

Spectrum

PEOPLE ARE AHEAD OF POLITICIANS

Editorial

People are often ahead of those who govern them and they are definitely ahead of the politicians when it comes to environmental issues. October presents us with one of the unique times when politicians have a more than usual motivation to listen - a civic election. October is also recycling month. If everyone of us talks to all our friends and neighbors, writes letters and engage those running for office in debate, the message might just get through that the people of Vancouver want and are ready for recycling garbage and do not want more landfills and incinerators.

One final thing just in case anyone thinks recycling is just a garbage issue. An awareness of how we on an individual level interact with our environment is vital to effect the changes of attitude necessary to change our society from a consumer society to a conserver society. We can only be effective in saving our air, water and forests when we realize that everyone of our actions has an impact, good or bad, on the world we live in and the world we hope to pass on to our children.



Rediscovery Society -

(P.O. Box 684, Massett, B.C. V0T 1R0)

are selling Lottery Tickets to raise money for a cultural & heritage program for youths of all ages to attend a Haida camp on the West Coast of Queen Charlotte Islands.

1st Prize is a 40' Fiberglass Cabin Cruiser E.M.V. \$85,000

There will be 4,000 tickets sold and if you would like to assist in this fund raising, please write them at the above address.

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DID YOU KNOW???

The Body Shop, Oakridge Mall -- SELLS
NATURAL CLEANING PRODUCTS.

This business is a member of Friends of the Earth (F.O.E.) and is displaying pamphlets and issue sheets on PROTECTING THE OZONE LAYER.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES

The preservation of the environment is every individual's responsibility. Industries must ensure that they dispose of hazardous wastes safely, the individual must also take the same responsibility if they bring harmful substances into their homes.

Household hazardous wastes can be as toxic as those created by industry, and it is up to the consumer to recognize dangerous products, manage them properly, and reduce their use as much as possible.

Commercial products that are harbingers of household hazardous wastes are in almost every backyard, kitchen, bathroom, and garage. Paints, household cleaners, detergents, pesticides, automobile oil and anti-freeze; all make life more convenient, also more dangerous.

Often, household substances contain man-made chemicals which are foreign to nature and therefore cannot be broken down. These chemicals accumulate in organisms and the further they travel up the food chain, the more concentrated they become. A number of health problems may result in affected organisms - from genetic mutations and birth defects to cancer.

Toxic chemicals enter the organisms through ingestion, inhalation or absorbed through the skin. The affects may be immediately apparent or show up years later.

As well as causing illness, household hazardous wastes can be chemically reactive, explosive, or flammable. Given the dangers of these wastes, it is crucial that they are managed properly. There are no regulations regarding this issue, therefore the safe disposal of household hazardous waste depends on the conscience of the individual.

There are a number of ways in which household waste winds up polluting the environment:

- (1) Buried wastes can leach into the soil and contaminate the groundwater.
- (2) Incinerated wastes, some chemicals are not combustible and therefore become concentrated in the ash.
- (3) Burning may also result in explosions and the release of toxic fumes into the atmosphere.
- (4) Flushing or dumping wastes into drains leads to contamination of local water supplies.

Consequently, sending hazardous wastes to the local landfill is a totally irresponsible and inadequate means of disposal. So is dumping wastes into the toilet, the sink, or down sewer drains. While burning, dumping, burying, and flushing may get the wastes out of the house, the toxics have not been eliminated and ultimately they will reappear, most likely in the resource we all take for granted--our water. At this point the individual's waste has become everybody's problem because the toxics are now an environmental issue. Certain measures must be taken in order to prevent environmental damage.

The consumer could minimize the waste problem by:

- (i) purchasing hazardous products in small quantities.
- (ii) giving left-overs to someone who can use them.
- (iii) Store products in their original containers away from children and pets.

Determine proper disposal methods:

- (i) call the makers of the product or the retailer from whom it was purchased.
- (ii) Contact the Ministry of Environment and Parks' waste management offices and inquire about the Special Wastes Disposal program.

Ultimately, the best way to handle hazardous wastes is to eliminate them entirely. We have become accustomed to convenient and time-saving products. NOW we must realize how time-consuming and difficult it is to dispose of toxic wastes. We are better off without the hassles, and the hazards these products leave us faced with.

There are alternatives: for example,

- An all-purpose cleaner can be made with ammonia, vinegar, and baking soda.
- Rather than using extremely toxic commercial pesticides, try using a soap or garlic spray, and let the natural predators, ladybugs, dragonflies, and spiders - live.
- Recognize that there are non-toxic alternatives, and exercise your freedom to use them.

A home is not a vacuum, and how household hazardous wastes are managed can affect the entire environment. Therefore we must act responsibly with this issue by initiating proper disposal programs and by considering the alternatives.

