



**Labour Environmental
Alliance Society**

1203-207 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H7
Tel: 604-669-1921 Fax: 604-696-9627
E-mail: info@leas.ca www.leas.ca

CAW • ICA
CANADA caw 3000

ANNUAL REPORT



**Labour
Environmental
Alliance
Society**

2004



MEDIA PROFILE

Cable shows showcase LEAS work

The media and public profile of LEAS rose prominently in 2004, as LEAS work was showcased on shows such as CBC's Almanac and Global TV. More than ever, the Labour Environmental Alliance's name is associated positively with educational work on consumer toxins awareness.

Undoubtedly the most significant contribution to our new profile came from a series of LEAS cable TV shows that were launched in September on the Lower Mainland Shaw TV channel and continue to air at various times.

The shows, which feature LEAS directors and staff as well as health and safety advocates that participate in LEAS projects, were produced by Production Magic and LEAS director Claudia Ferris. There are eight half-hour segments on topic such as the CancerSmart consumer pro-

gram, Toxins in the Workplace workshops, and workplace regulations on chemical exposure.

The shows have reached thousands of viewers of the cable channel, which has a subscriber base of some 450,000 people throughout the Lower Mainland. A welcome benefit of the shows is that LEAS often needs no introduction — “we saw your work on TV” is now a frequent response from new audiences. And with every airing, there is a jump in telephone and website orders of the CancerSmart Consumer Guide.

The Guide also played a major role in the heightened media interest in LEAS work, as Global TV, the North Shore News, Georgia Straight and CBC Almanac, all showcased in the guide in news reports or feature interviews. Several trade union publications also ran features on LEAS work.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2004, we experienced one of the most exciting and rewarding years in LEAS history — a year in which we moved our programs and workshops across the country and saw an unprecedented public response to our work.

We opened new networks among unions who integrated our programs on health and the environment into their conferences. We won new recognition and respect for our science-based research from health professionals who participated in our advisory committee and helped promote our CancerSmart Guide. And we took an innovative new step into school classrooms.

It was a year that demanded high energy from our staff and board volunteers but we've all been exhilarated to see our efforts showing results in so many places.

Our Cleaners and Toxins project has been ongoing for four years now and dozens of sites have been involved in the project. But this year, we saw suppliers using our materials to promote environmentally-certified cleaning products and many school districts as well as other facilities are shifting to green cleaners based on our criteria.

One of the highlights of 2004 was the publication of our Cancer Consumer Guide. We launched it in April and not long after the first news reports of it were aired, our mail slot was piled high with orders and the phone orders never stopped. The Guide confirmed our belief that people want the right to know the toxins to which they may be exposed and they want the tools to make changes, including regulatory changes like those being adopted in Europe.

More than anything, this year gave a new profile to LEAS and the labour-environmental cooperation that is at the heart of our work. Our message about the health-environment connections and green jobs is being echoed in places it was rarely raised before, creating new respect for LEAS and opening new doors. Our many thanks to all LEAS supporters for helping to create the opportunity to make that change.

Mae Burrows, Executive Director



WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

Reaching across Canada

From their beginning as part of the Cleaners and Toxins programs, our Toxins in the Workplace workshops and presentations have become a major part of our work, and have moved into the national arena, both in scope and audience.

Over the course of 2004, we put on 18 Workplace Toxins workshop-presentations, from Vancouver, Abbotsford and Port Alberni to Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto and Montreal.

In October, the Canadian Union of Public Employees made LEAS' Toxins in the Workplace a prominent part of the lineup at the union's national health and safety conference in Montreal, where LEAS directors Doug Elford and Larry Stoffman joined Mae Burrows as a presenter. As part of the conference, LEAS prepared a comprehensive guide for an eight-part workshop program that will give it an extended reach, both with CUPE and LEAS.

We also took our workshop to the national network of Environmental Educators, whose EEECOM conference this year headlined Developmental Education for a Sustainable Future. LEAS directors Patrick Robertson and Andrea Reimer ran delegates through LEAS presentation on chemical trespass and the work we have been doing in reducing toxic exposures.

