

# tea leaves

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE • AUTUMN 2001



## PESTICIDE PHASE-OUT

*Receive updates about TEA's work  
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# Beach Watch

by Shelley Pettie

A day at the beach shouldn't have to end at the water's edge. Toronto's beaches should be open – every beach, every day. The goal of TEA's new Beach Watch program, launched this summer, is to see clean beaches by the year 2006.

Spend a day at one of our beaches and you'll likely meet TEA's Beach Watch Patrol. Summer students Yasmín Aboelsaud, Carol Ramirez, Andrew Lam, Katarina Savinova, and Oia Sokolowski are visiting all 20 of Toronto's beaches, whether they're open or closed.

"While people are enjoying their day at the beach we're conducting surveys to find out if they're swimming on days when that beach is closed and what actions citizens are willing to take to stop the pollution," says Katarina.

Beach Watch was started in response to a public opinion poll that revealed an alarming lack of awareness around beach closures. "While most Torontonians know beaches are polluted, few can name the reason for the all too common sight of 'Don't Swim' signs – raw sewage," acknowledges Yasmín.

## Beach Pollution Solutions

- **Join Beach Watch**
- **Keep rain out of the drain**  
Let rain soak into the ground and not pour into the storm sewer. Replace your paved driveway with gravel or other porous material. Disconnect your downspout and collect the roof runoff in a rain barrel to water your lawn and garden.
- **Go to [www.city.toronto.on.ca/wateroff/downspout.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/wateroff/downspout.htm) or call (416) 392-1807 for details.**
- **Don't poison the lake at the sewer grate**  
Use organic lawn care products and non-toxic fertilizers like compost or grass clippings. Use chemical-free home cleaners. Wash your car on the lawn or visit a car wash. Scoop your pet's poop or you could be swimming in it later.
- **Call your Councillor**  
Offer to share your parking spot with a tree. Trees and rain gardens in car lots and near roads catch polluted rain water before it gets into the storm sewer and on the lake. Another bonus – trees, grass and plants are also natural filters. Chemicals can remain in hammock swimmers, boats and poison aquatic life.

Sanitary sewers collect household sewage and wastewater and carry it to treatment plants. Storm or street sewers collect rain and surface water runoff and dump it straight into streams, rivers and Lake Ontario.

In some areas of the city these two systems are connected and on



Carol Ramirez, Katarina Savinova, Andrew Lam, Oia Sokolowski, Yasmín Aboelsaud

"Homeowners can help fight smog," encourages Councillor Irina Jones, Etobicoke Lakeshore and the City's Water Advocate, speaking at the launch of Beach Watch on June 28th. We're all responsible for beach pollution – sewage and soapy water from our homes, pesticides and fertilizers from our lawns, and chemicals we clean with that can't be removed at treatment plants.

rainy days storm water and sewage mix in pipes that are too small for both sources. As a result, the pipes overflow into the streams and rivers bringing raw sewage and chemicals straight to the beach.

After a downpour, bacteria in sewage, such as E. coli, closes beaches immediately. It can take three days before bacteria disappear. Swimming in sewage-contaminated water can cause skin rashes, eye and throat infections, stomach aches and diarrhea. Young children, the elderly and those with suppressed immune systems are at even greater risk.

### Improving Awareness

So far, Beach Watch has talked to hundreds of residents and tourists. "Everyone is eager to talk, they want their beach cleaned up and they want to help," remarks Andrew. "But we've also seen people, including children, swimming at beaches that have tested over the limit for sewage contamination and signs are up warning citizens to stay out of the water," cautions Carol.

Early survey results indicate that citizens are willing to disconnect their roof downspouts (rain gutters) from the sewer system. And the majority of people won't swim when a beach is closed. "Still citizens are unaware of the City's beach hotline where they can get a daily update on which beaches are safe to swim at," adds Oia. The hotline number is (416) 392-7161.

## ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ALLIANCE (416) 596-7989

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(705) 335-0628
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  - Natural Insect Control (NIC) (Stevensville)**  
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  - Eco Organic Turf Sciences (Burlington)**  
(905) 639-5592, [www.beautifytgroup.com](http://www.beautifytgroup.com) (aquaticides)
  - Koppert Canada**  
(416) 291-0040, [www.koppert.com](http://www.koppert.com) (predatory insects, nematodes, beneficial insects)

## Record Breaking Smog Smothers Toronto Residents

Smog season opened earlier than ever this year. By the end of May 2001 we'd seen more smog days than in all of 2000. June and July were even worse.

This is bad news for anyone who breathes. It is particularly bad news for the most vulnerable – children, seniors, and people with respiratory problems such as asthma or heart ailments – who account for most of the estimated 1,000 premature deaths each year in Toronto due to air pollution.

