

J.M. Schneiders Expansion: Disaster for Pigs and the Environment!

By Vicki Burns, Winnipeg Humane Society

In the past few months we have been bombarded with news about Schneider/Smithfield wanting to expand their slaughterhouse here in Winnipeg. Most of the reports have touted the financial benefits to the province in increased jobs and pork sales. But what has been said about the animals who are the basis of this industry and what their lives are all about? What has been said about the tremendous line speeds in these mega slaughterhouses and what that means for the animals slaughtered there? What has been said about the horrendous history of environmental violations that Smithfield Foods can lay claim to?

People may ask why we are talking about the animals when they are going to be slaughtered anyway but surely we can, at minimum, require that they be killed with the least amount of pain and suffering. In the past thirty years slaughterhouses have accelerated the line speed from 3-400 animals an hour back in 1968 to 9-1200 animals an hour today. These accelerated speeds have had profound consequences for the animals. It has been shown that at this rate it is impossible to effectively stun every animal and the horrifying result is that some of the animals are still conscious when they are hung on the chain. Unthinkable atrocities become common practice and although we have humane slaughter regulations, they are not being enforced. Our Canadian government is joining the American government in adopting a new scheme called Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) which

means that soon we will no longer have federal inspectors in slaughter plants. This industry will become self regulating. Gail Eisnetz in her book "Slaughterhouse" has documented how the increased line speed has resulted in terrible suffering for the animals, as well as the highest rate of occupational injury for workers in any industry (the risk of injury in is 6 times higher than in coal mines). Schneiders is talking about slaughtering 90,000 pigs per week!

An equally concerning impact of the Schneider expansion is the need to produce more hogs in Manitoba and the resulting proliferation of huge corporate barns. Pigs raised in these barns live in completely unnatural circumstances on cement or slatted floors with no straw for bedding or rooting and little opportunity to engage in their normal "pigginess".

By that I mean their natural inclination to create separate areas for eating, dunging and sleeping, their desire to root in straw and their desire to build nests. As well, they must stand above pits containing their own undiluted urine and feces, which has fallen through the slats, and breathe air heavy with ammonia. The female pigs, sows, are confined to gestation crates almost their entire lives which are so small they cannot even turn around.

Pigs are intelligent animals who have a capacity for suffering as do all other living creatures. How can we be allowing millions of these animals to have to live in these circumstances when we know smaller-scale alternatives exist which are being practiced here in Manitoba by a number of family farmers?

The animal welfare concerns are inextricably linked with environmental concerns. The confinement of so many animals in so little space results in waste disposal issues that are a tremendous challenge to the environment. We know that right now there are water table pollution issues in Manitoba from the already existing huge hog barns. Dr. Eva Pip has begun to document clearly the pollution in the Interlake area resulting in a number of streams that are "dead" as well the negative effects



Sarah and friend: Smaller scale farming alternatives are threatened

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Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future

A Conference on Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems

by Anne Lindsey

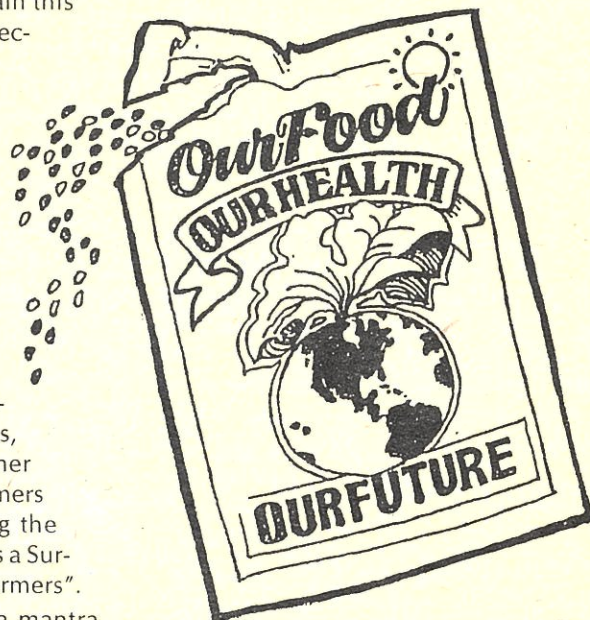
Last year's Organic Conference was so
well received that organizers felt sure
there would be another in the not-so-dis-
tant future. We were thinking of February
2001, perhaps. It became apparent over
the last summer and fall however, that
folks wouldn't wait that long. As a result
of numerous inquiries and requests, the
organizing committee met again this
past Fall and decided that our sec-
ond Organic Conference
would be held this year—
February 18 and 19, 2000.

