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B E T W E E N T H E
i s s u e s

BETWEEN THE COVERS:

Geoff Regan et al

Urban Agriculture

Fern Lane



an ecology action centre publication

www.ecologyaction.ca

PM 4005 0204

Before the Renovation

Fern Lane Aug 2005

[www.ecologyaction/
newhome](http://www.ecologyaction/newhome)



graffitti, window, pipe

BETWEEN THE ISSUES

VOL. 23 NO. 3

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letterstothecentre

A matter of safety



nick bevan-john

While I support the principle of more support for biking in the city, I believe there is a large learning curve needed to have compatible interaction between bikes and pedestrians and bikes and cars. I have had some close calls as a pedestrian with a tandem [of bicycles] passing me on a sidewalk, one on each side with only a millisecond of warning; a child roaring off a sidewalk into a crosswalk straight at me. As a driver I have a right turn on a just turned light as a cyclist roared up on my right side. Bikers, if they are going to share the road must abide by the rules, signalling; not driving the wrong way on one way streets and using lights at night. Yes. Drivers must be vigilant for bikers.

Tom Creighton, Fuller Terrace

EAC Response

If I understand correctly, you are one of many who are frustrated with cyclists, yet, recognise that bicycles are a legitimate form of transportation. The reality is that pedestrians and cyclists are killed by cars and trucks, while the reverse is a rarity. Until respect is given to cyclists and pedestrians, through safe facilities and driver and cyclist education, cyclists will continue to seek safety on the sidewalk and some will continue to behave irresponsibly. It is important to actively promote implementation of cycling infrastructure, so that children and adults feel safe and respected in bike lanes and on the streets. A brief chat with cyclist friends provides a sample of some distressing stories regarding incidents with drivers - being hit by a tennis ball thrown from a car on an icy, winter night; a baloney sandwich tossed from a passing car and hitting the cyclist in the face; being chased by a truck onto a sidewalk. These incidents are but a few of daily experiences cycling in HRM. Cyclists, pedestrians and drivers must advocate for safe transportation infrastructure.

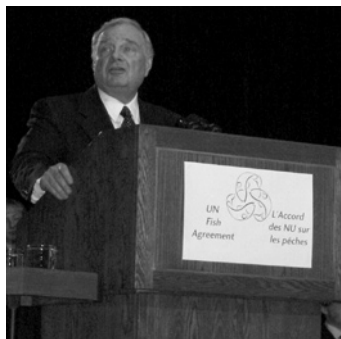
Rebecca O'Brien, TRAX Coordinator, EAC

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Participants on a break from the Gearshift Conference (hosted by the EAC, Living Oceans Society and the Fisheries Recovery Action Committee) await Prime Minister Martin in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Jeff Ardron

editorial

One of the longest running projects at the EAC is the Marine Issues Committee's (MIC) work to raise awareness about the effects of dragging – or trawling on the seafloor and to advocate for sustainable fisheries and the creatures affected by destructive fishing technology. Since 1997, MIC has published research reports, held international meetings and workshops, written countless letters, petitioned the federal government and even gone to court in efforts to increase protection of the marine environment, particularly the seafloor.

This year, we joined international efforts calling for a UN supported moratorium on dragging in the high seas (beyond the 200 mile limit) and are collaborating with environmental groups across Canada to change the federal government's position on the effects of fishing gear. Mark Butler and Sadie Beaton have contributed the feature article, which cleverly outlines some of the continued challenges to protecting creatures such as corals and sponges from trawl doors. In Citizens Choice, Sadie offers consumer advice on how you can help.

Also in this issue, Janet Barlow reminds us of the importance of walking – particularly for

children as an active way of getting to school. International Walk to School day is on the horizon. Japji Bas discusses food security and what EAC, in partnership, with local seniors and youth is doing about it. The EAC index is still here ...running along the bottom of the pages.

And...(drum roll)...at the almost mature age of 35 – the EAC has found a home of its own. As of July 31st, 2005, the Centre owns 2705 Fern Street in the North End of Halifax. We aim to make our new building as much about action as we have always been, and to create a showcase building for green renovations and retrofitting. This is a major undertaking for the Centre, and we will be seeking community partners in making our vision a reality. This purchase would not have been possible without an endowment received in 2002, or without the generosity of the O'Malley family. If you are interested in helping renovate or sharing knowledge of green building practices and material sources, please let us know. As we progress, we will be sharing information on our website, and developing an eco-guide to renovations.

*Susanna Fuller,
BTI Editor*

Number of Globe and Mail editorials supporting a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling: 1

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actionisourmiddlename

seeing the trees AND the forest The Standing Tall Campaign, launched in the spring of 2005, seeks to achieve more ecologically sustainable forestry practices in Nova Scotia. Project objectives include: heightening public awareness of forest degradation in Nova Scotia including the need for participation in influencing forest policy; ensuring that public input is incorporated into forest policy development; encouraging industry and government to pursue FSC certification; supporting modifications to the Forest Sustainability Regulations and adopting ecologically sustainable forestry practices; and reducing clearcutting in Nova Scotian forests. In the past two months, we've launched Elizabeth May's At the Cutting Edge along with the Sierra Club of Canada (Atlantic); met with the Deputy Minister of the NS Department of Natural Resources and the Executive Director of Renewable Resources; visited sustainable woodlots; carried out a publicity campaign targeted at aerial spraying of BtK in Cape Breton Highlands; relaunched the Clearcut Nova Scotia website; and developed a detailed campaign action plan. Our efforts in the next few months will be on achieving a broad, independent public participation process for the new provincial forestry strategy, and amendments to the Forest Sustainability Regulations. Joanne Cook joined EAC as the Standing Tall Campaign Coordinator in June, working with Minga O'Brien, our Forestry Conservation Coordinator.