More bad news arrived in early July, when the provincial government reneged on its promise to retrofit the coal-fired Lakeview electricity generating stations with high-efficiency gas burners. They will be switching off coal, but will keep the old burners, doubling the amount of pollution and greenhouse gases coming out of Lakeview relative to modern, high-efficiency gas burners.

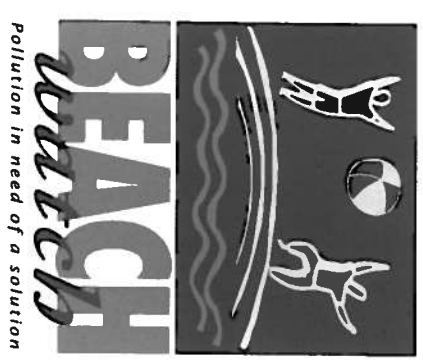
The good news is that TEA continues to fight for cleaner air. Recent successes include:

- Organizing the first-ever Canadian Green Power Trade Show.
- Release of the *Green Report Card on Electricity Restructuring in Ontario* which assesses the provincial government's plan for opening of the electricity market to competition and suggests how to promote green power such as wind and solar energy.
- Helping set up the Clean Air Renewable Energy coalition of leading environmental groups, municipal governments and industry which is pressing the federal government to combat global warming and urban smog through tax breaks for individuals and companies that use or develop greener sources of power.
- Effective pressure from the Rocket Rider Transit Users' Group resulting in increased funding from the City for the TTC.
- Keeping smog and climate change on the public agenda through awareness-raising and media work.

To find out more, check out TEA's all-new smog and climate change web-page in the campaigns section at [www.torontoenvironment.org](http://www.torontoenvironment.org).

"Clean air enhances the quality of life in Ontario. As physicians, we see people's health seriously affected by air pollution on a daily basis, in particular the elderly and children," says Dr. Kenneth Sky, President of the Ontario Medical Association.

"Governments need to move further and faster in their efforts to reduce air pollution and help improve the health of their citizens."



# Zero Waste By 2010

by Katrina Miller

**Toronto is putting a new face on waste.** Spurred by the controversy surrounding the proposed Adams Mine landfill site last fall, the city has decided to get tough with the amount of garbage we ship to dumps.

The outcry against the Adams Mine site emerged during the municipal elections in November 2000, with garbage proving to be a central concern for voters. When the plan to ship Toronto's garbage north to the mine was rescinded at the eleventh hour, leaders knew other alternatives had to be found.

To that end, Mayor Lastman created the Waste Diversion Task Force 2010 to be co-chaired by the Mayor and Councillor Betty Disero, Chair of Works and Emergency Services. The aim of the force is to develop a detailed plan to reach Council's waste diversion commitments of 30% by 2003; 60% by 2006; 90% by 2009; and 100% by 2010.

The Task Force report, released in June 2001, outlined what it learned from consultations with the public, environmental groups and industry. The news was good – not only was waste diversion possible, it was also fiscally realistic. Further, the commitment was clearly there from Toronto residents.

"There will be some tough choices for Toronto to make, but at the end of the day, we must become a leader in North America by dealing with this challenge head on," said Councillor Disero in the report.

Should City Council decide to go ahead with the report's recommendations, residents can look forward to the following improvements:

"40% of what we now throw out can be turned into valuable compost for parks & gardens."

Gord Parks, TEA

## Curbside Organics Collection

Starting in the spring of 2002, the city will phase-in curbside collection of organics, beginning with 170,000 single-family homes. These compostables will be taken to an anaerobic digestion plant that will turn organic refuse into high-quality, marketable compost for gardens, and methane gas for electricity generation. With the cost just slightly more than shipping garbage to landfill sites, the service is expected to be citywide by 2005.

## 1.0. Take It Back

TEA will partner with Earthday Canada and the City of Toronto to provide citizens with a free catalogue of stores that will take back everything from used paint, oil, and other household hazardous wastes. Modelled after Ottawa's "Take It Back" program, the initiative will encourage retailers to take responsibility for the products they sell, including their safe disposal.

## Show your Support!

Passed by City Council "in principle", the Task Force report will go to staff for further detailing and then to Council for final approval in October. Until then, City Councillors need to be reminded that citizens want to see Toronto deal responsibly with its waste. Give your councillor a call, or write a letter in support of the Task Force recommendations. And don't forget to cc TEA!

To find out more about the City's waste diversion plan you can attend public meetings scheduled for the fall, or check out the Task Force report at [www.city.toronto.on.ca](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca).

And remember... garbage is a resource that shouldn't be trashed. ■

*Katrina Miller works on waste reduction issues at TEA.*

## City Council Commits to Groundbreaking Cancer Prevention Plan

TEA and the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition are celebrating Toronto's recent commitment to cancer prevention. In response to a blueprint developed by the coalition, the City's Medical Officer of Health will convene a roundtable of experts to discuss a plan that would significantly decrease exposure to carcinogens such as dioxin, dry-cleaning solvents, diesel exhaust and pesticides.

