

tea leaves

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

www.torontoenvironment.org

TEA named 'Best defender of local ecology'

Now Magazine Critic's Picks, 2003

15 Years! Your champion for a cleaner and healthier Toronto, TEA has won many important local environmental victories, like the City's new Pesticide Bylaw that chose kid's health over chemical lawns. This ten-year campaign attests to the value of TEA's longevity.

But we don't do it alone. Happy Anniversary to all our "Friends of TEA" volunteers and generous donors. Here's how some of TEA's local victories add up.

Cleaner Air

The City adopted TEA's Smog Action Plan in 1997, which led to our participation in Toronto's very first Smog Summit where then Mayor Mel Lastman surmised, "If we can't breathe, we die." Toronto has become a national leader in implementing

More Toronto residents became members or 'Friends of TEA' in 2003 than ever before

clean air programs like buying cleaner fuels and green power, and adopting a TTC Ridership Growth Strategy, Bike Plan and Pedestrian Charter. But our annual Smog Report Card shows the City can do better. From 1998-2003, progress on the action plan has gone from a D- to a C-. We are hopeful the new City Council and Mayor will strive for an A+.

INSIDE!

New City Council	2	Kyoto Diet	8
Rocket Riders	3	TEA in the News	8
Beach Watch	4	Incineration	9
Pesticide Bylaw	6	Green Hospitals	10
Smog Report Card	7	TEA Canvass	11



TEA at 'Days of Action' march in 1996

TEA has also helped stop projects that would increase smog. We organized the "Rally in the Valley" that successfully opposed the widening of the Don Valley Parkway (DVP), collaborated with Community Air to fight the expansion of the Island Airport and assisted St. Clair residents in getting City Hall to pass a bylaw prohibiting the construction of drive-throughs in fast food outlets located directly in residential areas.

Cleaner Water

We supported the City toughening up its Sewer Use Bylaw, which reduces industrial chemical discharges that end up in our rivers and the Lake. Toronto won a national award for its progressive and innovative pollution prevention approach in the Bylaw.

Beach Watch, our newest program, has organized beach litter clean ups, educated beachgoers on the causes of pollution and is eager to help the City reduce contaminated stormwater runoff by literally "greening" sidewalks, parking lots and properties. Watch for more action on this campaign!

Healthier Neighborhoods

Say goodbye to poisonous pesticides on your street, with the City's new Bylaw! This is TEA's second victory on this issue - we worked hard to get pesticide-free parks in 1998.

...continued on page 9

New City Council is good news for the environment

The 2003 City Election brought us a new Mayor, fourteen new Councillors and a few reasons to be hopeful about the next three years. As a long time public transit advocate and a key figure in opposing the Alams Mine landfill, Mayor David Miller's election bodes well for the environment. Mayor Miller's pro-environmental stance was clear in his campaign when he opposed waste incineration and expansion of the Island Airport, and called for deposit-return on beverage containers and expanded TTC service.

The Mayor isn't the only one on City Council ready to move faster on cleaning up our environment. During the City elections, TEA surveyed candidates on their support for 18 key environmental commitments regarding smog, water, waste, toxics, and transportation. The results show that we can expect Councillors to join the Mayor in taking action to improve our environment.

The big winner in the survey is water. Programs to expand the City's downtown disconnection program, reduce road salt use by 30%, and reduce storm water runoff are supported by a majority of City Council. These programs will move Toronto much closer to healthy rivers and clean beaches.

A majority of Councillors also support a "Community Right to Know" bylaw that gives the public full access to information on hazardous and cancer causing substances used in their communities.

There are some disappointments in the survey results. Councillors are hesitant to commit to providing much needed

...continued on page 3

City Hall Issues to Watch in 2004

- 2004 Budget to include \$20 million for Smog Plan, and dollars for TTC Ridership Growth Strategy
- Implementation of pesticide bylaw
- Non-toxic West Nile virus prevention
- Real progress on re-building Toronto's waterfront
- Right-of-way for St. Clair street car
- New and improved smog plan
- Community "Right to Know" bylaw
- Curbside composting in former City of Toronto