bike again ! tells all Hot off the presses is a new resource created by Bike Again! A Workbook for Community Bicycle Programming in Atlantic Canada is a bicycle recycling how-to guide. The workbook walks you through how to collect, refurbish and distribute used bikes in your community. Based on experience with the Bike Again! project in Halifax the workbook provides practical ideas and tools for getting your community involved in active transportation. It covers the basics of gaining community and volunteer support, collecting bikes and parts, hosting repair clinics and information on safety, education and the law. It includes tool kit lists, a bike assessment form and a resource section. Written by Susanna Fuller and Rob Maguire, the workbook was funded through the Resource Recovery Fund Board and Mountain Equipment Co-op. Obtain a copy from the Ecology Action Centre at 429-2202 or bikeagain@hotmail.com (suggested donation of \$5). For more information on Bike Again! See http://www.trax.ns.ca/other_bikeagain.html.

successes and updates The Marine Issues Committee dragging campaign was given a huge boost by the visit of the Greenpeace vessel Esperanza to Halifax in July and August. Turning up the heat on the trawling issue resulted in an editorial in the Globe and Mail in support of a moratorium on trawling on the high seas. EAC has bought a building! The Centre has purchased a building and will be renovating for the next several months.

give your car an early retirement

The EAC's Steer Clean Program offers rewards to car owners willing to recycle their older, high-polluting vehicles. On July 5th the program held a fun and successful media launch where we crushed three cars for recycling and celebrated sustainable transportation. Since then we have been scrambling to keep up with demand. Our sustainable transportation incentives (worth around \$300) are inspiring Nova Scotians who are driving pre-1995 vehicles to learn more about ecologically-sound transportation choices to help improve our air quality. Learn more at www.steerclean.ca

keeping the lights on

The Energy Issues Committee (EIC) has received funding from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation to develop a long-term strategy for the burgeoning Atlantic Canada Energy Coalition (ACEI). ACEI has been formed to drive policy change at the regional level, while strengthening support to individual provinces as they tackle energy issues most poignant to them. Core members include the EAC, Sierra Club of Canada Atlantic Chapter, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, and EcoPEI. As well, the EIC will serve as a formal intervenor at the pending public hearing of the Utility and Review Board regarding NSPI's application to raise electricity rates. The EAC will continue to demand more assertive investments in and support for renewable energy developments, a new system for providing customers with services to help them improve energy efficiency of homes and businesses, rate assistance for those in need, and a renewed focus on fossil fuel conservation.



Vehicle Emissions Clinic

Hosted by TRAX
August 11-13th 9am to 6pm
Clayton Park Canadian Tire

Summer Harvest Party

Urban Garden Mentors
Project
August 24 at 1:30 pm
Spencer House, 5596 Morris
St, Halifax
gardenmentors@ecologyaction.ca

September Harvest Festival

September 18th, 10am to 5pm
Victoria Park, Spring Garden
Rd, Halifax
harvest@ecologyaction.ca

Walk to School Week

International Walk to School
Week
October 3 to 7, 2005
Schools may register for the
event at
www.goforgreen.ca/walktoschool/reg/step1.aro

Public Hikes on Public Land

Guided outings to Ship Harbour Long Lake, Herring Cove Backlands, Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes and Nictaux River.
For dates and details: www.publicland.ca/news

Turning the Tide

by Sadie Beaton

This winter, at a large grocery store, I asked the man behind the seafood counter how the haddock he was selling had been caught. I had asked because some haddock are caught by dragging heavy doors and nets across the ocean floor, while others are caught sustainably with bottom hook and line fishing gear. He looked at me like I had three heads. "It came in a box labeled haddock," he shrugged. End of conversation.

Clearly, this is not the whole answer. Indeed, the availability of all kinds of seafood at restaurants and the grocery store all year round creates a false impression about the state of the world's fisheries, making it seem as if fish can simply be manufactured and continue to occur in abundance. Which is the opposite of what we are hearing from scientists, governments and non-government organizations around the world.

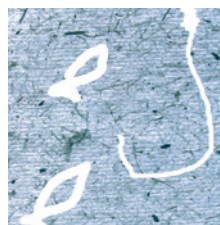
The oceans are in serious trouble. Global fish populations are under increasing pressure from unsustainable fishing practices that destroy essential habitats, along with over-harvesting, pollution, and climate change. This has become painfully obvious to Atlantic Canadians, where often the lifeblood of coastal communities has depended on the sea's bounty. And even though many consumers are concerned about the health of our oceans, information on which seafood species or stocks are being most threatened by unsustainable fishing practices is not always apparent. Complicating matters, stocks fished irresponsibly in one part of the world may be managed sustainably elsewhere.

It is fairly easy to avoid eating well-publicized, unsustainably harvested species like Chilean Sea Bass (aka. Patagonian Toothfish) or Orange Roughy, as the Endangered Fish Alliance advocates, but it is often more tricky to discover whether that tasty sounding haddock dish on the menu was caught in a sustainable manner. Unfortunately, most seafood counter clerks and restaurant servers in Nova Scotia do not have that information.

However, this is no reason to despair. Rath-

er it is an opportunity for seafood lovers to make a real difference for the health of the oceans. As seen with consumer campaigns for organic produce or fairly traded coffee, the market can act as an extremely powerful incentive for more responsible management of our resources.

A good, easy starting point is to ask lots of questions. Ask your vendor or server about today's catch. How was it caught? Where was it caught? Though you may find they do not always have the answers, the more often you ask, the sooner they will recognize the need to provide better information about their fish products.



aaron harpell

The Marine Issues Committee recently developed a wallet-sized card that can be used as a vote for more responsible marketing of seafood products. It can be tucked into a bill fold or passed on to your vendor, and states in part, "I would really like to see sustainable seafood on your menu so customers like

me can order it." Pick some up at the Ecology Action Centre, and you've got an excuse to eat out. There is a sea of information about sustainable seafood available online. Several organizations have ranked seafood choices by species and fishing method, and some provide downloadable wallet sized cards. These can be helpful as a rough guide, but it is best to seek out information specific to your region and local fisheries. The Ecology Action Centre recommends local farmed mussels, halibut, lobster, bottom hook and line haddock, bottom hook and line pollock, mackerel and snow crab as good Nova Scotian choices.