In addition to a workshop at the Saskatchewan

Federation of Nurses, we moved to another level with the B.C. Nurses Union. Working with LEAS director and BCNU education director Jackie Larkin and other BCNU health and safety representatives, LEAS developed workshops and a panel for BCNU OH&S conferences. We look forward to further engagement with the BCNU in 2005, with a train-the-trainer workshop among the proposed activities.

In November, we completed the circle, thanks to some innovative programming by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union and the presentation skills of LEAS staffers Mae Burrows and Sean Griffin and board member Andrea Reimer. For its biennial health and safety conference, the western region of CEP focussed on wellness, including health and the environment, and slated five LEAS workshops throughout the two-day conference. While our work has often begun in the workplace and moved from there to community, this time we began in the home and community and found dozens of CEP members making the links with toxins they encounter in their workplaces, including pulp mills, refining facilities and plastic manufacturing plants.



CHEMICAL TRESPASS PROGRAM

Taking LEAS into school classrooms

Already a respected name in many workplaces and in community forums, LEAS took an exciting new step in 2004 — moving its programs into elementary and secondary schools.

With funding from the McConnell Foundation and Environment Canada's EcoAction, LEAS launched a new initiative in the fall called Chemical Trespass, Clean Water. It will be carried out over the next two years and will engage students in elementary and secondary schools in a classroom-based program on the health and environmental impact of toxins in household and personal care products.

Students will carry out audits of potential toxins in their schools and homes and will track changes as they identify products with toxic ingredients and work with parents to replace them with safer alternatives.

LEAS is partnering with teachers and teachers' organizations to develop materials and resources that will enable students to discover the toxins in various common household and personal care products, and to see how their right to know compares with regulations governing the workplace. LEAS is also working with web designers and illustrators to develop an online game that students will use as part of the program.

The objective is to reach students when they're beginning to make decisions about the kinds of products that they will be buying and to encourage the concern and commitment that many have already shown about protecting the environment.

This newest step follows our ongoing project with school custodians to encourage them to move to safer, greener cleaning products. That project is already showing unexpected benefits — a poll conducted in 2004 by Strategic Communications showed that 91 per cent of respondents want action taken to eliminate the use of toxic cleaning products in schools. Many in the conservation community credited LEAS with helping to bring about that heightened awareness.





CANCERSMART

New Guide proves a runaway success

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, the incidence of cancer in Canada is expected to rise 60 per cent over the next two decades. And according to the World Health Organization, at least 25 per cent of cancers worldwide are attributable to environmental causes, not including smoking.

That's the backdrop to LEAS' most ambitious publishing project yet, The CancerSmart Consumer Guide. The 24-page Guide was launched in April with key funding support from the Vancouver Foundation and has become an overnight bestseller.

Now almost sold out of its third printing, with 6,000 copies in distribution, the Guide continues to generate wide interest among consumers, trade union health and safety activists as well as consumers and practitioners in the area of holistic

health. Many copies have been distributed and sold through union and health networks, but hundreds more have been sold through direct sales, either via telephone and website orders to the LEAS office or through retail stores.

Valley Green, an environmental group in the Comox Valley that is working to reduce cosmetic pesticide use, took sales one step farther. The group initially ordered 100 copies to raise money for their campaign. Those 100 copies sold out almost immediately and now five book retailers in the valley, including Save-On Foods, are selling the Guides and donating the proceeds to Valley Green.

The Guide is now the centrepiece of the LEAS' CancerSmart program, which we initiated two years ago. The program grew out of our workplace initiative when many project participants

inquired about using their new-found knowledge of toxic chemicals to get rid of toxic products at home and replace them with safer alternatives.

At the heart of the Guide's success, as it was with the CancerSmart brochures we produced last year, is its practical approach to product substitution and its identification of specific brand name products. "This is such an excellent and practical book, well-written and easy to understand," wrote one consumer, in a note that is typical of many we have received.

