Albertans Win Emerald Awards For Keeping the Province Green

More than 130 individuals, businesses, and agencies were nominated for the first Emerald Awards for protecting Alberta's environment. From an eleven-year-old girl who started a juice can recycling program in her Calgary school to a corporation in Nisku which developed a breed of mosa to mop up oil spills, nominations came from all sectors and population groups.

The Emerald Awards were created by a private group called the Alberta Foundation for Environment Excellence to replace the Alberta Environment Awards. The first Emeralds were given to winners in six categories at a gala June 1st, 1992 in Edmonton. The categories were: educational organizations, not-for-profit organizations, communities & government, two awards for individual contributions, and industry & business.

The educational organization award went to all Alberta students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 for demonstrating outstanding initiatives and developing and implementing their own environmental strategic plans.

Ducks Unlimited received the not-for-profit award for their efforts in restoring and developing wildlife habitat. The group has spent 50 years and 100 million dollars to protect, enhance and reestablish the natural ecosystem in this province. They initiated the restoration of Frank Lake and successfully reclaimed more than 3000 acres of wetland which had dried out; bringing the ducks back to nest.

The communities & government award was won by Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation for the development and management of a system to treat and dispose of hazardous waste. The Corporation also holds the annual Toxie Roundup and provides educational materials to Albertans on personal management of hazardous chemicals and wastes.

Lois Soderstrom of Rocky Mountain House was the proud winner of the individual Emerald Award (community contribution) for starting her own recycling program. Martha Kostruch was also awarded an individual Emerald Award (provincial, national or international contribution) for her devotion to the environmental movement in Alberta. She has been involved with Friends of the Oldman River which set out to investigate the need for the impending dam. The case was brought before the Supreme Court of Canada which ruled that the federal government has not only the right, but the responsibility, to conduct needs assessments on projects with environmental impact.

The industry and business award went to Safety Boss for their efforts in capping oil wells in Kuwait after the Gulf War.

The Emerald Awards represent the sheer variety and number of environmental initiatives undertaken by agencies, individuals and corporations in the province.
Director's Note

Putting It Into Perspective

By Judy Setton, PhD

Like everyone else who is trying to keep up with the latest knowledge developments in their area of expertise, or merely trying to get through the daily assault of incoming mail, I sometimes find solstice reading something totally unrelated to my work. This usually happens miles away from the confines of my office, in the comfort of my living room.

A couple of weeks ago, during one of my at home "time outs" I found a 'gem' while reading the latest edition of the Melfort Journal (the weekly paper from my hometown that my parents still send as a Christmas gift!).

Above all, what my new-found 'gem' reminded me of was the importance of the simple things in life. Suddenly, the latest, most up-to-date information on the benefits of leisure or healthy work took second place as I was absorbed with the real life and real drama of the situation described in the following letter to the editor of my hometown newspaper.

Please take a minute out of your busy day to read on—you'll be glad you did.

GIFT FROM CANADA POST:
"I want to publicly thank the Canadian Postal System for the 'gift' I received in the mail today. So often I have complained about postal service. I take it back. My mother is struggling with Alzheimer's disease. Because of her illness she now has to live a very long way from me. Her mind is very often even farther away and she doesn't always know who I am. I can't tell you how heartbreaking that is.

Last week, though, she remembered me. She wrote a few sentences on a piece of paper addressed to my husband and myself. They didn't totally make sense but that doesn't matter because they were written from her heart with love. She then folded this little piece of paper and forgetting all about envelopes she wrote on the back...Mrs. Logan, Melfort, Sask. and placed a stamp (half on and half off) the paper that measures 3" X 5". This little "scrap" with my mother's love on it arrived today. No envelope, no first name, no box number, no postal code. This "scrap" made it through the massive Edmonton distribution (and who knows where all else!) to finally get to me.

I thank the Post Office and of course, God, for touching all the souls that brought this precious morsel to me. It may be the last I ever receive from her and I will never throw it away." Irene Logan
Melfort, Sask.

Recycling Steps

Tips From the Environment Council of Alberta

Newspapers can be recycled but mills do not take magazines. Use libraries or share subscriptions with friends. Give old copies to doctor's offices, rest homes or shops that resell them.

Buy recycled goods to help promote recycling.

Take old clothing to a resale shop.

Re-use lunch bags—better still, use a permanent lunch box or satchel.

Don't throw cans or bottles away—recycle them. And re-use envelopes, cartons, boxes and wrapping paper and aluminum foil.

