



CONNECTIONS

WOMEN'S NETWORK ON HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT

Volume 2 • Issue 2

ACTION FOR PREVENTION

June 1997

FIRST WORLD BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE SEE YOU THERE!

Less than two months to go, and registration is already more than 400 for what promises to be an extraordinary event in Kingston, slated for July 13 to 17. The First World Conference on Breast Cancer, the brainchild of irrepressible activist Janet Collins, is drawing participants from over 40 countries.

Two days of the conference, July 16 and 17, will be of particular interest and importance to women who are concerned about environmental links to cancer.

Wednesday, July 16 is Environment/Prevention Day, and the list of speakers reads like an international Who's Who. The day has been organized to offer participants a morning overview of science as it relates to breast cancer and environmental links, from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. This plenary features four speakers: Dr. Devra Lee Davis, World Resources Institute (speaking about Persistent Organic Pollutants, Pesticides and Breast Cancer), Dr. Annie Sasco, International Agency for Research on Cancer (Topic: Breast Cancer Risks: Where we live, Where we work, What we consume. This includes occupational risks, pharmaceuticals, diet, and so on),

...continued on page 2

Our long awaited film about breast cancer and the environment, narrated by singer/breast cancer survivor/activist **Olivia Newton-John**, will be released at the First World Conference on Breast Cancer in Kingston. For more information, and copies (\$29.95 for individuals, \$19.95 for students & unwaged, \$99.95 for institutions, plus tax), please contact the WNH&E office: 416-516-2600.

Sandra Steingraber

June 23 at U of T

Sandra Steingraber, a PhD biologist and cancer survivor, has been described as 'a poet with a knife'. Here is a brief excerpt from the prologue to her new book, *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment* (Addison Wesley Longman, June, 1997). Please join us June 23 at 7 p.m. (Med Sciences Building, U of T) when Sandra will be speaking in Toronto as part of her North American book tour (see enclosed poster).



Sandra Steingraber

"There are individuals who claim, as a form of dismissal, that links between cancer and environmental contamination are unproven and unprovable. There are others who believe that placing people in harm's way is wrong - whether the exact mechanisms by which this harm is inflicted can be precisely deciphered or not. At the very least, they argue, we are obligated to

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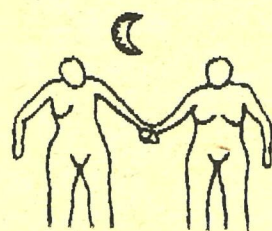
Buy the book!

Sandra's extraordinary book is available from WNH&E. The Canadian price is \$32.95, and for that amount we'll also contribute the tax, as well as postage & handling. It's as simple as filling out the enclosed order form & return envelope. Make your cheque payable to The WEED Foundation. (And we'll see you on the 23rd!)

736 Bathurst Street, Toronto ON M5S 2R4 Phone: (416) 516-2600 • Fax: (416) 531-6214 (WEED)

WNH&E is a project of the Women and Environments Education and Development (WEED) Foundation

WORLD BREAST CANCER ...continued from page 1



Dr. Rosalie Bertell, International Institute of Concern for Public Health (Links Between Radiation and Breast Cancer), and Dr. Bary Wilson, Batelle Pacific Northwest Laboratory (Overview of Electromagnetic Fields and Breast Cancer).

Following a half-hour break, the morning plenary resumes with a session entitled **The Politics of Cancer & Limits of Science** (11:00 to noon), featuring three outstanding women, who will undoubtedly wake us up with provocative and insightful presentations: **Judy Brady**, Cancer Prevention Coalition, San Francisco (topic is Politics of Cancer: The Flow of Money), **Andaiye**, Red Thread Guyana (Cancer and Power), and **Sharon Batt**, Breast Cancer Action Montreal (Our Breasts, Their Science).

Keynote luncheon speaker is **Dr. Sandra Steingraber**. This is guaranteed to be an unforgettable talk. Sandra's book, *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment*, as noted on page 1, was released in early June – and is surely to be another milestone in the long journey to have environmental links to this disease recognized and acknowledged. A powerful, poetic voice for primary prevention.

Afternoon sessions are breakout groups which will examine in more depth the four science issues from the morning, as well as addressing Synergistic Effects and the Politics of Cancer, and Breast Cancer Environmental Advocacy.

At the end of the day, we will regroup to pool recommendations for policy and action, coordinated by **Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg**, of our very own WNH&E group.

