



**SUNSHINE
COAST
CLEAN AIR
SOCIETY**

**COMMUNITY
UPDATE**

June 2007
www.cleanaironthecoast.com

CONTACT US!

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

www.cleanaironthecoast.com

OUR MANDATE:

"to educate our community on the importance and benefits of clean air and thus enhance the quality of life for future

SMOKE

I smell the smoke, I see the flame
Next door neighbours are burning again.
The baby must remain indoors
Until the good rain pours and pours.

We need clean water, we need clean air,
Our present grade is only fair.
As trees come down and end in smoke
It's really time we all awoke.

Smoke is dangerous; smoke can kill.
Your health is precious; have the will
To stop the burning; bury and chip
Asthmatic children are on our ship.

Rosemary Holmes-Smith
Sechelt, B.C.

Outdated SCR D By-Laws Burn Area F Residents

by Francois Lincoln

In 2004 we purchased a vacant lot and built our home in a newly developing subdivision (12 lots in Hopkins Landing). The disclosure statement for the subdivision required natural gas home heating. This was to our satisfaction; we considered natural gas a 'clean' home fuel. Both the developers and purchasers paid substantial monies to the SCR D (permits) to allow home building in this subdivision.

During the past three years we have been subjected to poor air quality due to unrestricted open burning (from backyard pits and land clearance) and poorly functioning wood-burning home heating systems. The stench of acrid smoke wafting across our hillside as well as the eyesore from the smoke has been appalling.

One evening in January 2007 as we were being 'smoked out', we googled 'open burning SCR D'. A web page opened and clearly stated that restrictions were in place that would disallow the open burn. However when we contacted the Fire Dept. we were told the restrictions WRONGLY included the SCR D. The restrictions were only relevant to the *early phases* of the new burning ban for Gibsons! The Fire Prevention Officer explained to us that the web page would be deleted. So began our enquiries.

We became aware that the Town of Gibsons and the Municipality of Sechelt had moved forward to ban



ACRID SMOKE DRIFTS UP from a nearby backyard burn in a Hopkins Landing residential neighbourhood .

open burning (backyard burning) and restrict developers' land clearance burns. Area F Director Lee Turnbull stated that residents in our area were opposed to any changes to the current burning regulations. She explained to us that her position was informed by the Area F Planning Commission and the West Howe Sound Community Association.

We did not accept that residents of Area F were unwilling to support clean air practices. We circulated a petition in Area F and received an 80% positive response in support of additional restrictions. As well, many residents shared alarming anecdotal stories of the negative impact on open burning on their daily lives.

As we learned more about the health impacts of wood smoke, we realized that the current SCR D burning bylaw protects neither the environment nor the health of citizens. For 6 months of the year open burning is allowed in Area F backyards—many of which

are in residential subdivisions, and some of which are literally "across the street" from the Municipality of Gibsons, where such burns are banned outright. How neighbourly is that?

Our experience indicates that a majority of SCR D residents would support changes to the open burning regulations. The Gibsons experience indicates that educating our neighbours about the health impacts of wood smoke, and alternatives to "the easy way" of burning household debris, will result in a successful transition to eliminating outdoor burning.

All levels of government are recognizing the importance of protecting the environment. We hope that the SCR D will harmonize its burning bylaws with those of the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt—banning open burning in residential neighbourhoods, and restricting burns for land clearance.

President's Report: 2006-07



*Note: At the SCCAS Annual General Meeting held on April 15, Society founders **David and Rosemary Holmes-Smith** retired from the Board of Directors. David's final report as President is reprinted here for those who were unable to attend the AGM.*

The 12 month period 2006- 2007 has been a good year for those who are concerned with our environment; global warming is proving to be a reality and many people are seriously trying to reduce their footprint in the sky!

For this reason too it has also been a good year for The Clean Air Society; we have gained some new members and also some younger people to attack new issues, in particular the cosmetic use of herbicides.

We have also gained a new organizer, Heather Jeal, who is our Executive Director and will keep us on the straight and narrow. As you have seen she has already produced two excellent newsletters, and she has taken over the ever-expanding files of the organization. In earlier discussions with her, we agreed that one of her first jobs would be to apply for grant money so that we could develop our educational role.

Rosemary and I have finally reached the end of our respective tethers, and are happy that, at long last, there are others willing to take over our leadership roles. We are relinquishing the reins, but not the Society which we want to serve as long as possible.

However, before we go, there are several things to be said.