Council Contacts

Name	Ward	Business Phone
David Miller	Mayor	(416) 397-2489
Suzan Hall	Erbicke North	(416) 392-0205
Rob Ford	Erbicke North	(416) 397-9255
Doug Holyday	Erbicke Centre	(416) 392-4002
Gloria Lindsay Luby	Erbicke Centre	(416) 392-1369
Peter Milczyn	Erbicke-Lakeshore	(416) 392-4040
Mark Ginnes	Erbicke-Lakeshore	(416) 397-9273
Georgio Mammoliti	York West	(416) 395-6401
Peter Le Prei	York West	(416) 392-0201
Mario Augimeni	York Centre	(416) 392-4021
Mike Feldman	York Centre	(416) 395-6407
Francis Nunziata	York South-Weston	(416) 392-4091
Frank Di Giorgio	York South-Weston	(416) 392-4066
Bill Saunderson	Parkdale-High Park	(416) 392-4072
Sylvia Watson	Parkdale-High Park	(416) 392-7919
Howard Moscoe	Eglinton-Lawrence	(416) 392-4027
Karen Shintz	Eglinton-Lawrence	(416) 392-4090
Cesar Palocco	Davenport	(416) 392-7011
Adam Giambone	Davenport	(416) 392-7012
Joe Panthone	Trinity-Spadina	(416) 392-4009
Olivia Chow	Trinity-Spadina	(416) 392-4044
Joe Milner	St. Paul's	(416) 392-0208
Michael Walker	St. Paul's	(416) 392-7906
John Filion	Willowdale	(416) 395-6411
David Shiner	Willowdale	(416) 395-6413
Cliff Jenkins	Don Valley West	(416) 395-6408
Jane Pitfield	Don Valley West	(416) 392-0215
Kyle Rae	Toronto Centre-Rosedale	(416) 392-7903
Pam McConnell	Toronto Centre-Rosedale	(416) 392-7916
Case Oates	Brookview-Greenwood	(416) 392-4032
Paul Fletcher	Brookview-Greenwood	(416) 392-4060
Janeet Davis	Beaches-East York	(416) 392-4035
Sandra Bussin	Beaches-East York	(416) 392-1376
Shelley Carroll	Don Valley East	(416) 392-4038
Denzil Minnon-Wong	Don Valley East	(416) 397-9256
Gerry Altabello	Scarborough Southwest	(416) 392-0213
Brian Ashton	Scarborough Southwest	(416) 392-4052
Michael Thompson	Scarborough Centre	(416) 397-9274
Glenn De Baetnemecker	Scarborough Centre	(416) 392-0204
Mike Del Grande	Scarborough-Agincourt	(416) 392-1374
Norm Kelly	Scarborough-Agincourt	(416) 392-4047
Bos Baksson	Scarborough-Rouge River	(416) 392-1375
Raymond Cho	Scarborough-Rouge River	(416) 392-4076
David Sokoncki	Scarborough East	(416) 392-4008
Guy Courboisne	Scarborough East	(416) 392-1373

MAKING TORONTO A TRANSIT CITY AGAIN

There was a time when Toronto's public transit system was one of the best in North America. If you are a TTC rider you are probably well aware that this is far from true today. In the 1990s, TTC fares doubled due to budget cuts. In addition, services declined up to 30% on some key routes. These actions switched millions of transit trips into smog producing car trips. With a substantial amount of population and employment growth forecasted for Toronto, gridlock and smog will continue to rise. That is one of the reasons why the focus of Toronto's Official Plan "is on altering behaviour so as to reduce our dependence on the private automobile."

Against this background TTA's Rocket Riders have fought to get the TTC back on the system through improved service and better fares. After three years we succeeded.

The TTC released their Ridership Growth Strategy in March 2003 which outlines a comprehensive and doable set of initiatives to improve transit and increase ridership by 10% (40 million additional rides annually) by 2011.

- A 10% increase in peak period service on busy routes, requiring expansion of bus fleet by 100 vehicles and construction of a bus garage;
- off-peak service on major routes;



ROCKETRIDERS

Making transit a priority on our streets makes sense when we remember that a well-used bus or streetcar line can carry five or six thousand people each direction in one hour while a four lane city street can only carry one thousand people in cars. The successful streetcar lane on Spadina is an example of one end of the transit priority spectrum. In that case the street was totally redesigned to make it streetcar friendly. An environmental assessment is underway for St. Clair Avenue. A wide variety of options

- Commuter parking expansion;
- Expanding traffic signal priority program; and
- Implementing surface rapid transit.

Increasing service and reducing fares will only be accomplished with more funding. But good public transit isn't all about money. It's also about giving our streetcars and buses priority on the street so that we can move more people faster. That's why Toronto's Official Plan and the Ridership Growth Strategy recognize that we need a plan focused on moving people instead of vehicles.

Toronto's Official Plan calls for improving the level of priority for transit on roughly 20 major City streets. These measures can include everything from tying traffic signals to the needs of transit vehicles to giving transit vehicles their own lane.

(including a streetcar-only lane) are being considered. Importantly, the community is being brought in to help set the goals for the project, and then to participate in designing what the street looks like.

