



“All of us, no matter what we do in life, no matter where we live, we all have much more power than we think.”

Tough Mind, Tender Heart

Sage advice from Earth Day Canada’s Outstanding Commitment Award winner, Laure Waridel.

Mark Brooks: *Congratulations on winning Earth Day Canada’s Outstanding Commitment to the Environment Award this year.*

Laure Waridel: Thank you. It is a great honour for me, especially from Earth Day, because it’s an organization in which I believe. I believe that Earth Day should be every day and that’s what this organization is working for. Highlighting one day each year for the Earth allows people to reflect on their choices and what they do on this planet.

This award is just the latest recognition you've received for your work in promoting sustainable and socially responsible choices. As a native of Quebec, what originally inspired you to get involved in the environmental movement?

I guess it's a combination of experiences I had, people I met, books I read, and more than anything else, love for people and nature. I grew up in the country. My parents were farmers so I had the opportunity to witness some of the impacts that humans have on ecosystems. I also saw how big corporations and the economic system were having a huge impact on the lives of small farmers. So this kind of interdependence between people and the Earth became apparent when I was very young.

Why did you feel the need to co-found the non-profit organization Équiterre in 1993?

Following the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, we were all feeling the need not only to denounce problems, but also propose solutions. What politicians were doing was not enough, and we wanted to convince people to take action and make the connection between environmental and social issues.

We have seen many positive changes at the local level, yet at the global level there is still much room for pessimism – climate change, biodiversity loss and so on. What keeps you motivated to do the work you do?

Well, if we're not doing what we're doing, things would be much worse! It's as if our economic system is a huge ship and it takes time to change course because we need to change our habits. For decades, we've been convinced that we are what we buy, that we always need to have more things and that economic growth is the only way to go. We now realize the impacts of this. We need a different mindset, a different way to envision what happiness is and what it means to be wealthy and to progress. The status quo is no longer possible.

I am optimistic because I see little changes all the time. We need to continue to suggest approaches that are positive, that make people feel part of the solution and empowered to make the world around them better. I really believe we are moving toward a paradigm shift when I compare the attitudes of people now, especially business people, to 10 years ago.

What would you say to people who want to help out but feel overwhelmed and don't know where to begin?

All of us, no matter what we do in life, no matter where we live, we all have much more power than we think. Personally, I find it easier to work on positive solutions but I also believe in more radical approaches and support them. Each person should find the place where they feel comfortable to act. The important thing is to start somewhere even if it seems to be so small. Martin Luther King [Jr.] once said that you need a tough mind and a tender heart to make real change in society. I think that it is also true for the environmental movement today. If you only talk about scientific facts or only try to touch the heart, it is not enough. You need to cultivate both.

What small choices and decisions can people make to have an impact?

Start by reducing our own consumption and then when we do buy something, try to have as little negative impact as possible. But there is also political action. We need to vote for people who will make a difference and take the time to contact our representatives. Most of us in Canada are in a comfortable situation and it is easy to not care about what is going on when it is not directly in our backyard. Now with the Conservative Government in power, fundamental values are under attack: social justice, environmental protection, access to information, freedom of speech. We are starting to lose a lot of things we take for granted. We need to wake up to avoid a crash. 🇨🇦

Mark Brooks, a Montreal-based environmental journalist and blogger, prepares Alternatives' podcasts. Check out his blog markbrooks.ca.

Named one of Maclean's "25 young Canadians who are already changing our world," Laure Waridel co-founded Équiterre. Read more at equiterre.org/en.

Earth Day Canada Heroes

ALTERNATIVES JOURNAL is a media sponsor of Earth Day Canada's Hometown Heroes Awards. Introduced in 2004, the program celebrates unsung environmental leaders who have made positive differences within their communities. This year, EDC added a third category to its individual and group awards. It recognizes a small business.