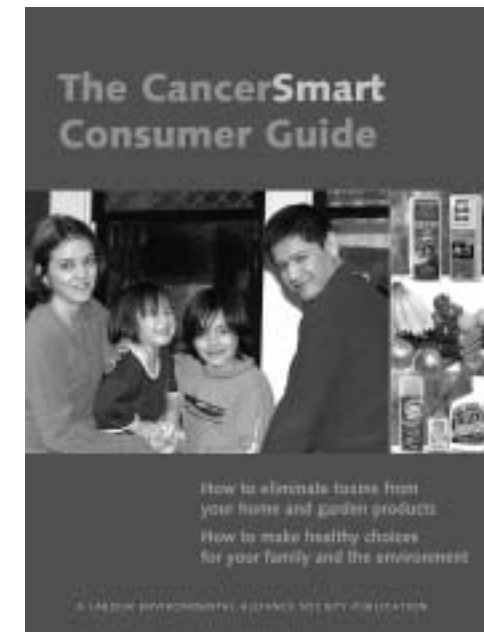
The Guide goes beyond the consumer cleaning product focus of the initial three brochures to deal with household and garden pesticides, contaminants on food and home maintenance products in addition to household cleaners. It also highlights the health-environment link, by targeting endocrine disrupting chemicals as well as carcinogens, emphasizing the impact on the environment of household products and pesticides.

The CancerSmart program has been a key feature at many community forums and workshops we have put on, as well as the displays we have mounted at health shows. Among those workshops were forums on household and garden pesticides. We also put on a workshop on our program for staff and volunteers at the Canadian Cancer Society.

In addition to its practical program of education and product substitution, LEAS continues to emphasize the need for right-to-know ingredient labelling of consumer products. Those efforts, combined with the work of many advocacy groups and ordinary Canadians, bore some fruit

late in the year when Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh announced regulations making it mandatory to list the ingredients of most cosmetic and personal care products. The regulations, which require full compliance by November, 2006, will enable Canadians to know what's in their cosmetic products and will make LEAS work in targeting toxic ingredients more effective.

Looking to the future, LEAS plans to publish a new and expanded edition of the CancerSmart Consumer Guide that will include a section on personal care and cosmetic products, plastics and other consumer products not now included. It will also include updates on pesticides currently being re-evaluated by the federal Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency.



LEAS' ALLIANCES

Networking for research and action

LEAS, already a respected alliance in its own right, expanded its alliance connections in 2004, working with a number of environmental, health and union groups to develop new initiatives and carry out project work. Special thanks go to the Tides/Endswell Foundation, for their continuing support of this important alliance-building work.

LEAS was instrumental in the formation of the new Western Regional Environment Committee of the Canadian Auto Workers that was created at a delegated conference in New Westminster in June. LEAS executive director Mae Burrows was a key facilitator at the conference and LEAS directors Denise Kellahan, Pam Taylor and David Lane played prominent roles. Taylor was also elected to the steering committee established by the founding conference.

LEAS participated in the creation of a Health Environmental Research Network, a new initiative that will bring together researchers from universities as well as health and environmental agencies.

LEAS also began working more closely this year with the Canadian Cancer Strategy's National Committee on Occupational and Environmental Exposures. LEAS director Larry Stoffman chairs

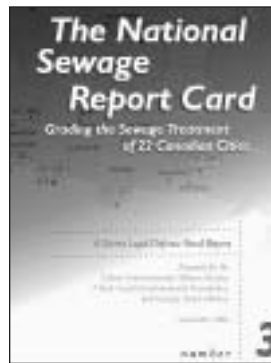
the committee and Mae Burrows sits on the committee as an ENGO representative.

Reaching across the country, LEAS made connections with the Women's Healthy Environments Network (WHEN), a Toronto-based coalition that has won respect for its work on the role of environmental and occupational contaminants in cancer.

LEAS also joined with longstanding allies Sierra Legal Defence Fund, T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation and the Georgia Strait Alliance in releasing the latest Sewage Report Card. The declining populations of orcas — linked to PCB contamination — has highlighted the urgent need for secondary treatment of all sewage from British Columbia's two largest cities, Vancouver and Victoria.