Over the years we have been helped by outside groups with bigger budgets than we have had; among them are the B.C Lung Association, represented here today by **Jesse Eckert**; the B.C. Cancer Society where **Ashley Duyker** has been very useful. Our local B.C. Health Nurse

whose name is **Eli Weston**, and our local rep for B.C. Transit, **Marj McDougall**, are high on our list of favourite people. These last named help us on Clean Air Day and Canada Day in Sechelt, and we are very happy to have them on our side. Ultimately, of course, there is the provincial Ministry of Environment with whom we have a good working arrangement and whose support we covet.

Amongst our own members I must mention that there are two people who have been very generous donors of cash (running to hundreds of dollars) and to them we all give our heartfelt thanks. I don't think I am allowed to tell you their names, but we would be in sad shape without them.

As you are all now aware, what matters is that the Clean Air Society maintains a presence on the Coast and this is done by having a table or attending as many events as possible throughout the year – we must be seen and be heard. It is important too that we attend the ever-increasing number of conferences about clean air that are being held in B.C. This means sending emissaries to as many as we can so that again we are seen and heard around the province, and we can learn something new from each event.

When we get some funding, it will be important to bring in high level speakers who can help spread the Clean Air idea amongst the local population. Our absolute coup here was in 2002 when we invited the late **Dr. David Bate** of UBC who was, at that time the most distinguished researcher in this field in all of Canada.

Today, the Clean Air Society has a multi-pronged approach to cleaner air. The main focus, as always, is to get the SCRCD to synchronize their bylaws about backyard burning with the rest of the lower Coast. This is by no means a 'given' yet, as some of

you already know, but we are struggling on. On this matter, I'd like to commend two new members for their hard work in Area F – they are **Laura and Francois Lincoln**, who have entered the lion's den and are still alive. They are likely to come out winners in the long run Well done, you are doing excellent work for us.

Developers' burns are still a huge concern for us and solving this problem is very difficult; we need a courageous government to lay down the law but this we haven't got. However, we must press on here.

There is one other committee working on the outdoor threat of the cosmetic use of pesticides and herbicides, and its other half is tackling the indoor threat of scented household products and air fresheners.

As you can see we are still busy and there are many, many other areas that need attention: wood heating stoves is still unfinished business. and I would suggest to the new executive that it reminds the Ministry of Environment that it should focus on this issue before the summer is out. The large increase in the number of cars and trucks that is likely to occur as the home building boom continues, might suggest that anti-idling laws are a good target and even a system of "aircare" for those many, many dirty trucks. But you will have your own ideas and so I'll leave you with best wishes and thanks from Rosemary and me. . . Thank you.

"What matters is that the Clean Air Society maintains a presence on the Coast—we must be seen and be heard."

HEROINES AND HEROES

Join "Grandmothers and GrandOthers" at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre on June 30 at 7pm for an evening of paintings (by Helen Broadfoot) and poetry, featuring a lighthearted reading from Rosemary Holmes-Smith's beguiling *Doggerel for a Dismal World*.

Admission by donation. Refreshments will be served.

New Logo a Breath of Fresh Air

You may have noticed the Clean Air Society's new logo which recently appeared in newspaper ads for our Clean Air Day screening of An Inconvenient Truth. We believe our new look will give the SCCAS a unique and memorable identity.

Like a breath of fresh air, the human form with outstretched arms raised in hope and celebration, forms the base of a healthy atmosphere free of air pollution.

We hope the public will recognize it as a symbol of hope, change, growth and

thoughtfulness, as we strive to protect the air.

It will lend a visual consistency to our message and reflect the society's mandate "to educate our community on the importance and benefits of clean air and thus enhance the quality of life for future generations".

Watch for our new logo on all correspondence, on our membership cards, website and newsletter.

~Ian MacLeod



Having Your Membership Work for You

Along with a fresh board of directors and a new logo, a new committee is being formed to add value to a Clean Air Society membership. Soon, all members will receive a personalized membership card. The membership committee will be contacting businesses that are environmental leaders in their field

and inviting them to participate in our CAS Membership Card Program. CAS members will be able to show their membership card to participating businesses to receive special discounts on products and services. The purpose of this program is to promote businesses and products that are air-friendly while at the

same time giving our members discounts when purchasing them. Director, Ryan Logtenberg has volunteered to head the membership card committee and is looking for more volunteers to help get the program off the ground. If you are interested, contact Ryan at ryanlogtenberg@gmail.com or 604-883-2227

"CAS members will be able to show their membership card to participating businesses to receive special discounts on products and services."