Many Halifax restaurants have agreed to make an effort to provide bottom hook and line seafood choices on their menus. An expanded local seafood guide, along with links to more information, can be found online at www.ecologyaction.ca/seafood.htm. Remember, choosing sustainable seafood can help ensure that some of your favourite meals will still be around to enjoy in future decades.

Sadie Beaton is EAC's sustainable seafood coordinator.

ecobriefs

by June Hall

Magical bandaids

Back in the early 1980s, a vigorous strain of *Caulerpa taxifolia*, a bright-green tropical seaweed, was brought from an aquarium in Germany to the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco. By 1984, the alga had escaped as a little patch of it was discovered in the sea, right by the museum.

The rest is history. *C. taxifolia* is now found throughout the Mediterranean, settling on almost any substrate and displacing vast areas of native vegetation. The “killer alga” has also appeared off California and Australia.

Key to its spread is its ability to regenerate when injured. Each organism consists of a single cell up to several metres long that contains many copies of its genetic material. When a cell is broken, it can quickly repair the damage. Even a tiny fragment will regrow. Now scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Engineering in Jena, Germany, know how this is done. “After injury, the seaweed produces an enzyme that changes a compound called ‘caulerpene’—a by-product of the cell’s metabolism—into a highly reactive chemical.” Within seconds the chemical binds proteins recruited to the site into “a tough polymer network, [forming] a sticky plug.” The scientists hope to use this discovery to develop inexpensive, non-toxic ways to block the healing process. It’s probably too late for the Mediterranean, but maybe we can stop the spread elsewhere.

Science News, 2 Apr. '05

Pavement sealants

An accidental discovery by city workers in Austin, Texas, has led to research that points to pavement sealants as the source of most of the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) found in U.S. urban streams and lakes. PAHs are carcinogenic compounds generally produced during combustion. They’re ubiquitous in today’s urban environments, but the usual suspects (including car exhausts, oils, gas, and tire particles) don’t produce anything like the high concentrations of PAHs found in Austin streams.

The sealants, which are applied to asphalt parking lots and driveways to protect them from the elements and to improve their appearance, come in two main types: coal-tar-based and asphalt-based. The former appear

to be the major culprit, and since manufacturers recommend resealing every 2-3 years, runoff provides a continuous stream of pollution—at a rate in Austin up to 65 times higher than that from concrete and unsealed asphalt. As yet, the industry is stumped for solutions, but Austin will be considering a ban on coal-tar-based sealants.

Envir. Sci. & Tech., 22 June '05

Offshore fish farms

The United States imports 70% of the fish it eats, and demand continues to grow. But with fisheries all over the world under stress, and substantial concerns over conventional fish farming, how to satisfy this demand?

A bill presented to the U.S. Senate in early June may solve the dilemma. Ten years in the making, the bill would allow aquaculture pens in deep waters between 5.5 and 370 km offshore, i.e., in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which is under federal control. Officials with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which drew up the plan, say it would “produce healthy food in an environmentally friendly manner,” and foresee annual fish production worth US\$5 billion. Tuna, salmon, halibut and cod are amongst the suitable candidates. Several pilot projects are already underway.

Not so fast, say a host of interests. Opposition is coming from many quarters, not least from environmentalists, commercial fishermen, and state (especially Alaskan) officials. Apart from the usual concerns, one provision of the bill would allow foreign-owned companies to set up shop; another could potentially open the door to genetically modified organisms. It’s not known when or if the bill will become law. At the very least, all opposed are calling for specific environmental standards, missing from the bill as it stands.

Washington Post, 8 June; *Nature*, 23 June '05

Tsunami impacts

In February, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) issued a preliminary assessment of the environmental devastation wrought by last year’s Asian tsunami. Rehabilitating the area, it says, may take 10 years and cost more than US\$10 billion. Detailed reports on the Maldives and Sri were issued in mid-June; to read the reports, go to www.unep.org/tsunami.

www.unep.org/tsunami.

Overall, one of the biggest problems is contaminated water and soil. Salt water and fecal bacteria have infiltrated wells and groundwater supplies, especially on small islands. Hazardous waste is another massive concern. In Somalia, for instance, the tsunami stirred up wastes illegally dumped on beaches. The wastes, which include uranium, lead, cadmium, mercury, radioactive uranium, are suspected to come from industrialized countries. Not surprisingly, residents are complaining of unusual health problems.

Unfortunately, too, in the race to rebuild communities, aid organizations and citizens alike are often unwittingly using lumber illegally logged in local forests, already under threat from many directions. To save the forests, World Wildlife Fund and Greenomics have developed a plan to import lumber from Australia and the U.S., while other NGOs are turning to brick as they become aware of the problem.

Envir. Sci. & Tech., 1 May;
Guardian Weekly, 27 May '05

A BIG ditch

Question: What’s 300 m wide, 152 km long, and costs US\$400 million?

Answer: a navigable channel dredged in the shallow waters between India and Sri Lanka that, if India has its way, will soon become reality. The channel would reduce by a day the trip from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, and allow large Indian naval vessels to patrol the waters around northern Sri Lanka.

A host of objections have been mounted, not least by Sri Lanka, which has not been consulted. What will the impacts be on Colombo, South Asia’s hub port, it asks, or on the region’s fishermen, whose livelihoods, so badly damaged by the tsunami, may be further disrupted?

