

I Was a Refugee Once

By Reka Gustafson

Stories of refugees from Syria brought back bittersweet memories of my own family's arrival from Eastern Europe to Vancouver on January 16, 1980. We too received assistance with housing, clothing, and training in English from the Canadian Government. While this material assistance was essential, and very much appreciated, what I remember with even more gratitude is gift of being welcomed by individuals. One such individual was an ESL teacher who took our class of 12 year olds to an ice-cream shop on the corner of Denman and Davie. I still remember, 35 years later, exactly where I sat as we learned the words "ice cream", "spoon", "cold" and "melt." I also remember thinking, for the first time in a long while, that I had permission to just feel happy.

Other people asked us to teach them a few words in our language, share cooking from our country, and listened with interest to our story. Such simple acts made me feel like I was giving, not just receiving, and that gave me dignity. I probably didn't thank the people who welcomed me to Canada in this way, but I hope I can pay back some small part of the kindness by doing the same for another group of new Canadians this winter.

P.S. Three years later, when we became Canadian citizens, they lady who swore us in told us that the anthem is made for all Canadians, and if we wished, we could sing "Our home and chosen land...." That was pretty great too.

Thank you to Reka Gustafson, VCH's MHO and Medical Director for CD Control, for providing this article for republication. In light of the current refugee crisis, it is uplifting to hear from a Canadian environmental public health professional and their experiences with being a refugee.



Reka and her family in 1980.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE. . .

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UPCOMING EVENT. . .

May 1-7—Drinking Water Week

Hello CIPHI members and environmental health professionals alike! Welcome back again to Giardia's Corner with me, Giardia! 2016 is already flying by! We're 1/3 of the way through the year and the BCIT students are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. A couple more weeks until Practicum Students descend upon your offices and you have the opportunity to spread your wealth of knowledge and mold the minds of future Environmental Public Health Professionals. With BOC preparations beginning, it only seems logical to meet Ron Popoff, our BC Rep for the BOC.

CIPHI celebrated it's 103rd birthday on April 19th this year! The institute was originally the Sanitary Inspectors Association of Western Canada and it was formed in Winnipeg, MB.

Happy Belated Birthday CIPHI!



Ron Popoff—BC Representative for the BOC

Q1: What school did you go to for the ENVH program? What year did you graduate?

A1: BCIT Technical Diploma 1979, Ryerson Degree 1986

Q2: Where have you worked and what roles have you been in throughout your career?

A2: Fort McMurray Alberta - pioneering the Environmental Health program in Northern Alberta, Cranbrook BC - EHO Generalist, Health Education / Promotion, Tobacco Reduction Coordinator / TED, Env Health Team Leader in Kootenay's

Q3: How have you seen the focus of Environmental Public Health change over the years?

A3: During my 35 years of public service, I have witnessed a transition from technician to professional. We are no longer in the shadow of the Medical Health Officer. Our broader scope of work and advanced academic credentials enable us to take on a greater degree of leadership and independent decision making which elevates our profession.

Q4: What is one of the most memorable moments or situations in your career so far?

A4: **1.** Investigate and control the major Crypto outbreak due to cattle contamination in the Cranbrook watershed, **2.** Developing the BC provincial tobacco control program, **3.** Health representative on the Unified Command for the Emergency Response to remediate the Lemon Creek aviation fuel spill

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Ron Popoff—BC Representative for the BOC—Continued



Q5: As an EHO/PHI, one of your primary roles is to look for problems or issues; how have you stayed positive?

A5: Hazard identification is our job and professional responsibility. What excites me is finding ways and means to effect positive change. That is my reward.

Q6: On a scale of Educator to Enforcer, where would you place your health inspector style?

A6: Definitely an educator...for effective long term change, there must be voluntary behavior change. Enforced behavior is less effective because it conflicts with people's attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Q7: Legislative recognition for CIPHI passed in Sept 2013, what do you see as the next big goal for CIPHI's BC Branch?

A7: The BC Branch has a very low membership rate which is marginalizing our profession. All members, and especially our Health Protection Directors and employers, need to awaken and advocate for stronger membership. If you are not a member then you have no right to b*%@\$.

Q8: You're currently the BC Representative for the Board of Certification, can you give us an update what the BOC is focusing on right now or of any possible changes to come?