The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition is a network of health care organizations, public health agencies, labour unions, environmental groups and citizens.

TEA and the Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers chaired the coalition's Environmental and Occupational working group.

The group issued a report, "*Preventing Occupational and Environmental Cancer: A Strategy for Toronto*" that recommends the City:

- follow the precautionary principle, the weight of evidence approach, pollution prevention, just transition for workers and the community's right to know in all its activities
  - implement a community "right-to-know" bylaw
  - phase out the use and/or release of eight key carcinogens – benzene, diesel exhaust, dioxin, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, perchloroethylene, methylene chloride, asbestos and pesticides
  - become a "model employer" by quantifying and eliminating carcinogens in its operations
  - advocate for a strong provincial role in reducing occupational and environmental exposures to cancer-causing substances.
- These recommendations complemented those of other coalition working groups looking at dietary risk factors, alcohol, tobacco, ultraviolet radiation, physical inactivity and reproductive factors.
- Environmental pollution and occupation have not historically been considered significant cancer risk factors, despite strong evidence to the contrary.

The "*Preventing Occupational and Environmental Cancer: A Strategy for Toronto*" report is available from TEA and online at the Workers' Health and Safety Centre [www.whsc.on.ca/communities.html](http://www.whsc.on.ca/communities.html). Click on "workplace cancer" to download report. ■

## Health Update – Vital Signs Report Offers Snapshot of Toronto's Environmental Health

by Rich Whate

**W**hat do air pollution, beach closings and recycling tell us about our health and prosperity? "Vital Signs: The Vitality of the Greater Toronto Area" reveals a city in need of improvement.

The report, released in early May, was produced by TEA, the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund, the Toronto Community Foundation and the Canadian Urban Institute, among others. It blends environmental, economic and social indicators in the Greater Toronto Area to produce a snapshot of the health of our region. For citizens and governments, it's a call to action to protect our air and water.

To find out more about the "Vital Signs" report visit [www.torontovitalsigns.com](http://www.torontovitalsigns.com). Tell your friends and get involved!

## Volunteering at TEA

by Kale Broadhagen

**O**ver the last several months TEA has benefited enormously from the hours of time donated by our volunteers. Not only have they contributed to the success of our campaigns, they've also been the backbone of day to day operations.

This fall TEA will be starting a bi-weekly volunteer email update that will allow current volunteers to stay in touch, and provide potential volunteers with information about what types of opportunities are available at TEA.

Our volunteers are a diverse group, with some of them new to Canada. They all want to learn more about Toronto's environmental issues and what they can do to help the city go green.

## Come Volunteer!

In August, TEA will begin work on its "T.O. Take It Back" initiative. This is a citywide project to encourage retailers to take back products after the consumer has finished with them (see "Zero Waste By 2010" p. 4). There are thousands of businesses to contact, so we need all the help we can get!

Following that, TEA will be holding volunteer training workshops in the fall. For more information, please contact the office this fall.

So thanks to everyone for all your time and energy. Your work at TEA really does make a difference!

If you're interested in being a volunteer or attending one of TEA's workshops, please call the office at (416) 596-0660 or e-mail: [tea@torontoenvironment.org](mailto:tea@torontoenvironment.org)

*Kale Broadhagen is TEA's Community Outreach Coordinator.*

## TEA's volunteers have:

- improved our member services
- expanded our community outreach ability
- performed valuable research and data analysis
- updated our website
- become actively involved in Rocket Riders; and campaigns to reduce waste and pesticide use
- joined our summer Beach Watch Patrol to educate residents about pollution
- translated information brochures

# Become a part of Tea

**TEA has many volunteers who work with us every day or come to our regular meetings. Get involved by giving us a call or work on an issue that interests you. Please call us at (416) 596-0660**

RICH WHATE/KATRINA MILLER, Pesticide Reduction Caucus

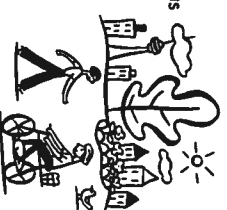
GORD PERKS, Waste Reduction Caucus

MARJORIE NICHOL, Rocket Riders Caucus

SHELLEY PERRE, Water Caucus

KEITH STEWART, Smog and Climate Change Caucus

KALE BROADHAGEN, Youth Caucus



# Ecuador's New Oil Pipeline Project

by Sheila Jarrin

**T**EA has called on the Alberta Energy Company to withdraw from its participation in a proposed new oil pipeline in Ecuador. The Calgary-based company is the lead investor in the \$1.1 billion dollar project which plans to build a 500 kilometre-long pipeline to transport heavy crude from Ecuador's Amazon rainforest, across the Andes mountains to the Pacific Coast.