There are worries, too, about the area’s rich marine ecology. A channel would disrupt the natural barrier between east and west, provide a source of pollution, and threaten already endangered plants and animals, including coral reefs.

Financial Times, 25 April '05

amatterofopinion

Walking Uphill Both Ways

by Janet Barlow

“When I was young I walked to school uphill, both ways.” An old saw, but what a shame we don’t hear it more often. As the days of small, local schools fade away, so do the streams of children walking to them. In their place are large, centralized schools to which roll legions of buses and family cars.

A growing movement of parents, school staff, students and community members, however, advocates kids shun the car and walk, cycle, in-line skate, skateboard or scooter to school instead. The movement brings hope that more children and youth will reconnect with their neighbourhoods as they experience the joys of traveling to school under their own steam.

Implications

Our children’s safety, environment and health are all negatively affected by being driven to school rather than traveling there actively. How our kids get to school also affects their sense of freedom, independence and ability to connect with their neighbourhoods.

According to a 1998 Environics International report, about 68% of Canadian children could walk to school in 30 minutes or less, yet only 36% do so regularly. In our province this number is even lower at about 25%. For the remainder, we’re not talking about kids living in rural areas where there is no alternative to the bus. These are kids living 3 km or less from school who are driven in the family car.

Making matters worse is the fact that two thirds of children and youth are not active enough for health benefits. A recent Stats Can report says in Nova Scotia 32% of our kids are overweight or obese. We’ve got to get these kids moving.

Why don’t kids walk or cycle to school when, in theory, they should be able to? Stopping students in their tracks are a lack of sidewalks, treacherous street crossings and speeding and/or congested traffic. “Stranger danger” is another concern. It’s no wonder some parents fear for their child’s personal safety. Other parents believe the walk to school is too far. Still others simply go for the convenience of a car.

Locating large, centralized schools on the

outskirts of communities – a worrying recent trend – makes schools less accessible for walking and wheeling students and increases the need for buses. Further, a 2003 study by the US Environmental Protection Agency found that the location of a school affects traffic congestion, air pollution, school transportation budgets and children’s health.

Solutions

Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) works with Nova Scotian school communities to overcome barriers to students walking or wheeling to school. It’s a national Go for Green program coordinated in Nova Scotia by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Program Area of Nova Scotia Health Promotion. ASRTS offers up lots of solutions to the problem of car-bound kids.

At the school level, we need to beef up the safety skills of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Schools should provide secure, sheltered bike racks and ideally should be designed with separate access points for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and cars.

At the neighbourhood level, identifying safe walking and cycling routes, providing safe crossings and reducing traffic speed will benefit not only school kids but also seniors, those with limited mobility and those who don’t drive. Municipalities must work with schools and communities to make sure our neighbourhood streets are friendly not only to cars, but also to people.

The Walking School Bus, where parents supervise a group of students on their way to and from school, is an innovative tool. It reduces congestion and teaches traffic safety by encouraging parents to leave the car at home and allow their kids to walk. It also eases parental fears of stranger danger or fears their child will be hit by a car. A Walking School Bus offers safety in numbers as well as a great social atmosphere for kids and adults alike. Students arrive at school fresh, full of energy and ready for the day.

On a province-wide level we need to look at where we place our schools in the first place. Schools should be located within or close to high population densities so that at least some students can walk or cycle to

school. High-density neighbourhoods tend to have sidewalks, lower traffic speeds and more eyes on the street. Ultimately, a reduced need for bussing means more money for other things.

Maybe we need two or three schools rather than one big one. Research shows that students do better overall in smaller schools. By partnering with a local recreation or community organization, a smaller school can also serve as an accessible community centre. Finally, we need new policies that reflect these solutions to ensure that in the future our kids, too, can brag about their trip to school “uphill, both ways.”

Janet Barlow is Coordinator of the Active & Safe Routes to School program at the Ecology Action Centre (asrts@ecologyaction.ca). This revised editorial first appeared in the Chronicle Herald on Sept. 21, 2004.

Starting Off on the Right Foot

International Walk to School Week takes place from October 3 to 7. Its one way schools can move closer to more active and healthy students, safer streets and fewer greenhouse gas emissions from cars.

Last year over 2,000 schools across Canada and 100 in Nova Scotia participated in Walk to School Week. Schools can register at www.goforgreen.ca/walktoschool/reg/step1.a. Participating schools could win lots of neat prizes including up to \$500. For more on Walk to School Week and Active & Safe Routes to School, contact us at (902) 442-5055, asrts@ecologyaction.ca or www.ecologyaction.ca/asrts.

On Walk to School Day, 2003, Premier John Hamm and former Principal Kim Nadeau cut the ribbon launching the new sidewalk to Sackville Centennial School in Lower Sackville.

Say it like it is

We have a lot of ocean in Atlantic Canada; approximately 10:1 ratio of ocean to land. Aside from global impacts such as climate change, the greatest human impact on the ocean in this region is fishing and of the various fisheries, dragging has the greatest impact. (DFO has not yet been able to provide us with an estimate of how much of the ocean floor of Atlantic Canada is affected by dragging.)

We have highlighted statements from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and a regional director of fisheries on the impacts of fishing gear on the ecosystem and contrasted them with statements from fishermen and scientists. The quote from the Minister reflects a deliberate and longstanding effort on the part of senior DFO officials to bury or diminish the fact that some gears are much more damaging than others.

Local managers interpret these statements to mean that there is no difference between fishing gears in terms of environmental impacts and consequently treat all gears in the same manner. This is a huge obstacle to the development and maintenance of sustainable. Identifying and promoting less destructive methods of fishing is a key part of the solution.

In the last year there has been some good news from the U.S. Using a mix of approaches regulators have closed large areas to dragging off Alaska, the West Coast and New England. Investigate the websites of groups such as Oceana, MCBI or Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association. In Canada, the Federal Government does not yet appear to have the courage to say it like it is and regulate the impacts of dragging and dredging.