One-third of the garbage produced in a large city is organic. Start or join a composting program for organic waste.
By Jackie Webber

Being "green" and living an environmentally friendly lifestyle isn't always as simple as "those in the know" make it out to be.

For a long time, recycling, reusing, renewing and restoring were less than economically friendly, products were hard to find, and during a recession, the line between good and not-so-good can become rather grey.

However, as the cost of recycled and reusable goods slowly catch up with the costs of disposable, non-renewable, and environmentally hazardous products, our wallets stay "greener", access is greater, and economics often take back seat to guilt as a motivator to do right by Mother Earth. Not to say that most of us aren't motivated by the sheer pride, joy and pleasure of living "green"; but try to convince a single mother of three to purchase a phosphate-free detergent at twice the cost of the cheap generic phosphate.

The idea of "turning green" on an individual basis can be compared with motivating individuals to become more physically active, for example. If people are going to adopt a new lifestyle, the process must be low-cost, enjoyable, fit in with their present schedule and not upset the "status quo" too terribly much. That's reality.

With this issue of WellSpring, please take some time to think about your commitment to the environment and how you can instill your commitment in your clients, customers, patients, friends, family and colleagues.
By “The Wellness Wagon Crew”

The Wellness Wagon is steadily trekking across the province promoting wellness, active living and leisure benefits to Albertans in rural and urban communities alike.

Co-sponsored by Alberta Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Alberta Lotteries, Sun-Rype, IBM Canada, Majestic RV and the Alberta Centre For Well-Being, the Wellness Wagon is taking its messages to thousands of Albertans this summer.

The Alberta Lotteries Wellness Check, IBM Health Games and popular Sun-Rype fruit juice Sparklers have been integral to the success of the campaign.

The comments from participants speak for themselves. “These are all common-sense ideas,” says Val Morris of Red Deer, one of the first participants at the Parkland Mall promotion July 16th. “I know I should be doing these things, but it takes a little kick like this one to 100 (100 is the best score).

“We are seeing many Albertans in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s, with the occasional participant below 50 and 40,” says Lea Wiens, Wellness Wagon Program Coordinator. The Wellness Wagon crew, Lea Wiens (University of Alberta Foods and Nutrition student) and Sandy Berzins, (MSc in Health Behaviour from the University of Waterloo) help participants make connections within their communities to ensure they know where to turn for additional information or more comprehensive and individualized assessment.

“We provide these individuals with information on various aspects of their health and suggest they see their local professionals,” says Wiens. The local health units, recreation departments, physicians and regional Be Fit For Life Centres are also offered as referrals.

The Wellness Wagon will continue to bring its message to Albertans until September 10th. For a complete list of dates and locations, please call 1-800-661-4551.©
Friends of Environment Education Society of Alberta

FEESA (Friends of Environment Education Society of Alberta), a charitable organization, was established in 1985 to promote, communicate, coordinate and initiate development and support of environmental education in Alberta.

With a rich history of environmental education, Alberta has an excellent network of environmental resources that educators can access. FEESA provides partial coordination to make these resources effective and efficient.

Coordination includes Partners in Education, bringing resources and needs together; Resource PAKS, packages of environmental materials from varied sources; and Environmental Forums, presentations focusing on the educational resources available from different organizations.

FEESA develops programs in partnership with industry, business, government, environmental and educational groups. These programs include: Adopt a Stream, Aquatic Invertebrate Monitoring, Conservation Strategy Education, Special Waste Environment Education, among many others.

For more information, or to become a member, please call FEESA at: (403)421-1497.

Environment Council of Alberta

Environment Council of Alberta exists to help government make better decisions about environmental matters. It exists separately from any other government department or agency and has a wide range of responsibilities and roles in reviewing policies and programs, inquiring into practices and making proposals relating to environmental conservation in this province.

From the views of the public, its own research and from sources within government itself, the Council gathers information it needs to form the views and recommendations it provides to government. Established by an Act of the Alberta Legislature, the Council has conducted several public hearings into major environmental issues, including recycling, maintaining and expanding the agricultural land base in Alberta, noise, hazardous waste management, water management within the Oldman River Basin, and the environmental effects of forestry operations in the province.

For more information on the Environment Council of Alberta, please call 427-5792 or dial “0” and ask for Zenith 06075 (toll free).
Injuries are the leading killer of our preschool children, school age children and young adults. According to Health and Welfare Canada, injuries account for over two-thirds of deaths between the ages of one to 24 years. The majority of these deaths are preventable.

Mortality is only one consequence of accidents. Statistics show that for every child who dies of an injury, 45 more children require emergency hospital treatment and another 1300 visit the hospital emergency room. Whether directly or indirectly, as parents, community members and tax payers, we are all affected by injury.