Maybe the farming crisis
which has developed in
southern Manitoba added
impetus to our delibera-
tions. It certainly guided our
choice of theme and key-
note speaker. Recognizing
that the very survival of farm-
ers on our rural landscape is be-
coming more and more tenuous,
we asked Nettie Wiebe, former
President of the National Farmers
Union, to speak on "Keeping the
Family Farm Alive: Organics as a Sur-
vival Strategy for Struggling Farmers".

Diversification is almost a mantra
these days, and many organic farmers are
finding that their smaller scale and mixed
farms are weathering change more suc-
cessfully. Others, such as herb produc-
ers and larger scale organic grain farmers,
are able to take advantage of the market-
ing opportunities opening up overseas
and here at home for organic and non-ge-

netically modified commodities. A panel
will look at the nitty gritty of "Growing the
Organic Family Farm".

What about the economics of switch-
ing to organics? We'll be looking at that
subject too, with internationally known
organic farmer Fred Kirschenmann shar-



ing his wisdom and experience, along
with Manitoba producer, Gerry Dube,
who will explore the economics of Not
switching.

Our new provincial Agriculture Min-
ister, Rosann Wowchuk, will share

see "Our Food ..." on page 11 ►

Eco-Network Steering Committee, 1999 – 2000

Dennis Bayomi - Winnipeg Vegetarian Association
Shirley Lord - CHO!CES Coalition for Social Justice
Steve Rauh - Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg
John Sinclair - Resource Conservation Manitoba
Eb Scherer - Manitoba Naturalists Society
Peter Walker - Manitoba Federation of Labour

Remembering Alice

by Roger Turenne and Donna Danyluk, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Manitoba Chapter

The conservation community in Manitoba is in mourning. It has lost one of its most admired and indispensable members.

Alice Chambers, CPAWS Manitoba Vice-President, died in Pinawa, Manitoba, on December 13, 1999, at age 62, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She leaves an incomparable legacy, one that words fail to convey.

In one respect, Alice's life was unremarkable. Young woman interrupts career to become stay-at-home mother, spends the rest of her life in a small town, and does volunteer work. But to recast an expression from Churchill: some mother! some volunteer!

Alice was born in Elkhorn, Manitoba, the sixth of seven children and the first daughter. After completing a B.Sc. Hons. in Microbiology from the University of Manitoba, she moved to Ottawa to work at the National Research Council. It was there she met her husband Keith. They later moved to England for three years where she did research at Leeds Medical School. Upon returning to Canada in 1968 with their infant daughter Anna, they moved to Pinawa, Manitoba. Here, the family would grow to include their sons Andrew and Paul.

In Pinawa, Alice quickly became very involved in her community, serving 14 years on the local school board, as a founding member and chairperson of the local recycling committee, and as a guide leader, among other things. In May, 1992, Alice noticed an ad in the Winnipeg Free Press regarding a proposal for an environmental license for an old pulp mill downstream from where she lived. Finding out that the mill was spewing out 38,000 cubic meters of acutely lethal effluent every day was her



wake-up call to the real state of "environmental protection" in Manitoba. Alice made a conscious decision that, from that day forth, with the support of her husband and children, she would spend as much time as possible working for environmental protection.

When Alice was first invited to attend a CPAWS chapter meeting, she said, in her usual self-effacing manner, "I'm not sure that I would be able to contribute anything..." That comment is a shoo-in for "understatement of the century". Alice soon became our most active volunteer, and most important of all, our inspiration and motivator.

In short order, Alice put her science background to use, and practically became a one-woman research institute for organizations such as CPAWS, T.R.E.E., the Sierra Club, and the Manitoba Naturalists Society. Her way was not the stump speech or the noisy demonstration; it was the meticulous digging into government files for commitments unmet and rules broken. She was not afraid to wade into the deepest and thickest bureaucratic mire, and had the courage to take on thankless but necessary assignments, such as sitting on Pine Falls Paper Company's advisory committee.

