



Word Power

countermand

To revoke (a former command) or to cancel or rescind by giving an order contrary to one previously given.

President's Message

Molson's Edmonton House

- Don Pirot

The summer is quickly approaching and it is once again the Alberta Branch's honour to be hosting CIPHI's **69th Annual Educational Conference (AEC)** in Edmonton this year. It promises to be an educational and fun time for everyone!

Did you know that this is the *11th* time the Branch has hosted the national conference? The Branch has hosted the AEC previously in Edmonton (1920, 1951, 1961, 1974, 1991, 2003), Banff (1979, 1984, 1997) and Calgary (1923, 1968). WOW!

The conference is beginning to take shape on all fronts. The

Social Committee has lined up a band to play during the wine & cheese reception, the golf tournament has been set and the social evenings during the conference have all been finalized. You will not want to miss the President's banquet this year... it promises to be quite *hypnotic!*

The **Education Committee** has finalized the education tracks to include the following:

- Communicable Disease and Outbreak Control;
- Water Quality;
- Public & Environmental

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Eagerly Anticipating AEC

With a little less than three months (and counting) to the **69th Annual Educational Conference** in Edmonton, my anticipation is growing as this will be the first AEC of my professional career. A quick perusal of the Education Tracks (that can be viewed and downloaded from the Conference website, <http://www.ciphi.ab.ca/nec/>) indicates a wide range of topics and interests and I'm having a difficult time choosing which session I want to attend at the expense of the others! Thankfully I do have the upcoming months to decide!

In addition to the actual "education" component of the conference, I am looking with great interest at the various social activities planned such as the golf tournament, dinner show at Jubilations Dinner Theatre and the various luncheons and President's Banquet. It certainly appears like three days of fun-filled frivolity!

A great many thanks go out to the tireless efforts of the Conference Organizing Committee and the various Sub-committees who pushed themselves to bring together a conference that will be enjoyed by all who attend.

More information about the conference can be found both on CIPHI National's website (<http://www.ciphi.ca>) as well as the Alberta Branch (<http://www.ciphi.ab.ca>).

On a personal note, I'd like to extend my congratulations to my good friends and fellow CIPHI members, **Tony Thepsouvanh** (Membership Chair) and his new wife **Sarah (n. Hoffman)**, who recently tied the knot in the Magic Kingdom. It's good to see that love still has a place in this busy, busy world. That's the happy couple in the picture.

And finally, speaking about that "love" thing, it was sure nice of the folks from Chinook Health Region who took in those wayward southern souls from Headwaters that travelled to Edmonton for the **John Watters Zoonotic Workshop** in early February with nary a hotel reservation in sight. With preparations for sleeping in the back seat of their vehicles, these poor hapless sorts were taken into the shelter of those friendly Chinookers. I believe the bill will be in the mail.

Hope to see y'all in May for the AGM and June for the AEC! ♦

- Phi Phan, Editor



Editorial Policy

In the pursuit of the Association's objectives, the Editor is authorized to publish this Newsletter on a periodic basis, as deemed appropriate. The objectives of the Association are:

- (1) The development and advancement of environmental health, and
- (2) To support the advancement of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.

The Association Executive Board has the authority to provide general direction respecting the content of the Newsletter and, in consultation with the Editor, to set policies regarding administrative matters of each issue. The Editor shall have the general authority to select material for publication in the Newsletter provided all material meets the criteria of being within the objectives of the Association.

Views, comments or positions within the contents of the Newsletter are those of the Editor, Editorial Staff or the author, respectively, and does not necessarily reflect those of the Association Executive or its' membership.



Impersonation of the Worst Kind

On a Sunday afternoon, an older male entered a small town Dairy Queen and ordered two pre-packaged salads.

When the salads were delivered to him, this man told the waitress he was a "health inspector" and if he ever saw anyone in that building handling [pre-packaged] salads again without first washing their hands, he would "shut this place down."

The waitress said this person became very loud and abusive, to the point where the customers in the store were actually laughing at him. This person did not show any identification, and the waitress said she was afraid to ask for any, for fear of infuriating him further.

On Monday morning, the owner of the Dairy Queen contacted me, i.e. the authorized health inspector of that facility (whom she knows by sight and by name) to find out what the heck is going on.

I made an immediate visit to the facility to speak with the owner and her staff.

I informed them of their right to demand identification of people visiting their facility. I also suggested the police could be called in if at any time they felt they were in danger.

As this type of inspector/operator rapport is totally foreign to them, they felt (as I did) that this was a case of impersonation and misrepresentation.

However, the owner and her staff still had reservations that this impersonator may have been a retired health inspector or an inspector from another health region just traveling through.

Another point that was brought up is that this person could have been a Federal or Provincial inspector of some other discipline. The Dairy Queen personnel were made aware that only **Executive Officers** of the local RHA

have the authority to inspect their premises.

