

STEVE PAYNE

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

Steve Payne, founder and organizer of the Little League Theatre, is currently working on a radio series about the environment which will air on CBC-AM during the last hour of the *Sunday Morning* program. The show, which will run for five weeks, starts Sunday, July 16.

"It deals with the history of where things like PCBs, CFCs, and dioxins originate, and it isn't really going after manufacturers, which would be the easy way to do it," he states. "Instead, it's saying they manufacture this stuff because that's what the public wants; it looks at how these toxins are created."

For instance, he points out, CFCs (chloro-fluorocarbons) are one of the chief components in freon gas, which is used for refrigerators and every household has at least one. "The scope of the show is worldwide," he says. "Host David Suzuki talks to environmentalists; everyone from key scientists involved in the field to the average person."

Of particular interest, he says, is the segment on "the power of one."

"It's about the power of one person to effect change in their own community or their own company. A lot of corporations have taken a leadership role in the area of the environment," he says.

Northern Telecom, for instance, has developed a strategy that will enable the firm to avoid using CFCs within two years.

How can one person help? "It's as simple as using cotton diapers for your baby," he stresses. "It may be more work, but think of what you're doing. People say they're too busy, but we have to stop being too busy and be willing to take

an extra hour of the week to care about the environment.

"We have to stop using cars and start walking or cycling more often too. One of the saddest scenarios we've unearthed is the decline of the sugar bush. One of our longest-standing

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traditions has been producing the best maple syrup in the world and now the maples are dying because of acid rain."

Acid rain is caused by emissions from incinerators used in the production of consumer goods, from car parts to plastics, he states. "The rain itself falls and eats away at the nutrients in the soil." If you drive along the streets of any town, "you will notice huge maple trees, hundreds of years old and wonder what's going to happen to them."

Although the use of fertilizers is a temporary solution, he admits, "in the long term we have to start being more environmentally conscious about what we're doing. It's vitally important for people to realize it's today, not tomorrow or next week or next year we have a problem."

The program, he hopes, "will scare people into action, but we don't want them to think it's too late; that anything they do now will be futile."

Blue Box recycling programs are "only scratching the surface. It may take five to six per cent of our garbage." Taking cardboard to the recycling depot and composting garden waste are ways people can actively help preserve the environment, he adds.

Although the present generation may not be affected radically by the deteriorating state of the environment, "our children will and their children will. I want the best world possible for my kids. David Suzuki asked 'how much more do we want?' Everyone wants a bigger house, a bigger car. We have to stop all this consuming and start recycling. We have to get back to basics."

The CBC show has travelled worldwide, to places like Helsinki, London and Paris, as well as across Canada, "wherever there's a story."

He is part of the series' production team, working with the executive producer to coordinate everything that happens on the program. "There are three producers, one researcher and myself involved," he notes. He was working on the popular science show *Quirks and Quarks* when they asked him to consider the environment series.

Although Steve was new to the CBC, having been there only two or three weeks, he says things have worked out extremely well. "I was meant to be there for a month and then go back to *Quirks and Quarks*, but they asked me to stay on and finish the series," he notes.

He started at the beginning of April and when the program is complete, he'll be going on to variety radio.

He sees some positive indications that environmental issues are finally being treated with the seriousness they deserve. "We're starting to see the 'greening' of politicians. We're seeing that you can effect change if you demand it."

He says it's up to the public to insist on less food packaging, to stop accepting plastic grocery bags and instead bring their own. "If we do things like that, we'll be much further ahead," he concludes.

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