Nominations are received from across Canada on Earth Day (April 22), and judged by a panel of community, business and environmental leaders. Winners receive a cash prize or an expense-paid trip to a professional development course.

Alternatives Journal has the pleasure of profiling these special Canadians whose awards are sponsored by Cascades, Mill Street Brewery and the RBC Foundation. A full archive of the program's winners and finalists, including photos, stories and accomplishments, is available at earthday.ca.

Individual finalists

Robin Wheeler, Roberts Creek, BC
Wayne Salewski, Vanderhoof, BC

Group finalists

Mel Johnson School Gardening Project, Wabowden, MB
Sackville Rivers Association, Lower Sackville, NS

Small Business Finalists

Green Chair Events, Vancouver, BC
Woolwich Arrow Pub, Guelph, ON



Johan deZoeete

Bay Watch

What sets BARC apart is the diversity of people it has engaged in reclaiming Hamilton Harbour.

WHEN the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) in Hamilton, Ontario, celebrated its 20th birthday in June, there was much to celebrate: The organization had just won Earth Day Canada's 2011 Group Hometown Hero Award.

Karen Logan nominated BARC for this annual award, particularly noting the diversity of people it has engaged in helping clean up Hamilton Harbour. Given BARC's small size, just three full-time staff, "what they get done is really amazing," Logan says.

Formed in 1991, BARC is a child of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which identified Hamilton Harbour as one of 43 Areas of Concern. Decades of industrial development by mammoth corporations including steel manufacturers Stelco and Defasco, and sewage discharge, had turned Hamilton Harbour into a toxic soup of polluted water and contaminated sediments. By the 1960s, all but five per cent of the shoreline was closed to public access.

To remedy the situation, the International Joint Commission required that Canada develop a Remedial Action Plan. BARC and the Bay Area Implementation Team had the Herculean task of executing the clean-up. BARC

executive director Jim Hudson says his group "was set up to be the community side of it" while government and industry – "the folks that are supposed to get the work done" – made up the Implementation Team.

Since it began, BARC has not only spearheaded efforts to restore Cootes Paradise Marsh, a 320-hectare environmentally significant wetland, it has also seen the percentage of publicly accessible shoreline increase to 28 per cent from under five per cent. Water clarity has improved, E. coli levels are down and native fish are returning.

Nonetheless, the region continues to be blighted by Randle Reef. This 630,000-cubic-metre blob of coal tar is the most toxic site in the Canadian Great Lakes. Despite years of hard work, funding issues will likely prevent BARC from meeting its goal of having the bay delisted as an Area of Concern by 2015. Though keen to get the job done, Hudson recognizes that delisting will result in another challenge: The office in charge of the Remedial Action Plan will close, putting a greater burden on BARC.

Hudson recognizes that BARC will "need all of the residents of the watershed to be committed to finishing this job." It's a task for which Rhoda deJonge, BARC's diversity co-ordinator, is ready. She contends that human diversity is at the heart of BARC's success. By seeking people who "are true environmentalists,

but wouldn't necessarily give themselves that label," she has successfully reached out to the broad community, including schools. And in a place where more than a quarter of the population was born outside Canada, there is an enormous opportunity to engage a diverse group of people.

Proof of BARC's commitment to reaching out comes from Hamilton's former mayor, Fred Eisenberger. He writes, "BARC's more recent initiative to assure greater involvement of all the peoples of Hamilton has given great hope to the future of environmental efforts in our community."

Last year, deJonge created the Multi-Cultural Waterfest, a one-day event to get new Canadians involved in recreational opportunities in the bay. The event grew out of her talks with community newcomers who said they had no idea how to start enjoying what should be Hamilton's greatest asset. "The work that we're doing is not only restoring the harbour," she says, "but restoring the harbour in the minds of the people."

BARC, it seems, is living its motto: Together, we're bringing back the bay. 🌱

Janet Kimantas, a student in the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment, is an intern at Alternatives.

