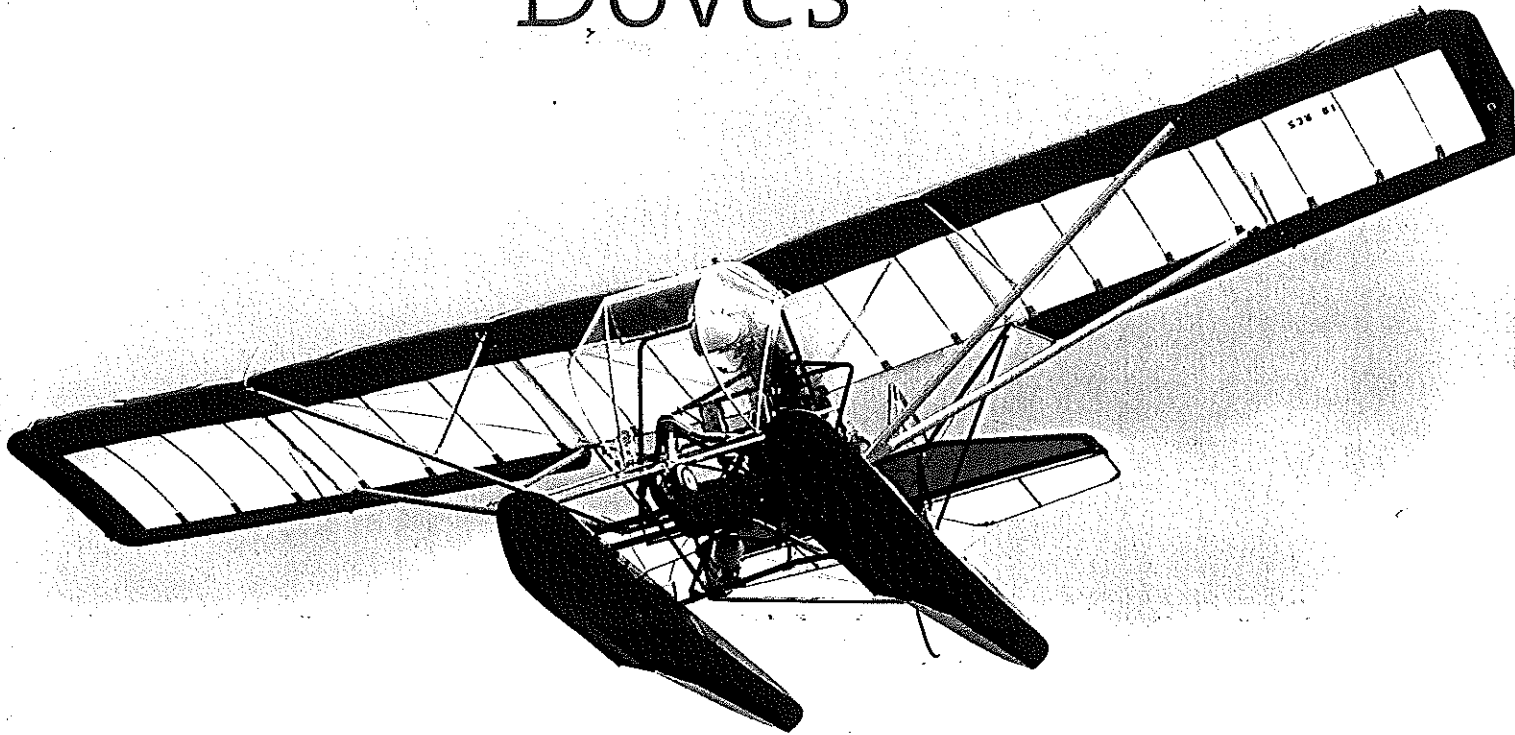


« ASTRONAUT BUZZ ALDRIN »

