

A TRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES OF OUR COMMUNITY  
Citizens and Organizations Who Have Made a Difference



by  
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Numerous notable Beaconsfield residents and organizations have done a great deal for the protection of our environment. With this essay I hope to recognize their efforts by bringing their contributions to light. Of course, there are many more groups and individuals that I was unable to present, but their involvement is equally as important. I wish to thank them all for their work to preserve a clean natural environment, the best gift a generation can pass on to the next.

## Willma "Billie" Carter

Born on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1918 in Saskatchewan, Willma (Billie) Carter and her husband Mel moved to Beaurepaire following the Second World War. The couple quickly became “pillars of the community<sup>1</sup>”: Mel and his partner Bill Boxell opened and operated The Hub, a hardware store, becoming “Beaurepaire Village’s first entrepreneurs<sup>2</sup>.” As for Billie, she gave piano lessons to many children of the area and was an active volunteer, helping autistic children through various programs including swimming lessons and acting as a “national judge for synchronized swimming<sup>3</sup>” for twenty years.



The late Billie Carter

Figure 1 [http://www.myvirtualpaper.com/doc/The-Suburban/TheSuburbanFebruary11\\_2009/2009021101/60.html#60](http://www.myvirtualpaper.com/doc/The-Suburban/TheSuburbanFebruary11_2009/2009021101/60.html#60)

This remarkable woman was also known in the community for her avant-garde environmental ways. For instance, Billie stopped using soap in her dishware since she was concerned of its impact on Lac Saint-Louis. In addition, she opposed the use of pesticides, discouraging residents of her East Gables Court community from using this method of weed control. Her influence led to “a ban on pesticides [as] an unwritten requirement of all homeowners<sup>4</sup>,” decades before any such by-laws were adopted by the city. The late resident was also known for taking care of injured animals and birds that

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<sup>1</sup> Chwalkowski, Irene. “Billie Carter: Gone but not forgotten”, *The Suburban*, February 11<sup>th</sup> 2009, consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, [http://www.myvirtualpaper.com/doc/The-Suburban/TheSuburbanFebruary11\\_2009/2009021101/60.html#60](http://www.myvirtualpaper.com/doc/The-Suburban/TheSuburbanFebruary11_2009/2009021101/60.html#60)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous. “Willma (Billie) Carter”, *The Gazette*, December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/montrealgazette/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=122020556#fbLoggedOut>

<sup>4</sup> Chwalkowski, Irene. *Ibid.*

her children and their friends brought to her and she “biked everywhere well into her 80s<sup>5</sup>.” Billie Carter passed away on December 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, but she lives on as an inspiration.

## Clifford Lincoln

Clifford Lincoln, born on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1928 in Mauritius, moved to Canada in 1958. Although he has lived in cities across the country and now resides in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, he spent four decades in Beaconsfield and still considers it “home.<sup>6</sup>” Known for his political career as a liberal deputy, he was Quebec Minister of the Environment from 1985 to 1988. During this time, he led a Subcommittee on the Arctic Region of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development during the Second conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region. The outcome of

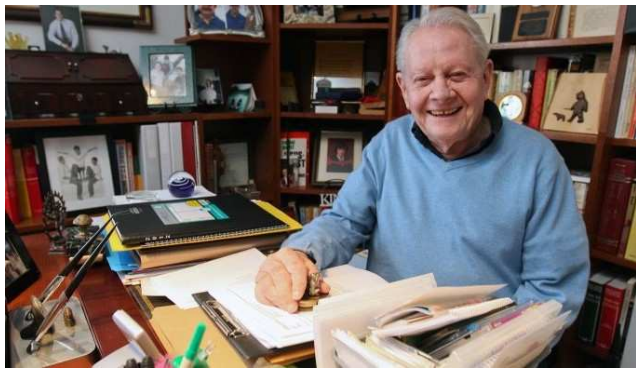


Figure 2 <http://westislandgazette.com/news/story/2012/12/11/lincoln-laments-regressive-times-as-he-prepares-to-launch-his-memoirs/>

this conference involving delegations from Canada, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden was the creation of the Arctic Council. Still active and ever as needed, the goal of this “high level intergovernmental forum [is to provide] a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic<sup>7</sup>.” Furthermore, this organization leads research projects related to issues that affect the Arctic such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity.

During his years as Minister of the Environment, Mr. Lincoln also became the “first minister in Canada [...] to propose and enact an anti-smoking law<sup>8</sup>.” At a time when Sainte-Anne Council members

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Lincoln, Clifford. “Beaconsfield Voices”, *Beaconsfield*, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://100.beaconsfield.ca/voicedetail/8/en/>

<sup>7</sup> Arctic Council Chairmanship Secretariat. “About the Arctic Council”, *Arctic-Council*, consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about>

smoked frequently during meetings and when students and teachers at John Abbott College still smoked in class, such a proposition was quite shocking for the time. However, this law initiated our country's war on tobacco and we have Clifford Lincoln to thank for the smoke-free public spaces we enjoy today.

Still today, this senior is active within the environmental community. For instance, last November he gave a talk during a conference for the 30th anniversary of the Quebec Association against Atmospheric Pollution (AQLPA). According to this association, as a politician Clifford Lincoln contributed to the Species at Risk Act, the Pesticides Act, the St-Lawrence Action Plan created in 1988, the creation of 38 Ecological Reserves and many more ecological projects<sup>9</sup>. He is also at the source of the establishment of the Snowy Owl as Quebec's official bird. In summary, this Beaconsfield resident has played an important role in the "greening" of our province through his environmentally oriented political actions.