Most fatal childhood illnesses have been significantly reduced over the century through sanitation control, immunization programs, improved nutrition and medical technology. Today, the causes of illness are primarily due to chronic disease and traumatic accidents.

In this country, injuries account for the majority of dollars spent on acute and long-term medical care. Yet, injury attracts the least amount of funding for research and prevention. It is mainly up to us, as adults, to ensure children are safe and learn how to play, live and work safely.

Several agencies in this province have been involved in strategies to reduce the incidence, morbidity and mortality associated with injury. The Sport Medicine Council of Alberta and The Injury Awareness and Prevention Centre (the Heros program) among others have played key roles in programs targeted toward youth in this province.

Successful Strategies

Several strategies are used to reduce injury, death and disability, strengthen public policy regarding injury prevention, improve awareness and education programs, create safe environments, decrease the incidence of injuries related to alcohol and drug use and to improve the health care systems of trauma care and rehabilitation.

Strengthening public policy takes many shapes. Legislation in the area of regulations and standards for products, playgrounds, toys, bicycle helmets, car seats and even extension cords is a priority of policy makers fueled by groups advocating child safety.

In the past, education and awareness programs on injury prevention have been limited due to the perception that injury and accidents are random unpredictable events. Agencies at municipal, provincial and federal levels, are involved with the delivery of educational programs in the day cares, schools and community centres country-wide. By creating a community awareness of injury prevention strategies through programs and materials, we will hopefully adopt safer practices and create safer environments for ourselves and our children.

Safe Physical Environments

Physical environments at work, home or play contribute to each individual’s potential for injury. For children, swimming pools, playgrounds, play centres, roadways, playing fields and motor vehicles are significant hazards. By creating safer environments for children, the likelihood of preventing passive injury rises dramatically.

Behaviour is an important part of injury prevention. Just because a playground is safe does not make it injury-free. But by combining a safe environment with education and awareness, we have the best preventive medicine around.

-- Jackie Webber, Editor
Escape your fast-paced office environment and take your work into the wilderness. The Blue Lake Centre provides a beautiful environment where participants develop personally and professionally in a natural setting.

The Blue Lake staff can help you create some quality time for yourself to focus on your personal well-being and optimal health while participating in a healthy amount of physical activity. Blue Lake Centre promotes and facilitates an active lifestyle by providing programs to shape and educate today's and tomorrow's recreational leaders.

Nestled in the forested foothills of William A. Switzer Provincial Park, Blue Lake Centre is located between Hinton and Jasper. The Centre encompasses 222 acres of provincial woodlands including two crystal clear mountain lakes. The setting provides a panoramic backdrop for canoeing, swimming, and hiking with rivers close by for whitewater paddling.

The 1992-93 calendar emphasizes a wide variety of programs that will satisfy well-being and active living needs. Program topics range from: Backpacking, Bicycle Touring, Canoeing, Kayaking, Sharing Nature, to: Initiative Tasks, Natural History and Geology. In addition, Blue Lake Centre offers programs to fulfill the needs of association executives and board members as well: Communication Skills, Speaking With Class, Group Relations, Major Event Planning and Leadership Assessment.

All Blue Lake Centre programs combine Alberta's best instructors, top-of-the-line equipment, comfortable facilities and the best home-cooked meals in the Rockies. Program fees are $60.00 per day per participant which includes meals, accommodations, instruction fees and equipment at the beginner levels.

While Blue Lake Centre offers a year-round schedule of programs, the facilities are also available for group bookings. Group programs can be custom-tailored to provide associations with the answers to their leadership training, board development and active living needs. If you are looking for a facility with modern amenities, and a relaxing yet productive environment, set your sights on Blue Lake Centre for your next retreat or meeting.

For more information on Blue Lake Centre, call (403)865-4741. ☺

The Environment Week Association of Alberta (EWAA) was formed in 1985 to increase the understanding and awareness of the environment among Albertans through the coordination and promotion of Environment Week each year.

Environment week is a federally-mandated program, first celebrated in 1972, that runs the first week of June to incorporate World Environment Day, June 5th.

Next year, Environment Week will take place May 30th to June 6th, 1993.

The idea is that each of us is personally responsible for ensuring a healthy environment for generations to come. Planning starts in the fall. If you are interested in becoming involved, please call Kimi Lucas at 421-1497 in Edmonton.
By Gordon W. Stewart

If you read the travel guides, they tell you the easiest and most polite way to tune out a talkative seatmate on an airplane is to put on your headset and tune in your favorite music on the in-flight audio program.