WATERKEEPER

Fall 2005

Hawks & Doves



*Waterkeeper
Air Force*

*Founder
Joe Payne*

*Restoration
Hardware*

*Million Acres of
Wilderness*

Students Bring Meaning to Ontario Laws

By Krystyn Tulley, Executive Director
Lake Ontario Waterkeeper

Leslie Newman on the Lake Ontario
Waterkeeper Patrol Boat



Pro Bono Students Canada

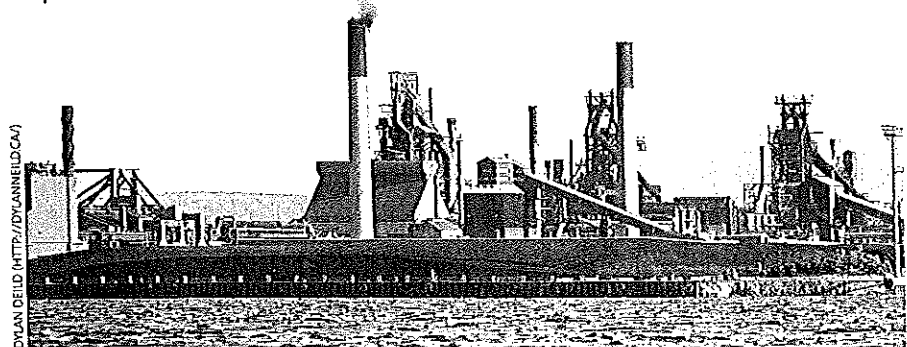
Pro Bono Students Canada was established at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law in 1996 to engage law students from early on in the noble pro bono tradition of the legal profession. The format is simple – match pro bono law students with public interest and community organizations that are ineligible for legal aid but need legal and law-related services. Since its inception, the program has involved more than 6,000 students, transforming the legal profession by developing leaders committed to pro bono and public interest law. These future leaders will influence public policy and strengthen the voices of the disenfranchised.

Between 1993 and 1995, the Ontario government introduced ambitious new rules to protect our province's waterways. The program – called "MISA" or, the Municipal/Industrial Strategy for Abatement – seeks to virtually eliminate persistent toxic substances from the wastewater of nine major industrial sectors in Ontario, including Iron and Steel Manufacturing.

But after 10 years the rules have done little to protect the Great Lakes. Now, a team of volunteer law students from Pro Bono Students Canada are working with Lake Ontario Waterkeeper to change this. The students began by studying a number of MISA facilities on Lake Ontario. Their research results were shocking: The MISA rules for steel plants give four of Ontario's large polluters permission to dump a combined total of up to 87 kg – almost 200 lbs – of lead into the Great Lakes in a single day. Averaged out over a year, that's a combined 13,000 kilograms (14.5 U.S. tons) into the Great Lakes without ever breaking Ontario's rules. Lead is widely considered one of the most toxic substances humans can release into the environment.

Law student Leslie Newman wanted to follow up on this research and won a Donner Fellowship to spend the summer working with Lake Ontario Waterkeeper pursuing the lead permitting issue. Leslie's research uncovered serious concerns with the steel plants in question. Two of the facilities are located in

One of Hamilton Canada's steel plants on banks of Lake Ontario.



"The oath that lawyers take when admitted to the bar compels them to work for greater justice. This does not mean that they work only for justice when they get paid, but perhaps more idealistically, that they work to create a more just society."

– Canada Supreme Court Justice J.C. Major

the same Lake Ontario port – Hamilton Harbour – where lead is a contaminant of concern. What's more, the International Commission for Environmental Cooperation recently singled out those two steel plants as two of Canada's largest emitters of known cancer-causing substances.

Though Hamilton Harbour has been an industrial port for generations, it used to be the most productive fishery on the lake. Troubled by MISA's apparent failure to eliminate lead from steel plant discharges, Leslie helped Lake Ontario Waterkeeper draft an administrative challenge to the lax permits. Waterkeeper Mark Mattson filed the challenge with the Province of Ontario in July and expects a decision later this year.

This challenge is just one demonstration of how law students and nonprofit organizations can team up to make a real impact in their communities. For the nonprofit, the partnership brings resources, talent, and enthusiasm. For the students, it brings experience. Just ask Leslie: "I cannot speak highly enough of the experience this fellowship has given me. Perhaps most valuable of all, it has reinforced my belief that individually and collectively we can make a difference in this world and the study of law gives us invaluable tools with which to do so." **WK**