



# Wadd's New?

~ The BCCA Prevention Program Newsletter ~

Volume 1 Issue 3

August 2003

Welcome to the third issue of Wadd's New! As the summer sun beats down on the Interior, we have been concentrating our efforts throughout the Okanagan Valley on delivering the safe sun message. Now with a small army of SunWise Guys on the move, we have been able to reach health centers, daycares, schools, events, beaches, and parks in even greater numbers. The final total of people contacted promises to be very impressive, and our round-up evaluation will tell us just what kind of impact has been made. I certainly enjoy counting the number of heads (large and small!) clad in SunWise hats when I'm out and about - so I know that something good is happening! However, noting the number of very red holidaymakers - we still have a way to go. (Just how mad do you have to be to spend an afternoon on a shadeless beach when the temperature is hitting 38C?)

With the approach of the new school year, we are gearing up to provide SD22 and SD23 with the *Better Choices*

resource. The Rotarians, who are funding this initiative, propose to take it into every elementary school in the Okanagan. If other Rotary clubs decide to collaborate, it could be offered province-wide.

This is also the time of year that thoughts turn to accessing money to support research. This year I plan to submit proposals for funding in three areas of research: teen smoking; shade audits; and school nutrition. All 3 projects would have implications for community programs. I'll keep everyone posted on the responses.

## The Truth about Tanning

There have recently been a few contradictory messages regarding the health benefits of tanning. Most of these come from the indoor tanning industry, which is understandably concerned about retaining as many customers as it can in the face of skin cancer education. Their efforts to divert the message that indoor tanning is a poor health choice are in some ways very similar to the tobacco industry's defensive maneuverings.



Rather than refute the statement that tanning is directly related to skin cancer - which they cannot do - they have crafted an approach intended to create confusion and doubt in that statement.

What they are now claiming is that exposure to the sun is necessary for us to produce Vitamin D and remain healthy, and that Northern countries receive less sun. As with the tobacco defences,

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these claims contain an element of truth. We do need sunlight to remain healthy and yes, living in Canada, we *do* get less sunlight exposure. However, the rest of that story is that a little sunlight is enough to maintain health (as little as exposing the face and the backs of the hands for 15 minutes, three times a week!), and that exposure to a little sunlight each day is not the same as sun bathing or using a tanning bed.

To market their product, some tanning salons are distributing misleading information that tanning can play a preventative role in breast, bowel and prostate cancer. **There is no scientific evidence to suggest that tanning will reduce the risk of any cancer.** Research indicates that the average tanning bed emits UV radiation at a level significantly higher than the summer sun at noon. Further, although the UVB levels are similar to those of the sun, the UVA levels can be 10 - 15 times higher. UVA is more penetrating than UVB and is associated with premature ageing and cell...

damage leading to skin cancer. UVA is also linked to *impairing* the immune system, lowering the body's ability to ward off disease and infection.

Malignant melanoma of the eye is also associated with the use of tanning lamps and beds, and the risk of malignant melanoma is increased by a factor of 8 for a person under the age of 30 who has used a tanning bed or lamp at least 10 times.

"Tanning is a natural defence against the sun" is another claim made. Well, nice idea, but no, it's not. Even the darkest tan provides only an SPF of about 6.

As for one claim that tanning can "stimulate the male sex hormone and can increase sex drive", I have not found any studies conducted to that effect in the scientific literature ... however - if there's anyone out there looking for a good research topic ...

There are now several websites dedicated to indoor tanning. One called "Extreme Tanning" looks slick and professional. It states that "Heliotherapy is the treatment of disease by exposing the body to sunlight". This site claims to get this information from Baylor University Medical Centre, a reputable institution with an impressive track record. However, researching the Baylor site reveals that this reference comes from the section on alternative complimentary

treatments and does not refer to trials conducted at that institution. In fact, the site is careful to issue disclaimers on these treatments. You can check it out for yourselves at:

<http://www.bhcs.com/Library/HealthGuide/CAM/topic.asp?hwid=hn-2930006>

Cancer prevention is also misinformation prevention. With Internet access as close as the room next door or the local library, it becomes even more urgent that we get the facts out there.

With Dr. David McLean's support, we have put together a tanning information flier. This flier gives the facts about indoor tanning to allow people to make informed and accurate decisions about using tanning salons or lamps. Your community coordinator will soon receive 50 copies. If you would like a copy, or would like to help distribute them to pharmacies, recreation centres, gyms and doctors' offices, please contact your coordinator or Dr. Lynne Baillie at 250 712 3925.

