



## Word from the president

*By William Lucy*

Action St-François has a new fiscal year. It has been brought into line with the calendar year and now coincides with our clean up season and other activities. As a result, we are obliged to change the date of our annual general assembly, previously always held in the fall. According to our general rules, the annual meeting must be held within four months of the end of the fiscal year, thus the meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup> which will double as get together for those, members and non-members, interested in participating in any of our activities, and they are numerous.

Another change resulting from the new fiscal year concerns the biannual elections for the board of directors. These are always held at the general assembly and are due in November of this year. The current board had three options : hold the elections in November-convoking a special meeting; hold the elections April 20<sup>th</sup> thus shortening the mandate of the existing board; or extend the

mandate and have the elections in April 1999. After much discussion it was decided to extend the mandate.

Action St-François has taken a major step toward realizing its interest in popular education. Benoît De Champlain, a student at the University of Sherbrooke, worked for several weeks developing a project about the hydrological cycle and pollution. It is directed at sixth grade and secondary one students. As one of his teaching aids, Benoît constructed a three dimensional model of the St-François watershed. All in all excellent work and well done, thank you Benoît (see his article page 2).

Action St-François attended the symposium on water held last December in Montreal. An interesting three days devoted to the present and future of Quebec's water supply (see page 4).

Also in this issue we have an article on « El Niño ». Written by Richard Smith, one of our very capable door-to-door campaigners, the article talks



*Small brook, lots of scrap !*

*Many car carcasses, much like this one, have been taken out of « Le ruisseau d'Or » in Rock Forest, in July 1997.*

briefly about the causes and effects of « El Niño » (page 3).

Serge Nielly gives us a look at our program for the upcoming season and brings us up-to-date in our activities.

## ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS WILL HOLD A GARAGE SALE IN JULY

**If you would want to donate things to sell, please contact.**

***Our telephone number: 563-5362***

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## A WORD FROM THE GENERAL CO-ORDINATOR

Since the last general assembly in November, things have been moving along steadily. Energies have been mainly devoted to preparing for the upcoming season.

*By Serge Nielly*

The campaign to recruit members and solicit donations continues. Donations provide the organization with nearly 50% of its total revenue.

Three applications for grants have been submitted to the federal government. If the response is positive to all three, Action St-François will be able to maintain its level of operations and achieve in 1998 results equivalent to those of 1997. More precisely, it will be possible to hire six people to fill temporary full-time positions, two of which will be filled by students. These individuals will be responsible for the preparation and co-ordination of voluntary clean-up operations, inventories and riverbank stabilization. We have in fact had positive responses.

The government of Québec has awarded Action St-François a grant of \$20,000. Seventy-five percent of these funds will cover co-ordinator's salary up to September of 1998 while the remaining 25% will cover operating costs (office equipment, rent, electricity, etc.). A new application will be made in the near future to ensure that funding continues after September of 1998.

The Inventory Co-ordinator, Sandra Roux, completed her work at the end of January. During her time with Action St-François, she defined the methods employed, completed numerous inventories, and set up a computer system to monitor and produce data, including a map of the Saint Francis River watershed. Bravo Sandra !

A grant of \$1,200 from the Government of Québec has allowed us to hire Benoît De Champlain from the University of Sherbrooke's co-op programme as a student trainee for a period of 12 weeks. Benoît has initiated

an educational programme on the environment (See article below).

As you may have noticed, the work of the organization is done mainly in the office. Many volunteers have participated actively : Our thanks to Chantal, Claire, Anaïs, Andrée-Anne, Marie-Christine, Geneviève, Katy, Julie, Christine, Michèle, Richard and Pierre.

At the present, the organization employs seven people; the general co-ordinator, a trainee, and five recruiters.

Action St-François has also taken steps to develop its public visibility. An information booth was set up during the afternoon of March 27 at La Grande Ruche food co-op; a second was held at the gardening and home improvement exhibition in Fleurimont on April 10, 11 and 12.

## A ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

*By Benoît De Champlain*

I'm a student in ecology. In the mid of the Sherbrooke University cooperative program, I've spent my training course working at Action Saint-François. Most of my work consisted in putting together an educational program regarding different aspects of the quality of water.

My educational program is an information tool helping 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to have a better understanding on how the polluting agents travel and at the end, affect us.

