

## FOOD SAFETY IN SRI LANKA

John Gibb has just returned from Sri Lanka (the former Ceylon, located just off the south eastern coast of India) after having completed his first CESO assignment there. John was asked to go over and assist a hotel which had been damaged by the 2004 tsunami get back on its feet in order to become more attractive to package tour operators.

The project involved setting up a basic food safety training program for hotel staff, some of whom had only a “few” years of schooling a most spoke only Sinhalese. John put this training together and with the help of the hotel owner translating, walked the staff, sometimes one by one, through the basic principles. “it was great fun working with staff in a foreign language, around their various shift schedules, days off, local holidays, cycles of the moon and my twelve and a half hour jet lag!” said John.

As the Board of Directors were very keen to market their facility to tour operators who are increasingly requiring hotels to have HACCP

*...Continued on page 10*

*Below: John and translator*



### Highlights...

<b>Bill Leith Endowment</b>	<b>p. 2</b>	<b>Christmas Luncheons</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<b>Public Health Act Re-write</b>	<b>p. 4</b>	<b>Membership Updates</b>	<b>p. 12</b>
<b>BC Branch Executive Members</b>	<b>p. 6</b>	<b>Memorium: Robin Gear</b>	<b>p. 13</b>
<b>EPHW Proclamation 2008</b>	<b>p. 8</b>	<b>Remember When &amp; Who?</b>	<b>p. 14</b>

## Message from the Editor



Happy 2008! Every year seems to go by faster and faster. 2007 was no exception, and throughout the last 12 months great steps were taken in the name of public health whether they be big or small accomplishments. Showing that you care about our profession doesn't necessarily

mean you have to start with big undertakings. It can be as simple as offering your spare time like the many volunteers did to help put together the successful 73<sup>rd</sup> national conference in Kelowna.

Although we have just wrapped up Environmental Public Health Week (January 14-20, 2008), there's nothing to stop us from spreading the word of our great profession all the time. On top of that, public health is not just in our back yard as it is getting more and more attention world wide, especially with announcements like the UN General Assembly declaring 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation. John Gibb took his expertise to the other side of the globe to assist with implementing food safety in Sri Lanka (front page). You can read all about John's enthusiasm and love of our profession in his adventure in Sri Lanka.

With all the positives, sometimes there are the negatives. With heavy hearts, last year we said goodbye to a fellow colleague and friend Robin Gear who passed away in late November. You can read about Robin's devoted and dedicated life in public health on page 14.

Lastly, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, and let's keep spreading the word about public health and continue to keep our profession at centre stage.

Respectfully  
Alex Kwan - Editor

## NEW AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

**The Bill Leith Endowment** was established at BCIT by William D. Leith in December 2006. The annual interest provides an award to recognize the academic and all-round achievements of a graduate from the Environmental Health - Public Health Inspection, full-time Bachelor of Technology program, who is deemed by faculty to be the **"most promising public health inspector."** The first award will be presented at the BCIT award ceremony in June 2008.

Bill has supported BCIT's Environmental Health - Public Health Inspection program for over ten years, which has resulted in many students receiving recognition and funding for their achievements within the program.

The Environmental Health - Public Health Inspection program at BCIT prepares graduates with the expanded knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to meet the current and evolving needs of employers, the profession, and the community; fosters in graduates a commitment to life-long learning and professional growth; and provides an appropriate combination of specialty, research and multi-disciplinary courses that will promote the development of critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and communication skills.

Bill Leith commenced his career as a Public Health Inspector with the City of Vancouver Health Department in 1950 and retired after 35 years service from the Position of Deputy Chief Inspector. He has been a long time and active member of the BC Branch, CIPHI and a strong supporter of the Environmental Health - Public Health Inspection program since its inception at BCIT back in the mid 60s. Bill has held numerous offices on the BC Branch executive for nearly two decades and currently continues his participation in Institute affairs as an Auditor for the Environmental Health Foundation of Canada. In 2000 Bill was awarded **Honorary Membership** in the BC Branch for his significant contribution to the Institute and his support for students and graduates of this program.