Between Toronto's Official Plan and the TTC's Ridership Growth Strategy lies a clear answer to Toronto's failing transit system. The question now is will it be implemented?



what YOU can DO

- Call your councillor and tell them you want to see more TTC service without a fare increase.
- Call your MPP and tell them Toronto needs permanent provincial funding for the TTC now.
- Check to see if your TTC route includes a street targeted for improving transit priority.
http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/toronto-plan/chps1_5/nov2002_map05.pdf

Toronto's New City Council... continued from page 2

funding for implementing Toronto's smog plan and pesticide bylaw. Banning municipal waste incineration also received weak support.

City Council and the Mayor are still intent on extending Front Street to include another ramp to the Gardiner Expressway. This is an unneeded road expansion that may threaten future plans to dismantle the Gardiner. Dismantling the Gardiner is a key component to revitalizing Toronto's waterfront.

Overall, we believe that Toronto's new City Council has the potential to make Toronto a world leader in innovative environmental programs. Council's first test was voting to

cancel the bridge to the island airport, which they passed with flying colours.

Our task now is to hold Council to the environmental commitments they have made and continue to build support for environmental wins they have left off their to-do list.

what YOU can DO

- Check out how your Councillor responded to TEA's survey by going to http://www.torontoenvironment.org/election_survey/mayor-questions.htm
- Keep up-to-date on important environmental issues being debated at City Hall and how your Councillor is voting. Sign up for "Council Watch", our free e-mail bulletin, by sending an e-mail to cwatch@torontoenvironment.org

Reducing the Impact of Development on Local Rivers & Beaches

“Smart Growth” usually refers to stopping sprawl in order to protect natural areas like the Oak Ridges Moraine. But development patterns in downtown Toronto also need to change. Building condos, roads, and parking lots, without saving any greenspace or trees, is largely responsible for the poor state of our rivers and closed beaches in Toronto. TEA's Beach Watch program supports replacing some of our concrete jungle with natural greenspace.

Facts: A reduction in permeability by 10 to 20% can begin to cause environmental stress. In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), buildings, roads, parking lots, driveways and hard compacted soils found on sports fields and urban lawns have consumed over 80% of the natural cover. In areas defined as “sprawl” such as strip malls and big box shopping plazas, impermeability can reach 100%.

Development disrupts the natural hydrological system that maintains healthy watersheds and water quality. Stormwater (rain and snow melt) traditionally recharges groundwater supplies, filtering out pollutants picked up in the environment and replenishing rivers, streams and lakes with clean water. But, as areas of absorption decrease inside urban areas, greater volumes of polluted stormwater runoff are created. Road sewers capture and carry this runoff to local streams, rivers and lakes. In Toronto's downtown core, storm sewers are connected to sanitary sewers. Too much rain in the pipes causes an overflow, dumping untreated sewage into our beaches and making them unhealthy for swimming.

Facts: Stormwater runoff from one square mile of roads and parking lots discharges 20,000 gallons of residual oil per year.

Renewing natural cover to improve water quality

Many cities in the United States have successfully incorporated “low-impact development” policies into their urban building plans by strategically planting greenery on residential streets, next to buildings and in parking lots. A mall in Fredericksburg, VA eliminated stormwater runoff from the parking lot by installing a sloped vegetative channel to collect and absorb runoff. Seattle reduced runoff by 98% in one residential neighborhood by installing rain gardens on individual properties, at no cost to the homeowner. Restoring natural greenspace in cities also helps to improve air quality and lower temperatures in the city core. And in most cases developers can reduce their costs by 10 to 30%.

TEA is creating a list of similar policy recommendations for Toronto and City Council.

Consequences of Impermeability

- Loss of vegetation
- Loss of habitat & local biodiversity
- Increase in the volume, velocity and temperature of stormwater runoff
- Reduction in groundwater base flow

Impact of Polluted Stormwater Runoff on Local Watersheds

- Degraded health of aquatic habitat
- Fish kills
- Increased flooding in neighborhoods and basements
- Stream sedimentation
- Riverbank erosion
- Increase in pollutant loading to rivers
- Closed beaches