We began working on a joint paper with the Western Canada Wilderness Committee that will chart the toxic "chemical trespass" against both human and orca whale populations in the Pacific Northwest. The paper, with a slated press run of 100,000 copies, is expected out in early 2005.

In November, LEAS played a key role in organizing and facilitating a special Hollyhock Institute conference on Organizing for Change, held at the Canadian Auto Workers centre.



WOOD, NOT WASTE

Proposal moves to licence phase

LEAS has made good progress this year our exciting log salvage project to restore the vital and severely degraded marshes in the Fraser River estuary.

The Fraser River has the largest and most biologically productive estuary on the Pacific Coast of North America. This vital area provides critical habitat for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds, and over 20 species of birds of prey, which all congregate at the mouth of this river at various times of the year. Each year, up to 800 million juvenile salmon migrate down the Fraser — the largest salmon producing river in the world. The salt marshes in the estuary provide critical habitat for these young fish as they acclimatize to salt water.

However, less than 30 per cent of the original marshes have survived industrial and urban development. Many of the remaining wetlands are severely degraded by accumulations of wood debris — the number one threat to these ecosystems. Every year, approximately 80,000 cubic metres of logs are left to drift on the Fraser, piling up on beaches and marshes in a sad testament to a log salvage system that simply is not working.

Working with local log salvors, LEAS is proposing an innovative solution to this problem. With funding support from VanCity Credit Union Community Foundation, LEAS director Mitch Anderson has helped salvors to form a legally

incorporated co-operative that has recently applied to the provincial government to obtain a licence for a new facility that would market salvaged logs. If the licence application is approved, the facility will be run as a producer co-op of log salvors.

Through innovative marketing we hope to improve the economics of log salvage so that more wood is recovered and salvors are paid more for their efforts. This will provide direct and indirect employment, protect vital fish habitat, improve boater safety, and utilize a huge volume of wood that would otherwise be wasted.

We are hopeful that this innovative and exciting project will become a reality.



FISCAL YEAR 2004

Operating statement

REVENUE

Foundations	\$148,714.51
Environment Canada	\$25,934.49
Donations	\$8,395.29
Workshop fees	\$9,358.94
Research, consulting	\$13,335.72
Booklet sales	\$13,199.80
Interest, rebates	\$3,700.97
Total	\$222,639.72

EXPENSES

Wages, benefits	\$109,152.91
Project research	\$39,583.29
Clerical	\$8,950.64
Website maintenance	\$1,366.53
Cable TV show production	\$2,675.00
Chemical Trespass lab development	\$6,000.00
Meetings, forums, workshops	\$5,891.53
Office, rent, services	\$14,286.56
Office equipment	\$5,331.67
Accounting	\$4,000.00
Photocopying, printing	\$14,585.56
Board meetings	\$1,712.54
Travel	\$5,316.49
Insurance	\$3,787.00
Total	\$222,639.72



2004-2005

The LEAS board

Honorary chair

the late Dick Martin, former secretary-treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress

Executive Director

Mae Burrows

Mitch Anderson, Sierra Legal Defence

Herb Barbolet, Farm Folk/City Folk

Alex Boston, David Suzuki Foundation

Delores Broten, Reach For

Unbleached/Watershed Sentinel

Doug Elford, Canadian Union of Public Employees

Claudia Ferris, Production Magic video productions

Harold Funk, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union

Denise Kellahan, Canadian Auto Workers

David Lane, T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation

Jackie Larkin, B.C. Nurses' Union

Wayne Peppard, B.C. Building Trades

Ana Rahmat, Hospital Employees' Union

Andrea Reimer, Western Canada Wilderness Committee

Patrick Robertson, B.C. Teachers' Federation

Larry Stoffman, United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1518

Ananda Tan, Canadian Restoration and Environmental Workers

Pam Taylor, CAW Local 2002

David Thompson, Environmental consultant

Darryl Walker, Vancouver and District Labour Council & B.C. Government and Service

Employees Union