The construction of the pipeline has been opposed in Ecuador by TEA's partner group Accion Ecologica and a coalition of indigenous groups, human rights organizations and local populations who have expressed concern over the potential environmental and social impacts. The proposed pipeline would jeopardize the future of fragile ecosystems, endangered species, and dozens of communities along the route. The increased petroleum production required to fill the pipeline would also negatively impact the indigenous peoples and ecosystems of the Amazon rainforest.

In order to fill the new pipeline, Ecuador's current oil production would have to double to 450,000 barrels per day and hundreds of new oil wells and flow lines would be built from existing oil concessions. These activities threaten protected areas such as Yasuni National Park, Caysheno Wildlife Reserve and the Limoncacha and Panacocha Biological Reserves. Moreover, this development will also negatively affect the territories of Achuar, Shuar, Huaorani, Quichua, Shiwari, and Zapara.

Indigenous communities in these areas have already faced the negative impacts of more than 30 years of petroleum exploitation including loss of ancestral

territories, traditional practices and even the extinction of entire cultures like those of the Tereces and the Sansahuari. In addition, the pipeline would endanger communities living alongside the country's principal oil refineries in the coastal province of Esmeraldas. Finally, along with threatening fragile areas, the pipeline would increase our reliance on oil – the main fossil fuel responsible for climate change.

The route chosen by the pipeline consortium would affect 18 protected areas and would traverse ecologically sensitive areas such as the Mindo Nambillo Cloudforest, the first area in South America to be declared an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International. This area in danger is the habitat of more than 450 species of birds (30 of them endemic, 5 threatened, 7 almost threatened at a world-wide level) and one in critical danger of extinction). A large number of amphibians, reptiles, insects, butterflies, plants and mammals also live in the zone. Construction of the heavy crude pipeline would increase the risks of landslides and erosion in this delicate area of primary forest. Furthermore, the pipeline poses a threat to the eco-tourism industry.

Prominent Ecuadorian, international, environmental and human rights organizations have shown a strong opposition to the proposed pipeline. They're also critical of the Ecuadorian government for failing to fully assess the long-term adverse effects of oil exploration. On May 11, a letter signed by 17 international organizations was sent to J.P. Morgan Chase, Citigroup and Deutsche, the pipeline's financiers, asking them to withdraw from the project.



The Ecuadorian government is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to build the new pipeline in order to help pay the foreign debt. Ecuador's president, Gustavo Noboa, says the project will boost Ecuador's economy by \$2 billion – by increasing its oil exports, which already comprise 40% of its total exports.

Meanwhile in Ecuador, a growing group of indigenous activists like the National Indigenous Peoples Council of Ecuador are working with environmental groups like Accion Ecologica to prevent the construction of the pipeline. On May 11, two thousand people participated in a protest against the pipeline and a legal petition for a constitutional injunction was filed by seven organizations including Accion Ecologica and the Association of Professionals of Petroecuador.

Unfortunately, on June 6, 2001 the Second Court of the Constitutional Tribunal in Quito ruled against the injunction. However, that same day, concerned groups appealed the decision and plan on taking it before the International Courts.

On June 7, the Ecuadorian government issued an environmental approval to the pipeline consortium and still waits the signing of it by one consortium member and the mayor of Quito, Pacho Moncayo. Despite these occurrences, the environmental groups against the project have vowed to stay firm on their position. As of early June, 50,000 people had said **NO** to the pipeline project. ■

*Sheila Jarrin is a student in the environment program at the University of Toronto. She is doing a student placement at TEA as part of her course work.*

## Building Local Resistance To Globalization: TEA goes to the People's Summit of the Americas

by Keith Stewart

**The irony was lost on no one.** Quebec City – the oldest walled city in North America – had to be rebuilt as the continent's newest fortress in order for the leaders from 34 countries of the Western Hemisphere to gather to negotiate the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

The proposed FTAA has created such strong opposition – and triggered the largest security operation in peacetime Canadian history – because the stakes are so high. If enacted, it could give transnational corporations unequalled new 'rights' that would remove or limit the ability of governments at every level to create or maintain laws and regulations protecting the health, safety and well-being of their citizens, and the environment they share. It reinforces a growth model that demands the ever-faster extraction of resources and the creation of unnecessary waste, without truly meeting human needs.

But the FTAA is not simply an international phenomenon. It could severely limit what our local government here in Toronto is allowed to do to protect our environment and our health, and force the privatization of public services. Making the links between local activism and 'summit hopping' – participating in alternative summits and street demonstrations wherever new trade deals are being negotiated – is a challenging, but necessary task in today's world.