Outside of Alice's back door was the area she worked hardest to preserve in its natural state: the boreal forest of eastern Manitoba. This was the area closest to her heart but she was more likely to be found there investigating a logging road or bridge or a clearcut than recreating in a canoe or on a hiking trail.

see "Remembering Alice" on page 7 ►

Assessment Act Under Review

by John Sinclair

As part of the Five Year Review of the provisions and operation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, there will be a public meeting in Winnipeg on March 2nd, Lombard Hotel, 2-5PM and 7-10 PM, where people can learn more about the Act and express their concerns or support. Funding is available from the Agency if you have to travel from outside of Winnipeg to present at the March 2nd event. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network will be preparing papers on various aspects of the Act and its enforcement over the past five years. These briefing notes will be available in the early part of February at the MEN office. They can also be viewed or downloaded from the CEN's web site at www.cen.web.net

A discussion paper prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency has been released (also available at the MEN office for viewing) which identifies three goals for the renewal and revitalization of the Act: making the process more predictable, consistent and timely; improving the quality of as-

sessments; and strengthening opportunities for public participation. It is designed to focus, but not limit, discussions on key issues and possible options for improving the Act and the assessment process. A report on the Five Year Review is to be submitted by the Minister to Parliament by January 2001. The Agency has also set up a web site to post information and allow discussion. Go to http://199.212.18.103/tellus/tellus_e.htm to participate in the electronic bulletin board discussion of the 5 year review.

There is widespread concern throughout the environmental community that the Act, which needs some strengthening and more consistent enforcement, will crumble under pressure from provincial governments and some industrial sectors. There will be national consultations across the country as well as the public meetings. It is important that the ENGO community get out so that our message is heard.

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What's Happening

FEBRUARY 10 - Herb Society of Manitoba - Guest speaker, John Morgan on the topic of Wild Flowers and Grasses, Assiniboine Park Conservatory, 7:00pm Admission: Free. Call (204)757-9868 for info.

FEBRUARY 18 & 19 - Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future: A Conference on Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems at the University of Winnipeg, Bulman Centre. Keynote address and cafe Friday evening at 7 pm. Admission at the door is just \$5. Pre-registration is required for Saturday's plenaries and workshop sessions which kick off 8 am Saturday. Cost for the day \$35/\$20 for students or low income. Organic luncheon is \$10 per person. Call MB Eco-Network at 947-6511 for more info.

FEBRUARY 20 - North End Sponsorship Team (NEST) Potluck Supper, 5 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 211 Kimberley Avenue. Call Elisabeth Kunkel at 667-5546 for more info.

MARCH 1 through 14 - Hiroshima Exhibit at the Fort Garry Place Mall. A moving and inspiring exhibit which serves as a reminder of the horror of nuclear weapons sponsored by Project Peacemakers and the Veterans Against Nuclear Arms. Call Project Peacemakers at 775-8178 for more information.

MARCH 2 - Public Meeting on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, sponsored by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. Lombard Hotel, 2-5pm and 7-10pm. Travel funding is available. For details contact MEN at 947-6511.

MARCH 3 & 4 - Food for Thought: Private Money, Public Interest, and the University at the Bulman Centre, University of Winnipeg. A conference sponsored by the Manitoba Organiza-

tion of Faculty Associations (MOFA) to stimulate debate on corporate control of both the food supply and universities. Registration is \$25 for students/seniors/low income; \$50 individuals; \$125 for those from organizations. Fee includes two lunches, and a supper during the Friday evening social event. For further info or to register, contact Esyllt Jones, MOFA, c/o 780 Brock Street, R3N 0Z5; phone 487-4991; fax 489-0739; or email umjone12@cc.umanitoba.ca.

MARCH 11 - Workshop on Environmental Assessment. Puzzled by how the government evaluates developments for their potential environmental impact and incorporates the results into decision making? This day-long workshop will clarify the laws governing assessment, describe the quality of assessments we should be striving for, and review a few case studies of assessments in Manitoba. Sponsored by the Environmental Assessment Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network. Call MB. Eco-Network at 947-6511 for more info.