Our heartiest thanks to Bill for the new endowment he has established at BCIT and his significant contribution to the profession.

**BRANCH UPDATE**

With the new year well under way, I would like to reflect on some of the recent accomplishments in 2007. Firstly, congratulations to all of the students who successfully completed the Board of Certification requirements this past fall. All of your hard work has finally paid off and I wish you good luck with your future endeavours. Secondly, the BC Branch organized a very successful Christmas luncheon in December 2007. These events are a great opportunity to meet new members and for old colleagues to reacquaint themselves.

As you are aware, Environmental Public Health Week (EPHW) recently took place during the third week of January. EPHW was established in 2003 by the National Executive Council to promote the field of Environmental Public Health and to recognize all of the hard work that Environmental Public Health Professionals carry out on a daily basis. It proves to be an excellent opportunity to promote our profession and educate the public as to the services we provide. Although EPHW is officially only one week of the year, we should all take the time to advocate for our profession and celebrate all of our accomplishments throughout the upcoming year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members who volunteered their valuable time to make this week a success.

Looking ahead, the 74<sup>th</sup> CIPHI National Education Conference will be held in Newfoundland, July 2008 and the BC Branch will be hosting their annual educational conference in Richmond this fall. Planning is well under way for both of these conferences and I'm sure each will prove to be very educational and beneficial to all attendees.

As you can see 2008 will be another exciting year and I hope it will be a prosperous one for all!

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Parhar  
Vice President, BC Branch





**Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors  
L'Institut canadien des inspecteurs en santé publique**

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Dr. Brian P. Emerson  
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Dear Dr. Emerson,

Please accept this letter as the British Columbia Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors' response to the "Conversation on Health" with respect to the Consultation Public Health Act – Version 2. We wish to express our gratitude for your recognition of our association as a stakeholder in this process, as we believe our members contribute significantly to the health and well being of all British Columbians. Through the Public Health Act our members have been able to provide key preventative health intervention services and taken measures that have resulted in substantial positive impacts in British Columbian communities and, at times, reached significance at national and international levels.

The new Public Health Act has recognized several key provisions contained in the former PHA regarding matters of relevance to our members such as: powers and duties; health hazard inspection and abatement; regulation of activities which may cause health hazards; and communicable disease control. We concur with the importance of acknowledging and retaining these significant provisions, and enthusiastically welcome new provisions concerning: mandated public health promotion planning; broadening of health assessment and surveillance; and clarification of public health emergency provisions. The new initiatives recognize the fluidity and pace of socio-cultural, ecological and epidemiological change, and are well served to lead future public health initiatives. In addressing evolving public health issues, ensuring consistency between the MHO's and the PHO is desirable in ensuring a consistently effective response.

With respect to improving aboriginal health our organization welcomes challenges that may present themselves in achieving this goal. We believe that all persons in British Columbia should be able to have good health and good quality of life. Our organization has professional recognition both nationally and internationally, and we have members that have historically, and presently provide effective public health services within aboriginal communities.

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**Health Protection: Cornerstone of Public Health  
Promotion et Protection de la Santé: Fondement de la Santé Publique**



Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors  
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Since our national organization has embarked upon and is committed to professional accreditation, we will be in a position to ensure continued provision of qualified professionals through our certified members. We consider education and advocacy as key principles and so welcome the opportunity to provide further information on our professional accreditation initiative, with respect to the proposed mechanism in the PHA for the Minister to regulate our profession. We believe that our national level professional accreditation will meet or exceed the Minister's expectations and thereby allow our organization to be self governing, as is with other professional bodies operating within British Columbia.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the review of the BC Public Health Act Renewal. It is comforting to see that the proposed Act maintains the roles for Environmental Health Officers and expands the scope to be dynamic with the changing health challenges that lie ahead, including the important role we can play in health promotion activities. We look forward to continued involvement in this process of Renewal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jasmina Egeler".