To learn about Hamilton Harbour's rich biodiversity, visit The Cootes to Escarpment Park System Project at archive.rbg.ca/greenbelt.

Bringing Back the Bay: Volunteers make the slogan come alive as they wade through Hamilton Harbour marshes, replanting many of the species lost over the years.

Keep Your Eye on This Guy

Jonathan Glencross may not have arrived with a plan to make McGill University a more sustainable campus, but that's exactly what he has done.

WHEN Jonathan Glencross arrived at McGill University, he had no intention of changing the institution. Yet four years later, this is precisely what he has helped do. Enrolled in the McGill School of Environment, Glencross has become one of the driving forces behind the university's dramatically increased commitment to sustainability.

"I grew up in the suburbs in a context that was pretty unsustainable in terms of how we organized our lives," he says. From this beginning, it was really a matter of meeting the right people at the Sustainable McGill Project (SMP). Soon Glencross was on his way to spearheading campaigns for several new sustainability projects on campus. Within the first few months of his arrival, the SMP tried to create a greenhouse gas inventory for McGill. But, he explained, they soon realized it had only been done once before, in 2005. "It boggled my mind that an institution this big didn't even know what its greenhouse gas footprint was," Glencross

says, "so this gave me a lot of inspiration, but also it made me realize how far there was to go."

His most notable achievement may well be the creation of a new fund for community-based sustainability projects. Students voted overwhelmingly in 2009 to contribute to the fund at a rate of 50 cents per credit per year, which is then matched by the administration. "This has transformed our community," Glencross says, "as anybody in the McGill community can apply for project funding as long as it works toward building a culture of sustainability on campus."

The fund has already approved 35 projects from the \$800,000 that it receives annually – more than double what is collected by similar green funds from all other Quebec universities combined. Projects funded to date include a volunteer-run urban gardening project, a program that distributes produce by bike, an industrial composter, a student-run bike collective, an on-campus farmers market and more. Glencross also played

a leading role in the creation of a new Office of Sustainability at the university, which now employs three full-time staff and 11 student interns. He co-authored McGill's first *Greening Events Guide*; helped coordinate a Rethink Your Curriculum Challenge for students; and co-founded the McGill Food Systems Project. "Before we existed," he says, "no one knew where our food was coming from, let alone if it was being grown sustainably."

If this wasn't enough, last year, Glencross wrote a proposal that led to the creation of an annual interdisciplinary field-study semester focused on applied sustainability, all while being a full-time student and trying to maintain some semblance of a social life.

"My two biggest obstacles were overcoming the 'us versus them' attitude on campus and the lack of agency many students often feel at school." In fact, it is his ability to bring students and the administration together in common cause that may be his greatest talent. "We have come way farther than I ever could have expected. There are still some major issues we have to face, but we're doing really well compared to other universities."

What makes Glencross so passionate about sustainability? "I don't know what else is more worthy of consideration than the ability of future generations to be able to maintain themselves," he says. "The more I learn about the challenges we face, the more I realize we have to dedicate our lives to making our interactions more sustainable."

Although Glencross will soon be graduating and isn't sure what his next project will be, it is safe to say that his legacy at McGill will be felt for many years to come. 🌱

– Mark Brooks

Jonathan Glencross addresses McGill University in this TEDx event [youtube.com/watch?v=LVudqilIors](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVudqilIors).



Setting up an \$800,000 fund to support green initiatives is only part of what Jonathan Glencross accomplished as a McGill University student. It has made him a sought-after speaker.

Hemp Hero

Oilseed Works has paid the price for being first into a new sector. Finally, it's paying off.

GREG HERRIOTT judges how far industrial hemp has come by how few people joke about it. "At our first trade show in 1996, nine of 10 people who visited our booth began with a joke. Now, it's only two of 10," says Hempola's founder. It's a cool, sunny, spring day, and we're sitting inside Herriott's eye-catching octagonal house made from hemp-straw bales. He's a man who walks the walk.