If you want to see healthy oceans and thriving fishing communities in Atlantic Canada check out the Marine Issues Committee of EAC. We meet the last Wednesday of every month. MIC is looking to Nova Scotians for financial support for its work. If you like what you see give us a call.

1997: EAC publishes first report on deep sea corals in the NW Atlantic.

1999: EAC publishes report on fishermen's knowledge of trawl damage.

2000: EAC hosts, with others, the First International Symposium on Deep Sea Corals Conference.

2001: EAC launches law suit against DFO for destruction of fish habitat.

2003: DFO establishes coral closure (424km²) off SW Nova Scotia.

2003: EAC publishes brochure on economic advantages of hook and line vs trawl fisheries.

2004: Gully Marine Protected Area is established with zones for different uses. Dragging is excluded.

2004: EAC petitions the auditor general and CESD on protection of fish habitat.

2004: EAC hosts, with others, Ocean Zoning Workshop to generate discussion on appropriate use of the ocean.

2004: Judge rules against EAC case (launched in 2001), stating that Fisheries Act habitat protection provisions do not apply to environmental effects of fishing.

2004: DFO establishes coral closure (15km²) on Stone Fence to protect Lophelia coral. All gear types are excluded.

2005: EAC joins international Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) in calling for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. (www.savethehighseas.org)

2005: EAC launches consumer campaign on sustainably caught seafood, encouraging Nova Scotian consumers and restaurants to buy fish caught by hook and line.

2005: EAC, Living Oceans Society and Fisheries Recovery Action Committee host Gearshift Conference in St. Johns Newfoundland. Canadian groups form Gearshift Coalition.

2005: DFO Oceans Branch releases draft Coral Conservation Plan and Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Management Plan (ESSIM). The IM Plan identifies zoning as an important management tool.

2005: Greenpeace visits Halifax, as part of an international campaign for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling.

Fall 2005: DFO will hold first-ever scientific assessment of the impacts of dragging.

The current Canadian government position on bottom trawling:

“Canada’s position is that no specific gear type is inherently destructive.

From experience, we know that all gear types can have negative impacts, depending on how they are used.”

-Geoff Regan, Fisheries Minister. Address to United Nations, November 16, 2004.

“Dragging is a way of fishing that can have an impact on the seabed, but so is every other kind of fishing.”

-Lesley Burke, Fisheries Management Branch. “Dragger limits urged after court ruling.” Chronicle Herald, August 24, 2004.

Statements from government scientists, fishermen, past and present politicians that say it like it is:

“I’m asking you to seize this historic occasion, and begin the process to stop the rape of our fisheries and oceans, once and for all. I’m asking you to come together – as a global community – to write the next chapter in the history of the world’s fisheries and oceans, and the restore their once-proud place in our cultures, in our nations, and in our lives.”

-Address by Paul Martin during Moving From Words to Action, International Fisheries Conference, St John’s May 1, 2005.

“The bottom line of the report was that there was a consensus amongst fishermen, scientists, and conservationists that bottom trawling is more ecologically damaging than any other type of gear used and I am here to present those findings.”

-Lance Morgan, Chief Scientist with the Marine Conservation Biology Institute speaking about Shifting Gears, a recent report looking at the environmental impacts of different fishing gears, at an international fisheries conference that the EAC helped organize in St John’s, Newfoundland in April, 2005.

“Most concern about adverse effects on benthic communities and habitat have been centred around the impacts caused by mobile bottom tending gear.”

-S. Gavaris and J. Black, DFO Working Paper, 2004.

Interim guidelines for offshore management of trawling activity within Scotia/Fundy:

1. Change fishing practices from trawling to alternative methods which are less harmful to benthic habitats.
2. Concentrate trawling effort in specified trawling lanes
3. Limit areas which can be trawled to <60% of the total area of a conservation planning area.
4. Only permit new areas to be trawled if it can be demonstrated that rare habitats are absent there.

-D.J. Wildish and P.L. Stewart, “A geographically based ecosystem management strategy for the offshore regions of the Scotian Shelf/ Bay of Fundy,” Prepared for a DFO Science Meeting, 2004.

“Of the types of fishing listed above [bottom trawling, pelagic trawling, seine net, dredging, longlines, gillnets, tangles nets and traps], the greatest physical impact on sensitive habitats is likely to be caused by towed gear such as dredging, otter trawl and beam trawl...”

-From a report of the Working Group on Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities, at the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 2004.

“Of course it’s hard to get 100 percent evidence....but the fact that this is a heavily trawled area would lead us to believe that the damage we see is most likely caused by the most common fishing in the area.”

-Paul Mortensen, speaking about damaged coral amongst overturned boulders east of Sable Island. “Coral find proves need for protection.” The Chronicle Herald, October 4, 2002.

“If we harvest the fish more sensibly and selectively, we will have more ground-fish in the water, in the boats, and in the plants.”

-Fisheries and Oceans Minister Bernard Valcourt in announcing a conversion program from dragger to longliner technology on November 27, 1990, which failed because of poor implementation.

“When I was fishing in the mid-sixties I saw a net full of coral come up, tonnes of it.”