Given the fact that potential toxic material travel mostly in the water, I'm putting the emphasis particularly on the water cycle; natural reservoirs, evaporation, condensation and precipitation phenomena. Afterwards, I'm introducing the pollution notion and I'm specifying its relations to each and every phase of the cycle. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate the importance of putting a stop to wasting and polluting water.

In order to show the dynamics of water and its relation to the territory covered by Action Saint-François, I have built a scale model showing the watershed of the St-Francis River. I've also used other settings to illustrate the phenomena associated with the water cycle. I continue by going over actions that each of us can do to improve the situation.

Then, I'm mentioning the importance of joining forces with other people to act as a group. I then conclude and make some connections with our organisations activities.

To inform you better, I have, along with this program, brought up to date a list of names of recycling contractors in your area. Should you have things you want to get rid of and don't know how to have them reused or recycled, then just call Action Saint-François head quarters. You will get the proper information on how to reach the good recycling contractors.



## November's Annual General Assembly

The most recent annual general assembly was held on November 10 with thirteen people in attendance.

The question of finances was the first item to be raised. Accountant Johanne Tessier presented a written financial statement. Members remarked on the organization's sound financial state.

The assembly continued with a presentation of the results of activities. (A summary appeared in last October's Journal copies of which are available in the office.)

The results of the meeting on orientation held in October were presented. What emerged is that the general objectives of Action Saint-François should remain unchanged. It was recommended that two committees be formed : a public relations committee and a committee on secondary watersheds. The purpose of the public relations committee will be to establish a general policy regarding positions taken by the organization. It would also concern itself with the development of educational activities directed at the general public. The Committee on secondary watersheds will be responsible for expanding the organization's activities to include the whole area of the St-François watershed. The plan will be to initiate a recruiting drive of volunteers within the region in order to form many local groups, a committee for each secondary watershed.

It was recommended that the organization continue to accept donations and gifts only from individuals. Action Saint-François, it was noted, should not be dependent on grants. It also was recommended that the organization should no longer present itself as a candidate for recognition awards since this might give the impression of validating the actions of groups which engage in dubious practices. Actions undertaken in partnership with other groups are, however, to be strongly encouraged.

A long discussion took place on the advisability of expanding the campaign for funds to target small retail merchants and businesses. Follow-

ing the discussion, it was proposed that the public relations committee formulate a code of ethics and include a policy on relations with businesses, in particular the question of finances. This policy will be submitted to the next annual general assembly.

A discussion followed regarding the possibility of producing a paper on participation in the development of a policy on the management of water resources in Québec. No decision was taken on this item.

Finally, since none of the positions on the Board of Directors had expired, there were no elections. William Lucy remains President, Charles Coulombe Vice-president, Clothilde Gingras Treasurer, and Jean-François Denis Secretary. Isabelle Vaillancourt, Yannick Boulanger and Simon Trépanier will also stay in their positions on the Board.

### THE CHILD OF THE PACIFIC

The floodings that have occurred in the Saguenay region and in Manitoba, the ice storm in the Province of Quebec, the land slides in Equator and Peru, the tornados in Florida and many other natural catastrophes that have hit the globe in recent times, have one same responsible source : El Niño, the terrible « Child of the Pacific ».

This child is quite popular as of now. And especially there is a tendency to blame everything on him. Sure, this phenomenon is really at the start of disasters that have happened here and there around the world, but is it the only explanation ?

What is El Niño ? Firstly, this is not a new phenomenon, in fact, it is quite old, but it has adopted a very unpredictable path over the last twenty years. It has been particularly active during the last five years. Something never seen before. In a recent meeting, held in Montreal, on atmospheric disruptions, meteorologist Henry Hengeveld explained the phenomenon in these words : year in and year out, the winds blowing from the Pacific Ocean move the surface waters around, these waters are being heated by the sun. Furthermore, the Asian side of the Pacific Ocean is generally warmer than the Western American side. But during the El Niño phenomenon, which occurs between two to seven years, a change in the atmospheric pressure modifies the given flow of warm waters and winds.

This results in the warming up of the waters of the western American seaboard. The air located above the ocean is in turn heated and it creates a complete chaos in the different climates around the world.

