

Pesticide Awareness Day *continued from page 1*

also emphasized the need to re-evaluate pesticides approved when standards were lower than today's. The PMRA has been abysmally slow at getting the process going.

When re-evaluating old and registering new pesticides, standards must emphasize the safety of children and other vulnerable populations. It must look at substances in combination when they have the same mechanism of action, are known to interact or are commonly found together. The Precautionary Principle should guide decision making, particularly when there are safer alternative products. CAPE also emphasized the need for transparency and meaningful public participation. Unless the PMRA serves the public interest above all, changes to laws will not protect human and ecosystem health.

I would like to join CAPE **in working for a healthier environment**

Last Name/First Name _____

Dr Ms. Mr. Miss Mrs. Other _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Membership

- Members \$50
- Supporters (*Honorary mention and a free copy of The Canadian Guide to Health and the Environment*) \$200
- Students, retirees, those with limited income \$25
- Member Organizations (*one vote per organization*) \$50
(*My cheque is made out to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment*)
- I would like updates on CAPE-related activities. Please put me on the CAPENEWS listserv (*for members only*) .
- I want to get involved in CAPE.

Donations

I am sending a donation of:

- \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000 Other _____ to support CAPE's environmental advocacy work (*My cheque is made out to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment*) .
- Please take a monthly donation of \$ _____ from my account on the 1st of each month. (*I have attached a voided cheque and signed below*)

Signature _____

- I would like a charitable tax receipt for my donation. I understand that these donations will only be used for research and education activities. (*My cheque is made out to the Canadian Health and Environment Education and Research Foundation (CHEER)*)
- Check here if you do not want your name shared with other like-minded organizations.

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CAPE's Vice-President on the Move

OUR V-P, IRENA BUKA, TRAVELLED WITH COLLEAGUE (AND CAPE MEMBER) Harold Hoffman to Washington D.C. to attend the Global Forum for Action: Paediatric Environmental Health II, in late September. They presented a paper on the first Paediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit in Canada, which they coordinate in Edmonton. They were able to network with staff from units in the U.S. and 54 other countries.

Subsequently, Irena was to have moved on to The Health Professional Task Force of the International Joint Commission Meeting, slated to gather in Montreal immediately after the Global Forum. But it was cancelled due to the Sept.11 events. (The Task Force has been putting together information and guidelines regarding the consumption of contaminated fish from our lakes and oceans.)

Next on her busy agenda, Irena will represent Canada on the Expert Advisory Panel for the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, part of the NAFTA. There are three representatives from Canada, three from the U.S., and three from Mexico. The first meeting will be held in late November. Initial projects have included an article on lead, which Irena wrote for Trio Magazine, a publication of the Commission on Environmental Cooperation. Further projects will be decided at the first meeting.

Executive Director's Report *continued from page 1*

CAPE and its board members have been very busy this past year, in the community and in the policy arena. But next year will be a crucial time for CAPE. We are making the transition from volunteer to professional organization – with paid staff – and that (of course) will take money. Could you include a \$250, \$500 or \$1000 donation with your next membership renewal, to help CAPE make this transition? Our new Canadian Health and Environment Education and Research (CHEER) Foundation can give out tax receipts to those of you need them.

I wish you all strength in these turbulent times, and energy to do good things for yourself, your loved ones and our Planet in the coming year.

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

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Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment – the national voice of physicians on issues of health & the environment

From the President's Corner

THIS NEWSLETTER OUTLINES THE SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES CAPE HAS MADE IN the last 6 months. Greening health care, pesticides, children's health and climate change have been the major areas of activity where we have worked to impact public policy. I am continually heartened by the ceaseless efforts and commitment of the core membership of this organization. I am grateful for the support of the growing number of physicians, other health professionals, scientists and citizens who support our work both financially and in other ways – often by outstanding work in their own communities.

CAPE's credibility and influence are increasing, despite working with minimal material resources. No better illustration of our advances can be found than our sponsorship of the first-ever ecological footprint of a Canadian hospital, carried out by Susan Germain. Results of this landmark analysis will be published soon.

Since the events of September 11th, North American society has changed palpably. But the principles of social and environmental justice apply now, as much as they did before. Dividing the world into armed camps will not serve to enhance such goals. Those who commit hateful criminal acts must be brought to justice, whoever they are. But this must happen within the rules of international law, the rules within which CAPE operates, and which we strive to improve in order to establish a sustainable world for future generations. We must learn to share this Planet with each other and all other creatures, with compassion and equanimity. May we also remember to do unto others as we would have them do unto us – because in very real ways, they are us.