Jasmina Egeler, B.Tech., CPHI(C)  
President, BC Branch  
CIPHI

Health Protection: Cornerstone of Public Health  
Promotion et Protection de la Santé: Fondement de la Santé Publique

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***Introducing ...  
Members of the 2007/2008 BC Branch Executive***



**Steve Chong (Past President)**

Steve graduated in 1991 with a business degree from Simon Fraser University. After spending some time with Revenue Canada, he quickly realized that tax accounting was not his calling and entered the Environmental Health Program at BCIT. He currently manages the Health Protection Program for Richmond Health Services, and has been in Richmond since graduating from BCIT in 1993. In his spare time, Steve enjoys spending time with his very active 2 year old son.

**Gary Tam (Correspondence Secretary)**

Gary has been working as an EHO for almost three years. After graduating from the Environmental Health program at BCIT in 2004, he worked in a town called High Level in Alberta, which only had a population of 4000 people! Not only was he introduced to a “new” fashion trend in a small country town, but Gary also increased the Chinese population from eight to nine people in the community. In 2006, Gary returned to Greater Vancouver and has been working in the Richmond office of VCH. Gary is actively involved with the BC Branch, and takes pride in helping to make the recent National Educational Conference in Kelowna a tremendous success.



**Barbara Haworth (Councilor)**

Barbara graduated from Royal Roads University in 1998 with a Bachelors Degree in Environmental Science. She later went on to BCIT and completed the Environmental Health Program in 2005. Barbara currently works for the Fraser Health Authority in the Drinking Water Program in the Abbotsford office. Currently she lives in Chilliwack and during her leisure time Barbara enjoys tennis, hiking, in-line skating, and reading.



### **Ashleen Nadan (Councilor)**

Ashleen graduated from SFU in 1997 with a B.Sc. (Majored in Biology). Shortly after, she enrolled in the Environmental Health Program at BCIT and completed her B. Tech. in 2000. She has been working in the field for 7 years now with the Fraser Health Authority and is based in the Surrey office. Ashleen lives in New Westminster and some of her hobbies include photography, salsa dancing and traveling. She tries to visit at least one new place each year. The place of choice this year was New York, and it was an exciting experience, to say the least. Ashleen says she hopes to continue gallivanting around the globe for years to come!

### **Shannon Roberts (Councilor)**

Shannon completed the Environmental Health program at BCIT in 2006 and started working for Vancouver Coast Health shortly after. Currently she works for Health Canada in the Workplace Health and Public Safety Program. She also has a Diploma of Technology in Occupational Health and Safety from BCIT.



### **Jennifer Flaten (Councilor)**

Jennifer was born and raised in Port Moody, BC. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry in 1998. A few years later, she attended BCIT where she entered the Environmental Health program.

After BCIT, Jennifer gained a contract position with Vancouver Coastal Health in 2003 and started her career in public health by picking up dead crows and searching for mosquito larvae within the city's catch basins! After certification, she was hired full time and for the most part, has given up the hunt for dead corvids.

In her spare time, Jennifer can be found kicking and punching willing participants at her kickboxing gym, spending time with her significant other and socializing with friends.






Lieutenant Governor

**Canada**  
**Province of British Columbia**  
**A Proclamation**

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom,  
 Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the  
 Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

**To all to whom these presents shall come – Greeting**

WHEREAS the members of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) declared that the first full week of every January, Monday to Sunday, be celebrated as "Environmental Public Health Week", and

WHEREAS Environmental Public Health Week recognizes the dedication and work of Environmental Public Health Professionals, such as Certified Public Health Inspectors and Certified Environmental Health Officers, and

WHEREAS Environmental Public Health Week heightens the visibility of Environmental Public Health Professionals to both the general public and public/private sector partners, and

WHEREAS the core services provided by Environmental Public Health Professionals are essential elements in building a healthy population, including food safety and hygiene, water quality (drinking and recreational), air quality (indoor and outdoor), community sanitation and environmental health, and emergency management, and

WHEREAS Our Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, has been pleased to enact Order in Council 903 on October 11, 2002;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that January 14 to 20, 2008, inclusive, shall be known as

**"Environmental Public Health Week"**

in the Province of British Columbia.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS The Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this eighth day of January, two thousand eight and in the fifty-sixth year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND.