To help make these links, environmental, human rights, social justice, women's and indigenous movements from across the hemisphere came together in the 'People's Summit' that was designed to parallel the official summit and propose alternatives to corporate-led globalization (see "What We Want" box).

I participated in the Environment Forum of the People's Summit with Ivonne Ramos and Gloria Chicritz of Accion Ecologica. TEA has been working with Accion Ecologica since 1993, and in the last three years we've focused on the global links between our respective local struggles to combat climate change (see "Ecuador's New Oil Pipeline Project" on p. 6).

At the Environment Forum, we talked about the big issues – new investor rights, the undermining of democracy and human rights, and the relentless appetite for natural resources. But we also talked about the links between TEA's actions to support public transit and green power in Toronto and Accion Ecologica's campaign to keep oil companies out of the ecological reserves and indigenous lands in Ecuador's Amazon rainforest. And we marched peacefully, side-by-side, through the streets of Quebec City to make our voices heard.

The teargas may have stolen the headlines, but the real story was about our combined efforts, grounded in local activism but with an awareness of the global context. ■

*Keith Stewart is TEA's Smog and Climate Change campaigner.*

## From the Declaration of the Second People's Summit of the Americas

Québec, April 19, 2001

### WHAT WE WANT

- We want to build bridges between the peoples of the Americas, draw on the pluralism of our histories and our cultures and to strengthen each other in the exercising of a representative and participatory democracy. We want to share the same passion for an absolute respect of human rights and the same commitment to have these rights respected. We want to live together in true equality between men and women, to take care of all our children and to share the wealth fairly and in solidarity.
- We want complete respect for workers rights, trade union rights and collective bargaining.
- We want to ensure the primacy of human rights and collectives' rights as defined in international instruments over commercial agreements.
- We want states that promote the common good and that are able to intervene actively to ensure the respect of rights. We want states to strengthen democracy, to ensure the production and distribution of wealth, to guarantee universal and free access to quality public education, and to health care particularly concerning women's reproductive rights. We want states to eliminate violence against women and children and to ensure respect for the environment on behalf of current and future generations.
- We want socially productive and ecologically responsible investment. The rules applied across the continent should encourage foreign investors who will guarantee the creation of quality jobs, sustainable production and economic stability, while blocking speculative investments.
- We want fair trade.
- We welcome the conclusions of the deliberations of the different forums in the People's Summit. These reflections will be integrated into the Alternatives for the Americas document.
- We call upon the peoples of the Americas to intensify their mobilization to fight the FTAA project and to build other integration alternatives based on democracy, social justice and sustainable development.

### ANOTHER AMERICAS IS POSSIBLE!

- possible extinction of threatened species due to habitat loss
- erosion caused by opening the way for new routes
- oil spills provoked by pipeline breakage
- climate change
- deforestation
- loss of bio-diversity
- water contamination which affects hydrologic cycles and aquatic species
- material losses for indigenous people due to crop damage, cattle death, sickness and birth defects
- pipeline breakage due to high seismic and volcanic activity
- fires caused by oil spills
- threats to the eco-tourism industry



# The Canadian Coalition For Green Healthcare: A New Environmental Movement

by Rich Whate

Recent issues of "TEA Leaves" have looked at our efforts to reduce the negative impact of hospital practices. At issue are adverse effects to the environment and human health. To address these concerns TEA and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment have co-founded the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare.

A large number of health care workers are represented through the coalition including: the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian College of Family Physicians, the Canadian Society of Environmental Medicine, the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention and Great Lakes United.

A provincial arm of the new coalition – the Ontario Coalition for Green Healthcare – includes the Hospital for Sick Children, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, the Environmental Health Clinic at Sunnybrook and Women's Health Sciences Centre, the Ontario College of Family Physicians and Pollution Probe.

The Coalition is a partnership born of necessity. Hospital incinerators release dioxin and mercury when recyclables and non-pathogenic medical wastes are unnecessarily burned. Hospitals consume tremendous amounts of energy and are large emitters of greenhouse gases. In many facilities, products and processes contribute to poor indoor air quality, and landscaping involves pesticide use. Vinyl use can expose highly vulnerable patients, such as infants, to toxic plasticizers called phthalates. Raising awareness is our first task, but a large challenge is to encourage governments to reward hospitals for environmental initiatives. As underfunded hospitals and over-worked staff struggle to meet patients' needs, there are few incentives to implement and maintain important environmental programs.

Our Coalition partners understand that hospitals are potent symbols of our commitment to health, and that environmental protection is key to this commitment. And they lead by example – the Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association recently renewed their joint "Position Statement on Environmental Responsibility in the Health Care Sector" and our hospital members have made public commitments to reduce mercury and save energy.