Sources/Further Reading:

- "Stepping Lightly on the Earth", Greenpeace
- "Pest or Guest", SPEC
- "Mother's Guide to Hazardous Household Substances", The Mother Earth News

Heather LeDuc

Volunteer



Awards!

Has your neighbour spent the last year promoting a community recycling program? Or maybe the pulp-mill up the river is producing dioxin-free products. Do you know any person, organization, or industry that's taken significant steps in preserving and/or enhancing the environment? Why not nominate them for an Award from the Minister of the Environment and Parks? These awards are given out each year and nominations can be made in the following categories:

Individual citizen -- youth organization or school group -- citizen's group or organization -- business (industrial, government agency) and environmental education (individual or organization). Submit nomination forms by December 31, 1988 to:

Minister's Environmental Awards,

c/o Information Services Branch,
Ministry of Environment & Parks,
810 Blanshard Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X5

For further info, call the Information Services Branch of the Ministry of Environment & Parks: (604) 387-9422

C.E.P.A.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act was proclaimed on June 30th of this year. The CEPA, "an act respecting the protection of the environment and of human life and health" is designed to protect Canadians from all pollution (air, soil, water, etc.) created by toxic substances. The CEPA is concerned with the entire life cycle of toxic substances, including development, manufacturing, storage, transportation, use and disposal. Environment Minister Tom McMillan has appointed Senior investigation officers in all regional environmental protection offices. The CEPA means stiff controls and, according to McMillan, "The government will get tough with polluters. The Act requires us to take offenders to court and recommends large fines". (up to one million dollars a day; imprisonment up to five years). The Act also guarantees certain rights for Canadians, such as "the right to be informed about proposed regulations, enforcement activities, and about the health and environmental impacts of assessed substances".

For more information on the CEPA, contact:

Sheila Ritchie,
Director, Communications,
Pacific and Yukon Region,
Kapilano 100, Park Royal South,
West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1A2
Phone: (604) 666-5902

AIR QUALITY PROBLEMS

by Pamela Graham

The pure air we need to sustain us used to be taken for granted. Then we began to hear of health problems, dead lakes and rivers, blighted crops and corrosive damage to buildings and materials -- all caused by air pollution.

Now global deterioration of the atmosphere has startled us into an awareness that action must be taken internationally to save life on this planet. The thinning of the ozone layer, with the appearance of periodic holes over the Antarctic -- and now perhaps over the Arctic -- means that the polar cap will melt, causing inundation of coastal areas, river valleys and islands. In addition, the harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun will cause widespread skin cancers and eye damage if they are not blocked out.

Further catastrophic warming will be caused by a thickening blanket of carbon dioxide. This circles the globe, acts like a blanket and causes the greenhouse effect. Areas that now sustain crops and browsing animals will become desert. Soil will blow away. This warming trend will grow as ever-increasing numbers of people use more and more fossil fuels to run industry and transportation, and to heat and cool their houses. The large-scale depletion of forests, especially in the tropics, adds to this.

On a more local level, ozone causes harmful smog in the Fraser Valley. Carbon monoxide can cause health problems near very busy intersections. Nitrogen oxides and particulates contribute to smog.

What can we do? Wring our hands and count on politicians to have the will to take necessary steps, even if they decrease our standard of living and eliminate jobs? No, there is action we could and should take. Anyone can contact his or her government representative or the appropriate minister. It is quite true that governments - federal, provincial, regional or municipal - too often do not take action until people demand it.

Press for such appropriate measures as the following:

1. Chlorofluorocarbons cause ozone depletion in the atmosphere. These are found in foam products, refrigerators, air conditioners, some aerosol sprays (most here now use other propellants such as hydrofluorocarbons) and cleaners for computerchips. Ask the federal government to set a deadline for banning such items. Don't use the foam trays and containers favoured by grocery stores or chains and fast food outlets. Tell the managers that you will ban the products - or stay away - until they demand, and get, safe replacement products. MacDonald's is working towards this and Provigo, a food chain in Montreal, is phasing out foam egg cartons, meat trays, etc.
2. Tell the manager of your grocery store or chain that you want unbleached paper products. These might even be cheaper if the harmful chlorine, used in the bleaching process, is eliminated. Or phone the paper manufacturing company, e.g. Scott Paper of New Westminster, to demand this. (John Phillips: 688-8131).
3. To reduce excessive CO-2; demand a return to action on solar heating, help promote smaller hydro-electric dams that can provide energy for limited areas and reduce use of fossil fuels and fight against slash and other outdoor burning.
4. Write to Marcel Masse, Federal Minister of Energy, and ask him not to approve the permit to B.C. Hydro for export of energy from the Burrard Thermal Generating Plant at Ioco. (A decision may be imminent.) This plant would emit large amounts of nitrogen oxides, a precursor to ozone, the most serious pollutant in the Lower Fraser Valley.

