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FINE PRINT

The Newsletter of the Ecology Action Centre

Bring Back The Refillable ACTION NOW!

Many stores in the Halifax-Dartmouth-Sackville area that carry refillables charge 5¢ and 10¢ for deposit but only give a refund of 2¢ and 5¢ in many cases (often the refund comes only in the form of candy). This decreases the number of bottles returned. Consumers have less incentive to bring back the refillable because they're not getting a full cash refund on their deposit.

The people of Nova Scotia can start to change the problem now on a voluntary basis. Legislation is necessary for real effectiveness but we must act now to stem the tide of non-refillables.

The Ecology Action Centre has printed an attractive poster to be placed in stores selling refillable soft drink bottles stating that the store will guarantee a full cash refund of 5¢ for small bottles and 10¢ for large bottles.

We are asking Nova Scotians to take this poster to their local corner stores and supermarkets and request and place the poster in their store. We will concentrate on the Halifax-Dartmouth-Sackville first

Our publicity will encourage Nova Scotians to buy refillables and bring them back to a store for refund. If there is a large scale public support for using the refillable the government and industry will be more willing to act.

If you are a resident (or a storeowner!) and you wish to help by taking one or more of our posters and approaching your local store (s) please call 422-4311 or write to the Ecology Action Centre, Forrest Building, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S.



Room 20-A, Forrest Building
Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. 422-4311

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Halifax, N.S.

July, 1975

No. 8

New Co-ordinator

Susan Mayo has recently been appointed co-ordinator of The Ecology Action Centre.

Susan claims to be "mostly Nova Scotian" which is probably justified. She was born in Portsmouth, England, where she lived for all of six weeks. Since then, she has lived in Halifax three times, for periods of four or five years, interspersed with stretches in Ottawa and Victoria.

She began her university career at Carleton University. After two years, she transferred to Dalhousie University, where she completed a B.Sc. in biology.

Susan's first ambition was to go into medicine, but she chose to continue in biology, particularly marine biology. She did an M.Sc. thesis on the red seaweed Irish Moss, studying the strong gel material, which is extracted from the seaweed, and used, in Susan's words, "as an additive in everything from ice cream to shampoo."

After this thesis was done, she worked on gel substances in other seaweeds, but found she preferred people to test tubes and chemicals, so she returned to school for a year of studies toward an education degree. She still hopes to work in the education field some day.

When asked how she got into ecology, Susan replies that she likes nature -- "spiders and loons and tamarack trees". She enjoys wilderness canoeing, and cross-country skiing. In addition, she has a deep concern for the political, social, and economic aspects of man's interaction with nature.

We are sorry to lose the services of Brian Gifford, who has been with the Centre since its inception, but we have been fortunate in having his place filled so quickly and capably.

The Green Paper on Non-Refillable Containers

The Ecology Action Centre welcomed the Green Paper recently released by the Department of the Environment. The release coincided with plans by the E.A.C. to urge the public to "bring back the refillable". We feel, however, that the Green Paper does not go far enough and that a ban on non-refillable containers is the most effective way to solve the problem.

The Ecology Action Centre agrees with the two basic conclusions of the text... 1) from the environmental point of view, including energy consumption, returnable-refillable containers are preferable to those that are not returned, and 2) recycling cannot be considered a real alternative for reducing the waste and litter from beverage containers.

COSTS TO CONSUMER

What are the costs to the consumer of using refillable or non-refillable containers? More than twice as much energy is required to produce non-refillable containers and with the soaring energy costs the consumer is guaranteed a definite saving through the use of refillable containers. In fact a survey of major retail outlets in Halifax-Dartmouth has found that the consumer can save up to 13¢ per bottle with the purchase of the refillable container. It also seems reasonable that if a container is reused rather than a new one produced there will be a saving in required raw materials which are being depleted at an alarming rate. In Halifax-Dartmouth last year there were about 613 tons of soft drink containers incinerated or bulldozed into the ground. Naturally the use of the refillable container would help reduce the quantity of solid waste created. One cannot ignore the litter problem either. Various studies have estimated that between 19% and 44% of litter is beverage containers. A deposit on all containers would drastically reduce this problem due to the ever-so-important monetary incentive.

Concern has been expressed over the employment situation if there is a complete ban of non-returnables. An Ontario study indicated that there would be some initial employment dislocation but at the same time there would be an increase in jobs. The state of Oregon has announced an estimated increase of 365 jobs because of their move to bring back the refillable.