The message that we send remains the same - **be safe in the sun**. We are not attempting to persuade people to avoid the sun, or to give up healthy outdoor activities during the summer months. We are encouraging everyone, but especially young children and their parents, that the sun has to be respected and that sunburns are not a normal part of childhood summers. Our 5 S's - a few simple precautions will hopefully become second nature and allow everyone to enjoy a healthy summer.

~ Lynne Baillie

### The Truth about Indoor Tanning



*The decision to use a sunbed or sunlamp is yours alone to make. Some people believe that indoor tanning is good for your health. This is not true. To make a good decision, you should know the proven medical facts about indoor tanning...*

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### NORTH OKANAGAN (Wendy Aasen)



**Sun Protection** In May, Vernon hosted the successful "Shade Planning for the Okanagan" featuring John Greenwood of Australia's *Shelter Strategies*. Around 50 people attended representing health, education, & recreation, among others. We also met & heard from Dr. David McLean with BCCA Prevention Program, Dr. Jean Shoveller, researcher at UBC & Dr. Tim Lee, with BCCA's Cancer Control. All participants left with a renewed sense of the importance of sun protection to prevent skin cancer & the role of shade in a comprehensive sun protection plan. We were able to better understand how communities can plan for shade in public places and identify areas of need. ...

## COMMUNITY NEWS

## NORTH OKANAGAN (continued)

Wow! Lots of action in the Okanagan with the SunWise Program! It's gratifying to know that the SunWise Guys are operating throughout the Okanagan Valley this summer. This year we added Summerland/Penticton to the mix and we in the North were happy to participate in their training. As usual, thousands of area children and their caregivers are getting the message about sun protection.

**Air Quality**

Lots of positive news around this topic! With a lot of help from new staff member Lori Borchert, the North Okanagan program has been actively involved in air quality initiatives. Our forum and fair in April was a successful event. While only about 70 attended, the quality of information was excellent and participants were appreciative. From the events, we were able to collect survey information that will help us as we plan future activities.

In May, our program hosted an Environment Canada Vehicle Emissions Testing clinic. Over 300 cars were tested over two days, making it one of the most successful clinics in Western Canada. The North Okanagan Regional District provided the interim funds and Environment Canada reimburses the cost of the clinic.

In June we took part in the BC Hydro sponsored Clean Air Day -

Environmental Fair. Our display featured information on air quality and health as well as reducing risk from other environmental contaminants. Participants enjoyed our Air Quality Jeopardy game.

As well, we have been attending all the meetings of the Regional District's Regional Services Committee. This committee is



**Vernon SunWise Guys in Action**

responsible for air quality within the region. We have made several presentations and have encouraged the committee to consider developing an Air Quality Management Plan for the region. As a result, the Regional District has given approval to form a Stakeholder committee of community representatives that will draft up an Action Plan. The BC Cancer Agency Prevention Program will serve on this committee as representatives of the community in regards to air quality and health concerns. We see ourselves playing a major public education & capacity building role within the community. Wendy continues to write her monthly column

"Clearing the Air" and has had a good response.

Currently we are investigating bringing a keynote health effects and air quality expert to Vernon to speak to our local physicians, politicians, and stakeholder committee. Environmental issues continue to be a major health concern to local residents. As time and resources permit, we will do what we can to address these concerns.

**School Food and Nutrition Policy Pilot Project**

The Interior Health Authority community nutritionists are behind this pilot project that is attempting to assist elementary, middle, and high schools overcome obstacles and make "healthy choices the easy

choices" in a sampling of schools through the various regions of the IHA.

In Vernon, BCCA Prevention Program has been active in one of the pilot schools. Wendy is serving on the pilot's Steering Committee as well as heading up the Advisory Committee at Silver Star elementary. The committee is seeking to develop policies that will influence the entire school community. The focus at Silver Star is to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables that children consume both at home and at school. A "Snack Track" survey revealed that children are choosing less nutritious recess snacks more often than fruits or vegetables.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## NORTH OKANAGAN (continued)

The committee, which consists of parents, staff, and students, will also be providing resource information to teachers and parents, looking for ways to improve the quality of foods served at the school for PAC lunch days and other school events, and encouraging more "hands on" healthy snack preparation opportunities in the classroom. As part of this promotion, the school will pick a "feature fruit" of the month around which teachers can build

curriculum opportunities, messages and recipes can go home to parents, and free fruit will be provided to classrooms to experiment with fruity snacks or to encourage children to help themselves. Stickers with the message of "Fruit First" can be given to students to attach to lunch bags as a reminder to choose fruit over a dessert or less nutritious snack.