## **Anne-Marie Parent**

Anne-Marie Parent has been an influential activist within our community. An urban planning and landscape architect by profession, she was a part of the Beaconsfield City Council from 1989 until 2005. In 1996, when the City of Beaconsfield held a public meeting on the regulation of pesticide use, a number of the citizens present expressed their strong disapproval for the use of this means of pest and weed control. In reaction, Anne-Marie Parent solicited volunteers to help the city educate the community about pesticide alternatives. Within a few weeks, the Alternatives to Pesticides Fair was put together. Featuring guest speakers and 12 booths, it received 300 visitors and was deemed a success. Following this project, some of the volunteers involved created the Beaconsfield Environmental Committee (BEC).

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<sup>8</sup> Tierney, Bill. "Bill Tierney: People like Clifford Lincoln don't come around too often", *The Gazette*, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2012, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://westislandgazette.com/life/story/2012/12/11/bill-tierney-people-like-clifford-lincoln-dont-come-around-too-often/>

<sup>9</sup> AQLPA. "Soirée de conférences à Montréal", *AQLPA*, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://aqlpadepuis30ans.com/evenement-2012-11-16.php>

During her time as a counsellor, she also served as a member of Montreal's Transportation, Environment and Sustainable Development Commission and in 2001 she "was appointed president of the National Committee on the Environmental Protocols of InfraGuide, a team of experts in charge of examining the environmental conditions and opportunities associated with municipal infrastructures and climate change<sup>10</sup>." Her involvement in politics and her environmental activism led to her selection as a member of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) for which she has been working full-time since 2009. According to Parent, "The BAPE is under the authority of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks (Line Beauchamp) and we deal with questions related to the environment. We help the government make enlightened decisions. As commissioners, we are assigned to specific dossiers, public hearings are held and then we report back to the minister<sup>11</sup>." In a nutshell, this Beaconsfield resident has had a considerable impact on the protection of the environment at both the local and the provincial scale.

## **Beaconsfield Environmental Club**

Inaugurated on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1996, this committee of volunteers has played an important role in the advocacy for environmental policies, in informing citizens about pesticide alternatives and in implementing a composter project, among other things. Following the first Alternatives to Pesticides Fair of 1996, the group's first goal was to get the city to implement a ban on pesticides. Although their use was already regulated by By-law 783, this regulation had large loops and was quite ineffective in practice. With this objective in mind, BEC put together a critique of By-law 783 as requested by the City. When the City failed to put together a committee to study this critique and to decide how best to apply it, BEC held a second Alternatives to Pesticides Fair in 1997. BEC's hard work finally paid off when the by-law was amended in April 2000, increasing restrictions on the use of pesticides and thereby improving the cleanliness of our community. In 2004, the City of Montréal passed By-law 04-041 which

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<sup>10</sup> BAPE. "Anne-Marie Parent, member", *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, [http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca/sections/bape/membres/parent\\_eng.htm](http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca/sections/bape/membres/parent_eng.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Kramberger, Albert. "Parent set to tackle major environmental projects", *The Chronicle*, March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://www.westislandchronicle.com/News/Politics/2009-03-06/article-635737/Parent-set-to-tackle-major-environmental-projects/1>

implemented a total ban on “the use and application of pesticides [...] outside buildings on the whole territory of the City<sup>12</sup>,” finalizing the ruling that still applies today.

From 1998 to 1999, the Beaconsfield Environmental Club partnered with the City to offer the Composter Project. Through this initiative, citizens were able to purchase subsidized composters and those who did were also offered “a free one-hour course on composting techniques<sup>13</sup>.” Within the two years, hundreds of composters were successfully sold.

In another effort to green our city, “BEC worked closely with the public works department of the city of Beaconsfield to reforest a vacant lot on the corner of Beaurepaire and Celtic and the banks of Meadowbrook stream<sup>14</sup>.” About 100 citizens volunteered their time to help plant trees and bushes during this 1999 Renaturalization Day. The goal of this project was to “attract birds and wildlife to the area [and to help] stabilize the banks of the stream and filter the water<sup>15</sup>.”

To continue, this committee has been involved in the effort to protect Angell Woods. For example, along with the Angell Woods Protection Society (APAW), the Green Coalition and Scouts Canada, BEC took part in the organization of the Angell Woods Awareness Day that took place on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2003. Held at the entrance to the woods, the event involved nature walks, booths on the biodiversity of the green space, local bands, etc and its



Figure 3 Angell Woods in the fall - [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com)

goal was to show politicians that the community supported the creation of a nature park in Angell Woods. Since 2003, Angell Woods Appreciation Day has become a yearly event and the fight for the protection of “the last undeveloped forested area in Beaconsfield<sup>16</sup>” is still ongoing.

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<sup>12</sup> City of Beaconsfield. “Pesticide”, *Beaconsfield*, 2012, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://www.beaconsfield.ca/en/biodiversity/pesticides.html>

<sup>13</sup> BEC. “BEC History”, *Beaconsfield Environmental Committee*, Consulted April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, <http://cebec.pubnix.net/BEC-history.shtml>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

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