A8:

- We have approved Conestoga College in Kitchener Ontario to teach the Environmental Public Health program
- Conducted three recent school reviews – First Nations University, Ryerson University, and BCIT
- Reviewing our school curriculum learning objectives to establish current and future professional practice
- Considering possible improvements to the written reports to better evaluate contemporary writing skills

What is your favourite outdoor activity?

- Riding my Harley and golf

If you could witness any event past, present, or future, what would it be?

- Being at game 7 of the 1st Canada Russia hockey series.

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

- Speak multiple languages.



WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER:

1. Drink a glass of Guinness or Fat Tire?
 - Fat Tire
2. Visit Europe or Mexico?
 - Europe
3. Vacation in Hawaii or Alaska?
 - Alaska
4. Travel by sailboat or cruise ship?
 - Sailboat

A Spicy Calamity: Chipotle Outbreak Update—My Take on the Situation



In the “2015: Year in Review” article published in the Winter 2015 Edition of the BC Page, Chipotle Mexican Grill was highlighted for their food safety woes. Two concurrent outbreaks of Shiga toxin-producing *E. Coli* O26 (STEC026) began in October of 2015; federal officials declared the outbreaks over on February 1, 2016. The outbreaks lasted for four months, both linked to multiple of Chipotle’s facilities, and hundreds of people were victimized with foodborne illness. Of the 60 confirmed cases, 21 people were hospitalized; luckily there were no deaths linked to these outbreaks. After a thorough investigation, epidemiological data was not adequate to pinpoint a single food item or ingredient as the culprit. No samples collected at the associated facilities, during the investigation, contained STEC026, making the results of the investigation inconclusive (Centre for Disease Control, 2016).

The associated Chipotle facilities reportedly had a number of food safety and sanitation shortfalls. Infractions including improper refrigeration, inadequate hot holding temperatures, improper hand washing by staff, and even, in one instance, a live bird being present in the kitchen had previously been reported. After the conclusion of the investigation, Chipotle had vowed to improve sanitation and food safety measures, including improved staff training (Food Safety News, 2016).

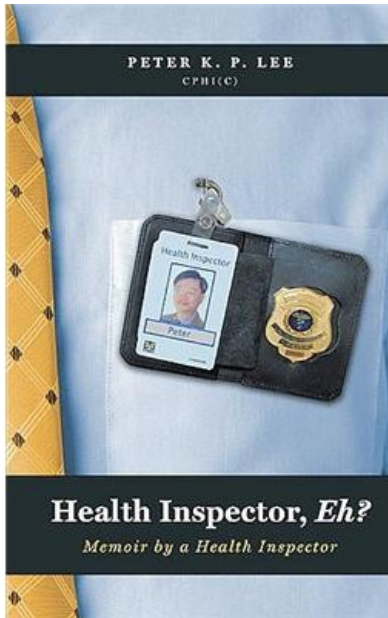
On February 8th, 2016, all of the Chipotle facilities closed for a four hour training session for staff. The four hours was used to educate staff on the new food safety and sanitation measures that would be implemented within the facilities across the U.S (Chipotle, 2016). This fact caught the attention of John Oliver, late night TV-show host of Last Week Tonight. Oliver poked fun at the notion that the facilities’ excessively non-compliant actions could be remediated within a four hour pep-talk with staff. In addition, multiple concerning customer interviews were aired. Interviewees were questioned about their level of worry with the repeated infractions identified in their local Chipotle restaurant; all indicated that they would continue to patron the restaurant because the food was too good to pass up (Last Week Tonight, 2016). It’s hard to say if these attitudes are shared across the board for the general public but it is certainly disconcerting to see members of the public laugh off 21 people being hospitalized by foodborne illness as they flock towards their next meal. It is promising that the outbreaks associated with Chipotle Mexican Grill have ceased and that new food safety and sanitation procedures have been implemented. We’ll chalk this up to another victory for environmental public health professionals even though I find we’re still fighting an uphill battle with the public’s understanding of food safety and the severity of foodborne illness. Whether their misconceptions are over-estimating the risk of an observation they made or the flip-side of underrating the hazards that exist, the misconceptions are a continued challenge. I bid you good luck in your constant struggle to educate, promote, and protect.

Stacey Sowa, CPHI(C)
BC Page Editor

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- Centre for Disease Control [CDC], 2016. Multistate Outbreaks of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O26 Infections Linked to Chipotle Mexican Grill Restaurants (Final Update). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2015/o26-11-15/> on March 21, 2016.
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- Last Week Tonight, 2016. Last Week Tonight: Chipotle Mexican Grill. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81HhfS8D83M> on March 21, 2016.