The following day, July 14, will feature an international hearing with another impressive slate of speakers (and listeners!) not to be missed. Be there!

For more information, contact the **First World Conference on Breast Cancer, Registration Office**, PO Box 1570, 190 Railway Street, Kingston K7L 5C8. Telephone: (613) 531-9210, fax (613) 531-0626 or e-mail events@adan.kingston.net. Registration fee is \$225.00 for the whole conference, or \$60.00 for a single day. Individuals who wish to attend

but cannot afford the fee are invited to write to the Conference Secretariat to apply for financial assistance.

SANDRA STEINGRABER ...continued from page 1

investigate, however imperfect our scientific tools: with the right to know comes the duty to inquire.

Happily, the latter perspective is gaining esteem as many cancer researchers acknowledge the need for an 'upstream' focus. As explained at a recent international conference, this image comes from a fable about a village along a river. The residents who live there, according to the parable, began noticing increasing numbers of drowning people caught in the river's current and so went to work inventing ever more elaborate technologies to resuscitate them. So preoccupied were these heroic villagers with rescue and treatment that they never thought to look upstream to see who was pushing the victims in.

This book is a walk up that river." (*Living Downstream*)

LIFESTYLES CAUSE CANCER?

Did you know that 70 per cent of all incidences of cancer are caused by "lifestyle" factors – including smoking, diet, lack of exercise, excessive alcohol consumption, and excessive exposure to the sun? And that pollution and poverty together account for only five percent of all cancers? These are the conclusions of a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, reported in a recent issue of the journal *Cancer Causes and Control*.

This news might be cause for enormous relief and celebration. In light of these findings, WNH&E and our sister organizations can abandon our focus on the environmental causes of cancer – the Harvard study assures us that only two percent of cancers are traceable to environmental pollution.

But wait a minute. Look where Harvard's School of Public Health is getting its funding. Just a partial list of donors in 1996 included: Chemical Manufacturers' Association, Dow, Ciba Geigy, Chevron, American Crop Protection Association, Procter & Gamble, Goodyear, Hoffmann LaRoche, Union Carbide, Monsanto...

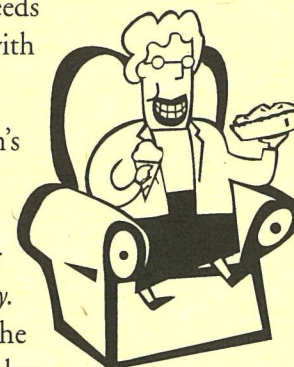
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LIFESTYLES...continued from page 2

Hard to bite the hand that feeds you (even if your fare is laced with pesticide residues...)

Thanks to the Women's Community Cancer Project in Boston for making these connections in a recent newsletter piece called *Follow The Money*. For more information about the WCCP, its newsletter and other materials, call 617-354-9888. Address: 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA USA02139.

For another incisive critique of the Harvard study, see the article entitled, *Misleading and Irresponsible: Cancer Activists Decry Harvard Report*, by **Tatiana Schreiber**. **Resist Newsletter**, Volume 6, #3. Resist, founded in 1967 as an anti-draft, anti-war (if you're under 30, that's the Vietnam War) is a peace and social justice newsletter published 10 times per year. \$15 (US) donation. Address is 259 Elm Street, #201, Somerville MA, USA. Phone 617-623-5110.



Websites Worth a Look

While the information superhighway may be one of the biggest "libraries" in the world, it is sometimes difficult and frustrating to find something of value amidst all the "noise" out there. WNH&E will suggest a few websites in each newsletter – check them out, see what you think and let us know if you found them valuable. And if you run across a web page that you think is terrific, drop us an e-mail: weed@web.net.

Hot Links to Active Pages! A web site for women of all sorts, with information varying from women web page designers, the battered women's shelter support network, women's references and news through to lesbian and first nations' issues. Research links also include the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, The Ontario Public Interest Research Group and the Canadian Council on Social Development – great pages to check out during the federal election campaign. The address is <http://www.groundwooddm.com/polspeak/getact.html>.

The **Toxics Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network** has an excellent page detailing the impact of the changes to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This Action Alert examines the number of ways in which the federal government is failing to protect our health and our environment. There is also a link examining the "Red Book" promises the Liberals made when they were last running. Address is <http://www.web.net/cepa911/index.html>.

