



NEWSLETTER



Scientist-Evangelical Alaska Expedition

*Joint group witnesses effects of
climate change*

Together, the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) organized an historic week-long expedition to Alaska at the end of August. A group of five scientists and five evangelical leaders traveled together to observe first-hand the dramatic effects of

climate change on local people and on the land, ocean, plants, and wildlife. A film crew from PBS also joined the group and a documentary of the trip is scheduled to air Friday, October 26 on the program NOW.

Led by a naturalist from Homer, Carmen Field, the group began its journey with a two-day stop in Shishmaref, a traditional Inupiat Eskimo village on the Arctic Circle with a population of about 500 people. The Inupiats have inhabited this village, located on Sarichef Island in the Chukchi Sea, for over 400 years. Because of melting sea ice and permafrost, however, the village is at high risk from storm surge erosion, and already 14 houses have fallen into the sea in recent years, raising concern that the village will soon need to be relocated to the mainland. The group also stopped at Portage and Exit glaciers to witness the rapid, unprecedented



melting of glacial ice, and at the Kenai Peninsula, where more than three million acres of spruce forests have been killed by exploding populations of Spruce Bark Beetles, brought on by warming temperatures. During the week-long expedition the group met with scientists, physicians, local church leaders, and evangelical pastors in Shishmaref, Anchorage, and Homer to learn directly from Alaskans about how they are coping with the effects of climate change. For more information and to see a list of expedition participants please



visit: <http://chge.med.harvard.edu/programs/unite/index.html>

NEW FACULTY MEMBER

We are proud to announce the addition of Melissa Perry, Associate Professor of Occupational Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health to our faculty. Melissa Perry came to the Occupational Health Program in 1997 and has conducted behavioral epidemiology and preventive intervention studies targeting a number of health endpoints including HIV infection, alcohol and illicit drug use, breast and lung cancer and occupational injury and disease over the past seven years. She is currently conducting a six-year study of farm based preventive interventions to reduce hazardous exposures to pesticides among farmers and their families.



POLICY MAKER EDUCATION

The Center is holding a briefing on Capitol Hill on October 30, 2007 titled *The Importance of Organic Agriculture in the U.S. in Coming Years*. The briefing will feature Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) an organic farmer working the same land his grandparents homesteaded nearly 100 years ago, as well as three of the country's leading experts on the subject including Frederick L. Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University; Kathleen Merrigan, Assistant Professor at the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and John P. Reganold, Regents Professor of Soil Science at Washington State University. For more information please visit: <http://chge.med.harvard.edu/education/policy/domestic/briefings/>



SUSTAINING LIFE: HOW HUMAN HEALTH DEPENDS ON BIODIVERSITY

The manuscript of *Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity* has been reviewed and copyedited and is currently in layout production with Oxford University Press. It is scheduled for publication in April 2008 and can currently be pre-ordered on Amazon.com. Edited by Center Director Eric Chivian M.D. and Aaron Bernstein M.D., a resident in the Boston Combined Residency Program in Pediatrics, this book will be the most comprehensive examination yet available on the subject of how Nature contributes to human health. The book includes a Foreword by Center faculty member E.O. Wilson and a Preface by former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan. The Center is working with the four co-sponsors of the book including the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP), the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to create the best distribution plans for the book through the vast networks of these organizations. A launch party celebrating the release of *Sustaining Life* including a public lecture, book signing and reception will be held in Washington, DC at the Smithsonian in the Spring. Please check <http://chge.med.harvard.edu/programs/bio/index.html> for updates on this release and other events related to the book as the Spring approaches.



CLIMATE CHANGE FUTURES

Center Associate Director Paul Epstein continues his work to disseminate the findings from the collaborative report *Climate Change Futures (CCF): Health, Economic, and Ecological Dimensions* to decision-makers in industry, policy and education, as well as to the media and the general public with a current focus on healthy solutions. He participated in several key meetings in the last August including: a Citigroup climate meeting, a World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization workshop on climate change and health preparedness, the annual Society of Environmental Journalists conference, and an Institute of Medicine of the National Academies roundtable workshop titled *The Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health*.



He is also a co-author on a recent publication in **The Lancet** titled *Policies for accelerating access to clean energy, improving health, advancing development, and mitigating climate change*, part of a six-part **Lancet** series on energy and health. Paul also authored a commentary titled *Changing Climate: Effects on Health, Environment & Economy* published as part of the fifth report from the Carbon Disclosure Project.

In October he will participate in the *Leadership Summit for Sustainable America: Building an Action Plan* and the Center will hold a “Cat Modeling Forum” at the Insurance Information Institute in New York City bringing together climate modelers, catastrophe modeling firms and major US insurers and insurance brokers to address integration of climate change into model projections of risks, and the implications of these new assessments for practices and policies. Paul also continues work on a publication titled *Healthy Solutions: Choosing Stabilization Wedges; Guidelines for Investors, Insurers and Industries* that examines the suite of energy choices available from the health, ecological and economic perspectives.