There are times when I do turn on the music to avoid the talk. Travelling can be tiring, and it’s nice sometimes to relax, listen to music, and read to be alone and quiet for a while.

Other times it’s nice to chat. On a recent quick trip (back to Ottawa one afternoon, returning home the following evening), I met two interesting people and we talked along the way.

Travelling East, I chatted with a woman who had been to Victoria to visit her mother. Her mother, in her 60s, would soon leave Victoria, she said, and go to live with her sister in Edmonton.

Her mother was extremely overweight, had been for some time, and now had serious problems with her legs.

For years her doctor had urged her to lose weight. She agreed she should, but she never did. She had failed to look after her health, and now she couldn’t look after herself. She was in a wheelchair, and would never walk again.

Flying between Ottawa and Toronto on my way home the next evening, I sat beside a potato farmer from Prince Edward Island. He was on his way to Toronto for the farm machinery show at the Canadian National Exhibition.

In transit, the farmer explained the ins and outs, even the art and science, of potato production. And he lamented how much farming had changed. "Don’t get nearly the exercise I used to", he said. Nevertheless, I counted him a lucky man. Daily his work took him outdoors. He was big and strong, and, in the course of our conversation, I discovered he was happy and healthy too.

Listening to my farmer friend — his enthusiasm and zest for life unbounded — I thought of yesterday’s story of the women in the wheelchair. This man was almost her age, but, my, how their lives were different. I felt at once happy and sad. Happy for this man and his vibrant life; sad for that woman who would never walk again.

These two stories, heard so close together, reminded me how much our way of life affects our quality of life. They reconfirmed how important it is to live healthfully and avoid problems — to prevent disease, which is usually a slow and insidious process, instead of having to cure it.

The woman in the wheelchair was a stark reminder that by the time you consider a cure, it’s often too late.

Do not litter.

Graffiti on trees and rocks is visual pollution.

Travel in small groups to reduce vegetation damage.

Avoid creating new trails.

Do not smoke while hiking.

Use designated campsites when possible.

Separate cooking area from sleeping area.

Choose backpacking stoves over wood fires.

Choose lightweight foods with minimum wrapping.

Clean up your campground and fire scar.

Bury human waste at least 200 feet from any water source.

Bring plastic bags to carry out non-degradable waste.

Avoid taking pets into the wilderness.

Avoid camping near game trails.

Hang food and equipment in a tree 20 feet above the ground at night.

Don’t feed wild animals — ever.
Notes

Gambling... A Health Problem?

According to recent research, gambling addiction is becoming a serious problem that not only affects financial status, but also has a significant impact on health and well-being.

In an upcoming full seminar, Dr. Garry Smith will discuss compulsive gambling in order to build awareness in the professional community. Stay tuned for dates and times. And watch for Dr. Smith's compulsive gambling article in the next issue of WellSpring.

DATES TO REMEMBER...

September: Arthritis Month
Sept. 6-12: World Literacy Week
Sept. 13: Terry Fox Run
Sept. 15: Intl Day of Peace
Sept. 20-27: Brain Injury Awareness Week and Sexual Stereotyping Awareness Week
Sept 21-27: KidsCare Week
October: Cheese Month
Oct. 1: Intl' Day for the Elderly
Oct 4-10: Fire Prevention Week, AIDS Awareness Week, Nat'l Family Week
Oct 18: Persons Day
Oct 18-25 Energy Awareness Week, Dental Hygiene Week, Homemaker & Home Support Week, Schizophrenia Awareness Week, Nat'l School Safety Week, Public Transit Awareness Week.
November: Diabetes Month, Family Violence Prevention Month, Osteoporosis Month.

Health Promotion

Leisure and recreation have excellent health benefits. But keep in mind that some hobbies, arts, even sports may be dangerous to the environment.

When you want to relax completely, consider reading, reviving the lost art of conversation, or enjoying good music. Don't overlook games: crosswords to chess or charades, your mind is stimulated and nothing is contaminated or consumed.

One of the best things you can do for the environment is to get to know it by going for walks regularly. Sharpen your powers of observation—notice birds, new plants, smells, sounds, air currents, signs of damage from humans or other creatures. If you know your environment, you will have a clearer idea about what we have to lose, and what's worth saving.

Artisans need to regard their workplace as seriously as an industrial or laboratory worker would. If you are an artist, think about your procedures, your materials, your workplace, and the dangers they may pose.

In place of solvents, use a good hand cleaner, followed with mild soap and water. Solvents may harm your skin, you may inhale them and you are needlessly releasing them into the environment when you dump them down the drain.

