



# ATMOSPHERIC ENVIRONMENT SERVICE NEWSLETTER

June-July 1992

## Alternatives to 9 to 5

*A recent study of private and public sector employees indicated nearly 40% of public servants surveyed experience high levels of stress at work and problems juggling work and family responsibilities. A whopping 70% wanted an end to the traditional nine-to-five work day in order to meet growing family commitments. Some public servants have taken matters into their own hands. Here are the stories of some AES people who have found a new way to work.*

### Work sharing

From January to July, Atlantic Region maintenance officer **Herman Fisher** maintains buildings and equipment on Sable Island. For the rest of the year, he returns to his mainland Nova Scotia home. He likes his work but not year-round isolation. So in 1989 he started job sharing, splitting year-round maintenance duties on the island. Herman proposes technical staff spend half the year in a populated centre and half in isolation, saving the Department money in decreased turnover and training costs. "In isolated places, if you spend more than two or three years, you get bushed. This way, you can hang in a lot longer and not be as tired. This system works really well for me."

In Edmonton, human resources officer **Pat Kleinmeyer** job-shares with

university student and fellow officer **Kim McCarthy**. Pat works four days and Kim works one day a week to underwrite her education. Pat spends the day off with her daughter, doing errands or refinishing furniture. Her pay and benefits are reduced but Pat enjoys sharing her job with someone who's worked in the department before. "Because Kim is 100% familiar with the organization, positions and people, it's a smooth transition. It's worked out well for both of us and our managers are happy, too."

### Part-time work

**Yvonne Bilan-Wallace** is a supervisor at ARWC in Edmonton. Every five weeks she works half of the normal 187 hours in rotating shifts. She has worked this way since the birth of her second child in spring 1991. She explained she wanted more time with her family but also enjoyed forecasting. Reduced working hours gives Yvonne and her two children the time to ride her quarter horse Chad. "He's my psychiatrist's couch, my form of relaxation," says Yvonne. She admits to experiencing some profes-

sional setbacks, but she wouldn't change a thing. "I feel very fortunate that my managers gave part-time work, in an operational environment, a chance. By giving me this opportunity we both win."

### Shorter work day

What a difference an hour makes, Western Region communications officer **Gloria Trimble** might tell you. Since last fall, Gloria's work day is one hour shorter than normal (6.5 hours). That extra chunk of time makes mornings with two school age children less frantic. "Usually, we're rushing here,



Yvonne Bilan-Wallace and son Adam with horse Chad.



Environment Canada

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CANADA'S GREEN PLAN



Service through science



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Patricia Kleinmeyer and Kim McCarthy of Western Region.

rushing there. Now, I don't feel I have to hurry as much." Gloria also adapts her work schedule to fit in evening courses for an advertising and public relations diploma. She enjoys the arrangement but stresses that it's "for my family."

### **Compressed work hours**

Sande Cole, a finance clerk in Pacific Region, has a compressed work schedule of seven 8.5 hour days with one eight and one seven hour day. By doing this, she can take every other Monday off. She uses the day off to study for a business degree. Sande says having some long days at work helps. "In finance, you get some really busy days and can use the extra time. Managers should encourage new arrangements,

## **Compliments from the minister**

In life and work, often the bricks outweigh the bouquets. So when we're recognized and praised, it's worth noting. At a recent Energy, Mines and Resources Standing Committee meeting, Minister Charest commended the work of Environment Canada employees in a heartfelt, unscripted address. To let you revel in well-deserved praise, the following are the Minister's remarks:

"I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the officials who were kind enough to be with us today, and to reiterate to you what I've said to other

she says. "In the spirit of PS 2000, you've got to trust your employees and they'll respect you for it. If anybody's given the chance to do this sort of thing, they're not going to abuse it, believe me. I couldn't be happier and I'd be really distressed if it got taken away."

On the other coast, **Ken Reynolds**, Atlantic Region supervisor of electronic equipment is often on the road during the summer,

fixing, maintaining and installing equipment. When he's back at the office, his workday is compressed. "I work 7:30 to 5:20 with a half-hour lunch. This enables me to put five days work into four days. Every Monday, Ken stays home working in his garden, tinkering with electronics or goofing off. "If I want to be totally indulgent and read in bed till 10 a.m., I can do it." His wife envies his day off and he's a happy employee. "I'm more productive if I work fairly intensely for a lengthy period of time...it's to the Department's advantage and to mine."