The Coalition has joined with the Ontario Hospital Association to promote a "green" theme at its Annual Convention and Exhibition on November 5-7, 2001 in Toronto. The convention's "Green Lane" will showcase environmental vendors and our "Green Health Centre" will profile hospital leaders. Ontario Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer will deliver the keynote address at our educational presentation on November 6th. Environmental innovators from Canada and the United States will follow the Minister to engage participants in sharing ideas for innovation.

TEA is extremely grateful to all of our Coalition and funding partners in this effort, in particular the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, the Ontario Hospital Association and Health Care Without Harm.

For more information, contact Rich Whate at (416) 596-0660, or by email at rich@torontoenvironment.org or visit the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare at [www.greenhealthcare.ca](http://www.greenhealthcare.ca)

*Rich Whate is TEA's Toxic Campaigner and the Canadian coordinator for Health Care Without Harm.*

## Sustainable Toronto

by Colette Boileau

Sustainable Toronto is an innovative collaboration – a meeting ground for academics and community activists. Graduate students from U of T and York University are now working with environmental and social activists to encourage research on sustainability and to determine how the City of Toronto can promote responsible growth.

For our part, TEA has formed a close alliance with York's Centre for Applied Sustainability. Over the summer of 2001 we'll be documenting past environmental campaigns to identify successful strategies that we can bring to City Hall.

For those interested in sustainable growth, TEA will be hosting related workshops this fall. For more information call TEA at (416) 596-0660 or visit [www.sustainabletoronto.ca](http://www.sustainabletoronto.ca).

### Cracks In Accountability

Federal and provincial downloading of services has resulted in confusion and lack of accountability. With municipal and voluntary sectors scrambling to pick up the pieces, crucial decisions

regarding the environment are being delayed, overlooked or passed along to the private sector. Pressing issues such as pesticide spraying, water quality monitoring, and the clean up of contaminated lands are in danger of falling through the cracks.

Downloading has ramifications for groups like TEA. When educating citizens, or working with them to improve local environments, we need to be clear about our options, and where to direct our concerns and comments. By studying examples of the world-wide trend toward downloading we'll be able to prepare for the consequences, while charting a new course toward finding solutions.



... continued on p. 11

## KEEP IN TOUCH

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## tea leaves

is produced by the Toronto Environmental Alliance twice a year. If you have any announcements, comments, or would like to submit an article, please contact us.

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Smog and Climate Smog: Keith Stewart  
Waste Reduction: Gord Perks  
Outreach Coordinator: Katie Broedhagen  
Rocket Riders: Margorie Nichol  
Waste and Pesticides: Kerriina Miller

## Rocket Riders on the TTC

by Gord Perks

We all know the bad news: TTC fares have gone up, again. Service levels still leave us packed in like cattle or waiting longer and longer for the bus or streetcar. The province still does not support transit.

The good news is that in a year of budget cuts at the City, the TTC didn't suffer any further cuts to its operating budget – a first in many years. The Rocket Riders were instrumental in protecting the TTC budget through its pre-budget campaigns. We think from here on the news will keep getting better. The brightest feature on the horizon is the City's draft official plan which puts a heavy emphasis on expanding transit ridership and transit oriented land-use.

Rocket Riders have undertaken some key campaigns to build the TTC. Our ongoing work on the King streetcar line is bearing fruit. The campaign began last year with a survey of passenger loadings on the busy route. Local residents' associations were also active in the campaign. Now the TTC has developed a streetcar-only concept for downtown King Street. We will be active in moving this concept forward, and proposing more initiatives to give TTC vehicles a quicker trip through city streets.

We have formally created the Scarborough branch of the Rocket Riders and are planning a major launch event in the fall. Finally, we have been supporting the Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees (H.E.R.E.) local 75 campaign to get an employer funded transit pass for all their members. Rocket Riders are always looking for more members. If you're interested you can email us at [rocketriders@yahoo.com](mailto:rocketriders@yahoo.com) or call (416) 596-0500. Monthly meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at City Hall, 100 Queen Street West. ■

*Gord Perks campaigns for better transit in Toronto and transit driven growth in the GTA. Margorie Nichol, a TEA volunteer, coordinates the Rocket Riders.*

## tea PUBLICATIONS

### PAMPHLETS & FACTSHEETS

VIDEOS (Also available in public libraries)

#### NEW – Are You Drinking Pesticides? A

warning that common lawn pesticides have been found in Toronto waters.

#### NEW – What's the Buzz about Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus? Get

informed about pesticides and the West Nile Virus.

#### NEW – Beach Watch:

Join the campaign for Toronto clean beaches by 2006.

#### SMOG ALERT! How to protect yourself and reduce emissions. FREE

"Our Changing Climate" Junior Level Curriculum Unit: A curriculum unit on climate change designed for teachers of junior-level students.

Return to Re-use: A look at deposit return systems to reduce waste and save taxpayers money.