THE PROPOSALS

The Green Paper lists 10 proposals and we should look at them individually. Proposal 1: All types of soft drinks sold by a vendor should be available in refillable containers; 2: Encourage soft drink companies and vendors to promote the sale of refillables; 3: The cost of the content and of the container deposit on returnables be shown separately; 4: Make mandatory a deposit of 5¢ and 10¢; 5: All returnables to have "money back bottle" marked on them; 6: Urges the manufacturers to produce convenient cartons for return; 7: The vendor is to take back any returnable bottles of a type he was selling and pay a full cash refund; 8: The vendor's obligations relative to returning bottles would be posted clearly in a store where returnables were sold; 9: Urges the industry to standardize and this should be enforced by legislation no later than the time at which conversion to the metric sizes is made obligatory; and 10: The adoption of an ongoing review of the effects of the measures adopted.

REACTION OF ECOLOGY ACTION CENTRE

How does the Ecology Action Centre react to the above? The first step in our campaign to "bring back the refillable" evolves around the Green Paper's proposals 7 and 8. We agree with these proposals as well as 9 as long as the federal government doesn't postpone the conversion to metric sizes. But let's look at proposal 1. Certainly it offers a positive approach to making returnable bottles more available, however the E.A.C. must stand firm and press for legislation that will go further than simply guaranteeing a choice. We feel strongly that the time is right for the implementation of a complete ban on all non-returnable soft drink containers. Half-way measures are unacceptable. Proposals 2 and 6 use the words "encourage" and "urge"...which leave the proposals without force. Also proposal 10 seems to lack any strength. There is an immediate need for the establishment of a solid waste review committee.

Simply by releasing the Green Paper the government has defined the use of non-refillable containers as a major problem. The proposals make a definite attempt to assure availability. Without firm controls however there are so many practical problems that one can conceive in assuring this availability. Legislation to require a refillable choice in each brand and size sold by any store would be complicated to draw up and impossible to enforce. A ban seems to be much more practical.

GARBAGE COMPOSITION STUDY

The trash thrown out by residents of Halifax-Dartmouth is being picked apart and analyzed this month. Six people are spending their working hours carefully sorting and weighing the various elements mixed up in our garbage.

The materials being recorded are:
Newsprint, corrugated cardboard, mixed paper;
Food wastes, garden wastes, other organics;
Beverage cans, other cans, ferrous metals, aluminum, and other metals;
Plastic; Wood; Textiles; Rubber;
Leather;
Ashes, rock, and dirt.

This is the Solid Waste composition study first approved two years ago, and supported in recent months by Halifax and Dartmouth city councils at the request of the Ecology Action Centre. The study will furnish basic data essential for any large-scale recycling operation in this region.

The Nova Scotia Research Foundation is conducting the study, under the auspices of MAPC and with funding assistance from the N.S. Department of Environment; The E.A.C. has a subcontract with the N. S. Research Foundation to do the actual sorting.

While assisting in the gradual development of recycling locally, this project is also contributing to the E.A.C.'s fund-raising.

It's smelly work -- but in the long run it may help to solve some of our resource and disposal problems

Brief to the Municipal Development Plan Committee

On May 20, The Ecology Action Centre presented "An Illustrated Brief" to the Municipal Development Plan Committee of the City Council. It dealt with five basic areas; Environment; Recycling; Transportation; Land Development; and Recreation. Following are some of the observations and recommendations made by the brief:

ENVIRONMENT

Halifax is an interesting and "livable" city, with over thirty thousand trees on city owned land, views from Citadel Hill, natural landscapes, watershed lands, parks and green spaces, and neighbourhoods which contribute to a sense of community. This environment is, however, fragile, and easily eroded. The Municipal Development Plan should try to prevent such erosion, and promote these assets as a highest priority.

The Statement of Policy of the M.D.P. should include an objective for environmental protection as well as provision for a review period for major developments to allow for environmental assessment. The cost of such studies could be shared between the Provincial Department of the Environment and the developer. The Plan should incorporate a policy to encourage conservation of natural resources and an energy efficient life style. The city could explore such options as; 1. the use of municipal waste for energy generation; 2. recycling of present housing stock; 3. Use of garden allotments; 4. increased use of waste heat from the Power Commission's generating plant; 5. energy efficient transportation; and 6. buildings incorporating good insulation and taking advantage of solar heat. (The Federal Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources states that high rise buildings consume 62% more energy than low rise buildings of the same capacity.