Use eye protection for any work that involves splashing, poses risk of splashing the eye, or which involves acids or caustics. Face shields that protect the face as well as the eyes against hazardous materials, and fit over street glasses, are preferred by many.

Contact lenses offer no protection at all against hazardous materials. What is worse, chemical vapours might actually adhere to them and thus remain in contact with the eyes. Avoid the use of contacts when working in a hazardous environment.

If you work with hazardous materials, organize an eye wash solution. A self-contained unit can be purchased from a safety supply store.

Some of you may smoke when you're at leisure. You don't have to be reminded of the health risk to yourself, but please remember that smoking is a major source of indoor air pollution. If you must smoke, use a small, ventilated smoking area to protect the health of non-smokers around you— including your loved ones. Play wise, be well!

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Health Promotion:

With the Environment In Mind

From the Environment Council of Alberta

For more information, contact the Environment Council of Alberta at 427-5792
By Scott Boyd

Kevin Sirois was inducted into the Canadian Amateur Speed Skating Hall of Fame on June 12, 1992. Sirois is the first Red Deer speed skater in the Hall and his accomplishments will be listed alongside such athletes as Gaetan Boucher, Sylvie Daigle, and Cathy Priestner.

Kevin Sirois was a champion city speed skater and cyclist who passed away May 14, 1972 while cycling on his way to Edmonton from Red Deer. Sirois was struck and killed by a car while training to qualify for the Canadian Olympic Cycling Team for the Munich Olympics after having just returned from Sapporo, Japan as a member of Canada's Olympic Speed Skating team.

Following Kevin's death, the City of Red Deer and Red Deer College recognized his achievements by building a new gymnasium in his name and generating a fund to purchase equipment for a fitness training-testing centre—one of Sirois' interests.

In 1992, the Kevin Sirois Fitness Resource Centre celebrates 20 years of supporting active healthy lifestyles to Red Deer and Central Alberta. The name and spirit of Kevin Sirois is held close and honoured by the staff and over 200,000 Central Albertans who are annually impacted by the services of the Fitness Centre, the Kevin Sirois Sports Medicine Clinic, and the Kevin Sirois Sport Equipment Room. As legacy to Mr. Sirois' relentless pursuit of excellence, we strive to train, test, treat, and increase the awareness and participation in sport, recreation and active living.

Heart Health In Central Alberta

In keeping with Kevin Sirois' ground breaking initiatives, the Fitness Centre is venturing into uncharted territory in pursuit of Heart Health within Central Alberta. This project would involve the cooperative coordination of residents, communities, health care agencies, media, physicians, and government ministries to encourage self-responsibility, increased awareness to heart health risks, positive health behaviour, and increased agency availability.

The Fit-Mobile Returns

The first step taken was the re-introduction of the Mobile Fitness Resource Unit or "Fit-Mobile". This year round project will attend community events, recreation facilities to provide health and lifestyle information. The staff will be available to answer any questions about wellness, active living, and exercise.

Happy Hearts Cardiac Support Group

Our most recent initiative was the formation of a Cardiac Support Group. The Happy Hearts Support Group aims to provide cardiac patients, their families and friends with educational and emotional support in the pursuit of cardiac wellness. These services are offered through monthly meetings, guest speakers, a newsletter, and hospital or home visits throughout Central Alberta.

Linking Certified Instructors

Our next step is to develop a strong communication link and network with certified fitness instructors in Central Alberta—excluding those with aerobic strength and conditioning, and Older Adult specialities. This linkage will serve to facilitate the next step in providing fitness exercise and active living leadership, feasibly and realistically, to every community, school, and business within Central Alberta.

If you have any questions concerning the Heart Health Initiative, the Fit-Mobile, Happy Hearts Support Group, or the Certified Instructors Network, please contact the Kevin Sirois Fitness Resource Centre at (403) 342-3140, or FAX (403) 340-8940.
By Kristy Hollingshead

The living together in intimate association or close union of dissimilar organisms especially when mutually beneficial. This simple definition of symbiosis provided by The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, provides a very powerful message directly related to our relationship with the environment.

The Earth has provided well for humankind over the centuries while asking little in return. Now is the time to fulfill our half of the bargain in order to guarantee a continued symbiotic union.

Get Informed

Consult the experts, further your education, learn about our world and use this knowledge to ensure the well-being of children today and tomorrow.

Listed here are some of the local and national organizations that provide information, publications and advice on the "how tos" of individual involvement. From conservation, environmental audits, and waste reduction/recycling to environmental education programs which address water quality, resource development and land use issues, the common thread that runs through these organizations is the genuine concern for our environmental future.