HEALTHY OCEAN, HEALTHY HUMANS

Kathleen Frith is traveling to Jordan and Saudi Arabia this fall to help launch an ocean and human health initiative in the Middle East. Her first stop is Aqaba, Jordan where she will give a presentation on the connections between human health and the health of the ocean. From there she will travel to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia where two new sets of the *Healthy Ocean, Healthy Humans* exhibit - one in English and one in Arabic – will be showcased at the 9th Global Meeting of the United Nations Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans hosted by the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) <http://www.persga.org/default.asp>. Kathleen will also meet with officials from Saudi Arabia’s department of meteorology and environment along with managers from the health sector and help train facilitators who will work with visitors to the *Healthy Ocean, Healthy Humans* exhibit.



In other news, production is nearing completion on a 10-minute film to be shown in aquariums and learning institutions in the US, as well as internationally. The film, produced by the Center and the award-winning Sea Studios Foundation, will showcase ways humans depend on a healthy ocean environment and appeal to people on an emotional level by using creative and narrative techniques not normally found in conventional natural history films. Future plans include developing an educational package to accompany the film including ‘take away’ guides for viewers with conservation actions and the directions to online resources including curricula and activities for teachers, sustainable seafood guides and access to the downloadable film. Visit the project’s homepage www.healthyocean.org for more information.

HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD

The Center is developing regional food guides for New England and the Mid-Atlantic states that outline the health benefits of local and sustainable food and explain when different types of produce are available locally and in each region. Printed pocket guides will complement the online resources including expanded fruit and vegetable profiles, detailed storage information and recipes from well-known sustainable cuisine chefs. The website will also include informative white papers about local foods and nutrition, food security, food and energy, and biodiversity. Research for these guides, produced in conjunction with the Program in Nutrition and Center for Food & Environment, Teachers College Columbia University and the Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, has been completed. An editors’ meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2007 at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture during which time the printing and distribution plan for the guides will be determined.



SECONDARY EDUCATION

Center Program Coordinator Margaret Thomsen traveled to Silverthorne, CO from June 11-17, 2007 for the week-long course at the Keystone Key Issues Institute. Thirty-six teachers were in attendance and came from a wide variety of science classrooms: urban, suburban, and rural; from the West, Mid-West, Northeast, and South. Their advice helped guide the next steps of the secondary education program, including expanded lesson plans with units useful for educators at the middle school level. She is currently preparing to attend the National Science Teachers Association convention in Birmingham, AL from December 6-8, 2007.



THE MUDDY RIVER: BOSTON'S ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

The Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation and the Center for Health and the Global Environment, with support from the Charles River Watershed Association and Brookline GreenSpace Alliance, hosted an environmental film series September 23-25, 2007. The successful three-day series was held at the Coolidge Corner Theatre in Brookline, MA and centered around the themes of ocean, climate and food. The series included participation by local filmmakers, a reception featuring local and sustainable food and wine, a panel discussion including local Pulitzer Prize winning author Ross Gelbspan and the Boston Globe's Beth Daley as well as a live performance by the band Yo La Tengo to the projected underwater films of avant-garde filmmaker Jean Painlevé. This series was made possible by the generous support of The Blossom Fund, Wainwright Bank and Adina World Beat Beverages.



ANNUAL RETREAT

The Center's annual retreat took place from September 27-29, 2007 at the Glynwood Center in Cold Spring, New York, a beautiful conference facility located on a working farm. Please visit www.glynwood.org for more information on using Glynwood for your own event. This year's theme focused on things each of us can do to reduce our own environmental footprints. Steven J. Strong, Founder and President, Solar Design Associates presented his work on energy solutions and Bill Browning, Partner, Terrapin/ Bright Green LLC was joined by Center advisory board members Bob Fox and Bill Moomaw for a presentation on "Practical Energy Solutions for Individuals."



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

The Center has recently been featured in *The Boston Globe*, *National Geographic News*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *Religion News Service*, *Geotimes*, *United Press International*, *The Anchorage Daily News*, *The Seattle Post Intelligencer*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Providence Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *ABC News*. Center Associate Director Paul Epstein was featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* in an interview titled "Theories Tying Human Health, Climate Gain Ground." To see a complete list of media appearances please visit:

<http://chge.med.harvard.edu/media/index.html>



NEW STAFF MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome Natalie Wicklund as the Center's new staff assistant. Natalie recently graduated from the University of Iowa with a BA in Political Science and International Studies. In college, Natalie was an award-winning activist in women's issues and civic engagement. Previous to coming to the Center, she served as an Americorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) in Iowa City, Iowa and as a Public Policy Intern at Columbia University's TeenScreen Program.

