You’ve got the VCR, the MBA, the BMW, the 1.5 children, the raises, the promotions — you’re even buying that motor scooter! “Can’t always get what you want.”

Mother Nature, you can’t have it all.”

The biologist. “They may see bass jump at dusk, but the croaking of frogs will be the croaking at twilight and fish jumping in the pond. You build a pond, you get what you bargain for.”

Sexton published a paper on his observations, titled “A Qualitative Study of Fish-Amphibian Interactions in 3 Missouri Ponds,” in Transactions, Missouri Academy of Science. His findings are particularly relevant to the “back to the country” trend and a resurgence in pond-building that has occurred in the last several years of the 1980s.

Americans have been returning steadily to the country in the past decade, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since 1986, the USDA reports, the population in rural areas has grown faster than in urban areas. In 1986, 64 million Americans — one out of four — lived in rural areas, defined as open countryside and places with under 2,500 residents that are not in the suburbs of large cities. Yet of these millions, slightly less than five million (2 percent of the entire U.S. population) live on farms.

And what will these urban refugees do with their “green acres”? They may well build ponds. According to the USDA, nearly 20,000 ponds were built across the nation between 1986 and 1990. In Missouri alone, the state’s Department of Conservation estimates that 1,500 to 2,000 ponds are built annually. In 1989 the department stocked 750 of these ponds with fish.

The figures are only for agricultural producers who cost-share with the government to enhance conservation efforts. Untold numbers of ponds are being scooped out of the countryside and in subdivisions by those who want to create their own environments.

While it is difficult to pinpoint what kinds of people are actually moving to the countryside, present trends have its roots in the 1970s, say Sexton.

Upsetting Mother Nature

Increase in fish-laden ponds threatens amphibians

Then, natural disaster struck. Nearly five inches of rain fell in the area in the spring of 1979, spilling the Meramec River, which meanders less than one-third of a mile from the pond, over its banks. The flood introduced several of the 89 species of fish found in the river — the highest number of fish fauna of any stream in the state — into Railroad Pond and Salamander Pond — at Washington University's Tyson Research Center, a wildlife refuge center located approximately 30 miles west of St. Louis. Sexton built the ponds specifically to study amphibians. Fourteen species of frogs, salamanders and newts lived in and near the ponds in various stages of their development.

“When you re-create or revise Mother Nature, you can’t have it all.”

Owen Sexton

While Sexton's research and observations indicate a generally healthy population of amphibians, some biologists have voiced concern over possibly declining numbers of toads, frogs and salamanders in various parts of the world. Any number of factors — acid rain, pesticides, pollution from fish or the actual consumption of the animals themselves — have been used as contributors. So far there is no consensus about how serious the problem may be. To address that question, some of the nation's researchers are holding a meeting, "Declining Amphibian Populations — A Global Phenomenon?" Feb. 18 in Irvine, California.

Sexton, who specializes in amphibian populations and ecology, has studied many ecosystems worldwide. In the late 60s the scientist built three ponds — Railroad Pond, New Pond and Salamander Pond — at Washington University's Tyson Research Center, a wildlife refuge center located approximately 30 miles west of St. Louis. Sexton built the ponds specifically to study amphibians. Fourteen species of frogs, salamanders and newts lived in and near the ponds in various stages of their development.

“The introduction of fish fauna was happenstance, but the principle applies whether you’re talking about a fish bowl or Lake Erie. When you build a pond, you get what you bargain for.”

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Continued on p. 2

Moral theologian to discuss 'tensions in Catholic Church'

A priest who was removed from the theology faculty at the Catholic University of America because of his controversial views on sexual morality will discuss "Tensions in the Contemporary Roman Catholic Church" during an Assembly Series lecture.

The Rev. Charles E. Curran, Visiting Firestone Professor of Religion at the University of America because of his teachings on homosexuality, will deliver the CIRCuit lecture at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22 in Graham Chapel. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Curran was removed from the theology faculty at the Washington, D.C., university in 1986 after the Vatican condemned his writings on homosexuality, abortion, medical ethics in the 1980s. Curran also questioned church policies on birth control, homosexuality and euthanasia.

The lecture is part of a series of University events in February commemorating Black History Month.

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American Indian dancers to perform; all shows sold out

Dances honoring the spirit world, celebrating the earth and showcasing warrior bravura will be performed by the American Indian Dance Theatre at 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at Edison Theatre. The dance company also will perform a children's matinee at 2 p.m. Feb. 24. All shows are sold out.

The two-year-old dance theatre is the brainchild of a professional company of American Indians who perform a broad repertory of American Indian dances, both authentic and theatrically appealing. The troupe's goal is to share the rich heritage of American Indian culture with the world by presenting it in a viable stage format that travels outside tribal reservations. The company's 24 dancers represent 17 different tribes from 11 states and two provinces of Canada.

The performers wear a breathtaking variety of feathers, furs, buckskin, birch bark, cornhusk, bone, beaded work, turquoise and silver, all handmade by the dancers and their families or passed on to them by their ancestors.

Music is performed on traditional instruments made from hollowed logs, clay pots, animal heads, deer hooves and pieces of wood and bone. The beat of the drum dominates the events.