Environmental Council of Alberta
400, 9925 - 109 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2J8
(403) 427-5792

Environment Canada Inquiry Centre
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0H3
(819) 997-2800

Alberta Environment Publications Centre
14th Floor, Oxbirdge Place
9820 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
(403) 422-2813

Environmental Resource Centre
10511 Saskatchewan Drive
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 4S1
(403) 433-8711

Friends of Environmental Education Society of Alberta (FEESA) and Environment Week Assn.
#320, 9939 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2X5
(403) 421-1479

Health and Welfare Canada Publications Distribution Centre
19th Floor, Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9
(613) 952-9191

Environmental Resources
Available in the ACFWB Resource Room

* Healthy Planet, Healthy People - Environment Council of Alberta 1989


* A Framework For Discussion On The Environment - Environment Canada 1990

* Climate Warming? Exploring The Answers - Environment Council of Alberta 1990

* Thanks From Alberta's Environment - Alberta Environment 1991


Through positive informed action, level-headed protection and individual involvement every one has the power to design an environment which will have a beneficial effect on people's health and feeling of well-being.

Kristy Hollingshead, BA is ACFWB Resource Coordinator.
Ergonomics and Well-Being In The Workplace

By Sharon Taylor

Burning neck. Sore back. Aching hands. It's all part of the job, right? Wrong. What may start out as discomfort in the workplace can end up being a serious, irreversible injury.

Ergonomics, the study of people at work, looks at how to improve the workplace, and increase productivity through personal well-being. An ergonomist looks at all aspects of the workplace—the worker's concerns, the equipment used and the tasks done—to determine the cause of any discomfort and find ways of preventing reoccurrence.

When ergonomics is applied in the workplace, some benefits are immediately visible. When workers feel more physically comfortable, morale improves along with productivity. Also, injury rates and severity decrease which can lower insurance and WCB costs.

Injuries resulting from repetitive movement, such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and back strains, are often an ergonomic problem. When responding to a worker's concern, an ergonomist provides a comprehensive worksite evaluation and educates the worker about body mechanisms and how injuries develop.

By surveying the facility to identify areas of concern and analyzing these target ergonomists identify potential problems. Educational programs are designed to address concerns such as injury mechanisms, body mechanics, office and industrial ergonomics, equipment use, workstation design and rehabilitation.

When choosing an ergonomist, be sure to identify your needs. Do the workers need educational programs? Are there engineering design issues? Is there research involved? Do you need someone to solve an urgent problem?

All ergonomists have slightly different backgrounds. However, when providing education on body mechanics and assessing work stations, it is imperative that the ergonomist have a good knowledge of anatomy, physiology, biomechanics and psychology. Engineering and design are important if major modifications are involved.

An ergonomist who is a full member of the Human Factors Association of Canada (HFAC) will have an adequate background in human function, structure and behaviour. A Directory of Consultants is available from HFAC and a list of Companies Offering Ergonomics Consulting Services is available from Alberta Occupational Health & Safety.

Sharon Taylor, MSc, is an ergonomics consultant in Edmonton

Needs Assessments Are Critical

By Deb Jones

Many Alberta companies are expressing the need to control the skyrocketing costs of extended health benefits, long and short term disability payments, and other costs associated with ill health.

Some of these same companies have components of health promotion programs, but these components may not be meeting the needs of the organization.

A survey of Alberta businesses, carried out this Spring by Well-Advised Health Promotion Consultants in conjunction with Western Management Consultants found that less than 50% of companies with some type of health promotion program had carried out a needs assessment.

If health promotion programs are to be successful, a thorough needs assessment is essential. More than just an interest survey, it should include some type of health screening, an assessment of organizational needs, and a review of available organizational and community resources.

The next steps involve strategic planning, developing programs that meet the assessed needs, marketing these programs to employees, and developing evaluation procedures to determine cost-effectiveness and organizational effectiveness.

Deb Jones, BSc, is the director of Well-Advised Health Promotion Consultants, Red Deer. See calendar, page 15.

WellSpring: Alberta Centre For Well-Being Newsletter: Summer 1992
By Kim Layne

Environmental concerns have had some impact on the way our foods are grown, produced and packaged. Whether or not this impact has been strong enough to change the practices of all food producers, packagers and manufacturers is uncertain. However, current agricultural and industrial research is moving towards the ideal "natural" and environmentally-friendly food products.