In the News



Health Inspector, Eh? by Peter K.P. Lee (FriesenPress)

On March 9, 2015, Peter Lee, ex-health inspector, had his memoir published by Friesen Press ©. “Health Inspector, Eh? - Memoir by a Health Inspector” was reviewed in The Vancouver Sun earlier this year; the author, Tom Sandborn, highlights tid-bits from Peter’s book and provides a reminder to love and respect thy health inspector. Take a read: [Book review: Memoir of public service a healthy reminder](#) (Sandborn, 2016).

News from BCIT



Top Row (L-R): Caroline Leung, Rebecca Wong, Geeti Bhatti, Sukhdeep Rakhra, Leni Rose, Alyssa Zambon, Tobie Xie; **Middle Row (L-R):** Jackie Sham, Victoria Cheung, Nicole Truong, Jessica Ahn, Marina Bebek, Helen Wang, Kelson Mah, Gagan Dhillon; **Front Row (L-R):** Ryan Hammel, Tina Chen, Sara Plain, Matthew Loo, Derek Song, Kristen Houwers, David Fowler



After a compelling nomination from the BCIT Environmental Health faculty and staff, the BC Branch Executive selected Anya Beshara as the recipient of the 2016 John. A. Stringer Award.

Congratulations!

Geeti Bhatti (right) receiving the CIPHI BC Branch **Bob Herbison Memorial Award** from Martin Macleod (left), Program Head of the Environmental Health Program at BCIT.



PUBLICATION OF MEMBERSHIP LISTS



As of May 2015, the names of all regular, life, retired and student members have been made available on CIPHI's national website. These lists, organized by province, can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ciphi.ca/publication-of-membership-lists/>

Sara Plain (right) receiving the Environmental Health program **Joe & Gladys Woolsey and Sam Parrish & Gladys Cranke Memorial Award** from Lorraine Woolsey (left).



Kristen Houwers (right) receiving the School of Health Sciences **Dr. Joseph Cohen Award** from Anne Edwards (left), Associate Dean, Health Sciences.

Three of the Environmental Health Program's successful award recipients.

Congratulations Sara (left), Kristen (center), and Geeti (right)!





The BC Branch was happy to award *two* Early Bird Registration Prizes for 2016. Laura Chow of VCH (left) and Karen Edgar of FHA (right) were presented with a free 2016 CIPHI Membership.



Congrats and thank you for your continued membership!



**YOU KNOW WHAT
REALLY GRINDS MY
GEARS . . .**

. . . When you ask an operator what a strange looking food is and they tell you it's theirs and only for personal use. . .
.mmhmm. . . So why is it amongst your restaurant food?

Please submit your "heard it a thousand time before one-liners" that you hear in the field over and over to stacey.sowa@viha.ca. Let's all share in the hilariously annoying joys of our environmental public health experiences.

Health Authority Updates



VCH's Vancouver office celebrated Anti-Bullying Day with team shirts, cake, and reminder to each other to be kind and respectful to all. The group also made a donation to a charity of their choice, from money collected that day.

Baby Announcements



Ross Adamson and his wife welcomed Baby Nikolas on March 11th, 2016 at 12:13a.m. Nikolas weighed in at 8lbs 7oz.

Congratulations!!



Baby Announcements—Continued



Denny Huang and his wife Andrea welcomed their baby boy, Justin, on March 22, 2016. Justin weighed 7.0lbs even!

Congratulations!!

Retirement—Maxine Marchenski

After 42 years of service, and at least a decade of John Gibb self-admittedly harassing her about her eventual retirement, Maxine Marchenski has retired from environmental public health. Congratulations to Maxine, who retired on March 31st, 2016.

Maxine was born and raised, the oldest of four siblings, in the small western Manitoba town of Birch River. She originally set out to pursue a career in social work and attended the University of Manitoba's Social Work program in 1970. Quickly realising this was not the career path for her, Maxine packed up and headed for the west coast. She attended BCIT in 1972, graduating from the Environmental Health diploma program in 1974.