User Pay: User pay for residential garbage neither reduces waste nor saves money – find out the better alternatives.

Pesticide-free Zone Kit: Outlines alternatives to lawn and pesticides and provides tips on how to talk to your neighbors. \$3.00

Green Lawns: A guide to environmentally-friendly lawn care. FREE

Use It, Re-Use It: The guide to reuse, repair and rental businesses in Toronto. FREE

**Growing Like a Weed:** Explores the issue of urban pesticide use and possible health effects caused by these chemicals. Illustrates chemical-free lawn care. \$15.00

**Great Lakes – Great Lawns:** Views from community activists and homeowners around the Great Lakes basin and their efforts and successes in eliminating pesticide use. \$15.00

**Auto Demolition – Avenues of Change:** Background on current transportation issues and sustainable alternatives. \$15.00

### REPORTS

**NEW – Green Report Card on Electricity Restructuring:** Critique of the Ontario government's plan for deregulating electricity.

**NEW – Mercury thermometers and your family health (booklet)**

**NEW – Health Care Without Harm Report:** National exposure to DEHP and opportunities for prevention.

**What's Wrong with Ontario's Smog Plan? FREE**

**Key Findings on Ground-Level Ozone: Health and Smog Report. FREE**  
**City of Toronto Smog Report Card. FREE**

## TEA Annual General Meeting: Milestones and Farewells

On July 12, TEA and friends gathered at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) to celebrate our achievements over the past year and ponder opportunities in the coming year. It was a tremendous year, with surprising twists and turns for TEA and environmental protection up to the very end.

### Environmental Milestones

The year was significant in the landmark victories that seemed to come in a flood:

- **Smog Victory:** The involvement of TEA's Executive Director Lois Corbett as a delegate in the Canada-US negotiations held in Washington, DC, resulted in the incorporation of reductions to emissions of smog causing pollutants in the agreement.
- **Cleaning up the Water:** TEA was influential in guiding the city towards one of the most progressive sewage/sewer use bylaws ever passed by a city, which greatly reduces the amount of toxic chemicals dumped into Lake Ontario.
- **Pesticide Win:** The Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged that it was within a municipality's purvey to ban pesticides on private property – TEA was instrumental in this defence.

- **Adam's Mine Dump Stopped:** The water-filled pit in Northern Ontario will likely never see a tonne of Toronto's garbage. The defeat of the dump was a huge victory for the environment and an end to a 10-year campaign for TEA.
- **City Turns to Composting:** Following the Adam's Mine defeat and publication of TEA/CUPE waste diversion report the City is now rolling out its first ever curbside organic (compost) pick up program.

The TEA Board and staff wish Lois Corbett, our widely respected Executive Director all the best as she leaves TEA and joins LURA Consulting Inc. Lois, TEA's first official staffperson hired in 1992, led a fledgling group to maturity over the past decade. Her presence and quick mind have helped TEA become the leading environmental group in Toronto.

Janet May, TEA's long standing campaigner to replace lawn and garden pesticide use with organic alternatives, is moving to Toronto Public Health. Well known and cherished by environmental groups across the province, Janet will help steer the City towards adopting a bylaw to phase-out all cosmetic spraying of pesticides in Toronto.

We extend thanks to everyone who attended their send-off parties and those who sent well wishes. Shelley Perrie takes on the position of Acting Executive Director and Rich Whate picks up the reins as TEA's Pesticide Reduction Campaigner.

The faces at TEA may change but our goals and work never will. TEA has been involved behind the scenes when the need required a positive, policy development approach. We were out front and making noise when the situation required an attitudinal change.

November's municipal election brought TEA volunteers to the front steps of many residents to discuss new environmental policies and programs needed at the City. We partnered in a Community Arts Project, with local artists and frontline CUPE garbage workers – painting murals on three garbage trucks to act as a reminder to citizens about their waste. Our Repair Our Air campaign broadcast messages on the health effects of smog on 16 GTA radio stations and commuter and special interest newspapers. Over the summer we reached over 9 million listeners.

Membership in Rocket Riders doubled to 300 and volunteers at TEA broke a record at 120. With the addition of Kale Broadhagen as our Outreach Coordinator we hope to meet even more Toronto residents and community groups in the coming months. ■



Dr. Sheila Basrur tries on TEA's Beach Watch cap after addressing the AGM.

### Links between Health and the Environment

Dr. Sheila Basrur, Medical Officer of Health at the City of Toronto was invited to give the Key Note Address at the AGM. Entitled "Public Health and the Urban Environment: Current issues and future directions" Dr. Basrur affirmed the value Toronto Public Health places in working with community groups to support joint initiatives to protect health and the environment such as – cancer prevention, air quality and pesticides phase-out on public parks.