It has been a rough road. Herriott, who owns Oilseed Works Inc., Hempola (a line of hemp products) and Flour Power (a system involving oil-seed crops), pioneered the hemp marketplace and has paid the price for being first in. He hit the big pothole in 2001, six years after the company began. With almost \$1-million in annual sales in North America,

Four hundred hectares of hemp will provide 1900 people per year with a 2000-calorie, protein-rich diet.

Herriott figured Hempola had made it. Then, with no advance warning, there was a proposal to ban hemp foods in the US. Overnight, Herriott lost 75 per cent of his business.

It took him four years to get back on track, and though the ban on hemp foods never passed, Herriott has not re-entered the US market in a substantial way. "It only makes sense to market in your own backyard first," says a wiser Herriott, 53, whose dark hair is now flecked with grey.

Herriott's 20-hectare property parallels Highway 400 just north of Barrie, Ontario, some 90-kilometres from Toronto. Likely suspicious of a business called Hempola, the local township took exception to his operation, declaring his barn a fire hazard. Herriott says the township's move forced him to "divide and conquer." What sets Herriott's business model apart is that his neighbour Bill King not only grows and harvests hemp, flax and sunflowers for Hempola, he also makes oil, a value-added product. King uses the two presses that Herriott had to remove from his own farm when the township intervened. Herriott says, "What we now have is a farm-gate, value-added infrastructure that is ahead of its time."

A landscape architect who had built a successful graphic design business in Toronto, Herriott recalls receiving a package of information about hemp from a friend. "I remember staying up to all hours of the night captivated with it." He learned that hemp is very hardy, grows without pesticides or fertilizer, and can be made into protein-rich and omega-fatty-acid-loaded food, biofuel and fibre for clothing. By the time Canada removed industrial hemp from its narcotics list in

1998, Herriott had already developed some hemp products and launched his business.

Hemp is so versatile that Herriott recently started a new company. Called Flour Power, it markets his systematic approach, whereby hemp is grown, harvested and converted into highly nutritional, non-GMO food as well as biofuel. Herriott admits, "Hempola has been fantastic and I love it, but it's Flour Power that gets butterflies going for me."

Using a small bakery as an example, Herriott explains that if it were to replace 10 per cent of its total flour use with hemp flour, the bakery could produce enough bioenergy to fuel its fleet of delivery trucks. Then he explains what Flour Power could do for impoverished communities anywhere that hemp or other oil-rich seeds will grow. Four hundred hectares of hemp will provide 1900 people per year with a 2000-calorie, protein-rich diet. It will also give them almost 10 times as much biofuel as they require for their personal and agricultural needs – the rest can be sold or traded for other goods.

As butterfly-producing as these opportunities appear, Herriott is a realist. "It took canola between 50 and 60 years to come of age. We're in year 13." Rather than look for the opportunities, he says, "They scrutinize you. They look for every chink in the armour."

But Herriott isn't deterred. This winner of the Toronto Food Policy Council's Local Food Hero award in 2009 has now picked up an Earth Day Canada Hometown Hero award for his parent company, Oilseed Works Inc. Through his pioneering work with hemp, Herriott can also rest assured that he already has fulfilled his ultimate dream. "It may sound clichéd, but I want to make a difference." 🌱

Nicola Ross is editor-in-chief of Alternatives Journal.

The Canadian government banned hemp for many years. Read about the history of this remarkable plant at hemptrade.ca.



Hemp seed is not psychoactive, but it does contain a brigade of essential fatty acids. Hemp fibre is among the strongest known.



Our newest Hometown Heroes: Bay Area Restoration Council



RBC® congratulates the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) for its dedication to restoring and protecting Hamilton Harbour and its watershed. Through RBC Foundation, we proudly support organizations like BARC and Earth Day Canada† who share our vision in working to address the important global challenges of climate change, biodiversity and fresh water protection.

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