But one should not take for granted that this a purely natural phenomenon over which man has no control. Even if, according to Mr. Hengeveld, all these recent disasters remained largely unexplained, they are parts of the alleged consequences of the green house effect, warming up the planet. Without linking directly these natural disasters with the carbonic gas emission into the atmosphere, resulting in the green house effect, Mr. Hengeveld maintains that controlling these emissions would reduce, without any doubts, the risk for the catastrophes to happen again.

At least, this should make us think and ask ourselves questions. We can not go on consuming and wasting our natural riches and resources, generating so much toxic waste, destroying vast areas of our forests... and get away with it without, somewhere, causing an imbalance in the biospheric cycles (carbon cycle, sulfur cycle...) And all ecosystems.

There is surely hope in the education and public awakening regarding the resulting impacts of our actions on the environment. The answer is in the implication of each and every one of us by our individual and collective deeds aiming at, for example : energy saving, waste reduction or the growth of new less energy consuming technologies.

Finally, these changes in the climates around the world show us that it is time, now more than ever, to have a global perspective and to act locally.





# THE SYMPOSIUM ON WATER MANAGEMENT IN QUEBEC

*By Clothilde Gingras  
and William Lucy*

The most talked about symposium that caused a lot of controversial wind to blow in Estrie finally happened.

Different environmental and pressure groups got together to discuss the eventual boycott of the symposium and that, for many reasons :

- The tone of the Government's preparatory reference document which seemed to promote the commercialization and exportation of water as the guiding principles in a future water policy;
- The symposium's agenda, made up by l'Institut National de Recherche Scientifique du Québec (INRS-EAU), was mainly focused on commercialization. Most speakers and resource people were representing water commercialization businesses and engineering firms whose interests lie in the privatization of water;
- The \$250 attendance fee limited the participation of citizens and environmental protection groups.

Thus, we decided that there would be a two-way action, one from the inside and one from the outside. In order to have an inside view of what was really at stake, we had no other choice but to be present. On the other hand, other groups publicly denounced the symposium and organized a demonstration in front of the building where it was held.

The Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec (The Ministry of the Environment) facilitated our, and other groups's access to the symposium by reimbursing the inscription's fee.

Two main themes were put on the agenda : the state of Quebec's water and water management in Quebec.

## **The state of Quebec's water**

We were briefed about the worldwide state of water by speakers and round table discussions. It's not a pretty picture... Geographical distribution and water usage are not equally shared; 60% of the world water reserves is located in eight countries and five of them use 60% of those reserves. An aggravation of the water shortage is forecasted. In fact, in 1990, 23 countries experienced water shortage and it is predicted that, by the year 2025, 35 countries will suffer similarly.

A speaker from the National Institute for Scientific Research-Water, co-sponsor of the symposium, informed us that 13% of the world fresh water lies underground and that it stays in the aquifer for 13 years before returning to the rivers and oceans. He also claimed that people are ready to pay for drinking water and that they trust the Government in the management of this resource.

During the question period, a teacher in environmental studies, along with the President of the Order of Forestry Engineers, questioned the analysis method related to underground water since it seems that our current knowledge is obtained by extrapolating sampled data. Also, according to them, we should consider subterranean water as being part of a long term development system.

It was also mentioned that we have a tendency to neglect considering the huge amount of water required to maintain the conservation of the aquatic ecosystems. It seems that we do not take into account the availability of water to be closely related to the different climatic changes that may occur. For example, water at the Manic dam site is not renewed as fast as it used to. Emphasis was also put on the fact that water is more than a simple commodity, it is a living environment.

The economic impact of water reaches far beyond the mere marketing aspect, to include the agricultural, industrial, electrical producers as well as recreational and touristic activities. Water is above all a world heritage.

After all, it seems to me that there was more vision among the participants than from some speakers.

The next topic was the quality of water in Quebec. The criteria used to determine the quality of the lake waters seem to be rather short sighted; they are subjective, relative and imperfect, they analyse the polluting agents one by one rather than seeing them as a whole. Some improvements might occur in the quality of the lake waters, but some damage might also be done due to eutrophication, acidity, and some mercury. As far as underground waters are concerned, the quality would range from good to excellent, but there is no systematic survey because it is not compulsory for artesian wells owners to have their water analyzed.