Dr. Basrur noted that amalgamation has created one large health department with increased influence to integrate preventative public health policies across the city and within city departments. Still fiscal restraints and heavy reliance on the province for funding, coupled with the need to tackle socially progressive issues such as smog, require an even stronger link be made between health and the environment in city policies and among the greater community.

### KEY NOTE ADDRESS

*A special thanks goes out to all the funders who supported our work over the last year. Your financial support and advice to TEA was very generous. Thank you as well to the Board, all the staff and our dedicated volunteers.*

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### The Fight Against Pesticides – What Can You Do? ... continued from p. 1

1. Come to our next planning meeting hosted by TEA's Pesticide Reduction Caucus. For more information contact Rich Whate at (416) 596-0660.
2. Let your councillor and Mayor Lastman know that pesticides are not necessary for beautiful lawns and gardens. Letters can be sent to Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2. Call Access Toronto at (416) 338-0338 for the phone number of your city councillor.
3. Send your councillor a photograph of your pesticide-free landscape. If you have an extra photo, send it to us. We would like to present an album of organic gardens to our elected representatives.
4. Order educational brochures from TEA to distribute to neighbours, daycares, co-workers or parish members.
5. Display a pesticide-free lawn sign on your front yard. Order a free sign from TEA.
6. If you're having weed or bug problems call the Organic Landscape Alliance, (416) 596-7989 for a list of companies that can help.
7. Write a letter or submit an article to your local newspaper on how your lawn thrives without chemicals. ■

*Janet May is TEA's Pesticide Campaigner. She is responsible for gaining community support for the City's pesticide-free parks and has been pursuing a pesticide phase-out of all cosmetic uses for the past ten years. TEA congratulates Janet on her win!*

### Sustainable Toronto ... continued from p. 8

TEA will also be looking at community capacity building tools to reach out to citizens and encourage them to become involved in environmental decision-making. It's an important effort as the City of Toronto recognizes that strong public participation leads to better government policies and programs.

For comments or questions, contact Colette Boileau at TEA (416) 596-0660, or email [colette\\_boileau@hotmail.com](mailto:colette_boileau@hotmail.com) ■

*Colette Boileau is a research assistant with Sustainable Toronto, a project of the Community University Research Alliance, and is completing her Masters Degree at York University in Environmental Studies.*

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tea

You can contribute to TEA's work and the environment by making a donation. And because we are largely a volunteer organization every dollar goes a long way. TEA will keep you up to date on our accomplishments through TEAleaves, "What's Brewing Action Alerts" and our publications. Please check your donation below.

TEA does not have charitable status, therefore we cannot issue you a tax-deductible receipt.

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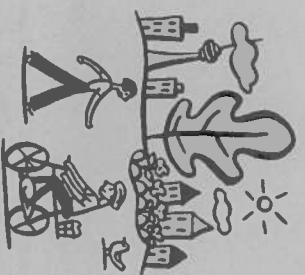
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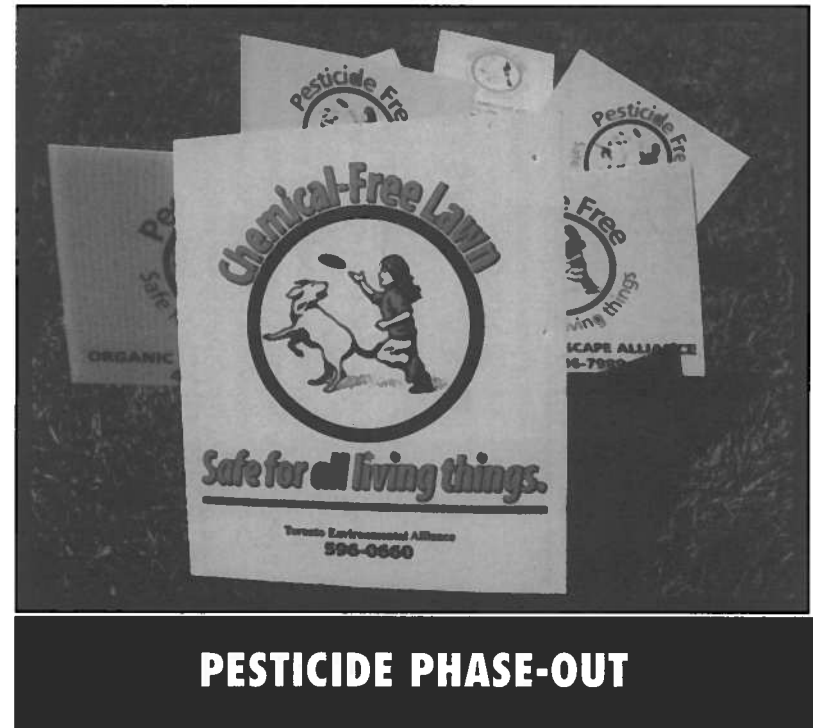
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