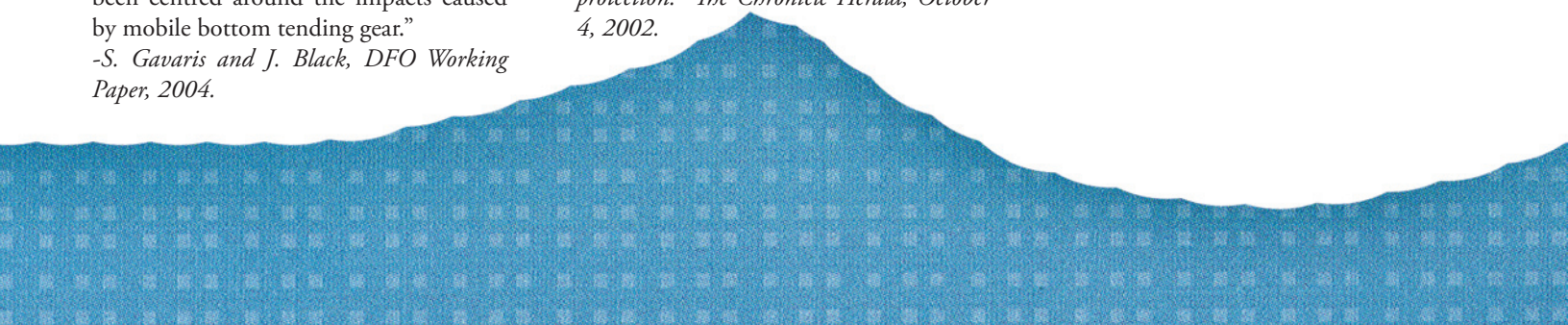
-W.A. Williams, Allendale, Nova Scotia. (personal communication).

Leonard Wilson, ... went out with his 25 tonne dragger around 1966, and “after my first haul with that 60-foot wide net I said, ‘This is going to be the worst curse we have ever laid upon the fishery.’ It wasn’t what I caught: it was what I killed- 1,500 pounds on the first tow and half were dead.”

-80 year old Bay of Fundy fisherman Leonard Wilson in Atlantic Fisherman, January, 1994.

“I am not advocating that mobile fishing gear not be used anywhere, but suggesting that perhaps we should not use it everywhere.”

-Peter Auster, National Undersea Research Centre, University of Connecticut in Sea Wind, 10(4).



askecohead

Q. I have heard about all the different types of environmentally friendly cleaning products. What is the latest on the best choices?

According to Amy, Holly and Amie, staff at P'lovers, there are a few things you should consider when choosing cleaning products. First, be sure to read the ingredients list. Savvy consumers realize that a product stating it is organic or biodegradable may not actually be 100% natural. If you're unsure about an ingredient, ask. Consider factors like: type of ingredients, bio-degradability, and whether the product is cruelty free.

Second, it is a common misconception that we need 300 different cleaners, one for each room or appliance. In fact, Citra Solve and Dr. Bronner's Soap are concentrated, multi-purpose cleaners which save packaging, space and brain power.

Third, don't forget to consider the container! In some cases far more energy and petroleum goes into packaging than the contents. Be sure to look for products in refillable, reusable or recyclable containers. Down East cleaning products are locally made and can be refilled (in Halifax) at P'lovers, Great Ocean, and The Grainery.

Fourth, some products can be re-used for even better ecological value. Eco Save laundry disks are excellent, lasting approximately 700 loads or 2-3 years. Lull drier sachets are filled with dried lavender to reduce static cling. Mabu wood fibre cloths

are soft enough to wipe your hands and tough enough to clean the bathroom.

Ask around and you'll find a product that will meet your needs – and if all else fails you can make your own using cleaning basics like vinegar, borax, baking soda and essential oils (tea tree, lavender, lemon, peppermint).

For more information on environmental cleaning product information, see the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia's guide, found online at www.lesstoxicguide.ca. EHANS is raising funds for its work through the sale of dryerballs, environmentally friendly, chemical free fabric softeners that can be used again and again, reduce static and eliminate the use of scented fabric softeners and sheets. For more information or to purchase a dryerball, contacted EHANS at dryerballs@environmentalhealth.ca.

Q. I am about to begin an indoor painting job, and am interesting in using environmentally friendly paints. Can you help?

We asked Selah Koile of Dandy-Lion Eco Interior Painting to share some advice:

The best thing you can do in any project is to be eco-efficient. When you plan ahead and do a good job you will waste less time, money and use less toxic chemicals. Make sure you are well informed before you start your work. Don't be in a rush. A quality job means that you will be



eryn foster

less likely to have to do it over again any time soon.

Before painting make sure you really need to use paint. Maybe you can use a high quality wood lacquer from Chem Craft, a locally owned environmentally responsible business. Choose paints, which are low in VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds). Benjamin and Moore Eco Spec or Glidden Delux Life Master has the lowest VOC levels of the high quality paints locally available. Choose light colours and flat or egg-shell paints as dark pigments and high gloss paints have higher levels of VOC's.

If you want to reduce waste in Nova Scotia (and buy locally) consider using Boomerang re-cycled paints, which come in a range of 16 velvet finish colours. Recycling paint diverts about a quarter of a million cans of paint per year from Nova Scotia's landfills.

If you decide to hire a painter, hire locally to reduce the amount of fossil fuel consumption. Also try and hire someone who cares about the environment. Hire someone who will think twice before dumping paint down the drain and who will do an excellent job. Again, if the job is well done you won't have to buy paint again for many years.

Feel free to call Dandy-Lion for more detailed free advice at 444-9812.

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Number of cubic kilometers of water that rush into the Bay of Fundy every 12 Hours: 100 km³.

Number of cubic kilometers of water that is discharged daily by all the rivers in the world: 100 km³

Percentage of rivers around the Bay of Fundy that have some sort of tidal barrier: 46%

HRM Seniors and Youth Partner in Urban Agriculture Project

By Japji Anna Bas

As many are aware, we are currently facing a global food security crisis. At the time of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) first World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, Oxfam Canada defined food security as: "the assurance that all people, especially the most vulnerable and least resilient, have at all times dignified and unthreatened access to the quantity and quality of culturally appropriate food that will fully support their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health".