MARCH 10 - Marilyn Waring, author of *If Women Counted*, and renowned spokesperson for global feminist economics. Details TBA. Call CHOICES at 944-4408 for more info.

MARCH 22 - International Day of Action on Water, Events are planned for a location at the Forks, contact Glen Koroluk at Waterwatch, 224-0933 for info.

APRIL 27 & 28 - The Ecology of Waste Reduction: Stewardship and Sustainability, at the International Inn, Winnipeg. A conservation conference organized by Resource Conservation Manitoba and Manitoba Association of Regional Recyclers. Call Randall at RCM at 925-3777 for more info.

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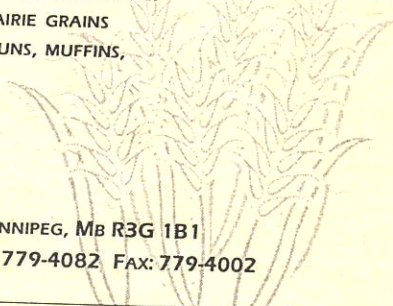


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Mayor Murray: A One Year (And a Bit) Report Card

by Anne Lindsey

In the September/October 1998 edition of Eco-Journal, we published environmental comments received from four of the candidates for the position of Mayor in the City of Winnipeg Municipal election, in response to a questionnaire that we sent out. The questions were compiled by a number of environmentally concerned groups, and covered 4 issues: Land use and urban sprawl, pesticides, transportation and waste reduction. Probably the most "environmentally sensitive" responses came from the eventual winner of the mayoral contest, Glen Murray. This did not surprise local activists: Murray had a good track record on environmental issues as a long-time Councillor in Fort Rouge ward. There was definitely a sense of elation amongst the environmental community on election night, and at the victory party, many familiar faces could be seen amongst the revellers. So how has Glen Murray measured up in his year (plus a few months) in the Mayor's office? We thought we'd go back to some of the authors of that Eco-Journal questionnaire for a mid-term check in.

Waste Reduction

Here, things don't look too great. Murray said he'd favour providing funding to the City's Waste Minimization Strategy and committing to an implementation plan over four years. But no funding has materialized, and neither has an implementation plan. "The programs have not changed. There's been no progress since he's been Mayor" says John Sinclair, Chair of the City's Waste Minimization Advisory Committee. "What's more," adds Sinclair, "we haven't even seen the implementation of recycling for apartment blocks, something which looked like a sure bet if Murray was elected". The only thing that has really happened is the starting up of the Alternative Service Delivery study, which is essentially looking at various models of "user pay" for waste management. Sinclair muses that maybe the ASD is Murray's way of look-

ing for funding for the Waste Minimization Strategy, but if it is, it's slow in coming. He notes that changes may be on the horizon in Winnipeg's waste management picture, changes that Murray may or may not agree with. "Disappointing" is how John Sinclair sums up Glen Murray's record on Waste Minimization this past year.



Mayor Glen Murray may need to repeat a grade

What about Pesticide Use Reduction?

There were some high hopes that on this issue, we'd see some strong leadership from Murray, an avowed anti-pesticide advocate. His questionnaire responses indicated that he supports "non-toxic weed control and naturalized public spaces". Sounds great, but unfortunately, once again, no action yet. Ian Greaves of Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg is frustrated by the City's seeming lack of concern about pesticide use, when the evidence of its harmful impacts on health and the environment is mounting. During the election campaign, Murray said he'd support a pesticide reduction by-law for Winnipeg, but he has not yet responded to a draft of a possible bylaw put forward by the CPR! group.

Transportation

Ken Klassen, a Winnipeg public transportation advocate, says "the Jury is still out" when it comes to Murray's transportation policies. He notes that the City still does not have a transportation plan in place, and that the TransPlan 2010 Report has not yet been responded to. Klassen points to a potential positive in the Working Group on Public Transport Policy's general support of better transit, however he notes that it remains to be seen what Murray's response to this report will be. The recently-passed 6-year Capital Budget shows no indication of a major switch to transit as a priority, or expansion of service. The draft of Plan Winnipeg 2020 calls for
see "Sizing Up the Year" on page 7 ►

Slaughterhouse Disaster

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on the west side of Lake Winnipeg. Dr. Bill Paton talks of the one ton per week of phosphates being dumped into the Assiniboine River from the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon. And yet, our government is considering doubling the size of the hog industry here?