5. Natural ozone in the atmosphere is essential to screen harmful ultraviolet rays, but down here man-made ozone is an irritating, corrosive gas that has reached health and crop-affecting levels. The provincial government should be persuaded to implement two well-studied measures to deal with this -- the I/M program - inspection and maintenance of emissions of in-use motor vehicles, and an air-management program requiring action at specified levels of pollution. The former should be added to the soon-to-be restored mandatory safety program.

ACTION IS NEEDED NOW TO PRESERVE OUR PLANET.

GUESS WHAT !!!

1. In ten years over 60% of the landfill sites in B.C. for garbage will be full.
2. The new garbage incinerator in Burnaby, which cost \$75 million can handle 210,000 tonnes per year, or 20% of the refuse generated in the region.

Between the destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain, water contamination through pesticides, herbicides, industrial waste and garbage, there won't be much left for our grandchildren to enjoy.

S.P.E.C. recently made presentations to, the City of Vancouver Finance and Priorities Committee as well as City Council, to encourage a 'multi-material curbside' program. It seems the city is still at the 'pilot project' stage although information is available from Delta (program in place), Surrey and Victoria (near future programs). As the largest municipality in the province it is a shame Vancouver doesn't even have a timetable as to when a residential recycling program will be implemented.

That doesn't stop each one of us to implement our own though. It will take a little organizing for each one of us but we can reduce our own garbage by 15% if we recycle newspaper, metal, plastic, glass and by 40% if we compost organic matter. As Rene Dubos said 15 years ago -- "Think Globally, Act Locally".

In early October a Recycling Conference will be held in the Vancouver area. Watch for details. This will "Kick-Off" the Recycling month sponsored by G.V.R.D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 3 - 7 "Our Common Future" - Sustainability in the Kootenays Conference, Nelson, B.C. Workshops: Full Employment for our Common Future, Horse Logging, Appropriate Paths and Integrated Forestry Management. More info: (604) 352-9871

August 13 Field Trip to Burms Bog - 10 a.m. Contact Will Paulik 278-5347

August 15-17 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CASINO NIGHTS.

August ?? Demonstration against clearcut logging and pesticides in Nelson. Exact date will be announced. Contact Kootenay Citizens Alternatives to Pesticides, c/o Jose Wake, Argenta, B.C.

September 3 Strathcona Wilderness gathering, Strathcona Park. If you'd like to attend or receive more info: (604) 338-1168.

Sept. 7 - 11 Coho Festival - Park Royal Shopping Centre. Phone: 926-6600.

October 4-5 Recycling Conference - The Villa - Contact Roz Mellander for more information.

October 18-21 Bioqual '88 - Burlington, Ontario

October 25-27 Canadian Waste Management Conference - Toronto, Ontario

November 9-11 Chemicals in the Environment - Whistler, B.C.

November 26-30 Impact '88 - Toronto, Ontario

"NATURE BATS LAST"

Since 1983 Daniel Martineau and Michaele Beland have been doing autopsies on the belugas found in and around the St. Lawrence. These autopsies reveal a wide range of disorders including bronchial pneumonia, hepatitis, perforated gastric ulcers, pulmonary abscesses, bladder cancer and benign tumors. Examination of the blubber revealed exceptionally high levels of polychlorinated biphenals (P.C.B.s), DDT, Mirex. These three pesticides were banned in the mid 70's.

Mirex was the most perplexing find in the whales flesh as its only known source is in the sediments of Lake Ontario and the whales never penetrate this area. It has since been speculated that the belugas picked up Mirex by eating eels that been feeding in Lake Ontario before migrating to the Atlantic Ocean via the St. Lawrence. Mirex provides a striking example of how deadly pollutants travel up the food chain.

Humans as well as beluga whales are at the top of the food chain. Humans on land and belugas in the water. We should be concerned with the information about residue pesticides found in belugas as written in "Harrowsmith" (May-June 1988) because if the recent findings for belugas can be allied to humans we are a walking "time-bomb".

Jorma Jyrkkanen, SPEC member and an Environmental Biologist, has located scientific findings that reveal alarming levels of pesticide residue in mother's milk. Most of the residue are considered carcinogenic. And we thought mother's milk was so nourishing and pure!!!