At the time, women were still breaking into the male dominated industry of Environmental

Health; some of the health units were even known for not hiring woman. Rumour has it that the unofficial reason was because woman couldn't lift the lid off a septic tank. In pursuit of starting her career off, Maxine found her first job in Prince George where she worked for three very enjoyable years. At that point in time, in 1978, a change occurred and Maxine seized the opportunity to work with the Capital Regional District health unit. She was the first woman to be hired with CRD as an Environmental Health Officer. Throughout her career she provided environmental public health services for Salt Spring

Island, Downtown Victoria, and Langford. She worked as a field inspector until 1996, at which time she became a Senior Inspector. She supported CIPHI as a councillor in the late 70s and early 80s and as a BOC examiner in the 90s.



Maxine and Tim Roark



Maxine and Don Wakelyn, 1982

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Retirement—Maxine Marchenski—Continued

When asked about her feelings of her career in environmental public health, she stated “It’s been a very rewarding career. I am proud of the accomplishments our environmental health team has made over the years in food safety, for example a reduction in foodborne illnesses, in drinking water, and proud to have participated in major public health initiatives such as the Clean Air Bylaw and Tanning Bylaw. It’s been a career, I feel, that our efforts have greatly improved the lives and health of the community has made my career more satisfying.” Maxine spoke of some of her career highlights where she was instrumental in helping improve security in a downtown high-rise apartment building and initiating an agency approach to dealing with seniors living in squalor and mentally ill individuals and families living in sub-standard housing. In addition, she also helped develop the first FoodSafe course for the Chinese community in Victoria. Maxine’s contributions to environmental public health have been extensive and everlasting.



Maxine in the EARLY years (second from the left on the bottom row)!

On March 30th, 2016, retired EHOs, colleagues from Island Health, friends, and family, including Maxine’s parents, all gathered at Canoe Brew Pub in Victoria to celebrate Maxine’s career. Ann Thomas reminisced about Maxine taking her out on a “Day with an EHO” before she began at BCIT. Sam Agbay raved about Maxine’s involvement in the development of FoodSafe. Dr. Stanwick, Chief Medical Health Officer, gave a speech about Maxine’s perpetual ability to always put public health first and told a tale of the dead elephant seal at Clover Point where Maxine helped coordinate every enforcement agency in Victoria. John Gibb provided a comical rendition of his years working with Maxine including some hilarious excerpts from local media sources and her persistence in continuing her career for as long as possible. John offered himself as Maxine’s sponsor as she goes through the withdrawals; he promised to be available at 3am when she needed it during an impending relapse to work.

As a closing speech, Maxine, with her ever-graceful nature, thanked everyone and finally let the Island Health team in on her retirement plans: She plans to open up a boutique marijuana dispensary at Gateway Village just to taunt the Health Protection and Environmental Services crew. In all honesty, after many years of service, Maxine is ready to relax into retirement. She plans to use her new touring bike, a wonderful retirement gift, and to travel with her also-retired partner Gerry. Congratulations and good luck in the next chapter Maxine!



Maxine enjoying John Gibb’s speech.



Maxine Marchenski during her retirement speech.



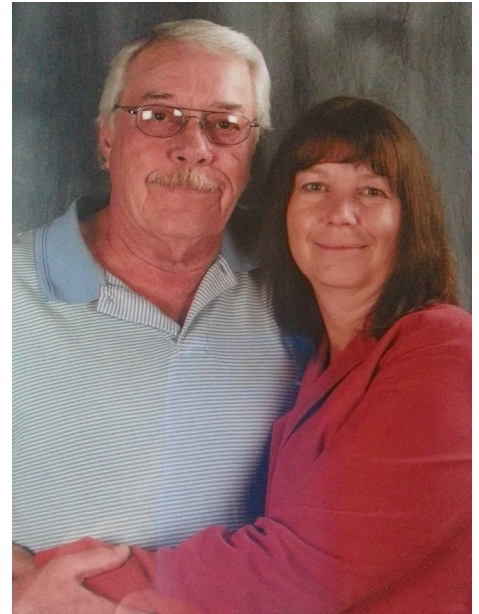
Maxine and Joanne Lum checking out John Gibb’s version of Maxine’s career highlights.

In Memoriam—Daniel Anthony Pituskin

Daniel was born November 22nd, 1940 in Carnwood, Alberta to Anatole (Tony) and Agatha Mae Pituskin in their log farmhouse. A local nurse, Miss Watherston, handled the delivery. When of age, Dan went to Liberton public school in Carnwood which was a single room school teaching grade one to high school.

Within a few days of Japan's surrender in the WWII, the family moved to West Jasper Place, a community on the west border of Edmonton. Interestingly, the family never had a motorized vehicle of any kind, car, truck or tractor. All work was done by horses and wagon or on horseback.