### **Telecommuting**

Telecommuting is becoming popular because it increases productivity, makes workers happier and benefits the

environment. In an innovative pilot project, one Ottawa DGMetOc computer systems analyst works regular hours from Monday to Wednesday. For 3.75 hours on Thursdays and Fridays, a PC with a FAX card links **Mary Alice Glasgow** to the office. Her work with computers can be done while she stays at home with daughter Jillian. "I'm more productive at home," indicates Mary Alice "because the phone isn't ringing all the time, people aren't dropping by." She says "Even though there's a drop in pay, it's worth it." The project will be re-evaluated in July but Lou Ranahan, Director, Military Weather Services, one of the managers involved, indicates it's going well. He suggests however, this type of work may be more suitable for those whose jobs do not require face-to-face contact or people management.

There are many options for helping to strike a better balance between professional and personal lives. AES Director of Human Resources Avo Lepp suggests those wanting a change should "look at each arrangement, think about all the implications, then discuss it with your manager and with Human Resources. If it won't affect operations and will make employees happier, they should have a really good reason before they turn it down."

can certainly assure you that had it not been for their good work over the last few years, Canada would not be in the good position we are in today, I think, in dealing with environmental issues."

Thanks...we needed that!



## Frankly speaking



Frank Letchford of CORE Western Region

Many people think about stepping away from their career path to blaze a completely different job trail. Some brave souls actually take the plunge, among them Western Region's Frank Letchford. For almost a year, Frank has been working for the Department's

CORE (Committee of Regional Executives) Secretariat, primarily on Green Plan coordination, in Western and Northern Region. Here's his story:

"My background is in operational forecasting, where I have spent about twenty years, the last five or so as a shift supervisor. I must admit to some trepidation upon accepting the assignment, as I had only a vague knowledge of CORE and, at best, a cursory knowledge of the Green Plan. I have been on a steep learning curve ever since.

I have learned more about our Department in the past few months than I had in the previous twenty years...that we have a Science Advisor, how Corporate Policy Group fits into the scheme of things. I also learned that "matrix management" meant I had too many bosses! I have had the opportunity to work with people from C&P and Parks as well as AES and have also been exposed to people from a variety of other government departments.

There haven't been many dull days in the last few months. No day is predictable, which can be very frustrating when you have a priority list which gets tossed out the window before the day is an hour old because of a sudden crisis. Now, I'm never quite sure how my day will be spent until the day is over. Typically, I might find myself answering queries from another government department, drafting a response to a letter from a concerned environmentalist...or making a presentation to AMC!

To the question, "Given the experiences of the past few months, would I apply for the assignment again?" my answer is an honest "yes." There have been days when I miss the familiarity of my previous duties but there have been just as many days when I find this assignment really invigorating. With CORE, I never know what adventures a new day will bring."

## AES celebrates Environment Week

As usual, AES employees across this great land swung into action for Environment Week. We don't have the space to talk about all the activities but the following serves as a good sample of the cross-country events.

On June 7th, boats cruised along the South Arm of B.C.'s Fraser River. On board were Pacific Region staff from all departments including AES, giving environmentally-related talks.

In southern Alberta, posters, banners and public service announcements promoted the week on local media outlets and Weatheradio. Banff's W04 held an open house. In Norman Wells, N.W.T., the weather station, public library, town hall and airport showcased Environment Week displays.

In Central Region, Winnipeg staff planned a picnic while in Regina, staff proudly showed off their delightful "Weather Wits" computer game during the W04 open house.



In various locations, Ontario Region sponsored an environmental phone-in

quiz with prizes of tiny tree seedlings complete with planting instructions. The Children's Environmental Festival in Hull attracted a crowd of enthusiastic youngsters.

In a special campaign, Quebec Region promoted AES and Environment Week with an intensive series of weather bulletins and environmental public service announcements on Radio-Canada and other networks.

And in Atlantic Region, TV weather broadcasts featured eye-catching Environment Week banners. Atlantic weather offices also offered tours or open houses during the week.

Good work, AES!