ATTORNEY GENERAL  
 AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MULTICULTURALISM





CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTORS

**PROUDLY ANNOUNCES**

# **ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK**

**January 14 - 20, 2008**

Environmental Public Health Week recognizes the hard work of all Environmental Public Health Professionals across Canada and the importance of environmental public health programs in our healthcare system.

We are dedicated professionals who are committed to promoting and protecting public health and continually meeting the new challenges from our environment that can affect human health.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS PROVIDE SERVICES IN**

Food Safety • Drinking Water Quality  
Rental Housing Conditions • Recreational Water Quality  
Personal Services Facilities • Childcare & Institutional Facilities  
Air Quality • Tobacco Reduction  
Outbreak Management • Injury Prevention  
Onsite Sewage Disposal Assessments • Landuse Management  
Infection Control & Communicable Disease Consultation

*"Protecting the Health of Canadians"*



To learn more about our profession, our organization and career opportunities in the field, contact your local health office and visit us on the web at [www.ciphi.ca](http://www.ciphi.ca)

# Food Safety in Sri Lanka (continued from page 1)

certification, John developed his soon to be famous HACCP 101 course for senior and middle management. This training received rave reviews from management who will spend the next several months implementing the agreed to work plan by training their staff on the standard operating procedures and having these materials translated into Sinhalese.

The tea industry, for which Sri Lanka is a leader, is moving towards requiring manufactures to meet HACCP standards. John had the opportunity to stay on a tea plantation and to tour a tea processing plant where his “thoughts” were requested. “After working with a hotel’s food services and all of it’s “menu items” (there must be at least a million recipes for curry), setting up a HACCP system for a tea factory would be a cup of tea, no pun intended, once you figure out a way to keep the birds out and to get everyone to remove their shoes” John opined.

CESO stands for the Canadian Executive Service Organization, which is made up of over three thousand Canadian volunteers from every imaginable background, and now even includes an Environmental Health Officer.



Above: Handwashing sign in Sinhala

Left: John and his class

## John Gibb (continued from previous page)

A Brief Environmental Health Bio for John Gibb: After graduating from Ryerson in 1966, John worked in Sarnia and Kincardine, Ontario, in British Columbia for the Ministry of Health in Kimberley, Terrace, Burnaby on a one year teaching secondment to BCIT, Coquitlam and in various positions at headquarters in Victoria including Community Care Facilities Licensing, New Directions and as Manager, Office for Injury Prevention. Since taking early “retirement” in 2000, John has worked steadily on environmental health contracts with international, national, and local agencies including two years in The Bahamas with the World Health Organization, Health Canada’s Workplace Health and First Nations and Inuit Health branches, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Camosun College’s BC Foodsafe Secretariat.

*Below: Photo of John (front row third from the left, in case you were wondering) with his class at a certificate presentation ceremony*



### YEAR OF SANITATION 2008

The UN General Assembly declared this year the International Year of Sanitation. Check out this link for more details: <http://esa.un.org/iys/>

## Greater Vancouver Christmas Luncheon

This year's event was held at the Firefighters' Club in Burnaby on December 5, 2007. There was a pretty good turn-out. There were a number of prizes and awards handed out as well. Chris Miki won the 50/50 draw, Ross Adamson won a \$100 gift certificate from the early bird membership renewal contest, Nick Potter & Shelly Bourdet both won gift certificates, and Kuljeet Chattha, Kimiko Banata, & Barbara Alvarez all won books written by Dr. Blatherwick. Many thanks to the organizing committee for putting together another great luncheon.



## Kelowna Christmas Luncheon

There were 14 PHIs and EHOs at the Kelowna Christmas luncheon at Kelsey's Restaurant on December 13, 2007. Likely more would have been in attendance but the BCGEU retirement Christmas lunch was held at the same time. Liz Nelson was the winner of the raffle of a bottle of Jackson Triggs Silver Medal wine. Thanks to Greg Baytalan for organizing the event.



## Victoria Christmas Luncheon

A very successful Christmas Luncheon was held again at the 5th Street Bar & Grill in Victoria on December 12, 2007. Over 25 attended including staff from VIHA, the Canadian Forces and several retirees. The food was great and so were the stories. James Whalen was the winner of the 50/50 draw. Other prizes were also awarded to lucky attendees. Many thanks to all who attended, their employers and the organizers.