Beach Watch Pollution Solutions

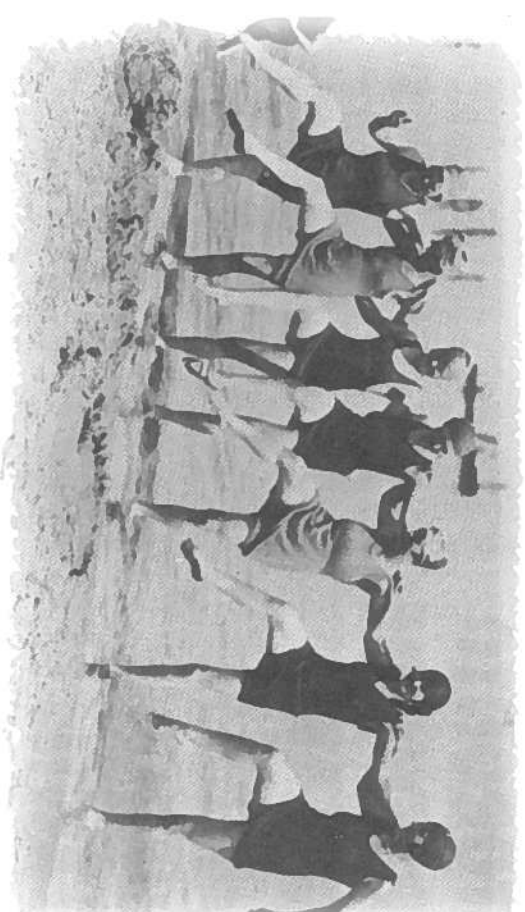
Help Restore The Don, Humber and Rouge Rivers and Etobicoke, Mimico and Highland Creeks!

- **Disconnect Your Downspout**
Collect roof runoff in a rain barrel to water the lawn and garden. Go to www.city.toronto.on.ca/waterreff/downspouthm or call (416) 392-1807.
- **Park on the Street, Restore Your Front Lawn**
Driveways can account for 15% of impermeable surfaces in a city and are toxic hot spots for rain water to pick up pollutants such as oil, phosphorous, fecal coliform from pets, and various metals and chemicals from tailpipe emissions, leaks and deteriorating car parts.
- **Plant Trees**
Toronto needs trees! On home lawns, along sidewalks, and commercial properties.
- **Reduce Parking Lot Runoff**
Lots can install rain gardens and reduce runoff by at least 60%. Most can do 100%.
- **Green Development Permits**
New construction and re-development projects must handle stormwater on site and keep the rain out of Toronto's sewers.
- **Plant Native Plants**
Vegetation and grasses that thrive in our climate can do double duty by also capturing and absorbing rainwater.

Reclaim Your Beach!

Too bad that during heat waves and on smog days, we can't always use our beaches to beat the heat and bad air, because our beaches are polluted too! These beach blahs result from various factors like overflowing sewers, high bacterial counts, urbanization of our watersheds and of course, litter.

Litter is an eyesore at the beach. Pop cans and bottles float in the water and are tossed among the rocks, fast food wrappers and chip bags fly around the sand. A 2001 study conducted by the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA), revealed that litter and odor deterred residents from using their beaches. As a majority of people visit Toronto's beaches for recreation other than swimming (only 12% say they actually swim in the water), clearing the beaches of litter should be an important goal for Toronto.



Thanks Parkdale-High Park Residents for cleaning up your beach!

On Saturday, August 23rd, local Sunnyside beach residents pulled on gloves, and collected 12 bags of garbage in just one hour! Half of those bags were filled with recyclable materials. In fact, there are no recycling bins at these beaches.

Rachel Mayberry and Sheila Griffiths won the special distinction of finding the most interesting “something” on the beach. Peter and Mat from Environmental Defence Canada, informed the clean-up crew of their work to bring an international clean beaches program to Toronto. The Blue Flag Program would mean daily beach clean-ups to Sunnyside and Gzowski Beaches.

TEA would like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thanks to all who helped out in the Beach Watch 2003 Sunnyside/Gzowski Beach Clean-up. A special thanks goes to Ilze Andzans at the City of Toronto and TEA's enthusiastic organizer Natasha D'Souza.

Let's follow the Parkdale-High Park community set an example and do our bit to reclaim our beaches! Call (416) 596-0660.

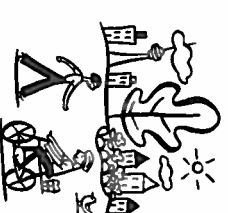
Years ago, Sunnyside Beach was a premiere amusement park, boasting one of the largest roller coasters in North America.

In the 1950's the amusement park was forfeited for the creation of the Gardiner Expressway that severed the Parkdale community from the lakeshore. The rollercoaster ended up at Disneyworld. In the Parkdale-High Park community, signs against swimming in Sunnyside Beach and Sir Casimer Gzowski Park Beach are too common a sight. In the hot month of July, Sunnyside beach was closed 39% of the time, and Gzowski Beach was closed 58% of the time.

These two beaches are on the list of the most frequently closed this summer.