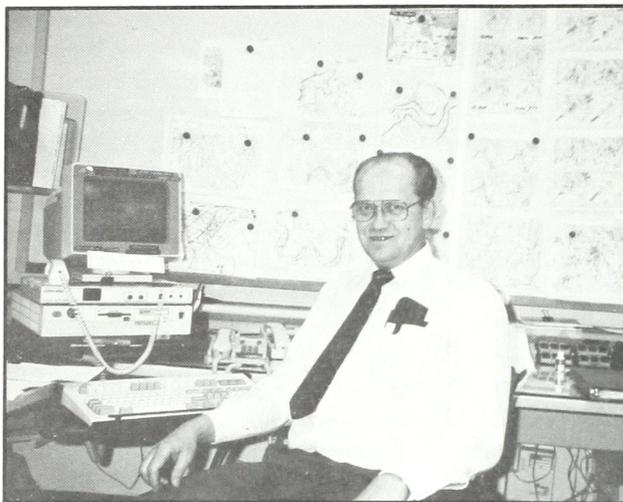
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## Programming prowess

It seems Richard Desjardins (Feb-March 1992) is not the only inventive computer hobbyist around AES. Elwyn

Holmberg, an EG from the Lethbridge, Alberta WO4, has also put together some time-saving computer programs.



*Elwyn Holmberg at the Lethbridge Weather Office.*

After teaching himself PASCAL computer language and buying software at his own expense, Elwyn spent an incredible 800 hours of his own time creating five new labour-saving computer programs. These programs archive daily and hourly climate data, as well as totals and means for the monthly climate report. One program prints out the

monthly climate message, another prints out a modified 2320 form that can be used to check the entries on the official 2320. Quality control is ensured with an error-checking program. The system saves one to two hours of tedious daily work and two hours or so at month's end. Time saved and fewer mistakes mean more effective use of computer and data entry time and a more efficient office. Lethbridge OIC Ron Harrison notes "Elwyn displayed considerable initiative and self-motivation in coming up with the idea. I think the region is better off for it."

Lethbridge WO4 has used the programs successfully for two and a half years and both the Edmonton Airport and the Municipal WO4 have been brought on board in the last six months. If you'd like more details, call Lethbridge at (403) 382-3185.

## Wacky weather inquiries

Recently, we asked you to send the weirdest requests for information you've ever received. Your response shows that AES employees love a challenge and can act, unofficially, as silviculturists, travel consultants or philanthropists.

Bill Hogg (CCAD/D) has managed to satisfy some notoriously tough customers, including the latex paint developer who wanted B.C. and Alberta dewpoints for paint drying time. He also heard from the ornithologist who wanted to know if archived digital weather radar data would help him determine the route of duck and geese flyways in eastern Canada.

Keith Perry (Vancouver WO4) had to field "What's the price of gold?" and "Can you tell me what time the B.C. Ferry leaves for Victoria?"

An anonymous correspondent tells about the gentleman who complained

his neighbour's toxic chemicals prevented him from doing his work. Apparently, he consulted the phone book and figured "Atmospheric Environment Service" could help.

Ron Houghton (WO4, Sault Ste. Marie) worked at the White River WO4 in the early 60s, a time when the northern Ontario town billed itself as "The Coldest Spot in Canada." Ron got a letter from a southern California teacher who asked "Do you have trees in White River?" And, "If you do, do the leaves come out on the trees or is it too cold?" An honest request from the Golden State!

Next, a question with a philosophical bent. While working at the Arctic Weather Centre, Pierre Tourigny (AWPP) received this brain-teaser, "Could you tell me if north is up or down?" Pierre was glad his phone had

a hold button that day because this sent him into laughing fits. A friend of Pierre's responded this way: North is "down" because the North Pole, the most northerly spot on earth, is at sea level. That's one to ponder!



Of course, our friends at CCC deal with some eccentric requests, kindly sent along by David Phillips. There was the gentleman who paid considerable money for upper-air data to bolster his contention that UFO's occurred over Montreal on November 7, 1990. Another person was convinced that relative humidity correlated well with winning lottery numbers. A baseball fan wanted to check whether air pressure affected the performance of certain relief pitchers. And last, but certainly not least, an inventor asked for detailed weather information for possible Lake Ontario test sites of "walk-on-water" shoes.

What ever will they think of next?

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## News from the green scene

Once again, AES employees are on the cutting edge of environmentally friendly living. A "green" baby shower was held in Downsview for Joan LeRoux of CCC. We would like to congratulate Marg Statsyshyn, Lou-Ann Hotz and Lorraine Kiely on their use of baby blankets instead of wrapping paper. What a great idea!