At the 1996 WFS, Over 100 UN members committed to reduce world hunger by 50% by 2015. Nine years later, conservative estimates suggest there are at least 23 million more hungry and undernourished people today than in 1996. There are now 852 million hungry and undernourished people around the world - that is one in seven people. Government commitments have not been met, and people around the world are searching for ways to take food security into their own hands.

Because of massive levels of rural to urban migration in the last half century, many of these efforts are in urban settings. In an ironic twist, rural residents have been forced by big agri-business off of land traditionally used for marketable or subsistence farming and into cities. As a result, many are turning to urban agriculture to meet their basic food needs. Urban agriculture is currently practiced by an estimated 800 million people and is poised to become increasingly significant to global food production, as projections suggest that over half of the world's population will be living in cities by 2015. If well coordinated, urban agriculture could significantly impact food security.

The world's most comprehensive and ef-



Japji Bas and Sonia Edworthy on their way to one of the 4 urban garden mentor projects on the peninsula.
Photo Credit: EAC

fective urban agriculture program exists in Havana, Cuba. Born out of necessity, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and loss of their key trading partner, Cuban citizens began to plant food crops in available green-spaces. With government support, urban agriculture produces between 50 and 90 percent of all produce consumed in the city! This not only provides affordable, local produce, but also reduces the need to transport food, thereby, reducing fuel emissions.

Urban agriculture is taking place around the world, across Canada, and right here in Halifax! Halifax Regional Municipality is home to (at least) 10 community garden projects. The Ecology Action Center's new Urban Garden Mentors Project offers people of all ages an opportunity to enjoy the feeling of growing their own food in an exciting community development project. Funded through the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program, the Project offers senior participants a chance to share their wisdom with younger adults and youth through gardening sessions, workshops, and parties.

At four sites on the Halifax peninsula—two in the North-End, one in the West-End, and one in the South-End—participants ranging in age from seven to 70 meet weekly to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis, carrots, beans, lettuce, mesclun, pumpkins, kale, broccoli, radish, herbs and sprouts. It is truly wonderful to see the kids' amazement at their very own veggies, grown with techniques passed down from seniors two generations older.

Much of the hunger and undernourishment around the world can be linked directly to imports for Western overconsumption. Indeed, even Canada, with such a vast landmass, is a net importer of all agricultural products except grains. High levels of transport emissions result from the transportation of the food we eat—which has often traveled halfway around the world. Nor are Canadians exempt from problems of food insecurity. In the last 5 years 17% of Nova Scotians have experienced food insecurity. Our efforts to eat locally, sustainably and healthily do make a difference. Shop at your local farmers' market, request local produce at your grocery store, or grow your own garden and help contribute to national food security.

For more information about the Urban Garden Mentors Project, how to grow your own food, or where to buy locally contact Japji Anna Bas at the Ecology Action Centre: 429 2202 or gardenmentors@ecologyaction.ca

Urban Garden Mentors Project Coordinator, Japji Anna Bas, has had a life-long love of food. Whether promoting local organic food as owner of the Big Life Whole Foods Cafe, working in urban agriculture in Havana, Cuba, or studying global food insecurity in International Development Studies the objective is always the same: eat locally, grow sustainably, live well.

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artandtheenvironment

Review: *Birds of a Feather*

by Emma Boardman

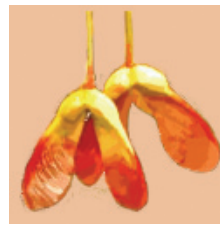
Linda Johns' fifth book, *Birds of a Feather*, is easy to read and highly enjoyable. It contains humorous, warm and caring stories about the injured birds that share her home in rural Nova Scotia. Though some of the stories in the book are heartbreaking, the book is ultimately uplifting and inspiring. The woman sharing her real-life experiences in this book, is one who is truly living out what she believes in. Strong bird personalities are described in *Birds of a Feather*, as are observations of their often awe-inspiring "ancestral intelligence" - intelligence that is too often dismissed by humans as "just instinct". There are lovely descriptions of interactions between species - birds who have been with Linda for a while help frightened new birds feel safer, and Edna, the patient rabbit, helps to raise many young birds. As well, there are some vivid, magical descriptions of nature and thoughtful insights on the way the world is interconnected. The book is beautifully illustrated by Linda, who is a talented artist.

Though Linda's life of helping wild birds is very rewarding, she is careful not to glamourize her work. There is hard work involved in figuring out what is best for other species - it is a job not to be taken lightly. Throughout the book, Linda describes the work she and her husband, Mack put into figuring out how she can give the birds what they need - pouring over books, consulting knowledgeable friends and, most importantly, just taking the time to observe what the birds tell them. Then, they go to great lengths to do whatever they can to help, from collecting buckets of seawater for a gannet, skimming delicious and nutritious duckweed from a neighbour's pond for an injured duck, to building safe areas for the birds like their indoor garden and screened-in porch, to spending sleepless nights feeding baby birds. Linda and Mack release as many birds as possible back into the wild, and try to give the best life possible to un-releasable birds.

Linda has taken valuable lessons from observing the birds she helps. When I speak to her (Coolie the pigeon on her shoulder) over the phone, Linda tells me she shares her stories in writing

so that "hopefully what the birds have taught me will get passed on. We have a lot we can learn from them."

An artist by profession, Linda had no writing experience when her friend, biologist Bob Bancroft, suggested people would enjoy reading about her unique experience of helping a mother robin raise several broods of young. He approached Nimbus publishers, who were interested in the story but thought that the person who'd had the first-hand experiences should be the one to write them down. After some persuasion, Linda wrote her first book, *Sharing a Robin's Life*, which won the Edna Staebler Award for creative non-fiction.



aaron harpell

Linda enjoys watching people's reactions to her writing, and is genuinely amazed and thrilled by the effect her writing has on people. Readers have begun looking at

birds in a different, more positive light, and some have even been able and willing to help injured birds that they have found. People have also become more thoughtful, making small changes that will benefit birds such as keeping their cats inside (or at least adorning them with bells) or placing birdfeeders near woods where avian visitors can easily escape predators.