TEA has many volunteers who work with us every day or come to our regular meetings. Get involved by giving us a call to work on an issue that interests you (416) 596-0660.

- KATRINA MILLER, Pesticide Reduction Caucus
- GORD PERKS, Waste Reduction Caucus
- SHELLEY PETRIE, Water Caucus
- KEITH STEWART, Smog and Climate Change Caucus
- ROGER BROOK, Rocket Riders Caucus



Is your beach polluted? Log on to find out if your beach is open or closed before you swim. This site also publishes e.coli test results for each beach: <http://www.torontobeach.ca/index.htm>

TORONTO PESTICIDE BYLAW MEANS HEALTHY LAWNS AND KIDS



May 22, 2003 is a historic day for healthy communities and our environment – it is the day Toronto passed its Pesticide Bylaw. The bylaw, which comes into effect in April 2004, prohibits the use of herbicides, insecticides and other pesticides on public and private property, except in rare occasions of infestations or where public health is at risk. Public education programs and help lines will assist residents to go pesticide-free and fines will be levied after September 2005.

Pesticides are a toxic and avoidable menace in our communities. The most commonly used pesticides – such as 2,4-D for weeds and diazinon for insects – are linked to cancers, immune system disruption, reproductive damage and other adverse health effects. We are exposed to these chemicals even if we don't use them and studies show that children are most susceptible to harm.

...the new bylaw prohibits the use of herbicides, insecticides and other pesticides on public and private property...

The pesticide bylaw takes a huge step forward to eliminate these risks. But this doesn't mean the end of green lawns and blooming gardens! TEA and the City of Toronto will be among those launching new education programs to teach people how to maintain healthy pest resistant lawns and gardens without chemicals. Hopefully retailers will follow Loblaw's lead and fill their shelves with safer alternatives to these toxic pesticides.

This bylaw was a group effort. The hardy volunteers of TEA's pesticide caucus helped us engage citizens to activate public support. A high-powered coalition, the "Partnership for Pesticide Bylaws" also gave essential support to the bylaw at just the right time.

The true test of the bylaw will be in its implementation. Buoyed by public polls showing high public support and a growing organic landscaping industry, TEA and its colleagues in the Partnership for Pesticide Bylaws will continue to work for success.

what YOU can DO

- Is a lawn care company spraying pesticides in your neighborhood? If you see one, give us a call at (416) 596-0660. They might be contravening the City's bylaw!
- TEA's new "I am Pesticide Free! Ask Me How" program is looking for residents to lead by example by becoming a neighborhood demonstration site for going pesticide free. Call our office to find out how to be a "Natural Leader" on your street!

Thank You!

The Toronto Pesticide Bylaw would not be a reality without:

- TEA's Volunteer Pesticide Caucus who called TEA members and went to countless public meetings! Sari, Gideon, Doug, Marcie and Mary Margaret, our hats off to you!
- Fourteen high profile organizations who joined together with TEA to form the Partnership for Pesticide Bylaws:
 - Ontario College of Family Physicians
 - Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
 - Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
 - Humane Society of Canada
 - Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario
 - United Steel Workers of America
 - Canadian Environmental Law Association
 - Great Lakes United
 - Breast Cancer Prevention Coalition
 - International Institute of Concern for Public Health
 - Pesticide Free Ontario
 - Women's Healthy Environments Network
 - Toronto and York Region Labour Council
 - Environmental Defence Canada

You really made all the difference!

City Gets C minus on Smog Report Card

"Look at TEA's smog report card," said then-mayoral candidate David Miller at the TEA-sponsored environmental debate during last fall's municipal election campaign. "Good idea after good idea that hasn't been put into practice. We need to do better."

His comments came in response to City Council being awarded a 'C-' by TEA in the sixth annual *Toronto Smog Report Card*. The report card evaluates progress on over 30 clean air initiatives adopted by Council. For 2003, it identified two low points: the support for expanding the Island Airport and the decision to implement only 1/5th of the green power and energy efficiency targets – a decision which TEA believes should be revisited in light of the August 14 blackout and rising electricity prices.

The grade was up slightly from a D+ in 2002, however, because the City increased TTC funding by \$30 million and developed a transit Ridership Growth Strategy. Other positive initiatives included adopting the drive-through and pesticide bylaws, and the anti-idling public education and enforcement blitz.

Toronto experienced 11 smog days in Summer 2003, the third highest number since the smog warning system began in 1993. Health experts estimate that air

pollution causes 1,000 premature deaths per year in Toronto, hospitalizes another 5,500 and increases health care costs in Toronto by over \$150 million.

"The status quo isn't good enough," said Shelley Petrie, TEA's Executive Director, at the release of the report card. "Our elected officials shouldn't meekly accept smog levels that kill 1,000 Toronto residents each year."