And, still on the green beat, there are two food innovations you may have missed. First, Heinz introduced "Enviro-getti," a canned product featuring "six unique environmental pasta shapes in a delicious tomato sauce." Among the natural shapes are trees, elephants, eagles and whales. The container is recyclable and the labels are printed with vegetable-based inks. We don't know what the stuff tastes like but a little increased awareness with your noodles can't hurt.

The threat of: "Johnny, Mary, if you don't eat your plate, you won't get any dessert!" may take on a new meaning in the future. Universal Technologies of Scarborough have invented edible cups, plates and other containers made from grains and starch. Yes, they taste bland but are as well-insulated and tough as polystyrene. The only drawback is you can't keep liquids in the cups for more than eight hours or you will have a

## It's in the bag

One of the most popular midday activities in downtown Winnipeg this spring was Environment Canada's Lunch Bag Theatre. Presentations on topics such as weather folklore, tornadoes and ozone depletion attracted crowds of over 100 to Winnipeg's Centennial Library Auditorium. Interest in AES Central Region's ozone talk was so great, an encore presentation was held for another 350.

The noon hour series, developed by Nancy Hnatiuk CD Winnipeg, has provided an entertaining and informative look at topical Environment Canada issues and has

mushy cup of coffee. Taste-tempting tableware could mean less garbage for dumps, less surplus grains wasted. Our meals and snacks could be revolutionized. But there's one nagging question - are these dishes dishwasher and micro-wave-safe?

If your house is cluttered with empty plastic soft drink bottles and you need a new rug, there's a new product that may take care of both problems. Using a revolutionary process, Pelo Plastique of Berthierville, Quebec has turned more than 100 million plastic bottles into high-fashion carpeting in the last 18 months. Instead of overloading landfills, plastic bottles are reduced into tiny resin flakes which are sent on to a U.S. manufacturer. There the flakes are converted into a honey-like liquid which is processed into yarn as fine as human hair, and then, made into carpet. "The feel and texture of Enviro-Tech carpeting is the same as any other carpet on the market," says Mike Miserany, general sales manager of Morency, the Montreal company which recently introduced the carpeting to Canada.

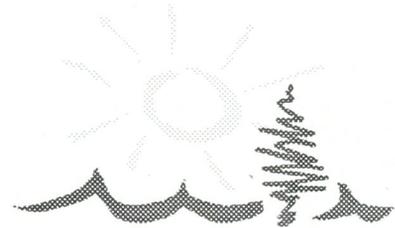
According to manufacturers, it's highly crush-resistant, fadeproof, stain and soil-resistant and durable. The carpet comes in five styles and 128 colours. Is green one of those colours, by any chance?

given the public a great chance to meet and ask questions of departmental staff. The monthly lectures have attracted a broad audience. Young mothers with infants sat with students and educators, business professionals, downtown shoppers, and seniors. In hiatus for the summer, the successful sessions will return to Central Region this fall.

## AES and the Green Plan

### May 27, 1992 - UV Advisory -

DOE and Health and Welfare Canada today launched a new service to provide information to help Canadians make informed decisions about the amount of time they spend in the sun. The UV (Ultraviolet) Advisory Program — the first of its kind in the world — was unveiled by Environment Minister Jean Charest in Montreal. The program's main component is a daily UV index which points to the expected UV strength under clear sky conditions. The index is based on a scale from 0 to 10. Ten reflects the typical intensity of UV on a clear summer day in the tropics. The index, combined with sun awareness and health messages, is to be provided daily by all WO4s.



*John Parker of Central Region speaks about tornadoes.*

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## The Earth Summit

Rio De Janeiro was the location for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development from June 1 to 12, 1992. With some 6000 participants including non-governmental organizations, media representatives and more than 100 heads of government including Canada's Prime Minister, this Conference was called the Earth Summit.