Underground water is linked to above ground activities. The quality of underground water is under constant threat from such contamination sources as atmospheric pollution, agricultural practices and waste burying methods. The underground water's quality conservation language speaks of input management (nitrates, phosphates, pesticides, fertilizers...), erosion control, water run-off and mitigation techniques (strip of soil along the banks).

We were also informed about long term developments (future generation friendly). One should always remember that the « depolluting machine will always be a step back of the coming pollution ».

## **Water management in Quebec**

It would be more suitable to say that this second item on the agenda was about the « water marketing in

Quebec ». We have been literally flooded with economical data during this portion of the symposium.

For example : the annual income of stock market water business companies ranges from 39.3 to 792 million dollars. The American market alone is expected to invest 279 billion in the water business. The share amounts of the European and Asian markets should represent between 80 to 100 billion dollars for water cleaning activities and 20 billion for the drinking water market segment. The share of the South American market is about 3.7 billion and their municipal authorities are open to privatisation. The French company Lyonnaise is present there.

We spoke about marketing strategies and strategic positioning. In other words : « how to make bundles of money selling water but without getting wet ».

More seriously, some good ideas came up for a symposium on the economical development related to the actual state of our expertise, but what has this to do with in a symposium on water management ?

We also talked about Quebec's future in regards to the bottled water market, the development of surface waters, the ups and downs of the province regarding water cleaning equipment and expertise, the necessity of consolidating the expertise of all the different partners in Quebec and finally, about the infrastructures.

We were just on step away from being convinced of the necessity of privatising our infrastructures before other countries do it for us. This speech is a real « frame up » for privatisation. My earth hurts !

On the final day of the symposium Action Saint-François attended the conference, round table discussion and workshop on watershed management. Topics included the pros and cons of regional manage-

ment, merging of jurisdictions, conflict management and watersheds and their rivers.

Much was said about the importance of cooperation among all levels of government from municipal to federal. Not as easy as it might appear given the number of ministries involved, the often antagonistic relationship between them and different governing bodies as well as the fact that in a watershed one finds several municipalities, MRC's and administrative regions. In spite of all the actual and potential conflicts, cooperation is essential if we are to succeed in formulating a coherent, just and sustainable water policy which was, after all, the « raison d'être » of the symposium.

Such a policy must take into account the needs of all water users : the ordinary citizen at home, industry, agriculture, pleasure etc. Also, not to be ignored are those with non-tangible interests. Their role is unde-

nably important for the continued health of every watershed but who can neither lobby nor defend themselves, I'm referring to the environment itself and all plant and animal species.

In fact, what we would like to see come out of the symposium is the recognition that all of us, human, plant and animal rely on a constant supply of clean water. That the resource will be managed by the citizens of Quebec in a way that will ensure fairness for all concerned and a continued supply of good clean water for future generations.

One step in the right direction toward intelligent water use came from Premier Bouchard who declared a moratorium on further exploitation of the ground water resources for bottling interests. However, much remains to be done and we must continue to push for an equitable water policy.

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## Things to come



*A big catch in the «Ruisseau d'Or» in Rock Forest, in July 1997.*



*Christian Gourdes has been caught having fun while picking small snap out of « le ruisseau Des Vignobles » in Rock Forest, in August 1997.*



## New members of Action Saint-François from september 15, 1997, to march 15, 1998.

### ASCOT

JENNE BRIAN  
PIERRE CÔTÉ  
PAULINE RIVARD  
JEANNOT THÉBERGE

SUZANNE MÉNARD  
DANIELLE MERCIER  
DANIEL PERREAULT  
CLÉMENT POMERLEAU  
ALAIN RAICHE  
DENIS SAINT-JACQUES

JACINTHE CÔTÉ  
LOUIS-MARIE DECOSTE  
FRANCE DOUCET  
ANDRÉ DUBOIS  
JEAN-MARC DUGRÉ  
NATHALIE DUQUETTE  
JOCELYNE FAUCHER  
JOHANNE GRENIER  
ISABELLE GRONDIN  
CHANTAL LABRECQUE  
JEAN-MARC LAFORÊT  
ONIL LEFEBVRE  
DANIELLE LONGPRÉ  
MARIE-JOSÉE MALTAIS  
MICHELINE MALTAIS  
LISE PROTEAU  
JEAN-FRANÇOIS TOUTANT  
MICHEL VIENS