Dan's parents moved to Bonnyville, Alberta where Dan went to Duclous High School and he graduated in 1961. Shortly after his graduation, Dan started his training with the health unit in St. Paul, Alberta to become a Public Health Inspector. Dan received his Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) in 1962.



Dan and his wife, Noreen.

Dan met and married his wife Joyce Hannas in Bonnyville, Alberta in 1963. His career in public health took the newlyweds to Vegreville, Alberta where he worked for a number of years as a Public Health Inspector and in private business. Kevin McLeod worked with Dan in Vegreville for a short time and stated, *"He had a great sense of humor and I was fortunate to have started my career under his mentorship"*. Dan was a supporter of the Institute and was a member while in Alberta and then in BC. Dan and Joyce had three very successful children, Edith, Patricia and Daniel. Unfortunately family difficulties took their toll and Dan moved to BC in 1988.

Dan worked for the East Kootenay Health Unit, in Fernie, for a number of years where he met and subsequently married his loving wife, Noreen, in 1997. Dan retired that same year and they purchased a very comfortable home on acreage in Galloway, BC near Elko now known as Rock Creek.

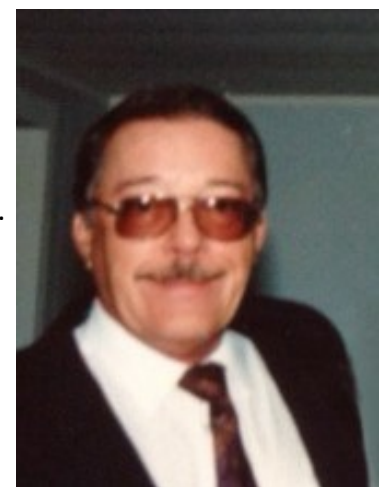
Dan was an avid sportsman. He loved hunting and fishing and was near the level of a professional golfer. He could par or better the local golf course. Dan also loved to play the guitar; he played at home and at a local church. He and Noreen gardened on their property and Dan chopped trees for firewood for their fireplace and furnace needs. Many were the times they saw various wild animals on their acreage. They really loved it.

Their home was about a half hour from the US border and they would frequently cross the border for shopping and fun. Dan developed back problems and went to Calgary for corrective surgery which unfortunately was unsuccessful. Dan suffered additional health problems and passed away on June 29, 2015 at age 75.

Dan and Noreen were very close and he will be dearly missed by Noreen, their families, and many friends.

Tim Roark, Branch Historian

Many thanks to Stan Pituskin, Dan's older brother, for providing much of this information.



Daniel Anthony Pituskin

In Memoriam—Greg Tone

Greg Tone made considerable contributions to the field of environmental public health and the communities he served in. Greg had fifteen years or experience and knowledge as an Environmental Health Officer and he was known for giving the job his all. Linda Pillsworth, Manager of Environmental Public Health Services, FNHA, emphasized that Greg “brought a level of passion that was authentic, original, and heartfelt” when referring to his level of commitment to his job. Greg had been working with First Nations Health Authority since September of 2014; he was based in Prince George and he provided environmental public health services to the Carrier Sekani area of north central BC. Previous to that, Greg worked with Northern Health.

Greg made a lasting impression on co-workers who conveyed that “Greg had a wonderful quirky sense of humour and left a lasting impression on all the he met. His light hearted demeanor was matched by his depth and intellect. He will be greatly missed by everyone.”

Greg suddenly passed on February 18th, 2016; he is survived by his wife, Angela, and two sons. He will be greatly missed by co-workers, friends, and family.



WORLD WATER DAY 2016—March 22, 2016

World Water Day was celebrated on March 22, 2016. The theme for this year was “Water and Jobs”. UN—Water stated that nearly 50% of the workers in the world are in water related industries and, as you can imagine, nearly all industries rely on water. The emphasis of World Water Day 2016 was that adequate amounts of quality water has the ability to change the lives of workers and strengthen society and their economies (UN-Water, 2016).

References:

UN-Water, 2016. ABOUT - World Water Day 2016, Water and Jobs. Retrieved from <http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/about/en/> on March 21, 2016.

Keep up to date on the latest news at the BC Branch website:

www.ciphi.bc.ca

The page also contains information on membership, conferences, career opportunities, documents, and much more. Check it out regularly.

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The views, comments, or positions 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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