"Organically" Grown

For example, research is underway to reduce the amount of chemical agents used on food crops without losing the benefits gained from spraying fruits and vegetables (pest-free, pleasant appearance, good shelf-life).

Unfortunately, although we have "organically" grown produce in many supermarket bins, they are often too expensive, don't travel well and may not have the same consumer appeal. In addition, standards are not in place to protect consumers who want "organic foods". The farmer may grow organic cucumbers, but the wholesaler may wash them so they keep and travel better—potentially changing the original "organic" product.

Consumer demands have placed increasing pressure on food manufacturers to provide products that are both convenient and environmentally friendly. Individually packaged servings are available in goods ranging from canned soups to frozen bagged dinners. These products may be handy, however the packaging involved is more wasteful than that used for bulk and fresh food goods.

Recycle, Reuse, Restore

Glass, plastic and metal containers may be recycled. Although glass, especially pop and beer bottles, are the easiest to recycle, recycling agencies presently have stockpiles of glass. Glass is also expensive to make, uses a great deal of energy to manufacture, uses large amounts of fuel to transport (due to its weight), and requires detergents and sanitizers to clean. For photosensitive foods like milk, glass packaging can lead to spoilage, color change, flavor change and nutrient breakdown on exposure to light.

Plastic is more efficient to make, light to transport, recyclable and reusable. However, plastic recycling requires the use of new material, whereas glass does not.

Metal cans are presently the most commonly recycled packaging. There always seems to be a use for tin.

When choosing between a plastic disposable packaging and paper packaging, choose paper.

Eating "Green"

The best "green" food choices with the most nutritional value are likely the fresh unprocessed products. Although, these must be eaten within a relatively short period of time to avoid spoilage and waste, purchasing produce in season and on sale is often cheaper than purchasing canned or frozen foods.

However, don't overlook preserved foods. Foods that would not usually meet the standard for quality of appearance can be processed and still have excellent nutritional value.

Bulk foods are a wise purchase—little or no packaging, less waste and economically sound. However, bulk food products are more prone to misappropriate handling and storing. Contamination leads to waste of large quantities and is difficult to trace.

Garden shops and Farmer's Markets are wonderful places to find fresh produce at good prices. It's also a good way to support the local farm community. Again, there are really no safeguards as to how foods from these sources have been grown or processed. So, purchase from people you know and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Kim Layne is a graduate student at the University of Alberta specializing in Foods and Nutrition.

This article has been externally reviewed.
Ecological Exercising: A Case for the Bicycle

Bicycling may not be a cure-all for our modern-day problems, but it can do much to improve the quality of life for individuals and for communities. As a form of transportation, the bicycle is hard to beat. It is non-polluting, human-powered and it takes up little space.

Cycling is a wonderful fitness activity—and fun, too! In the Campbell's Survey on The Well-Being of Canadians, conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, cycling ranked fourth in popularity. (It was topped only by walking, gardening, and swimming).

Pedal Power

In a time of great concern for the environment, the Worldwatch Institute heralds the bicycle as "the vehicle for a small planet." In its Worldwatch Paper 90, the institute notes the following:

* Motor vehicles emit almost half of the carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides that result from all fossil fuel combustion worldwide. These by-products of gasoline use are major contributors to urban air pollution, acid rain, and global climate change.
* Bicycle transportation offers the biggest benefit when replacing short automobile trips. (These create the most pollution because a cold engine does not fire efficiently.) Given that the majority of commuting trips are short—one half in North America, for example, are less than eight kilometres—the bicycle should be an important part of an effective clean-air strategy.
* For longer trips, linking bicycling with mass transit holds great promise. A study in Chicago showed that increased cycling (by providing secure bike parking at transit stations) would reduce hydrocarbon emissions at a public cost of $311 per ton. Alternative costs/solutions include: $3,937 per ton for a commuter rail-carpool matching service; $96,415 a ton for an express park-and-ride service; and $214,959 per ton for a feeder bus service. Carbon monoxide reductions would come at similar savings.
* In a world seduced by the automobile, a handful of countries have chosen to embrace the bicycle. What sets them apart? It's not living standards, geography, or climate as one might expect. The difference lies in enlightened public policy and strong government support.

Lessons to be Learned

Canada clearly has some catching up to do. Bicycle use in Toronto, for example, is minimal relative to that of other urban centres like: Tianjin (China), Groningen (Netherlands), Erlangen (Germany), Tokyo, Moscow, Copenhagen, New York.