*The cleaning operation by the voluntary workers of « le ruisseau Enchangeur » in west Barnston, in may 1997.*

### SHERBROOKE

ALEXANDRE AUBERT  
CHRISTIANE BELISLE  
PIERRE BLAIS  
PIERRE BLAIS  
MARJOLAINE BLANCHARD  
HÉLÈNE BOVIN  
ROBERT BONSER  
JACQUES CÔTÉ  
GUY DENIS  
PAUL-ANDRÉ DIONNE  
MAXIME DUGRÉ-SASSEVILLE  
DENIS FORTIER  
GILLES GUIMONT  
SERGE HAMEL  
PIERRE LAFRANCE  
THÉRÈSE LAMBERT  
MICHEL MALOUIN  
HÉLÈNE PARADIS  
PAUL PELLETIER  
NOËL RICHARD  
MICHELINE ROY  
MICHEL SAINT-JEAN  
RENÉ VACHON

### FLEURIMONT

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ROCH BIBEAU  
STÉPHANE BILODEAU  
ALAIN BOISVERT  
DANIEL BOULANGER  
JOCELYNE CLICHE  
PIERRE COSSETTE  
LINDA CÔTÉ  
MARTIN COURTEMANCHE  
PIERRE DELAND  
GERMAIN DUMOULIN  
SERGE GAGNON  
MARTINE GARRAND  
JEAN GOSELIN  
ANDRÉ GROLEAU  
FRANÇOIS ISABEL  
LUCIE JACQUES  
CARMEN LANCTOT  
FRANÇOIS LAPOINTE  
MANON LAPORTE  
RAYMOND LEWANDOSKI  
YVES MARMEN  
FRANÇOIS MASSÉ  
LUC MATHIEU  
JEAN-GUY MÉNARD

DANIELLE SAINT-LOUIS  
GILLES TANGUAY  
LISE THETREULT  
MICHEL VILLECOURT

### LENNOXVILLE

FRANÇOIS BOUDREAU  
VINCENT CUDDITTY  
MARIE-JOSÉE DANDENAULT  
LOUISE HÉBERT  
DONALD HILTON  
SEALE JILL  
JUDY KEEMAN  
RONALD WESTMAN  
THELMA WESTMAN

### ROCK FOREST

LOUISE BEAULIEU  
ANGE-AIMÉ BÉLANGER  
NATHALIE BENOÎT  
PIERRE BERGERON  
LAURENT BOUDREAU  
BENOÎT CHAMPOUX  
LAURÉAT CHARRON  
FRANK CÔTÉ

### OTHER CITIES

WOH RASMUSSEN  
RENÉ VEILLEUX  
CLAUDE VAN DER HEYDEN

## THE 1998 SEASON'S PROGRAM

The season has started. A clean-up operation will be held every Saturday from 8:30 AM until noon.

Thirteen brooks have many sites to be cleaned. Most of them are located in the Municipality of the « Canton de Hatley ». The most important of these sites is located around the marsh lands along the « Rivière aux Cerises » in the « Canton de Magog ». About a thousand person hours will be required to clean this site. This will be a joint venture with the group know as « Les Amis du Marais de la Rivière Aux Cerises (LAMRAC) ».

It's going to be a hay day.

Should you want to join in these cleaning activities, please, give us a call.

Our total regular membership is at the present time 920. From september 15, 1997, to march 15, 1998, 137 persons have joined in for the first time, while 222 other members have renewed their membership. Since 1992, 2560 persons have been members at least once.



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ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN AUGUST 1992 BRINGS TOGETHER CITIZENS CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THE GROUP IS INTERESTED IN THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF AQUATIC MILIEUS OF THE SAINT-FRANÇOIS RIVER WATERSHED. CLEAN UP, EROSION CONTROL AND REPLANTING PROJECTS ALONG WATERWAYS AND FLOOD PLAINS ARE ORGANIZED BY ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS. WE WANT TO HEIGHTEN AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION TO THE NECESSITY TO ACT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE HYDROLOGICAL NETWORK OF OUR TERRITORY. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE 25\$. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL US AT (819) 563-5362.