

# EXTRACTIONS



a newsletter from **O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES**

Number 5, April 1988

## **ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSPEAK**

Bright new environmental managers are introducing a bright new crop of buzz words. Among these are the terms risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication. Definitions for the new terms vary, but those recently published in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's *EPA Journal* likely reflect the meaning most users attach to them. Environmental risk assessment is defined as "the scientific enterprise in which facts and assumptions are used to estimate the potential for adverse effects on human health or the environment that may result from exposures to specific pollutants or other toxic agents." Risk management, on the other hand, refers to "a decision-making process which involves such considerations as risk assessment, technological feasibility, economic information about costs and benefits, and other factors." EPA defines risk communication as "the exchange of information about risk." Without sounding too grumpy, one wonders what the purveyors of these bright new terms think environmental managers did before the terms were coined.

## **FEWER GASOLINE SPILLS**

According to a spokesman for Manitoba's Department of Environment and Workplace Safety, better equipment, improved regulations, and more care and attention have resulted in fewer gasoline spills in that province. There were 53 spills in 1986, down from 62 in 1985 and 82 in 1984.

## **HIGH TECH FOOD**

Japanese researchers have reported the development of an "odourless garlic."

## **MAN BITES DOG**

In a reversal of the roles usually played by resource developers and conservationists, a Texas water development agency has sued the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for failure to complete an environmental impact assessment. The Sabine River Authority took the wildlife service to court

because the latter agency developed a 4000 acre wildlife refuge on river bottomland that the authority had hope to flood. In creating the refuge, the wildlife service neglected to complete required environmental studies and analyses.

## **PERFORMANCE OF FRP TANKS EXAMINED**

Controversy over the long-term structural performance of underground fibreglass reinforced plastic (FRP) tanks, which arose as the result of remarks made during recent United States Environmental Protection hearings, will be the subject of a joint Canadian/American study.

## **FEDERAL TANK MANAGERS TO BE TRAINED**

A training package for personnel involved in managing underground storage tanks at federal facilities is being developed by Environment Canada. The package will consist of an instructor's manual, handbooks for students, and a number of audio-visual aids. Trainees will receive instruction in tank installation, leak prediction, leak detection, spill clean-up, and tank removal/abandonment. Further details may be obtained by contacting Sue Day, Head, Hazardous Waste Section, Environment Canada, Halifax, Nova Scotia B2Y 2N6. (902) 426-6141.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DATA SHEETS COMPUTERIZED**

Software released by Baker Chemical now provides a system for storing and retrieving information about hazardous materials. The program is supplied to customers with 1500 data sheets stored on disk describing hazardous compounds. Additional data sheets may be created and added to the disk files, and users can customize the data sheets supplied by adding site-specific information or special procedures. Saf-T-Manager is available on standard 5.25 inch disks or on a 20 megabyte hard disk card. Baker Chemical is a subsidiary of Ashland Oil Inc. with offices at 222 Red School Lane, Phillipsburg, New Jersey 00865, U.S.A. (201) 859-2151.

## **OZONE TREATMENT REDUCES TRIHALOMETHANES**

Ozone, not chlorine, is proving to be a safer and less expensive disinfectant for drinking water in comparative studies being conducted at the University of Calgary. Research by Amir Badakhshan in U. of C.'s Department of Chemical Engineering suggests the use of ozone as a disinfectant can reduce the level of trihalomethanes in drinking water by 75 percent. Because trihalomethanes are thought to be carcinogens and are known to form when chlorine reacts with organic material in raw water, the use of ozone seems to offer some advantages. The research involving ozone is being conducted in co-operation with the City of Calgary.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*Water Use in the Coal Mining Industry and its Influence on Ground Water in Western Canada* by W.B. Barrie and C.Y. Carr. Based on two separate studies, this report assesses water demands for coal mining and preparation, identifies ground water resources in mining regions as well as likely supply problems, and assesses the effect that coal extraction will have on ground water.

Available from the Publications Office, Inland Waters/Lands Directorate, Department of the Environment, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3.

*The Baffin Island Oil Spill Supplement — Arctic* (Volume 40, Supplement 1). This 279-page volume presents 24 peer-reviewed research papers dealing with experimental releases of crude oil in coastal environments on Baffin Island. Copies may be obtained at a cost of \$25 from the Arctic Institute of North America, the University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4.

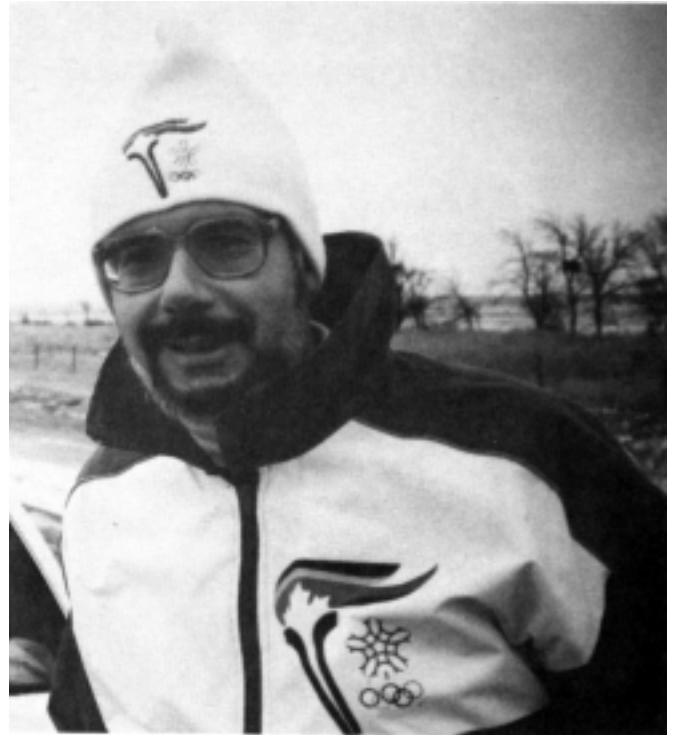
*Underground Tank Leak Detection Methods*. Authored by S. Nikae and J.A. Broccious, published by Noyes Data Corp., Park Ridge, New Jersey, U.S.A., 123 pages, \$34.00 (US).

*The International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals Bulletin* provides information on new legislation and regulation for controlling chemicals throughout the world. Published twice yearly at a cost of \$25 (US) the bulletin is available from United Nations Publications, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

The complexities of American efforts to clean up toxic waste dumps are explained in a question and answer format in a second edition of the *Superfund Handbook*.

A complimentary copy of the handbook will be forwarded to those making written requests on business letterhead. Requests should be sent to ERT Inc., Marketing Department, 698 Virginia Road, Concord, Massachusetts 01742, U.S.A.

## **SHARING THE FLAME**



On day 82 of the Olympic Torch Relay, Richard Clark of O'Connor Associates helped bring the Olympic flame closer to Calgary. Richard's relay kilometre was east of Taber and ended in the town of Purple Springs. Blowing snow and cool temperatures did not stop a busload of well-wishers from watching and running the kilometre with him. Among the well-wishers were Boy Scouts from the troop where Richard is a leader.

At O'Connor Associates, Richard is responsible for developing new technology. He is currently busy with an automatic leak detection system for underground storage tank installations. The system he is developing will also have a wider application as a remote data acquisition system for sites which are being cleaned up.

## **NOT ON OUR MAILING LIST?**

If you are not presently receiving **EXTRACTIONS** and would like to, let us know. Send your requests to:

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