RECYCLING

The principal of recycling has gained enough acceptance that the province of Ontario is embarking on a program to establish regional recycling operations. Anglo-Canadian Pulp and Paper Co. Ltd. has shown interest in a plant in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission has agreed to fund a waste composition study by the Nova Scotia Research Foundation, with assistance from the Ecology Action Centre.

In the long term, a total reclamation operation for the metro area must be promoted as a matter of policy. This would reduce significantly the amount of land needed for a sanitary landfill, it could be a money making operation, and it would conserve valuable resources which would otherwise be squandered.

Short-term policies offer advantages. Many Halifaxians separate their paper when putting it out for collection. The city could provide space on its garbage trucks for newspapers and other paper products, which could be kept temporarily at the proposed transfer stations already included in plans for the landfill operation, from where it could be sent to recycling plants such as the one in Hantsport. Such facilities could also be used by private companies which might wish to bring their paper to the transfer station.

Additional policies should be adopted to phase out non-returnable containers for beverages. This could reduce clean-up costs to the city, and make it more attractive.

The city could promote a comprehensive education kit to include in the present school curriculum, to introduce information on recycling, and to inculcate students with the need for such an approach to waste problems.

HOUSING

The Ecology Action Centre felt that the M.D.P. should encourage the retention of existing housing stock. New housing developments should be encouraged to locate on vacant land, rather than demolishing existing housing. At the present time many buildings are being demolished without any specific plans for replacement which is a waste of a valuable resource.

(continued on back page)

THE WRECK COVE BOOKLET

We have been unable to obtain a first hand account of the booklet, produced jointly by the Conservation Committee of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and The Ecology Action Centre, on the Wreck Cove Hydro Project. This is unfortunate, because the book has been one of the Centre's most significant accomplishments of the past few months.

The booklet, a most attractive publication, written by Ann Linton and Paul Keddy, with a cover illustration by Lloyd Fitzgerald, describes the project itself; lucidly sets forth the ecological objections to it, exposes contradictory governmental statements on the impact of the project; airs the government's attitude toward groups like E.A.C. that wish the Wreck Cove project stopped; explains the Nova Scotia Power Corporation's need for such a development; suggests long and short term alternatives to the project; and makes the following recommendations;

- (1) That there be a delay of at least one year in the construction of the project. Power deficits this may entail can be met by importing from New Brunswick. This will provide time for a thorough re-evaluation of the entire project, including:- public hearings to be held at various locations in the province, presided over by the Environmental Control Council. - thorough environmental impact studies. - detailed studies into feasibility of alternative power sources, especially a national energy grid.
- (2) The possibility of deleting the Cheticamp Lake area from the project, and returning it to Cape Breton Highlands National Park, should be seriously considered.
- (3) Conservation should be given a high priority in Nova Scotia Power Corporation policy; waste should be discouraged.
- (4) The 'systems study' of the Nova Scotia Power Corporation should be released to the public.
- (5) In future projects of this nature, the Environmental Control Council should be consulted at an early stage, and permitted to hold public hearings. Detailed environmental impact studies should be completed before a final decision is made about construction.

The booklet mentions that at least one proposed hydro-electric project in the province has been stopped in the late stages of planning. In the early sixties a peak hydro-electric project was to be built on the Gold River, Lunenburg County. Due to a great deal of public resistance, the project was finally halted.

The booklet sells for 25¢. Copies are available from: The Ecology Action Centre
Room 20-A
Forrest Building,
Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N. S.

WE NEED

DONATIONS

TO HELP WITH THE

"Bring Back the Refillable"
campaign

TRANSPORTATION

The Halifax Municipal Development Plan states that city policy on transportation will be "to enhance the use and success of mass transit". This statement, adopted by Halifax City Council on October 31, 1974, is of inestimable social and economic value, in protection of residential areas threatened by increasing traffic, and in enhancement of property values due to efficient traffic movement. The plan seems to express a preference for bus public transportation, omitting such alternatives as rail and water based public transport.

One area to be explored is commuter rail facilities. The tracks which radiate out from Halifax to surrounding communities are not now adequately serving passenger demands. The city can help by supporting a policy on commuter rail service.

Draft statements do not mention the Halifax-Dartmouth ferries, nor possible use of more ferries to connect with rail or road facilities already in use. Halifax is ideally located for use of its waterways for public transportation. The Centre is pleased to note that a company is planning on Halifax-Bedford hovercraft service.

The draft M.D.P. has focused on Halifax when it would be better to look into the problems of the whole area with movement of people in and out of Halifax, rather than a restricted view as now appears to be the case.