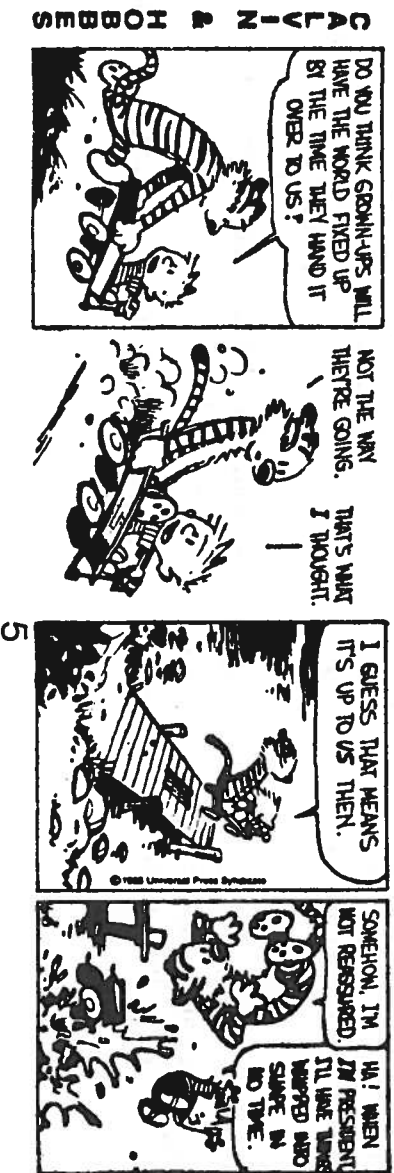
These findings are even more alarming than the findings from the beluga whales. Our future generations primary nourishment at infancy is loaded with carcinogens while their bodies are still developing. It's time we seriously re-evaluated our use of and need for pesticides and herbicides.

The Vancouver School Board is responsible for 90 playing fields. They have established a schedule of weed control which rotates between various schools (usually 6 per year). This year Henry Hudson, Quilchena, Southlands, Simon Fraser, Sexsmith and Britannia were scheduled for pesticide spraying which included the use of ureabor.

Ureabor is made up of three chemicals. Two of the three chemicals sodium chlorate and bromacil (or uracil) are both water soluble. Sodium chlorate is toxic to fish and has been known to cause skin irritation, nasal ulcers, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, shortness of breath.

Bromacil on the other hand can persist in the soil for up to 600 days and is fatal if swallowed. The Herbicide Handbook of the Weed Society of America, Fifth Edition, 1983 states that with both compounds one should get medical attention if any symptoms prevail as it can cause permanent physical damage.

This year the school spraying is just about completed, and the use of ureabor has been cancelled, but next year various School Boards will commence spraying again. If you hear of pesticide spraying please call us as we have medical reports on various pesticides which could help you in cancelling future spraying.



- "person aggrieved" means the person who is the subject of the decision and a person who has suffered or will suffer one or more of the following effects:
- (a) a substantial or unwarranted economic loss;
 - (b) genuine or real denial of some personal or property right;
 - (c) imposition of a burden or obligation which may be unwarranted;
 - (d) substantial risk to his health and safety;
 - but does not include:
 - (e) a personal inconvenience not resulting from a nuisance at common law, or
 - (f) diminution of an aesthetic amenity.

BILL 50, 1988

The above is an excerpt from Bill 50, the Environmental Management Amendment Act, 1988 which was introduced into the B.C. Legislature on June 17th. What is particularly disturbing about Bill 50 is that only a "person aggrieved" can make appeals to the Environment Appeal Board (EAB); therefore, those wishing to act in the public's interest would be left without an avenue of appeal. In a letter to Environment Minister Bruce Strachan, Bill Andrews, Executive Director of the West Coast Environmental Law Association, questions the motivation and the rationale behind this feature of Bill 50. If it is meant to ensure against appeals without merit, the EAB already has enough power to dismiss such appeals. Mr. Andrews also rules out the possibility that the EAB procedure results in unnecessary delay, because the filing of the appeal to the Board does not act as a stay or suspend the operation of a decision being appealed, unless the Chairman directs otherwise. Furthermore, it's not as if the EAB is submerged in appeals; as a matter of fact, there are few appeals compared to the amount of decisions being made.

Why the provincial government intends to eliminate public interest appeals to the EAB is not immediately clear. But it does seem evident that this intention is contrary to the position taken earlier, not only by Mr. Strachan, but also by Premier Vander Zalm when they endorsed the National Task Force on Environment and Economy in September, 1987. As Mr. Andrews points out, the purpose of the Task Force is to 'foster and promote environmentally sound economic development', and a large emphasis is placed on public participation in decisions concerning the environment. In B.C., the EAB is, Mr. Andrews states, "... an important forum for public involvement in environmental decision-making". By rendering the EAB inaccessible to public interest concerns, the provincial government would be at odds with the Task Force it originally endorsed.

Of course, this contradiction would be the least of our worries if Bill 50 passes in its present form. The EAB is our means of challenging government decisions regarding pesticides, waste management, wildlife, and water administration. If the EAB is available only to a "person aggrieved", many groups and individuals who work on behalf of the public would be left without recourse. Therefore we must express our disappointment to Minister Strachan and work to keep public interests represented in the EAB.

Heather LeDuc
Volunteer

"FREE CANADA...TRADE MULLRONEY"