Warren Bell

Warren Bell, CAPE President

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Children's Environmental Health II: A Global Forum for Action Washington Sept 8-11/01 *David Rosen*

THE SECOND CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT HEALTH NETWORK CONFERENCE, SPONSORED by the U.S. Children's Environmental Health Network, and the Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH), brought together representatives from over 50 countries and the United Nations. The opening address by Dr. David Satcher, the Surgeon General of the U.S. addressed his priorities with regard to children's health – developmental problems, asthma (whose incidence has tripled globally since the 1980's), unintentional injuries, and cancer. He emphasized an oft-repeated theme – the need for longitudinal studies about long-term, low dose exposures of children.

Common themes throughout the conference included:

- Environmental Tobacco smoke
- Indoor and ambient air quality
- Water pollution, both chemical and biological
- Lead, mercury, and other heavy metals
- Persistent organic pollutants (POPs)
- Development neurotoxins
- Health impacts of global climate change
- Poverty and its association with environmental degradation
- Endocrine disrupting chemicals
- Unsustainable urban areas, especially inadequate transportation and planning

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Children's Environmental Health II:A Global Forum for Action *continued from page 1*

We heard how championing the cause of the poor in some countries can lead to political harassment and even death threats. Speakers from India and Bangladesh implored us to consider the role of poverty and the impact of social, political, and industrial policies in this global economy. In Bangladesh, for example, farmers are given subsidies by multinational tobacco companies to plant on prime arable land not foodcrops, but tobacco. In those same countries, cigarette advertising targets teenagers. Worldwide, millions of children live within a short distance of a toxic waste dump.

Physicians with WHO (World Health Organization) are establishing indicators for the monitoring of children's health. Worldwide, 250 million child workers are exposed to toxic hazards, especially in agriculture and manufacturing. It is clear that solutions require national and international cooperation and multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral collaboration.

CAPE was well-represented at the symposium. Alan Abelsohn, Riina Bray, and Lynn Marshall held a workshop examining education resources and curriculum development. Executive Director Kapil Khatter presented a very clear outline of risk assessment and the precautionary principle. Irena Buka and Harold Hoffman contributed to a workshop on the work of Paediatric Environmental Health Clinics. Their clinic, in Edmonton, is the only children's environmental health clinic in Canada. Other Canadians visible included Graham Chance and others from the CICH, several MPs, and representatives of governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The meeting came to an abrupt halt on the morning of Sept 11th, before Hilary Clinton could give the closing address. From the Georgetown University campus we saw smoke drifting from the Pentagon, and watched in horror as events unfolded in New York and Washington.

The most inspiring address came from Rabbi Daniel Swartz, executive director of the CEHN. Rabbi Swartz told of his Muslim father-in-law from Egypt, his Bahai mother-in-law from Iran and Turkey, one daughter from India and a Korean Buddhist sister. He quoted liberally from the New and Old Testaments and the Koran as he envisioned a world safe for children. He closed with a Nigerian Ibo naming tradition:

*"Brothers and sister, a new child is born.
While in the womb, it was one woman's,
Safely delivered, it is everybody's child."*

The third global conference is to be held in Kenya in 2003.

Joint Declaration from Children's Environmental Health II:A Global Forum for Action (Draft)

Nations should commit to rapid and complete implementation of relevant laws that deal with the environmental health threats to children.

The international community should commit to the following actions:

1. International aid programs, national health policies, and community health agencies must vigorously address the environmental problems that contribute to childhood diseases.
2. Governments should commit to mobilizing the necessary resources for increased basic applied and epidemiological research.
3. There is an urgent need for broader education, awareness and training to address environmental problems that exacerbate a child's risk of contracting disease. Child protective standards for water, food, housing, hygiene and sanitation must be developed.
4. Governments and international development assistance agencies should establish comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines that recognize the special vulnerability of children.
5. Governments should enforce ILO standards for children and legal workplace inspections on health and safety practices.
6. Governments and international agencies should commit to actions now with strict timelines for full implementation.

Executive Director's Report

Kapil Khatter

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A YEAR SINCE I BECAME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, A YEAR OF speaking engagements, funding proposals, piles of email, meetings, and meetings (and more meetings).

Our Children's Environmental Health Project is finished. Though it is designed for health practitioners, it is a great resource for anyone interested in children's health. Organized by body system, it also covers environmental history-taking. You can reach it through the CAPE website (www.cape.ca) or at children.cape.ca (no www).