Among the dances to be performed at the Houston venue, in which soloist Eddie Skinner, a Cherokee, keeps 42 hoops aloft while creating the shapes of birds and animals, expressing the interconnectedness of all living things. The eagle, sacred to all tribes, is revered in both a northern plains and a Pueblo version of the Eagle Dance, in which the great bird's image emerges in the male dancers' beautifully choreographed movements.

The company was founded in 1987 by Barbara Schweitzer, a New York choreographer and Harry Geiogamah, a playwright and director based in Los Angeles. A member of the Kiowa/Delaware tribes, Schweitzer and Geiogamah spent several months traveling through the western United States talking to dancers and musicians and choosing songs and dances to feature in their performance. The troupe is composed of 22 dancers traveling with a nine-member ethnic drumming ensemble.

For more information, call 889-5185.

American Indian Dance Theatre is presented by Dance St. Louis and Edison's "Ovation" series.

Church

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Vatican's judgment that he was unsuitable to teach Catholic theology. The Catholic University is charted by the papacy and its theological school grants Vatican-authorized degrees. Curran is the first American ever to be so disciplined by Rome.

Considered the best-known Roman Catholic moral theologian in the United States, Curran is the author of 20 books. In 1972 Curran was named the first recipient of the John Courtney Murray Award of the Catholic Theological Society of America for distinguished achievement in theology. He is president of the American Theological Society.

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Valorie Hambley named assistant dean for medical school administration

Valorie J. Hambley, administrator of the Department of Pharmacology, has been named assistant dean for medical school administration at the School of Medicine.

The appointment, effective Feb. 1, was announced by William A. Peck, M.D., vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. This is the second appointment to be made in an administrative reorganization at the School of Medicine.

Hambley's primary responsibilities in this new post are research administration and human resource management.

"Valorie Hambley brings superior talent to the administrative staff," Peck said. "She will play a pivotal role in our efforts to enhance management efficiency and effectiveness.

For the last seven years, Hambley has served as the pharmacology department's administrator, responsible for handling grants, personnel, payroll and compliance. Her role was created as a liaison between researchers, university administration and outside funding agencies, and for a brief period worked as interim co-business manager for the Office of Animal Laboratory Care.

She serves on several committees, including an ad hoc committee of the Executive Faculty for enhancing the University's computerized administration system, the grants budgeting subcommittee of the School of Medicine's administrative systems group, and the University's staff administration salary study committee.

Hambley joined the administrative staff of the Office of Medical Administration in 1976. She became an administrative associate in 1982 and a year later was named departmental administrative assistant.

Hambley received a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 1981 and a master's degree in business administration from Webster University in 1988.

Introductions to new faculty

The Record is featuring a weekly series profiling new faculty on the Hilltop and Medical campuses. The profiles are of faculty members who have joined the University community between January 1989 and September 1989.

Bercengere Marie de Martinville, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics in the Division of Medical Genetics at the School of Medicine, comes to St. Louis from the University of Minnesota, where she had been an assistant professor in genetics and laboratory medicine and pathology.

She received her medical degree in 1973 and a master's degree in biology in 1978, both from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on analysis of the molecular level of mutations leading to the variable expression of X-linked muscular dystrophies with particular emphasis on the Duchenne muscular dystrophy gene.

Ponds — continued from p. 1

"In the 70s, there were actually more urban dwellers giving up their life for the country, especially in the Midwest," Beale says. "The thing to do seemed to be to buy five acres around old farmsteads and commute to work. In the 80s, we see a different concentration, a different demographic. Those who are purchasing in the country may be buying the acreage more for a second home. The acreage often comes in larger tracts. That is happening now is a result of the high proportion of urban people, their affluence and the availability of lots in the country."

Sixton constructed his ponds in the woods of Wyckoff and plans to deliberately fish-free so he can watch his graduate students assess the colonization of amphibian species. He introduced several salamanders, such as the spotted salamander and the wood frog, to see how their populations thrive. Other amphibian species, such as the narrow-mouth salamander, the newt, spring, green frogs and tiger salamanders, will generally invade a pond on their own. But when fish were inadvertently introduced, the amphibian population dwindled.

For a complete wildlife experience, a landowner may wish to consider building a pond without fish, Sixton says. "It's an interesting experiment to see what wildlife you can court. Not every pond needs fish by any means. On the other hand, a pond without fish is likely to attract more bitig and sprinting creatures. In an endeavor such as this, you make your own compromises. But it is heartening to see the appreciation for habitat so many conservation-minded people are

For those tens of thousands of amphibians, Sixton suggests considering their backyard Waldens fish-free. "There is a role in the ecosystem," he says, "yet they may be taken for granted or overlooked."
Thursday, Feb. 15

Friday, Feb. 16

Friday, Feb. 23

MISCELLANY

Wednesday, Feb. 21
8 p.m. Midfield Billboard. "Footprint Patience." a play by Arlene Skumra, Chicago playwright and visiting prof. of Romance languages and literature. (Also Sat., Feb. 24, and Jan 24, 25, same time and place.) Lindenwood Center Drama Studio, Room 208. Cost: $5 for general public, $3 for WU students, $1 for WU faculty and staff. For more info, call 889-6054.

Saturday, Feb. 24

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