We hope that the government will thoroughly investigate Smithfield Foods, the new owners of Schneider, before signing a deal with them, as they have a horrendous history of environmental violations in the U.S. They received the largest waterway pollution fine ever levied by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, \$12.6 million dollars for dumping slaughter-

house waste into Virginia's Pagan River. In North Carolina, their plant in Bladen County has drawn the local water table down 90 feet by pumping water to flush waste into the Cape Fear River.

Isn't it time to slow down our quest for more "development" and start to ask some questions about this industry and this company? Let us begin this new century with a clear commitment to upholding ethics of respect for animal welfare and for the environment even if it means saying no to some forms of economic development!

ECO

Minnesota Campaign Gains Momentum

Observant readers of the Globe and Mail may have noticed an article about a Minnesota campaign in support of the Cross Lake Cree, and questioning future hydro-electricity exports from Manitoba. Here's what some of our neighbours from the south are saying:

Cross Lake, Manitoba in 1999: Americans Are Wired to a Human Rights Crisis

by Ann Stewart

Identifiable, attempted suicides: 110. Completions: 7. Population on reserve: 4,500. Unemployment: 85 percent and rising. Despair and hopelessness: can't be quantified.

These are the grim statistics coming from Cross Lake, Manitoba, where Pimicikamak Cree Indians live in the middle of a mega-hydroelectric project that continues to devastate their lands, waters and way of life. Twenty-two years ago, Manitoba Hydro, a state-owned utility, began building generating stations on the Nelson River, diverted the north-flowing Churchill River south through a diversion channel into the Nelson to increase the flow of water, and dug more channels to store water in Lake Winnipeg for eventual release to drive the turbines that generate electricity on demand.

The lack of environmental or social assessments (they simply weren't considered in the 70s) has left northern Manitoba's fragile boreal ecology and indigenous people at the mercy of Canada, Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro...and American electricity users. A simple, subsistence economy was replaced with dependency upon governmental handouts. "Today, our kids get

out of school at 3pm and until it starts the next morning, they have nothing to do, no place to play, no pocket money," Councillor Kenny Miswaggon told Minnesota audiences in November and December.

Why Minnesota?

Northern States Power, located in Minneapolis, is Manitoba Hydro's biggest customer in the US, and Minnesota Power, located in Duluth, has an agreement with Manitoba Hydro to market power to American utilities.

"We're wired to an environmental and human rights slum," says George Crocker, executive director of the Minnesota-based North American Water Office. "We've discovered that our utilities are making purchasing decisions in our name that implicate us in their corporate amorality."

The land is under water

Pimicikamak Cree representatives have been traveling to Minnesota all fall to tell their story. "We've met politicians, outdoors conservationists, renewable energy advocates, students, and church members," explained Councillor Cathy Merrick, who came to the Twin Cities. "I have to do this for my father, who sits at home with nothing to do. And I remember him as the provider, but now he has nothing to give us because the land is under water."

The Crees show photographs they've taken of riverbank erosion and soil pollution from the constant changes in water levels. Perhaps the most devastating pictures, however, are those of human remains uncovered by erosion and impoundment. "Pimicikamak Cree Nation documents every instance of damage that our people learn about," said Councillor Merrick. "This is the truth we bring to Minnesota."

Manitoba Hydro exports

Northern States Power is currently negotiating a new contract with Manitoba Hydro which it expects to sign in April 2000. The Crees are asking Americans to write to Chairman Gregory Scott, MN Public Utilities Commission, Suite 350, 121 Seventh Place East, St. Paul MN 55101-2147, asking the PUC not to approve new contracts. "Our people are worried that more exports to the United States will double our misery," explained Councillor Miswaggon. "As the youngest elected official, I have an obligation both to tell our story and encourage Minnesotans to support the real renewable energy sources they have in the Midwest."

For more information, or to become involved, contact: Ann Stewart, US Information Officer, Pimicikamak Cree Nation at stewartship@visi.com

Mennonite Central Committee has long worked in support of Cross Lake and continues to do so. Now a new ad-hoc support group is forming here in Manitoba. If you would like to become involved, contact Chanda Meek at the Boreal Forest Network, 947-3081.