There are some signs that Council might be listening. As its first meeting, the new Mayor and Council moved to block the expansion of the Island Airport. And with energy prices on the rise, there has been some support for TEA's proposal to accelerate the City's energy efficiency and green power programs. Using less energy and getting the energy we truly need from clean, green power like wind turbines and solar panels would make a big contribution to cleaning up the air we breathe.

TEA will also be pushing all three levels of government to support implementation of the TTC's Ridership Growth Strategy, so that we can attract people out of their cars and into transit by having more buses, streetcars and subway cars carrying people for lower fares.

The full text of the 2003 Smog Report Card is available at <http://www.torontoenvironment.org/smog/municipal.html>.



TORONTO SMOG REPORT CARD 2003

Subject	Comments	Grade
Leadership	The Smog Plan continues to languish for lack of funding. Council's decision to permit the expansion of the Island Airport is further evidence of a lack of leadership on smog.	F
Transit and Trip Reduction	New money for TTC and a promising new Ridership Growth Strategy.	B-
Energy Efficiency and Green Power	Moving on only one fifth of commitments.	D-
Fleets and Fuels	Are buying cleaner fuels, but cleaner vehicles on hold.	C+
Bikes and Pedestrians	Bike Plan implementation slashed, but the Pedestrian Charter and drive-through ban supports a walkable City.	C+
Public Education	Thumbs up to 20/20: The Way to Cleaner Air program and anti-idling blitz.	B
2003 Final Grade		C-

TAKE THE ONE TONNE CHALLENGE: What you can do about smog and climate change

Smog and climate change are the consequence of our wasteful use of energy. The Kyoto Diet is designed to help you cut your energy consumption (and bills) while making the switch to green power.

Energy Efficiency – personal

- Get a home energy audit from GreenSaver at (416) 203-3106 or www.greensaver.org. You'll get expert advice on how to make your home more energy efficient and qualify for a federal rebate!
- Don't overuse air conditioning in the summer, it is powered by highly-polluting coal plants
 - Turn the thermostat up to 26 degrees and dress appropriately
 - Use fans and close the drapes during the day
- Turn off electrical appliances when not in use and turn down your hot water heater

- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents (they use 1/4 the energy)
- Use low-flow showerheads
- Do laundry in cold water and hang-dry your clothes
- Buy Energy Star-rated appliances that use less energy to do the same task as regular fridges, washing machines, air conditioners, etc.

Support Green Power: getting clean energy on-line

- Invest in the second Windshare turbine: (416) 977-5093; www.windshare.ca. The first wind turbine went up last year at Exhibition Place, and the second turbine should be going up soon. By investing in green power, you are helping to push dirty coal power off the system and make Ontario a leader in the green energy revolution.

Don't forget to contact your elected officials and ask them what they are doing about smog and climate change!

TEA in the NEWS

TEA is "the most credible environmental group in the city" said Globe and Mail columnist John Barber, after the pro-pesticide lobby tried to steal our profile by creating the Toronto Environmental Coalition. TEA was also named 'Best Defender of the Local Ecology' in Now Magazine Critics Picks, 2003.

TEA campaigner Gord Perks became a bi-weekly columnist in Eye Magazine this year, writing about everything from radioactive diapers to windpower.

Toronto Star's Michelle Landsberg gave TEA her stamp of approval when she said "...among those I value and regularly want to help are ... Toronto Environmental Alliance..." as one of the worthy groups on her personal donation list.

TEA staffers played starring roles in the Globe and Mail's *The Killing Fields*, a story on urban pesticides, and the Toronto Star's *Saving Energy: What will it Take? TEA* also penned an op-ed in the Star called *Cleaning Up our Electricity Mess*.

If you watch TVO's *Studio Two* you saw TEA on two hour-long shows discussing renewable energy and the pesticide bylaw.

Discovery Channel's *Medical Horseat* featured TEA spokespersons debating the value of pesticide bylaws and causes of PCB contamination in salmon.

We woke you up in the morning with Andy Barry on CBC's *Metro Morning* when we were talking about pesticides and garbage, and we joined you for your mid-morning coffee on CBC's *The Current* when we spoke on air pollution and energy efficiency.

TEA was also regularly featured in daily new items in radio, TV and print on electricity issues, public transit, global warming, water conservation and privatization, as well as the proposal to burn Toronto's garbage in an incinerator.



INCINERATION IS NO SOLUTION

The 2003 election once again showed that how we handle our garbage is a top issue with Torontonians. It also showed how tempting it is for candidates to look for quick fixes such as garbage incineration.