# BC BRANCH UPDATES

Members of the BC Branch send best wishes to retired PHI **Bill Hines** for a speedy recovery from his recent major surgery. Bill is now back home after a stay at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. We're sure Bill would appreciate hearing from his friends and colleagues when you have a moment.

Tim Roark, Associate Editor

The **BCIT Awards Ceremony** was held on November 7, 2007. Two Environmental Health students were recipients of awards.



Left: Erin Yehia is pictured receiving the Bob Herbison Award from Lis Vallaster on behalf of the BC Branch, Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. Congratulations Erin.

Below: Kathleen Martin is pictured receiving the Joe and Gladys Woolsey Memorial Achievement Award in Environmental Health from Lorraine Woolsey. Congratulations Kathleen




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## IN MEMORIAM

### Robin Gear

Robin Gear passed away peacefully with her husband by her side at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital on November 24, 2007 at the age of 49 years. Robin is survived by her loving husband Wayne; daughter Elizabeth and son Michael (Amber); parents Ralph and Margaret Annis; brother Stuart; sisters: Gayle and Diane; and five nieces. Robin was predeceased by her twin brother Robert in 1958.

Robin started her career in Environmental Health in Saskatchewan in 1983 upon graduating from BCIT. After several years in Saskatoon an opportunity arose in the Upper Fraser Valley Health Unit and she moved back to BC. She soon became the Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector in the Central Fraser Valley Health Unit (CFVHU) located in Langley. During her time in the Fraser Valley she became involved and very interested in drinking water quality issues. It was also during this period of time that she met Wayne Gear and they were subsequently happily married.

With the breakup of the CFVHU, due to the regionalization of health care in BC, her position was transferred to the South Fraser Health Region. Later when the Fraser Health Authority was formed, Robin became the Manager of Environmental Health Protection in the Newport office serving the Tri-Cities area. Although she excelled in her position and was well liked by her staff and colleagues, Robin continued her acute interest in drinking water quality issues. When the position of Drinking Water Coordinator for the Vancouver Island Health Authority was created she saw this as her long-awaited opportunity to really make a significant contribution to protecting the health of the public. Robin applied for the position in Nanaimo and was quickly accepted. During her three year period as Drinking Water Coordinator she accomplished a great deal and built bridges with many individuals and agencies involved with providing, consuming or regulating the drinking water industry.

Recently Dean Scovill wrote, "Robin was a well respected colleague who supported, encouraged and showed compassion for her staff. There were many kudos for her style of leadership. Robin also showed compassion for those in need. For years, Robin networked with various government agencies. She was involved with groundwater studies in the Fraser Valley. Robin's name is seen in several reports which are still widely used today. I have always said Robin was ahead of her time in public health. She contributed immensely to our profession. We have lost a great individual."

A Memorial Service was held on Wednesday November 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 in the Chapel of First Memorial Funeral Services of Nanaimo. Reverend Fred Massey presented a wonderful story of her life. Her many accomplishments were attested to by her friends and colleagues. Her father indicated he was so pleased with the wonderful attendance, the very kind words about Robin and her successful career.

Condolences may be sent to the family care of: [www.firstmemorialfuneral.com](http://www.firstmemorialfuneral.com) (Nanaimo link)

Right: Picture of Robin and Wayne together.  
Picture generously provided by Wayne Gear.



**REMEMBER WHEN AND WHO???**



Answers:  
Right: St. Patrick's Day Curling Team 1970s - (L-R) Rob Bradbury, Ron White, Bob Smith, Lorne Fish and Larry Hogg  
Left: Larry Copeland and son



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*President*

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# BC Branch Executive 2007

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## Editorial Policy

The objective of this newsletter is to keep the members of the BC Branch and other colleagues informed of local and national events that are of interest and importance to them.

The views, comments, or positions within the contents of the BC Page are those of the Editorial Team or the author and do not necessarily reflect those of either the BC Branch or the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.

The Editorial team reserves the right to edit material submitted, solicited or unsolicited, for brevity, clarity, and grammatical accuracy.

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