Research conducted in Finland by Dr. Pekka Oja and colleagues shows that:
* One-third of the urban working individuals were in a position to adopt active commuting (cycling or walking) as a means of getting to and from work.
* Active commuting led to small but significant improvements in cardiorespiratory fitness.
* Simple measures led to an increase in the number of active commuters. Information (posters, newsletters, presentations, etc.) at the workplace with proper attention to safety concerns and improvement of commuting route safety (in cooperation with the traffic safety and planning authorities) were both important.
Call For Abstracts
Second World Conference on Injury Control
May 20-23, 1993
Atlanta, Georgia.
Telefax (404) 488-4349
Abstract deadline Aug 31st.

4th Annual Injury in Alberta Conference:
Towards a Safer Alberta: Creating Safer Communities.
Oct. 21-23, Edmonton
(403)492-6019

Workplace Health Promotion: Investing in Your #1 Resources--Your Employees.
Oct. 15, Edmonton
Oct. 16, Calgary
Call Deb Jones at 347-8288.

18th Annual International Conference: Association For Fitness In Business.
Sept. 26-30, San Diego (317)636-6621

Behavioural Change Strategies: Community and Individual Interventions.
An ACFWB workshop presented by Dr. Jim Sallis, professor of psychology, San Diego State University.
Oct. 5th. Time and place TBA.

Call For Volunteers
The "New Neighbours Program": a project funded by FCSS which helps to link newly arrived immigrants and refugees with established and responsible Canadians, requires volunteer support. Please call (403)474-8445.

What's New With the Food Commodities?
Hear the latest about such current nutrition issues as fat and cholesterol... Find out about new products like designer eggs and dairy imitations. Call the Alberta Home Economists Association Branch in your area for more information.

Check Out The Fall, 1992 Behavioural Sciences brochure from the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. Call 492-5069.

Bridges '92: A major conference on diversity in the workplace and employment equity.
Sept. 21-23, 1992 at the Edmonton Inn. Representatives from employers, unions, government, private agencies, and individuals from the four designated groups: aboriginals, women, persons with disabilities and persons from visible minorities will be interested. Call (403)423-4106.

Perspectives in Exercise Testing and Prescription.
Jan 22-24, Kananaskis.
Call (403)287-4168.

The Alberta Centre For Well-Being is looking for keen volunteers to help with clerical and office duties, and exhibitions and displays. Please call 1-800-661-4551.

IF YOU ARE MOVING...
Please send a change of address to:
Resource/Network Coordinator
Alberta Centre For Well-Being, Third Floor, 11769 Groat Rd., Edmonton, AB, T5M 3K6. Or call 1-800-661-4551.

It is your mailing address in order to receive your free subscription of WellSpring and remain on the Network of Networks. Thanks!
New In The Resource Room

The Canadian Centre for Active Living in the Workplace has two new resources - a presentation package and a promotional video.

Workplace fitness consultants and health, safety, and human resource professionals can use these resources to promote workplace Active Living to decision makers in a company. Educators, government representatives and others will find them helpful for presentations.

The presentation package provides a brief overview of the Active Living in the workplace concept and rationale. It also discusses six components of workplace Active Living: getting started, implementing a program, motivating employees, keeping them moving, evaluation, and leadership.

The package includes 40 colourful overheads with graphics and scripts in a binder.

The five minute video has testimonials from senior managers in three Canadian companies and scenes of employees participating in Active Living programs.

Last Word...

Something In The Air?
Indoor air quality and the classroom

By Kimi Lucas

Drowsiness, nausea, headaches, skin rashes, stomach aches, hyperactivity, coughing, choking, dizziness, a short attention span, fainting, eye irritation and an array of respiratory problems - taken individually they seem like the common ailments children might have. Parents who expect to come up against a multitude of illness and complaints their children bring home from school usually relate the complaints to the communal setting of school.

But is it the setting that's the culprit, or are factors in the child's classroom environment causing these symptoms and affecting their health and ability to learn?

Indoor air quality is but one of several issues in the classroom. All of the above ailments can be attributed to poor air quality, the main cause of Sick Building Syndrome (SBS). Many factors can adversely affect indoor air quality - carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and various particles carried into the classroom through air intakes. Emissions from internal sources - smoking, formaldehyde from synthetics, and microbial matter harboured in damp carpets and humidifiers also contribute to poor indoor air quality. Inadequate ventilation in combination with any of these factors is the most common cause of SBS.

What can be done to ensure our children have a healthy breathing environment in the school? Public awareness is a good place to start. The buildings of yesterday were within the guidelines of the day. If those guidelines were not tough enough for today, are the present guidelines tough enough for tomorrow?

For a complete copy of this article, please call or write ACFWB (see address and telephone on page 3).

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