TEA opposes garbage incineration. Incineration is the largest source of dioxins in the world and emits a variety of other toxic substances into the air and our food chain. New "thermal technologies" such as gasification and pyrolysis are just incineration by another name. Although proponents laud them as green solutions to our waste problems, the facts point to a different story. Few of these plants have been built to handle large amounts of residential waste and some have experienced serious problems.

For example, one was closed down for exceeding German pollution laws and another suffered an internal explosion. The right answer is to proceed on three fronts. We need to: expand waste diversion programs; bring in tough laws that make corporations responsible for the environmental fate of their products and packages; and avoid the quick fix mentality that leads us to dangerous disposal options such as incineration and dirty dumps like Adams Mine.

The City of Toronto is making some good progress on diversion. Because of TEA and other citizen activists the City is in the middle of bringing curbside pick up to single family homes – the program should be city-wide by mid-2005. TEA is also a member of the City apartment waste diversion task force which aims to dramatically improve diversion programs in that important sector.

Our governments have stalled on making corporations deal with waste they create through products they sell. Ontario is one of only two provinces without a deposit-return system for all drink containers.

Avoiding quick fixes will also be a challenge. The good news here is that we have a wonderful model from Halifax.

TEA named 'Best defender of local ecology' ...continued from page 1

We also keep an eye on what other cities across Canada are doing to improve their environment. Our collaboration with city workers (CUPE 416) brought the Green Bin compost pick-up program to Toronto, a waste diversion model imported from the City of Halifax. We were also instrumental in developing Toronto's first Environmental Plan, with 66 specific clean and green recommendations. And it seems every year the Rocket Riders, a volunteer group at TEA, fight a fare hike on the TTC or campaign for better funding and service.

People Power

It is our experience that local governments are championing environmental progress in Canada. This is due to residents taking up the challenge to improve and protect their local environment. Our victories are shared with residents near and far. Remember when hundreds of Kirkland Lake citizens joined us to fill City Council for four days to stop Toronto's garbage from being dumped in the "leaky" Adams Mine pit? Thousands of you have signed our petitions on various issues when our canvass knocks on your door. We've even brought Dr. David Suzuki and children's entertainers Sharon, Lois & Bram to make deputations to Toronto Councilors and help win major victories.

This past year 350 residents attended our Mayoral Debate on local environmental issues – a first for the City!

TEA is committed to a greener Toronto and dedicated to working in our City for another 15 years. Make it a point to know us better this year! Join us at our Annual General Meeting this summer and our popular fundraiser EcoBank, held in December.

KEEP IN TOUCH

30 Duncan Street
Suite 201
Toronto, ON
M5V 2C3
Phone: (416) 596-0660
Fax: (416) 596-0345
e-mail: tea@torontoenvironment.org
www.torontoenvironment.org
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 1702645

tea leaves

is produced by the

Toronto Environmental Alliance

If you have any announcements, comments, or would like to submit an article, please contact us.

Design & Layout: **Suzanne Rodenkitchen**

Logo & Mascot Design: **Shauna Rae**

Photos: **TEA Staff**

STAFF AT TEA

Executive Director: **Shelley Perrin**

Bookkeeper: **Elaine Whittaker**

Smog and Climate Change: **Keith Stewart**

Transit & Waste: **Gord Perks**

Pesticides: **Katrina Miller**

Canvass Director: **Harry Piffold**



Their system starts with an effective diversion regime. The remaining "garbage" is then sorted to capture recyclables that didn't make it into diversion programs. Finally, the remaining material is treated in a compost-like system that reduces the amount that must be disposed of and renders it biologically inert eliminating the smelly, leaking, pest-infested mixed waste garbage dump.

Green Hospitals Get Healthy

Hospitals shouldn't make us sick. Yet our health care system creates mountains of waste, consumes incredible amounts of energy and uses polluting products like vinyl, mercury and pesticides. Fortunately, TEA and several hard-working hospitals and health care experts are changing this through Health Care Without Harm and the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care.

TEA helped found the Coalition in 2000, and it has grown into a network of over 25 hospitals, health associations and non-governmental organizations stretching from Quebec to British Columbia. The work of all these keen and able experts in Canada contributes to the global work of Health Care Without Harm, an organization of over 400 groups in 40 countries.