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Search the Green Lane for Environmental Information!



<http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca>

- Weather
- Climate
- Ozone Depletion
- Wildlife
- Air Quality
- Flood Damage
- Habitat Protection
- Legislation/Policies
- Science & Research
- Water Legislation
- Water Monitoring
- Action 21
- Pollution Prevention
- Publications/Brochures
- Environmental Protection
- Environmental Assessment

 Environment Canada Environnement Canada

Canada

Remembering Alice

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Alice's specialty was holding governments to their word. Politicians and civil servants soon learned that a commitment made in a law, a signed agreement, or even a speech, would come back to haunt them if there was no follow-through. But it was hard for them to be upset with the small, gentle woman from Pinawa, with the twinkle in her eye and the devastatingly accurate facts. They grew to respect her razor-sharp mind, her encyclopaedic knowledge, her lack of dogmatism, her generosity of spirit, and her integrity. So they appointed her to advisory bodies such as the Manitoba Environmental Council. When Alice expressed surprise at one such appointment, she was told, only half jokingly: "we'd rather have you where we can see you!"

In the past seven years, there was not a legislative committee hearing on the environment, or a hearing of Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission, in which Alice did not participate. She was not a one-issue activist. Toxics, elk ranching, hog barns, park developments, water quality, urban sprawl...she followed the issues and contributed to the debates. As her experience and expertise grew, she took on such national issues as Canada's National Forest Strategy, and draft endangered species legislation. Federal officials learned what their provincial counterparts already knew: Alice had something important to say.

Alice's activism was set against the backdrop of personal tragedy: her husband, Keith, died suddenly in 1993, and three years later, she contracted cancer. When she first informed us of her illness, her reaction was not one of self-pity or resignation, but rather of disappointment and frustration. "This is so annoying!" she would say. She would have to miss meetings. She would be

missing opportunities to be helpful. But far from slowing down, she re-doubled her efforts, and between treatments, put all of her energy into furthering the cause of conservation. She remained passionate about nature, passionate about her family, and passionate about life.

Alice's work will carry on, and her legacy continue to grow. The government will very likely soon undertake a process of land-use planning for the east side of Manitoba, a process which Alice was instrumental in launching. This coming summer, thanks to Alice's efforts and funding, a new Whiteshell River Trail will be established, which will provide a recreational opportunity for Manitobans, as well as educate them about conservation needs. She also left us some tools: a two-inch-thick red binder containing all there is to know about boreal forest issues on the east side. So, a warning to politicians: we have our own Red Book!

But the most important way in which Alice will continue to make her presence felt, in spite of her untimely departure, is through the love and loyalty that she evokes among Manitoba's environmental community. Her courage, selflessness and integrity inspire us and energize us into carrying on her work. We will follow her vision of a country where its citizens live in harmony with their natural environment. It is our way of saying: "thank you, Alice, for what you have done and what you have been."

Alice Chambers was the only person to be awarded the Manitoba Eco-Network's Environmental Award twice.

ECO

Sizing Up the Year

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both major road-building activity AND transit improvement. However, it's doubtful that both will be implemented and as Klassen points out, "In the history of this City, roads usually get the nod". Murray had an opportunity to go for bat for transit in the rezoning for new developments in the SW sector of the City, but disappointingly did not even consult Winnipeg Transit on the issue, resulting in almost no transit service at all to this new commercial development.

Last but not Least: Land Use Planning.

The Provincial Council of Women (represented by Valinda Morris, Elizabeth Fleming and Carolyn Garlich) are encouraged that Murray is able to communicate with the new government on Broadway, and see this as an opportunity to improve the record in this area. They want to see the Mayor exercise the City's statutory right to examine the development plans of neighbouring municipalities for their impact on Winnipeg. Silence on these plans is deemed to be approval. In the case of new suburban development, they want Murray to ensure in future that all appropriate Standing Committees are consulted when it comes to extending City services (this was not the case in the recent decisions on the Longboat development) and that final decisions

remain at the political level in order to ensure accountability.

Overall, the Council of Women "applauds the talk, and encourages the walk" from Murray, noting that his stated positions have generally been consistent with his stated intent to "end public subsidy for peripheral development and continue...neighbourhood renewal initiatives..."