Because fruits and vegetables are important to cancer prevention and because studies have revealed only 1/5 children are consuming the recommended 5 to 10 servings a day, our program felt that this pilot project was a good fit with the message of cancer prevention that we are encouraging in our communities.

**Looking Ahead...**

This fall will be a busy one as our committees become active again. We want to reintroduce ourselves to the community as the BC Cancer Agency Prevention Program. We will also be helping BC Lung promote their provincial Woodstove Awareness Campaign and educate the community on ways to burn that reduce harmful pollutants (the "other" second-hand smoke...). We'll keep you posted!

## KOOTENAYS (Harold Stanley)

The Promotional Items that were done this past spring have been distributed to family doctors in the Greater Trail and Castlegar areas. Posters featuring local residents engaged in a variety of healthy activities in local settings and newly designed flyers explaining who we are and what we do are now on display in their offices. In collaboration with these doctors, a healthy lifestyles "prescription pad"-advising patients on how to personally reduce their risk of cancer was designed, and is now in use. These promotional initiatives appear to have had a good reception, especially when medical staff and patients see a prevention poster with photos of people and places they know. T-shirts with the Waddell and BCCA logos on them were also made and distributed to Waddell volunteers who paid for them at their expense.



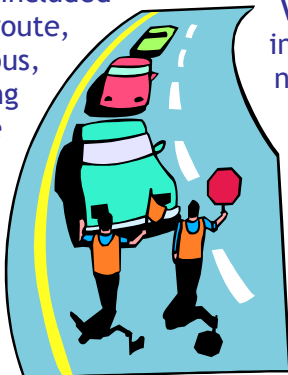
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A Smoking Cessation Pilot Program for Patients on Surgery Waiting Lists has begun in the West Kootenays. This is an initiative of the BC Cancer Agency and will involve Waddell Project volunteers interviewing patients who smoke and are on surgery waiting lists. The data collected from these interviews will be analysed and used in the design of a cessation resource. This resource will then be piloted in Vancouver and Lower Mainland (due to the large numbers of pre-surgical patients there). Presentations about the project have been made to Greater Trail and Castlegar doctors along with the distribution of information packages explaining the project to them. Eight Waddell Project volunteers have been trained by Lynne Baillie on the project and on conducting the interviews. We hope to have the interviews completed by the fall. The results will be incorporated into a larger smoking cessation project for patients across the province. ...

## COMMUNITY NEWS



**P**edestrian Crossing Lights are in the process of being put up in Rossland. This was an initiative of the MacLean School PAC Safety Committee and the Waddell Project. The initiative began as a result of the closing of the elementary school in Lower Rossland which necessitated students from Lower Rossland having to cross the highway to get to their new school in Upper Rossland. It included designation of a safe walking route, organization of our walking school bus, and petitioning for a school crossing guard & pedestrian lights. Some members of the local Chamber of Commerce objected to the lack of a heritage design to the lights (anyone know what ped lights circa 1900 look like?) & temporarily halted construction. However, thanks to the combined efforts of the Waddell Project and MacLean School PAC, these lights will now go ahead and the safe walking routes are secured.

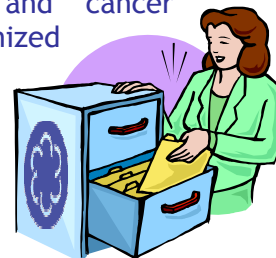


to students the benefits of a healthy diet, and; looking into getting students water bottles that they can use at school. News of this new committee will be going out to Rossland residents at the end of August in a notice that will also announce the return of the walking school bus. To make our efforts affective we are hoping to have a number of students join and participate on the committee.

**Walking School Buses** will again be organized in Rossland and Trail this fall. Although numbers in Rossland went up and down it was unanimous amongst the volunteer walking school bus supervisors that we do it again in the fall. The walking school bus in Trail, which began in April, has been a success and volunteers there look forward to expanding on this success in September.