Ideally, the Plan should achieve a minimum impact on residential communities, while getting people to work by a simple, uncluttered route. Unfortunately, the land development policies seem to direct the city so that homes, jobs, and shopping malls are widely separated.

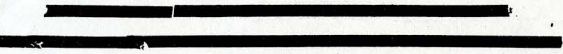
LAND DEVELOPMENT

The Plan states that "the existing residential scale shall be maintained by new developments." The Ecology Action Centre believes this principle is of fundamental importance. However, unless terms are clearly defined, much room for modification exists, which could thwart the intent of the plan. Terms must be defined clearly. The Centre appreciates the concern shown for needs of people displaced by development, but strongly feels that there should be no redevelopment until such people are adequately cared for. Policy 2.3 states that some high density residential development will be encouraged in downtown Halifax. The Centre agrees, but feels policy must be very specific. Such developments should include medium and low rise housing with some family housing units. Development should be timed to allow for the provision of adequate services, including planning for schools, playgrounds, recreational areas and transit services. New developments should allow for a mixture of old and young, high and low income groups, plus singles, to give a balanced community and the interaction needed for civic awareness. Provisions should be made for minimum architectural standards, which would provide a harmonious environment in which an individual can function well at work or at leisure. Sound proofing, natural light and natural ventilation should be considered.

Policy 2.1 states that there will be commercial centres to meet community, neighbourhood and regional needs. The idea is good, but what controls will be placed on such centres.

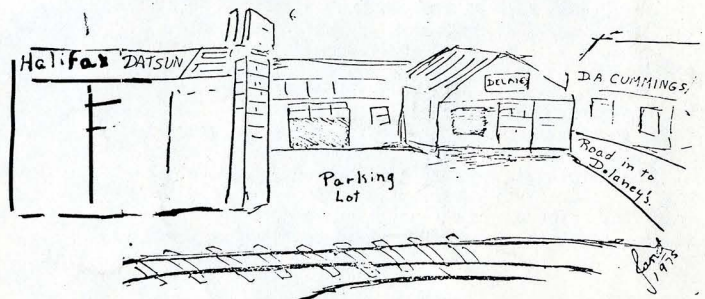
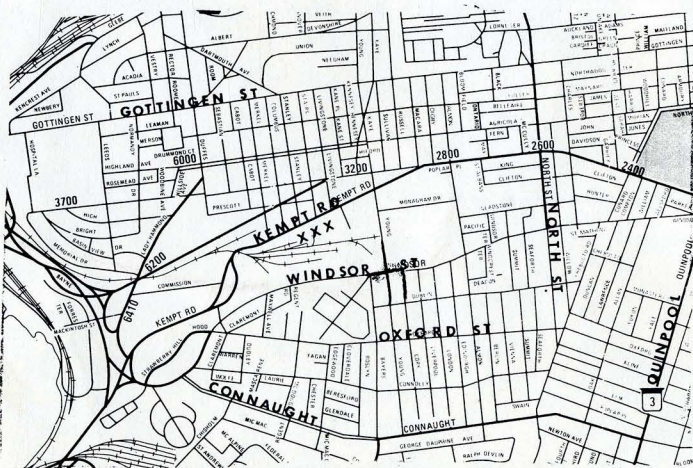
RECREATION

The Centre recommends "vest-pocket" parks, as small as a single house lot to be used as playgrounds, handball or tennis courts, places to sit and read, play checkers or feed birds, or as community gardens and greenhouses. Additional walking and bicycle trails should be established along the east side of the Arm, the harbour, Bedford Basin and in the watershed lands. The city should provide public access to all shorelines and establish boat-launching facilities and marinas on the Arm and Basin. A buffer zone should be established around those lakes and rivers which are not yet developed to the water's edge. Parks could be established at the Edmonds Grounds, Dead Man's Island, the south end of Williams Lake, and on parts of the present dump site and Windsor Park. A new zoning by-law should protect and designate park land separately from institutional land. Otherwise, the result will be a steady loss of park land.



The E.A.C. Recycling Committee needs your help in asking your local store to co-operate with our campaign. We'd like each store in metro Halifax, and later the whole province, to adopt a policy of paying full refunds in cash for empties -- and to put up our poster to let the world know. Want to help? Call 422-4311, or Marilyn Squires, 429-6460, or 469-7722

How to get to DELANEY'S



DELANEY'S PAPER SALVAGE

XXX on map marks approximate site