## On the move...

### Assignment

**Adamson, B.** from A/RDG Ontario to Assoc. AWDG  
**Bailey, R.** to PC Edmonton  
**Benjamin, M.** to MT St. Laurent  
**Bourque, D.** from APEC to ARDG  
**Carbone, R.** from Data Proc. to Shift Super. CMC  
**Charette, C.** from EG Quebec to Winnipeg  
**Collavecchia, T.** from Head AAFP to PAED  
**Cutler, N.** to A/RDG AES Ontario  
**Draper, N.** to A/ Weather Serv. Mgr. Vernon  
**Evans, C.** to A/Met. Insp. AES Vancouver  
**Hagan-Deschamps, S.** to SSD Clim. Serv. Bedford  
**Hopkins, C.** to CS CMC  
**House, D.** to A/Wx. Spec. Kelowna WO4  
**Kannel, V.** from Data Proc. to Shift Super. CMC  
**Lacate, R.** to A/Wx. Serv. Spec. LM WO4  
**Leblanc, H.** from Data Proc. to Tape Lib. CMC  
**Macdonald, K.** from ODIT MT to Proj. Coord. Bedford  
**Massey, D.** to Data Proc. CMC  
**McDonald, K.** to PC Edmonton  
**Mercier, C.** to CS CMC  
**Milani, S.** to CS CMC  
**Miller, S.** from MT MWC Bedford to ODIT MT MWC Bedford  
**Monroe, C.** to CS CMC  
**Okabe, I.** to MT PWC Vancouver  
**Petrin, F.** to CS CMC  
**Pottier, J.** to MT PWC Vancouver  
**Rafai, A.** to CS CMC

On the agenda were issues such as climate change, ozone depletion and transboundary air pollution, as well as forest management, desertification and soil loss. Water-related issues included marine pollution.

The focus of the Summit was on the critical relationship between the environmental health and economic development of the planet. In the past, development and

environment issues were dealt with separately; the Earth Summit considered them interdependently. Leaders at the Summit attempted to map a course for global sustainable development. They looked at ways of managing resources to produce both a strong economy and a healthy environment not only for today's needs, but also for those of future generations.

Look for more coverage next issue.

**Regan, M.** from TCTI Cornwall to Trans. Team  
**Richards, W.** to CS CMC  
**Sasaki, G.** to A/Wx. Spec. Ft. Nelson WO4  
**Schmiedel, A.** to A/Wx. Spec. Kelowna WO4  
**Sénécal, B.** from EG Chibougamau to Tech. Clim. Serv. St. Laurent  
**Sorya, P.** to CS CMC  
**Stevens, M.** to A/Wx. Serv. Spec. LM WO4, Pacific  
**Taylor, D.** to A/Wx. Serv. Spec. LM WO4, Pacific  
**Torgerson, M.** to A/Wx. Stn. Mgr. Cape St. James WS3  
**Wilkinson, H.** to A/Wx. Stn. Mgr. Revelstoke WS3

### Departure

**Burrows, J.** from Vancouver Int'l  
**Gravel, M.** from CS CMC to Veterans Affairs  
**Hill, D.** from Training Off. AHRS to Resource Off. PSC Toronto  
**Hollingshead, B.** from AHRD to private sector  
**Horwood, G.** from DD Edmonton  
**Kneller, L.** from CR Edmonton  
**Lauze, G.** from Staff Rel. Off. AHRD to Class. Off. C&P Ottawa  
**MacNaughton, M.** from CM Edmonton

### Promotion

**Baker, I.** to EG AES Edmonton  
**Benoit, R.** to Scien. Researcher CMC  
**Calvez, M.** to EG Weather Services  
**Chan, E.** to CS AES Edmonton  
**Côté, J.** to Scien. Researcher CMC  
**Drummond, I.** from Fin. Clerk to Purch. Off. Winnipeg  
**Erfani, A.** to EG Winnipeg

**Faust, D.** to EG Winnipeg  
**Finnigan, G.** from Purch. Off. to Head, Mat. Mgmt. Winnipeg  
**Gauthier, G.** from Wx. Obs. Gander to EG Sable Island  
**Mravnik, J.** from Surf. Insp. to Supt. Sask. Insp. Office Saskatoon  
**Nayet, C.** from Surf. Wx. Obs. to EG Winnipeg  
**Ritchie, H.** to Scien. Researcher CMC  
**Rouleau, J.** from Surf. Wx. Obs. to EG Winnipeg

### Transfer

**St. Pierre, R.** from MT MWC Bedford to SSD MT Bedford  
**Wartman, D.** from MT MWC Bedford to SSD MT Fredericton

### Retirement

**Reimer, D.** from OIC Vancouver

### Passings

**Carpick, J.** formerly Central Region  
**Marshall, S.** Patterson Medal winner

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