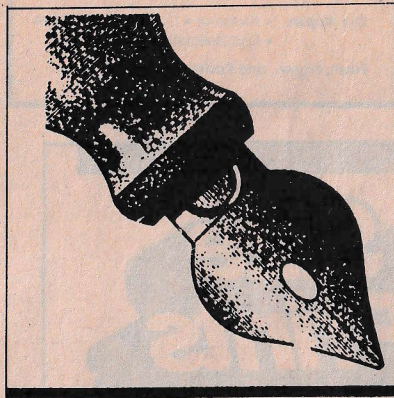
By **FATHER CHARLES BRANDT**

Species are disappearing from the planet earth at the rate of one per day. Soon it could be two per day ... We look at last year's environmental disasters: severe drought in the midwest, devastating floods in Bangladesh, tankers exporting toxic waste ... there seems to be no end. The earth is speaking to us, calling us to care for her, before it is too late.

To be heard by humans, the Earth needs a human voice. Many human voices. Those of you who through contemplation have come to understand the sanctity of life and creation, are the rightful voices of the Earth. You can affect people, and perhaps lead them to change.

Dr. Suzuki states that the deterioration of the environment is the overwhelming issue facing our planet. He thinks that we should instantly declare a global crisis, a crisis that is endangering all life on Earth and that we should marshal all of our forces to do battle with the threat. But we are doing little to counter these forces. That's because the monster is us.

Today, it is necessary, imperative, to view every new proposal, whether it is a new marina or a ferrochromium plant, in the context of the whole earth and its effect on the planet. To what degree it will endanger the environment?



## GUEST COLUMN

Under the wise leadership of Dr. Richard Murphy and CREWS, some Campbell River residents are attempting to rectify the environmental damage that has been done to the Campbell River estuary. A Fisheries officer has confessed the negligence of his agency in ever allowing industry in the estuary.

Courtenay has lost prime habitat in allowing the development of the airstrip along the Courtenay River estuary, lost due to the filling in of the sewage lagoon.

The mile long, yet undeveloped, foreshore at Oyster Bay is prime habitat, which is now threatened by a proposed Yacht Club marina development, a marina which would be privately owned and would be exclusively used.

This mile long bit of foreshore is public land and in my opinion should not be rezoned commer-

cially. The site should be retained for present and future public recreational day-use as a proposed regional park.

How long are we going to continue to alienate public land? Indeed, the Environment Council of Campbell River "favours the preservation of the Oyster Bay area as prime habitat and is opposed to the alienation of public land in that area."

Prime habitat? How so? First and foremost it is prime habitat for human beings, habitat to enjoy and take pleasure in, to walk along a beach a mile in extent. This type of public habitat is rapidly disappearing from Vancouver Island.

To what extent it is prime habitat for salmonids, bottom fish, etc., is up to Fisheries and their biologists to determine.

But what about shorebird habitat? Bruce Whittington who authors the column, *Island Birds*, in the *Colonist*, laments the scarcity of migrating shorebirds this season. These tiny creatures, of great variety, in their twice yearly migration need the mudflat habitat that the Oyster Bay provides to rest and feed as they fly between the arctic and far North and South America and points south. And this type of habitat is disappearing rapidly, not only on the west coast but on the east coast and European shores as well.

The proposed marina would destroy this habitat. You say,

what value are a few thousand birds? There is money in logging, fishing, mining and tourism. But shorebirds? Come now.

The fact is that every creature, every bit of matter, form a giant web that is interrelated and woven together into a whole. You destroy one part of the web, you help to destroy the whole.

The prime habitat along Oyster Bay should be preserved. It is public land. It will make a magnificent park which everyone can share equally without an entrance fee of \$2,000.

And the upland adjacent to this mile long beach, currently owned by MacMillan and Bloedel -- why don't we request of this giant corporation that it donate this land to enhance the foreshore and create the park for the public to enjoy.

Or would you rather see a mudflat destroyed, a private marina established, a shopping mall and a series of condominiums constructed, with the disappearance of almost the last stretch of beautiful foreshore on this part of our Island?

It is said that we have 10 years to halt the environmental destruction taking place on the earth, or it will be too late. Here is a beginning, a small beginning. But small is beautiful!

*Father Charles Brandt is a well-known environmentalist, paper preservationist and resident of Oyster River.*