Linda believes all life is intricately connected. "We are all in this together," she says. She feels it is important to help whoever is in need, regardless of whether they are from a "cute" or exotic species. As she puts it, if most people saw an injured or starving human on the side of the road, they would stop to help. Why leave members of other species to suffer when you can do something to help?

Birds of a Feather, published by Goose Lane Editions in April 2005, is available in bookstores or online. Linda Johns will be speaking at the Word on the Street Festival in Halifax in September. Her artwork work is permanently on display at the Lyghtesome Gallery in Antigonish, and she regularly tours with her work.

Emma Boardman is a long time EAC volunteer.

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Sky, September 12 Risser's Beach, NS

by Joanne Jefferson

To the north: open blue.

To the south: a pale shroud furled at its edge

and ribbed across its width.

Over the islands it shows yellow.

This cloud allows no clues, its particles too distant

to recognize as water or dust or ash.

The only arrivals the wind brings are common terns

(innocent pilots of the Atlantic)

and gulls prepared to scavenge any carcass

among the rubble of the tide's line.

By evening the air is furrowed with lavender;

orange light stains the dusk.

EAC's Reconnecting the Coast Initiative is collecting artwork, poems and songs that celebrate the coast.

Contact Sean at coastal@ecologyaction.ca.

autobituary

Betty Estelle 1993-2005

Betty Estelle the Buick Estate Wagon has moved on to a brighter, climate-neutral life. She was courageous entering the garage, knowing she may not make it out with a clean bill of health. Sadly, she failed her vehicle inspection at 10:12 am Atlantic time. A chronic emergency-brake injury has been plaguing her for years and finally caught up with her, and her fractured windshield sealed her fate. Her wish of "do not resuscitate for expensive repairs" was respected. She is survived by many friends and admirers from across Canada, who had affectionately called her "Betty Blue", "BEBE", "The Cruiser", "The Shaggin' Waggin'", and, somewhat in-

appropriately, "The Car of the Future". It was not uncommon for people to stare in awe, mouths agape, as Betty would drive by. Indeed, she was a sight to behold. She has been an important part of many lives throughout her 16 years (213 in human years), starting out in Ontario as the primary carriage for a family of four, towing trailers, running errands, and braving the traffic of the Big Smoke. She had a love for travel, and in her middle years she focussed mainly on moving cargo for university students several times a year in Ontario, and then in Nova Scotia. She often found herself holding a week's-worth of gear for only an overnight camping trip. Later in life, she mostly stayed

around home, introspective, but never hesitating when needed. Never did she object to a friend's request or ask for anything in return but consistent oil changes, and a few mufflers. Betty will be remembered for her openness when someone needed to move a one-bedroom apartment in preferably less than three car trips, the calm and collected delivery of her turn signal, and her excitement to find new adventures just around the next turn. Service to be announced.

Donations can be made to the Ecology Action Centre, Halifax, NS, where Betty has been graciously accepted into the Steer Clean Vehicle-scrappage Program.

www.steerclean.ca

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peoplewhomakeadifference

At the end of June 2005, the campus of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish was bursting with ideas, common values, good conversation and inspirational stories from around the globe. It was the venue for the Rethinking Development conference, where all who attended learned the various reasons why counting success by the Gross Domestic Product just doesn't cut it. This meeting was the result of the hard work of many people, but its occurrence in Antigonish was the direct result of the work of Ron Colman.

After first visiting Nova Scotia in 1990, Colman decided that it was the place to be. Shortly after moving here, he threw his energy into creating the non-profit organization Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Atlantic which is constructing an index of wellbeing and sustainable development for Nova Scotia. Over the years, GPIs accounting of forestry, volunteer work, health and transportation has endeavored to demonstrate to the public and policy makers that it is not just money that matters and counting for environmental degradation, poor health, fossil fuel emissions, among others is imperative if indeed we are to measure success in a meaningful way.

When asked about GPI's greatest successes, Colman says, "The most a researcher could hope for is to present evidence and it be followed up by results. This happened with the Health report on chronic disease followed by the cabinet decision to create the office of health promotion in effect direct policy action."

GPI's research and policy work joins efforts in other countries, such as Bhutan, Australia and New Zealand to create an index of wellbeing. Links have now been made across Canada and Roy Romanow has agreed to become the spokesperson for a national index of wellbeing. Ron Colman and GPI staff, have truly made a difference.

EAC hellos and goodbyes

Rebecca O'Brien, TRAX Coordinator since the beginning of the program is leaving for Calgary – the motherland of fossil fuel production. Rebecca has brought humour, style and countless creative ideas on how to get people out of their cars, and preferably on bicycles. Her years of living in Denmark taught her that things, in fact, could be different. Rebecca will be greatly missed and we hope she returns shortly.

While summer is not yet over, we want to thank our summer interns who always bring new life and energy into the office. Julia Kemp is once again working on the Harvest Festival; Sadie Beaton on Sustainable Seafood; Jesse Joyce is assisting with outreach and membership and Janice Ashworth and Alex Longmire can be found roaming the streets as sustainable transportation ambassadors.



nick bevan-john

EAC Superhero Volunteer

Here at the EAC we like to brag that we have over 200 active volunteers. With the desire to inform people of the work some of our volunteers do, and also to reward those extra-special volunteers, we created the "EAC Superhero" volunteer award. EAC's Summer/Fall Volunteer Superhero is: Rob MacLachlan. Rob continues to be a big help for the Coastal Issues Committee, navigating his way through the rocky shores of Nova Scotian legislation and regulations. Rob has always been keen to help whenever and wherever possible. CIC sends out a warm thanks to Rob for his help and enthusiasm and we hope to continue to work with him over the next year.

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