PAINLESS WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT:

Eat food produced locally and organically.

Avoid processed, over-packaged items.

Make a single weekly shopping run .

Reuse shopping bags.

Don't buy bottled water if your tap water is safe.

Share the ride!

Better yet: take the bus, cycle or walk.

Inventing the Future One Day at a Time

As SCCAS members know, air pollution is a significant environmental health problem. In Canada alone, it is responsible for causing thousands of deaths, millions of cases of illness, billions of dollars in health care expenses, and tens of billions of dollars in lost productivity every year.

In the report, *The Air We Breathe*, the David Suzuki Foundation found that Canada provides weaker protection for human health from air pollution than the U.S., Australia, or the European Union. Significantly, Canada is the only nation to rely on

voluntary national guidelines, which provide a far weaker approach to controlling air pollution than the enforceable standards in place elsewhere. The report also includes five key recommendations for improving the health and well-being of Canadians and reducing the negative health impacts of air pollution. The report can be downloaded from the Foundation's website (david Suzuki.org).

Suzuki does not place all responsibility for change on government or industry. He points out that each day, each person invents the future

with choices made about food, transportation, and energy use.

(Suzuki's website points out that the average person spends 32 hours a month driving, and 27 hours a month paying for their car use.)

The Foundation's website offers a number of specific changes individuals may make in their daily routines which are simple, effective, and sustainable; we've summarized a few at the left.

New Board, New Committees, New Direction

At the Annual General Meeting held April 15, 2007, the members elected a new Board of Directors.

Elise Buque, Jeff Hoag and Maria Lodzinski returned for another term.

Marguerite Johnson stepped down, as did David and Rosemary Holmes-Smith.

New directors included Ian MacLeod from Halfmoon Bay; Ryan Logtenberg from Pender Harbour; Francois Lincoln from Hopkin's Landing, and Louis Legal from Elphinstone. Louis Legal has since resigned from the Board.

The Board met in May and elected Ian MacLeod to serve as President and Maria Lodzinski as Vice-President. The position of secretary/treasurer, to which Louis Legal had been elected, is currently vacant.

Over the next year, the Board plans to focus on raising community awareness of the health benefits of clean air, and the environmental

threats to our airshed's well-being.

"Clean Air" is a huge topic, and so we have committees to break it up into particular areas of focus.

The Pesticide Committee under Elizabeth McNeill has made numerous presentations to explain the health and environmental impacts of the cosmetic use of pesticides and herbicides.

The Indoor Toxins Committee under Rosemary Holmes-Smith advises on the unseen toxins from household cleansers, air fresheners, and building materials.

The Outdoor Burning Committee under Francois Lincoln is a new group, fired with enthusiasm to reduce woodsmoke from backyard and land clearance burns.

The Woodstove Committee under Jeff Hoag is also new, and dedicated to reducing smoke produced by inefficient wood-fired heating systems.

The GHG Group will focus on ways to reduce greenhouse gases from vehicle emissions and industry.

The Membership Benefits Committee under Ryan Logtenberg is liaising with local businesses.

Each committee welcomes new members. Please contact the chairs for more information.

GHG Group

Ian MacLeod

Indoor Toxins:

Rosemary Holmes-Smith

Membership Benefits:

Ryan Logtenberg

Outdoor Burning:

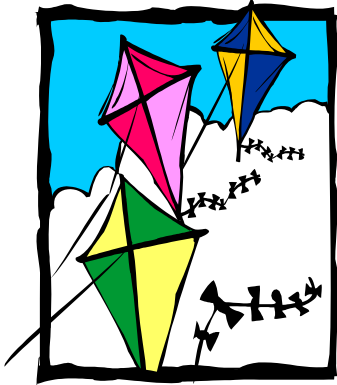
Francois Lincoln

Pesticides:

Elizabeth McNeill

Woodstove Committee:

Jeff Hoag:



YES! I'd like to join the Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society.

I am particularly concerned about (please check all that apply):

Greenhouse Gas Emissions / global warming

Smoke from outdoor burning

Smoke from woodstoves

Cosmetic use of pesticides

Indoor toxins

Clean air and our health

Clean air and our environment

Other _____

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

My cheque in the amount of _____ is enclosed. (Membership dues: \$10 per person per year).

Please mail to:

Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society

c/o Box 1504

Gibsons BC V0N 1V0