TEA's Rich Whittle (right) poses with hospital winners of OHA's Green Health Care Awards

In the past year, the Coalition has:

- Held "mercury thermometer roundups" in six hospitals to educate staff and patients about the hazards of mercury and safer alternatives. In a single day, we collected over 1,700 mercury thermometers and distributed 1,500 digital devices.
- Published a "Building Green Hospitals Checklist" in the Journal of the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society. With so many hospitals being built and renovated in Canada, we encourage them to consider energy efficiency, indoor air quality, waste reduction and safer materials in their decisions. After all, a healthy building makes for healthier patients and safer staff.
- Collaborated with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) to present environmentally-preferable companies and "green training" at their annual convention. We also recognized three hospitals with the "Green Health Care Awards". This is the third year of this successful Coalition-OHA partnership.
- Shared our Canadian success stories with delegates of the international "CleanMed" conference in Chicago.

- Contributed to a Health Canada review of a harmful plasticizer in vinyl medical products known as "DEHP". The Coalition advocates for accelerated research on vinyl alternatives and labeling on existing products to help doctors, nurses and purchasers avoid DEHP where possible.

In the coming year, the Coalition will launch programs to work more closely with hospitals to "green" purchasing and with nurses on DEHP alternatives. Learn about our work by clicking on "green health care" at www.torontoenvironment.org

Making a Difference Every Day

TEA had a very successful year in 2003 and it wouldn't have been possible without the daily help of dedicated volunteers. Some of these unsung heroes were huge assets in the office, helping us update member information and research environmental issues. Others worked in their communities to build awareness and support for TEA campaigns.

TEA would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers and highlight some of the great work they have done. Steve Munroe, Lin Wong, Roger Brook and the rest of the Rocket Riders are helping to make the TTC Ridership Growth Strategy a reality. TEA's pesticide caucus worked tirelessly to drum up public support for the Pesticide Bylaw. Students Ben Langer and Shirui Misra often went beyond the call of duty for their volunteer co-op placements to pitch in extra hours at key times. Every citizen who heeded our pleas to help our campaigns by contacting their councillor, making a deputation, attending a public meeting, or changing the way they live are environmental champions in our eyes.

Get Active and Stay Involved

- In 2004, we need volunteers to help:
- Keep our office in good working order and update our databases.
 - Educate community members on organic gardening and the "Kyoto Diet" home energy efficiency challenge.
 - Build community support for better public transit through provincial funding.

For more information on how to become a volunteer and what positions are available, call TEA at (416) 596-0660.

Use TEA's expertise to get your group or yourself involved in protecting the environment.

TEA offers workshops on...

- media training
 - how to talk to city hall
 - and many other environmental issues!
- Toronto Environmental Alliance

TEA's Canvass at Your Door

This edition of *TEA Leaves* marks the third year of our full time door-to-door outreach canvass. From its humble beginnings as a summer-only canvass some years ago, the canvass has developed into a year-round effort. We have had many successes and marked many firsts along the way.

As a result of the generosity of our members, TEA has been able to reach a broader and more diverse membership than ever before. The petitions signed, the issues discussed, the ideas and materials distributed, as well as your valuable financial contributions, helped us to succeed and thrive. A heartfelt thank you to all those people that took the time to stop and listen when we came to the door.

In the coming year we hope to be able to expand our focus on monthly donor development. Why monthly donations? Monthly donations are the most effective way of helping TEA, because they allow us to know how much money we'll be receiving each month from you and our other members, and this helps us plan for the future more efficiently. Monthly donations are also a better use of our outreach efforts – the time we spend contacting existing members when it's time to renew support



can be better utilized expanding our profile in new communities. We hope all of you will consider a monthly gift to TEA this year when we visit. TEA prides itself on the professionalism of its canvass. We hope that when we drop by we can answer your questions and gather your input. We love talking to you, as much as you like seeing us. *Keep up the smiles and see you soon.*

Become a friend of tea

You can contribute to TEA's work and the environment by making a donation. And because we are largely a volunteer organization every dollar goes a long way. TEA will keep you up to date on our accomplishments through **TEA LEAVES**, our E-bulletin **Council Watch**, and our publications.

TEA does not have charitable status, therefore we cannot issue you a tax-deductible receipt. **Please check your donation below.**

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 200 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ Monthly _____ |
- (requires credit card or void cheque)

Name _____ Address _____

City & Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Area of Interest _____

Visa/MasterCard # _____ Expiry Date _____

Please mail your cheque to: **TEA, 30 Duncan Street, Suite 201, Toronto, ON M5V 2C3 tel. (416) 596-0660**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Publications Mail Agreement No. 1702645
Tel: (416) 596-0660
Fax: (416) 596-0345
E-mail: tea@torontoenvironment.org
30 Duncan Street, Suite 201
Toronto, ON M5V 2C3

Toronto Environmental Alliance



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

**Residents hear Mayoral Hopfuls
Debate Environment at
TEA's Annual General Meeting**