At the next PHI staff meeting, the idea of using business cards with photographs was discussed. Vacation relief inspectors could identify themselves and leave their photo business card as well.

The Dairy Queen personnel chose to keep my business card (no photograph) next to their telephone. They will call me and/or the police if a similar occurrence happens. I provided my office number, cell number and home number.



— Brian Craig, Public Health Inspector (Chinook Health Region)

Do you have any comments?
 Have you had a similar incident?
 How did you handle it?
 How should it have been handled?
 Drop a line to the editor with your thoughts!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

(Continued from page 1)

- Health;
- Drinking & Recreational Water Quality;
- Special Technical;
- Food Policy;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Administration; and
- Poster Session.

The **Sponsorship Committee** continues to look for potential exhibitors, sponsors and donations (for the golf tournament, as door prizes and for the silent auction). If you know of anyone you think we should follow-up with in any of these categories please contact the Branch President.

The Alberta Branch Annual General Meeting will be set for May 31, 2003 in Red Deer so mark your calendars. Lunch will even be provided! There will be plenty of agenda items to discuss, such as Environmental Health

Technicians, nominations for the CIPHI Life Member Award, Environmental Health Week initiatives; and the presentation of the President's Award. Stay tuned for further announcements.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Branch AGM and CIPHI 2003 Conference. ◆

— Victor Mah, President



Hollywood Health Inspector

Are you an intellectual, a geek, a hard nose, hapless or just plain “unique”? It appears the multi-million dollar entertainment industry has made several feeble attempts to lump public health inspectors into one of these categories without exploring beyond these personality myths. Here’s a tongue in cheek sampling of what I’ve found for the casting and writing of the role of “health inspector” from a variety of movies and television shows.

Often the role is hapless similar to **Pink Panther’s** Inspector Clouseau such as in the final episode of the **Fawlty Towers** series. The owner spends the entire inspection rushing around trying to get an employee to remove a pigeon from the water tank and disposing of a rat all without the inspector having the faintest idea. Or in **Grumpier Old**

Men when, in an attempt to stop the opening of a restaurant, the “Men” release a guinea pig run across the floor while a health inspector (box office superstar Willy Tanner from **Alf**) is dining so he’ll think it’s a rat.

There are occasional romantic story lines such as in **Northern Exposure** where the restaurant owner sets up the love-starved visiting health inspector with his daughter in an attempt to keep him occupied with something other than his restaurant. I’ll have to check with the *Northern Zone* to see if anyone met his or her spouse this way.

Or more recently in a **Friends** episode when Phoebe dates Larry, a health inspector she met at Monica’s restaurant. At first she is turned on by his power to close places down with the power of his badge, but soon realizes that they’re running out of good places to eat. Stop, I’m welling up!

Occasionally La-La land hits on a point that only PHIs would find of side-splitting laughter caliber such as the *Grimes and Punishment* episode of **Married With Children** when the health department forces Al Bundy to live in his condemned basement suite, which is so bad rats are trying to escape! He must wear a mobility-limiting device that

...he broadens his traditional duties to include investigating why people in the city are complaining their relatives are not acting “normal.”

will give him an electric shock if he tries to leave before fixing it. Hold on folks, I think we’re on to something here!

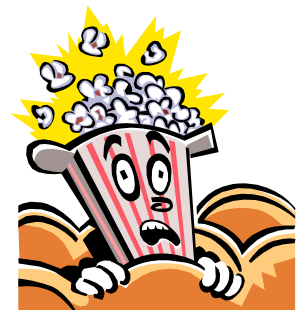
But fear not colleagues, like Superman leaping tall buildings, or the Lone Ranger arriving in the nick of time, there is promise for our public portrayal. I give you the 1998 horror movie **Slugs**, an excellent example of movie making at the end of its creative tether.

It casts the friendly neighborhood health inspector in the role of ridding small town America of fearsome toxic waste mutated garden slugs, which have invaded the water supply and developed a craving for human flesh. I won’t ruin the ending for you.

Finally my personal favorite, **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**. There is no truer example of art imitating life. The movie stars Donald Sutherland as health inspector Mathew Bennell. For some reason he broadens his traditional duties to include investigating why people in the city are complaining their relatives are not acting “normal”. My dear colleagues, I challenge you to find a family that is “normal”.

This is just a small sampling of the entertainment industry portrayal of our profession. So what have we learned from all of this, besides the fact I watch way too much television and movies? Well, while this article was written, “tongue in cheek”, there is a message being conveyed through the entertainment industry. Health inspectors present themselves to the public everyday through routine inspections, complaints, education courses, etc. The list is exhaustive. Often you may be the first and/or last encounter the public will ever have with our profession. As a result, you should keep in mind the impression you may impart. Remember, there is more to professionalism than the title you carry. See you at the movies! ♦

— Stephen Parker, Project Team Leader
(Alberta Health and Wellness, Disease Control and Prevention)



Drumroll Please...



