

Survey Reflects Worldwide Concern for the Environment

On June 20, 1989, Lou Harris of Lou Harris and Associates reported on the first worldwide survey of public opinion and leadership attitudes on the environment at a briefing sponsored by the Energy and Environment Study Committee and Americans for the Environment. The survey, conducted for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), clearly shows that people are alarmed at the state of their environment. Although not yet fully complete, the survey is already the most comprehensive global environmental opinion survey to date.

The study, "The Rising Tide: Public Opinion, Policy and Politics," notes that industrially developed countries and developing countries are equally concerned over the present and future state of their environment. Most people surveyed are pessimistic about future progress, but feel the negative trend could be reversed if environmental protection were to become a national and an international priority. Harris predicted that governments will fall simply because they fail to control environmental degradation. He concluded that next to war and peace, the environment may be the most important global issue that we face today.

For more information, contact Joan Martin-Brown at UNEP, 1889 F St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, U.S.A. (202-289-8456). A copy of the report may be obtained by sending U.S.\$5.00 to Americans for the Environment, 1400 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, U.S.A.

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Book Review

Ay-Ay: an Island Almanac, by George A. Seaman. Macmillan Publ., Ltd., London, November 1989. U.S.\$8.00, paper.

Hurricane Hugo and the tiny Caribbean island of St. Croix will forevermore be linked together. The U.S. island of St. Croix took a direct hit from that September 1989 storm, which may go down in the history of hurricanes as being the fiercest on record. Seemingly rising out of that disaster comes a wonderful 155-page book - *Ay-Ay: an Island Almanac* - that describes in a beautiful style the natural character of that tiny speck of land in the vast

Book Review (Continued)

Atlantic/Caribbean ocean. Author George Seaman, a St. Croix native, paints a word picture of St. Croix the way it was before Hugo, from a perspective of one who explored and understands that island's every nook and cranny. "Within her borders," he writes, "dwelt all the beauty and magic a man could wish for"

Rarely does a book appeal to me as does Seaman's *Ay-Ay*. It has the same character as Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, Louis Halle's *Spring in Washington*, and Sally Carrighar's *Wild Heritage*. All are chuck-full of information, but written in a style that makes them special. These books must be part of one's personal library, so that favorite sections can be read time and again.

Ay-Ay is more than a word picture of a Caribbean island. It contains a treasurehouse of morsels that is a must read for anyone who loves nature and its infinite diversity. *Ay-Ay* blends the tropical Caribbean climate with the great whales and the tiny bananaquit, the African tulip tree and the kalaloo crab, the spring arrival of zenaída doves and fall arrival of shorebirds, and the native trees Cruzans use at Christmastime. Its 12 chapters describe the fascinating changes that occur during the 12 months of the year.

Seaman describes January as the end of a "great pivotal journey." He writes that, "the entire earth and the heavens are making tentative and quivering resolutions against the new galactic voyage ahead. It is the celestial cycle's primordial moment. It is the Alpha of the planet's roster of exquisitely precise decisions. It is our home's bugle call to march. It is the zero hour for a diminutive, insular press to roll out its bulletin. It is January."

February is described as the driest month, the "month of purification...of the earth by the winds and the sun." Seaman points out, "There are many 'firsts' in this month - previews and songs of glories. A hesitant and isolated John Phillip (black-whiskered vireo) reaches the careful ear, hardly to be credited as the song which will dominate the woods and hills of July. A shining white cap of a hurtling blue javelin announces the vanguard of the white-crowned pigeon legions which will later seek our mangrove swamps in which to breed. And weirdest and most beautiful of all, that onomatopoeic first call of the chuck-will's-widow out of the evening's depth."

In April, Seaman describes the spring migration of zenaída doves. "In apparent endless numbers, pairs and groups come in from the west. This vernal migration of our 'mountain dove' does not, of course, always coincide with the celebration of Easter, but since it occurs annually after the vernal