CAPE is building strong relationships with children's environmental groups. The new Children's Environmental Health Partnership is still a toddler, but already a source of information, inspiration and cooperation. This partnership will generate more exciting CAPE activities aimed at protecting and promoting children's health.

In addition, with CAPE as a driving force, the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care has taken giant steps. The first Annual General Meeting is November 5th at 5:30 at the Toronto Convention Centre. You're welcome to attend.

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Greening Health Care: Strides Ahead *Trevor Hancock*

THE CANADIAN COALITION FOR GREEN HEALTH Care, established last November, includes both major national health care organizations (the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian College of Health Service Executives, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Society for Environmental Medicine, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and of course CAPE), and major national environmental organizations (Pollution Probe, the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, the Toronto Environmental Alliance/Health Care Without Harm, Great Lakes United). It also includes major hospitals and other health care institutions.

With funding from HRDC we hired a summer student who developed a website for the Coalition; see www.greenhealthcare.ca

The mission of the Coalition is “to minimize the adverse environmental and human health impacts of Canada's health care system” and its core areas of focus include:

- energy conservation
- pollution prevention
- resource conservation and solid waste reduction
- good indoor air quality
- environmentally-responsible design and management, including both health facility accreditation and ISO14001 certification.

Among the highlights so far:

1. Following representations from CAPE, Health Canada has included the greening of health care in its new sustainable development strategy, tabled in Parliament early in 2001. Dr Trevor Hancock has completed a detailed report for Health Canada's Office of Sustainable Development, identifying key issues around green health care and proposing a national strategy. A shorter version of the report for health care professionals, will be released at the OHA Convention in Toronto in November (*see below*).

2. The Ontario Hospital Association has responded very positively and at the OHA

Convention in Toronto (November 5-7, 2001) there will be:

- a dedicated area of exhibits – called the Green Lane – for environmentally sound products and services
- a Green Health Centre, an exhibit area for the Coalition and its non-profit members, provided at no cost by OHA featuring case studies of environmentally-responsible health care from across Canada; Health Canada has committed funds for this display; additional funding is being sought.
- a 3.5 hour educational session on greening health care, with Elizabeth Witmer - formerly Ontario Minister of Health and now Minister of Environment - giving the keynote. Charlotte Brody, coordinator of Health Care Without Harm in the USA, will join other prominent speakers
- the announcement by the Coalition and the OHA of the Ontario Green Health Care Awards, with Awards in four categories: overall leadership, energy conservation, pollution prevention and community partnership.
- first-ever awards will be presented at the OHA Convention. (Visit the OHA website at www.oha.com, go to the convention link and scroll down to the 'Green Health Care' section for further details)

3. An emerging Ontario “chapter” will turn its energies to monitoring provincial Ministries and other resources. This Ontario chapter is being pulled together by Rich Whate of the Toronto Environmental Alliance/Health Care Without Harm.

4. The Coalition has met with Ontario's Environment Minister (and former Health Minister), Elizabeth Witmer and is preparing a brief for the Provincial and Federal governments on environmentally responsible health care.

5. The Coalition has met with Mr Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner for Ontario, on August 23rd, 2001. Among other things, we asked Mr Miller to under-

take an assessment of the environmental impact of Ontario's health care system, since it is by far the largest single item of government expenditure and thus may represent the largest single component of the government's own environmental impact.

6. The Coalition, through the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, has submitted a proposal to the federal government's Voluntary Sector Initiative for a project to examine the policy dimensions of the adverse impact on the health of health care personnel of environmentally harmful products and processes.

For further information on these or other topics contact the person or organization listed or Dr Trevor Hancock at <thancock@on.aibn.com> or call him at 905 893 2808.

Sept.25 – Pesticide Awareness Day

PESTICIDE AWARENESS DAY BROUGHT TOGETHER many of the Ontario and Quebec-based groups that have been working on pesticide issues. Held in the West Block of Parliament Hill, and featuring a buffet table of delicacies made from low-pesticide apples, the event included a panel of speakers anchored by CAPE's Executive Director.

Charles Caccia, the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, organized the gathering, which straddled a Standing Committee meeting at which CAPE also testified. At both the evening talk and the afternoon presentation, we addressed the need to reform the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), and the need for stronger pesticide legislation.

CAPE called for legislation that takes a precautionary approach, lessens our dependence on synthetic pesticides and encourages sustainable agriculture. CAPE

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