A big thanks goes out to those who purchased tickets for our annual membership raffle. The raffle was made a success by our dedicated Zone Councilors who worked very hard to ensure a draw for their respective zones.

Congratulations to the following individuals who have won paid membership in CIPHI for 2003–2004, valued at \$125.

Southern Zone

Brian Craig

Calgary Zone

Kenning Eng

Central Zone

Ron Pillidge

Capital Zone

Dwayne Cherlenko

Northern Zone

Tony Thepsouvanh

In addition, members who paid their dues before December 31, 2002 were entered in a draw for a free conference registration for the upcoming CIPHI Educational Conference being hosted by the Alberta Branch. I would like to congratulate **Ken Fujioka** from Capital Zone who won this draw valued at \$499. ♦

- Tony Thepsouvanh, Membership Chair

BRANCH MATTERS

Zone Realignment

With the new regions coming into effect on April 1, discussion has started on the possible scenarios for realignment of the Zones within the Alberta Branch to coincide with the new regions. Discussion within the executive has brought forth the two following possibilities. Any decision concerning realignment will be made at the General Meeting (See page 7 for meeting information).

Option 1

Arctic — NWT, Nunavut

Northern — R8, R9, R7*

Central Zone — R4, R5, R7*

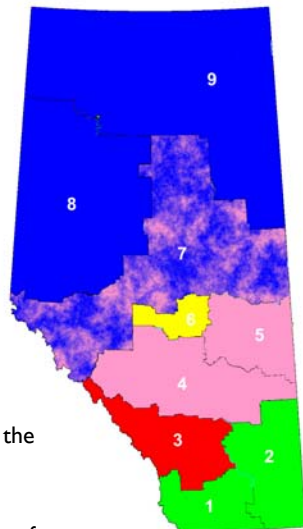
Capital — R6

Calgary — R3

Southern — R1, R2

Notes:

- Each zone has one vote in the Branch Executive
- Region 7 can either be part of the North Zone or the Central Zone, depending on the decision of members in that region.



Option 2

Arctic Zone — NWT, Nunavut

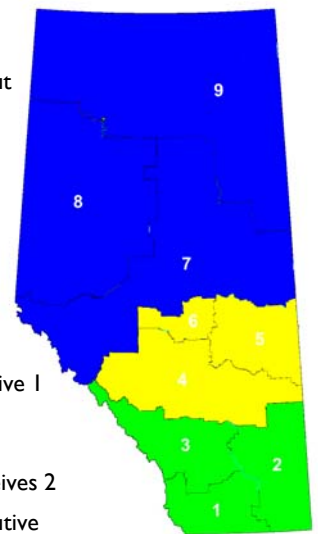
Northern Zone — R7, R8, R9

Central Zone — R4, R5, R6

Southern Zone — R1, R2, R3

Notes:

- Arctic Zone will still receive 1 vote
- Each zone in Alberta receives 2 votes in the Branch Executive



Stress in Public Health Inspection

DOES IT EXIST?

WHAT CAUSES IT?

HOW DO WE HANDLE IT?



Technological, organizational and intellectual change is a 'norm' in today's 21st century society. High-speed internet, regionalization, restructuring, downloading, crisis management, and academic upgrading are continual pressures that press in on today's worker.



In particular, the health care worker is under increasing pressure to deliver higher levels of service with fewer resources. The field of environmental health/public health inspection is not immune to increased demands to deliver more services into the new and expanding environmental health areas and issues.

How does the environmental health practitioner handle these pressures?

Our work lives are full of challenges and pressures that result in negative consequences if they are not handled and managed in an effective manner. These factors can affect efficiency, productivity, and morale within our work place, home and community.

"Burn out", "depression", "substance abuse", "relational breakdowns" and "mental illness" are examples of the fallout that can occur if we don't establish a healthy way to handle them throughout our professional career.

Therefore it would be helpful for public health inspectors/environmental health officers to have a better understanding of the stresses and pressures that are faced in our profession. With this information I further believe we can support and encourage our fellow PHI colleagues.

I have therefore started a project that I hope will shed more light into the topic of stress and stress management in our profession. The goal of this project is to have PHI colleagues identify the stressors we face in our profession and to offer insights on how to positively assess and face these stresses in order to maintain a successful PHI career.

Part of this project is to survey public health inspectors/environmental health officers in the field to gather information related to work stress. Each job/career has its' own unique pressures and stresses, either perceived or real. The best people to assess what we experience, how we deal with stress, and the solutions to a successful PHI career are PHI's/EHO's. I have

developed a questionnaire to gather this information and I am looking for PHI's/EHO's to participate in this questionnaire.

The information used in the questionnaire is STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will only be used to provide general information for the project.