#### Future Projects

Plans are in place to have a **Vertical File Library** set up at the Trail and District Library by early fall. This "library" will consist of a filing cabinet with BC Cancer Agency Prevention Program: Kootenays advertised on the side and contain info on cancer and cancer prevention that will be organized by library staff, in cooperation with Waddell volunteers, and updated on a regular basis. Having the vertical library in a public space that sees over 60,000 visitors a year will greatly increase the accessibility and visibility of this info to the public at a nominal cost to the Waddell Project.



**Letters** were sent to local municipal newspapers this past spring warning of the potential dangers of pesticide use and outlining the position of each municipality on pesticide use within their boundaries.

The Waddell Project set up a booth at the Canadian Cancer Society's **Relay for Life** at the end of May in Warfield. The event was well attended and hundreds of participants came by our booth to play our interactive games and pick up our new literature.

A **School Nutrition Committee** has been established to increase awareness of nutrition & diet amongst students in Rossland schools. Although supported by the Rossland Secondary School PAC the 5 members who currently sit on the Committee hope to use it as a template for other schools in the Greater Trail and Castlegar areas. Planned initiatives include: having school vending machines stocked with healthy alternatives to pop & junk food; getting teachers to stop rewarding students with sweets; having healthy foods served at school functions; creating posters that explain

**Healthy Lifestyle Forums** will be organized in the fall. We hope to have experts provide information on the cancer risks attributed to the industries of the West Kootenays and of particular concern to residents - high levels of naturally occurring radon gas, and understanding proposed changes in food labeling in order to make healthy diet choices.

Two nursing students will be working with us as part of the community internship requirements. We have found this to be a very productive collaborative with Selkirk College. We are also putting the finishing touches on our website update – a result of our links to Selkirk College!

## COMMUNITY NEWS

## SOUTH OKANAGAN (Mary Beth Rutherford)

**SunWise**

We are in summer mode around the Summerland office. Normally it is a quieter time of the year with me venturing out into the community - but with two SunWise Guys around, my office is filled with activity! Laura and Jessica have been having fun meeting and presenting to kids of all ages. They have been to day camps in Summerland, Penticton and Peachland, to many different public events and are always looking for more. I have received praise back already for the good - no wait - the GREAT JOB they are doing!

**Teen Programs in Summerland:****Caging the Invader**

The grade ten CAPP's 'Caging the Invader' presentations went well with our evaluations showing that the majority of these teens felt that this information was important for them to hear & that they did learn some new prevention facts. I will be continuing to teach this curriculum in Summerland.

**Website**

The cancer information & youth support website that several students & myself have been working on for the past year is now at the stage where we will be ready to post it in the fall. Staff personal & students from Summerland Secondary will be helping us to bring our content to life. The site will then be connected to the school's home site. With the site connection we will introduce students & staff to the manuals we created for teens, teachers & parents about how to stay in school & deal with school demands while your family is dealing with cancer. It will have links to cancer information & prevention sites from the B.C.CA, Canadian Cancer Society & Oncolink.

**Teen Support Workshop**

Two half-day workshops are proposed sometime in October. Dr. Karen Wright, past president of the Canadian Counselling Psychology Association will provide one workshop for teens and another for parents and teachers. In order to reduce the risk of students failing or dropping out, the goal of these workshops is to provide a school network of support for teens living with cancer in the home.

**Media**

Newspaper articles are now a 'sort of 'regular thing (you need to know the local paper!). Carol Stathers, a nurse from the Diabetes clinic in town and myself are writing alternating health columns for the paper. And from what I have heard the articles have gone into other regional newspapers. This means the cancer prevention message is going beyond Summerland in the South Okanagan, and that is a great thing.

Our collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society "Mission Possible" did not go beyond a group of four girls, but they did well. By expanding the scope of the program I hope to make it more appealing to the wider student body.

**Future**

Now that I know how well the SunWise Guys have worked I might see if I can borrow something else and use Harold's idea of the walking school bus. We are going to have some bussing changes in our community and maybe that will help to open the door to more walking. We also have an active senior population here who would be a great volunteer base to tap into. I'll let you know how the fall unfolds.

**This space is for you!!**

This is your newsletter - please send your comments, opinions, suggestions, concerns and I will print them here. You can do this either via your coordinator, or directly by sending it to [lbaille@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:lbaille@bccancer.bc.ca)