So there we have it, not a stellar performance by the Mayor, in fact, it's probably fair to say that environmental expectations have not been met - yet! But these are early days. Decisions coming soon will be watched closely, amongst them the controversial proposal to extend subsidized sewer rates to large companies, and the City's position on the J.M Schneider expansion plans. And a respected group of conservationists will be watching for the Mayor's position on declaring surplus (and thus open for development) the park-designated "Henteleff Tree Nursery" site along the banks of the Red River. Environment may not be at the top of the Mayor's agenda (he was too busy with budget consultation work to provide an interview) but he'd do well to recognize that all environmental decisions have repercussions in other areas - including budgetary ones, and that a thoughtful approach now will pay off in the future.

ECO

A Forest For the Killing

By David Nickarz

I had just returned from a trip to the United States when I got a message from Paul Barnard, the Pine Falls Paper Company's vice president of Human Resources and Public Affairs. Mr. Barnard said he had seen my article in the Eco-Journal about the illegal logging bridge over the Manigotagan River and that he wanted to clear the air.

"I would like to meet with you at the bridge site and see if we can find a way to resolve this issue", said Barnard.

Why would they call me and want to meet? And why would they want to consult people outside of their stakeholder advisory committee meetings? I thought to myself they must be scared.

I responded quickly and as cynically as my generation would allow. "We are not going to resolve this issue, Paul. You're not going to convince me that the bridge is legal", I said. I continued, "I think the only value of meeting with you would be to show our people how your people think."

Know your enemy

Slowly, he responded, "Well, Dave, that's what we want to do too." I believed what he said and agreed to meet with him.

In a short time I had phoned everyone I could think of. Of the 11 people who actually showed up about half were Green

Party people. Some of us had been activists for years and others were new to the issue. A few didn't even know that logging was allowed in Manitoba's provincial parks.

We were able to commandeer a large van so that all of us could go up in one vehicle. On the way to Pine Falls I gave a summary of the issue.

Votes were at stake

At the beginning of the 1990's Pine Falls' logging licence was up for review. They had successfully opposed a Clean Environment Commission recommendation to stop logging in Provincial Parks. They pleaded to Garry Filmon that the mill would go the way of the Dodo if they weren't able to log in Nopiming and other Provincial parks.

At the time Nopiming Park only represented about 5% of their wood supply, but votes were at stake so Filmon agreed. Now Nopiming Park is gutted of its older forests. Dozens of logging roads, old and new, stem from the main highways. Along with the roads are the clear cuts—violent interruptions of the forest's natural cycle. Rape doesn't even begin to describe what has been done to that forest.

The parks system plan that came about in 1996 was directly affected by the Pine Falls decision to allow logging in Parks. This



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Obscene 'multi-use' philosophy was then applied to all of Manitoba's Provincial Parks.

Under the parks system plan only 22% of Nopiming Provincial Park is now safe from Logging. Only 33% of Whiteshell Park is preserved. The 34% of Duck Mountain Park that is preserved is in the shape of a donut—with the hole being an area that Louisiana-Pacific wanted available for cutting. Pine Falls had set the stage for the grotesque parks system plan we have today.

Tree corpses

After the history lesson we arrived in Pine Falls. We pulled up to the Pine Falls mill with its stacks of tree corpses awaiting their transformation into newsprint. We got out and stretched our legs.

I introduced myself to our hosts, shaking their hands and giving them a manly nod hello. "Hi, Dave Knickarz", I said, paraphrasing my own introduction. Our hosts were Paul Barnard, Bob Durocher, and Glen Pinnell.

We still had an hour long drive to get to the bridge. We promptly piled into the Pine Falls van and began the trip to the bridge site.

The twelve of us filled their van except for the driver. Bob Durocher got the job. By the look on his face he was clearly unhappy about driving alone with 12 environmentalists. Glen and Paul took a truck.

On the way to the bridge Bob pointed out the old cutting areas from decades past. The ones that have appeared to recover are mere ecological shadows of their natural counterparts.

We are told by government and industry that clear cutting tries to mimic natural disturbances. What clear cutting does is remove the forest so that the Pine Falls mill can make money. At the present volumes clear cutting more accurately mimics a disease upon the landscape. It removes older forests and reduces the average age of the overall forest.