Using information from the questionnaire, literature reviews, and other background resources I will make a presentation called **Body, Mind and Spirit – Tips for a Successful PHI Career** at the upcoming National CIPHI Conference in Edmonton in June 2003.

To participate in this questionnaire please download it from <http://www.ciphi.ab.ca/special/stress>. Once complete, just send it back to me. For those who participate, I would like to *thank you* for your involvement to enhance our professions' understanding of this relevant topic.

If you have any questions or need more clarification on this project please feel free to contact me by telephone at (780)513-7518 or by e-mail at espilche@mhr.ab.ca ♦

— Elmer Spilchen, Public Health Inspector (Mistahia Health Region)



Editor's Note

This study is being undertaken solely by the author. Any conclusions, findings or final reports are not those of the Alberta Branch, its' Executive or its' membership.

ODDS AND ENDS

Noteworthy News from the North

- **Carla Eskow** has been hired for the vacant inspector position in Northern Lights moving from Terrace, BC. Welcome Carla!
- **Mike Melanson** from Mistahia Health Region has returned to New Brunswick.
- **Koreen Westly** will be joining the Grande Prairie office in April to fill the vacancy.
- **Gwen Elliott** (Keeweenok Lakes) has also gone eastward bound to take a position in Newfoundland.
- The Slave Lake and Peace River positions are currently looking to be filled.
- Best wishes to both Mike and Gwen!

Seeking Silent Auction Items

- The 2003 AEC Conference committee is still accepting items for the silent auction. For more information contact **Debra Langier-Blythe** at dlangier@cha.ab.ca.
- Or you can send your donation to directly to:

4219-50 Street
Leduc, Alberta T9E 8C9



UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

May 31, 2003 @ 11:00AM

Capri Centre (3310 Gaetz Avenue)
Red Deer, AB

Please note that lunch will be provided for all members-in-good-standing that attend.

Please ensure any items for discussion are forwarded to your zone councillor or another Branch executive prior to the meeting to ensure inclusion.

Contact **Merry Turtiak, Branch Secretary** if you require more information at 780.513.7521 or email mturtiak@mhr.ab.ca



Annual Education Conference '03

June 23 to 25, 2003

Fantasyland Hotel Conference Centre
Edmonton, AB

Early-bird registration is only \$499!
Consider spending a part of your summer in Edmonton this year to partake in the multitude of activities planned.



Contact **Shauna Dimock** for information at 780.413.7935 or email sdimock@cha.ab.ca

The P.H.I. files



An older sounding woman called to ask if there might be any health concerns with regards to pigeon poop.

The response was there may be some ill effects from inhaling or inadvertently ingesting pathogens that might be present in the poop.

She said, "Thank you, but what I really want to know is, can a Brita® water filter strain out the poison that will be in our drinking water during our the last days on earth, as described in the book of Revelation?"

It suggested she call the Culligan Man or some other water treatment company.

File: #2000-X-345

Agent: #BC501

To file your story with the *PHI files*, contact the Assistant Director of Editing and you will be given further instructions.

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alberta branch news

alberta branch news is published quarterly by the Communications Committee of the Alberta Branch to provide current information on the many activities of the Alberta Branch. The newsletter is distributed to members and friends of the Alberta Branch.

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alberta branch news

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<i>Contributors</i>	B Craig, V Mah, S Parker, E Spilchen, T Thepsouvanh

IS THAT RIGHT?

Barbeque Fumes Adding To Haze

By Reuters

HOUSTON, TX — Texans like to say that they live and breathe barbecue—which may be one of the reasons why the air is so bad in Houston, the state's so-called barbecue capital.

According to a study from scientists at Rice University in the city, microscopic bits of polyunsaturated fatty acids released into the atmosphere from cooking meat on backyard barbecues are helping to foul the air in Houston.

The city at times registers levels that rank it as one of the more polluted U.S. urban areas in terms of air quality.

Matthew Fraser, an assistant professor in civil and environmental engineering at Rice who led the study, said he was measuring eight different sources of organic particulate matter in the atmosphere, coming from items such as burning gasoline.

"Meat turned out to be a somewhat important source of the atmospheric

fine particles in the urban area in Houston," Fraser said.

Fraser said the percentage of particles in the atmosphere from cooking meat as a part of the overall level of airborne pollutants was in the single digits.

He added fine particles, such as those that come from cooking meat, are a health concern because they can penetrate deep into the lungs and lead to respiratory and heart problems.

The report is expected to be published next month in an academic periodical. The team at Rice conducted its survey of Houston air over a one-year period between 1997 and 1998.

"I think that a lot of American cities would have the same problem," Fraser said.

"Houston does have a reputation for being the barbecue capital of Texas. It is certainly possible that the problem of fine particles from cooking meat is more important here than other cities," he said. ♦