In response to the growing list of human health ailments that are caused or aggravated by indoor and outdoor air pollution, the **Technology and Health Foundation** has launched a new program called the Healthy Environments Project. Headed by Bruce Small, who has been active in the field of environmental health for two decades, the project seeks to improve our physical and social environments both locally and globally. Internet address is <http://www.inforamp.net/~bsmall/hep.html>.

Environmental estrogens – those chemicals which mimic estrogen in the body – are receiving more and more attention. The **Centre for Bioenvironmental Research of Tulane and Xavier Universities** has set up a web page called "Environmental Concepts Made Easy". Here you will find links to the Environmental Estrogens home page with overviews for the scientific novice as well as more detailed information for the specialist. This page also contains a link to other excellent sites and is a good place to start if you want to find out more about endocrine disrupters. <http://www1.omi.tulane.edu/ECME/>.



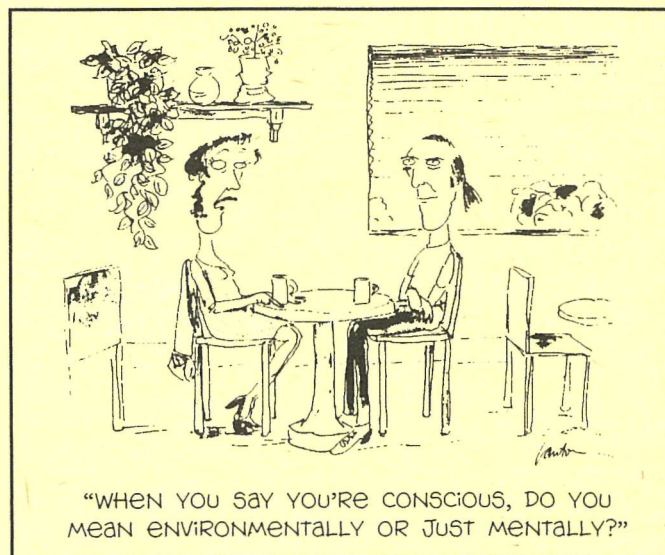
Help keep us regular! Your donations to The WEED Foundation will yield not only a tax receipt, but more issues of Connections, on time, every time!

Resources

The World Wildlife Fund has an excellent brochure called "Reducing Your Risk: A Guide to Avoiding Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals." In Toronto, you can contact WWF by calling (416) 489-8800. Their Internet site also has some excellent information on endocrine disruptors; you can find their web page at <http://www.wwfcanada.org>.

The Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) is presenting a new program called "Home Safe Home: Eliminating Toxic Cleansers and Pesticides in Your Home." At your request, an environmentalist from TEA will come to your home, apartment, school or place of work to do a home toxics audit on reducing your chemical use and will provide a presentation. For more information contact Rich at TEA by calling (416) 596-0660.

There's an excellent new Greenpeace report called "The Burning Question: Chlorine & Dioxin, PVC, The Poison Plastic" Call Greenpeace Toronto at (416) 597-8408.

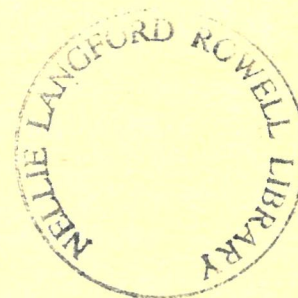


All suggestions, letters, upcoming events, and other contributions are welcome. Please address to *Connections*, WNH&E, c/o The WEED Foundation, 736 Bathurst Street, Toronto M5S 2R4. Or call us at (416) 516-2600 or fax (416) 531-6214 (WEED) e-mail: weed@web.net

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Toronto, ON
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PLEASE JOIN US!

Dr. Sandra Steingraber
Biologist, Cancer Survivor, Poet
talks about her new book...

Living Downstream
An Ecologist Looks At
Cancer and the Environment

Monday, June 23, 1997

7 p.m.

Room 3154 - The Lecture Hall, Medical Sciences Building
1 King's College Circle, University of Toronto
- Wheelchair Accessible-

For more information:

Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto 416-978-1809, Women's Network on Health & the Environment
416-516-2600, Breast Cancer Prevention Coalition 519-833-7202

www.net-efx.com/events/june23.html

\$32.95 Can. inclusive

To order **Living Downstream**, make your cheque or money order payable to: Women's Network on Health & the Environment. We also accept credit cards. Please Print!

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