I've been walking the clearcuts for years and the trees in the log piles are getting smaller and smaller—indicating the company has to cut young trees because older forests have been logged out. It is pretty obvious that they are running out of wood.

This is why they want to more than double their rate of cutting from 360,000 to 750,000 cubic meters per year with a vastly increased cutting area. Pine Falls wants an all weather road hundreds of miles up the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

We arrived at the bridge site

The logging bridge over the Manigotagan River was the object of two previous articles in this publication. I had spent two years trying to get the coast guard and the provincial government to do something about this illegal bridge. It had been built in contravention of the Navigable Waters Protection act and at least two of their Environment Act Licence requirements. In the case of this bridge the law was not enforced.

A five tonne mill stone that blocked vehicle access to the bridge had been moved. "It looks like moose poachers", said Paul. "They must have got a tow truck around the gate at the highway and moved the stone so they could drive in", said Paul, showing little concern over the displaced mill stone.

Just a hundred yards back from the bridge sat a burned out shell of a car that was the object of a Police investigation. Not only did this road bring the destruction of Boreal forests, it was the site of poaching, car theft and arson.

Bridge still illegal

We all stood on the shore next to the bridge. The company did their best to convince us that the bridge was not a problem.

Paul gave us the company's point of view on the bridge. They built the bridge so that the shoreline impact was minimal. The bridge was approved by the government and, anyway, there was a sign warning canoeists about the hazard.

I countered that the bridge should not have been approved in the first place—by the provincial and federal government. I told him his argument didn't change the fact that the bridge was placed illegally and continues to be illegal.

We obviously didn't find a way to resolve the issue.

We then spoke about logging in general. Glen Pinnell said, "We won't try to tell you that we don't clearcut, because you're smarter than that..."

That said it all. If we were not so smart, then what would he tell us? We were also invited to participate in their stakeholder advisory meetings. I flatly refused.

"We have no say in those meetings. You also use our participation as an endorsement for your policies. I've watched for years as you go to meetings and then do exactly what you want—with no concern for the environment or public opinion", I said.



Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future

continued from page 2

thoughts on how the provincial government can support a growing organic movement.

As with the first conference, there will be lots in our line-up to attract the non-farmer as well. Renowned biotechnology researcher and writer Carolyn Raffensperger will update us on Biotechnology's Impact on Food and Farms, and we'll hear from Winnipeg MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis on new developments on the biotechnology regulatory scene in Canada. We'll be looking at urban organic gardening for food and community, the effects of agricultural chemicals on consumer and farmer health, marketing opportunities for organics and much more. An exciting workshop this year will be on hormone-free and humane livestock production, featuring a new initiative from the Winnipeg Humane Society to certify humanely-produced meat, and the experience of an organic beef producer. Our goal continues to be enhanced interaction between urban and rural dwellers, farmers and non-farmers, as we work towards a stronger local economy for sustainable agriculture.

The trade show will once again feature some exciting innovations in the organics field, as well as a seed-savers exchange. (Label your non-hybrid seed envelope with as much info as possible, and see what there is to swap).

Conference registration is \$35 per person, with an additional charge of \$10 for an impressive organic lunch with local ingredients. Friday night's keynote with Nettie Wiebe is \$5 at the door. All events take place at the Bulman Students Centre, University of Winnipeg.

Pre-registration is necessary. Call Anne or Jan at 947-6511 for more information.



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Sign me up as a member of the Manitoba Eco-Network

Enclosed is a cheque for:

- \$25 Supporting member (individuals)
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- \$50 Other organizations (businesses, government departments and corporations that do not otherwise qualify for group membership)

I'm also enclosing a donation of _____ to help with your public education activities.

[Charitable tax receipts available for amounts over the cost of membership]

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I'm interested in volunteering for the Eco-Network. Please call me!

Name(s) _____ Group (if applicable) _____
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Group members are entitled to nominate representatives for a position on the Eco-Network Steering Committee. Group membership is open to any non-governmental, non-profit group which has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or environmental education.

A supporting membership includes a subscription to **Eco-Journal** as well as notice of events and regular updates on issues and is open to any individual.

