History of a Student-Led Organization II

Final Report

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"Towards a Universal Infrastructure of Dissent: The History of OPIRG Peterborough Through Student Mobilization, Community Gardening, and Women's Health, 1990-1998."

Alternatively: "History of a Student-Led Organization II"

Mason Godden

Abstract: OPIRG Peterborough celebrates its 40th anniversary of social and environmental justice activism in the Peterborough community. As a continuation of Rihannon Johnson's *History of a Student-Led Organization I,* this project chronicles the development of OPIRG Peterborough during the 1990's. Using sociologist Alan Sears' 'infrastructure of dissent' paradigm, each chapter explores a different social and environmental campaign that OPIRG Peterborough was involved with during the 1990's. In doing so, the historical evolution of the organization is traced. At the theoretical level, however, the infrastructure of dissent (and its implications for social mobilization) is re-evaluated in every chapter, culminating in a conclusion that posits that the infrastructure of dissent may be more applicable to the study of social movements than Sears originally conceptualized. By contextualizing OPIRG Peterborough as part of a wider student movement in Chapter One, it is seen that the infrastructure of dissent has a professional 'branch,' one that is necessary for the survival of grassroots organizations. By analysing the historical development of the Peterborough Ecology Garden in Chapter Two, it is argued that the infrastructure of dissent has the capacity to homogenize the organizational identities of environmental justice organizations that may otherwise appear fractured. In Chapter Three, the capacity for the infrastructure of dissent to foster individual identities within OPIRG Peterborough working groups is discussed. By developing these particular facets of the infrastructure of dissent, it is argued that the infrastructure itself may be key to formulating effective social mobilizations *outside* of strictly labour-political dichotomies.

HIST 4020D: Honours Thesis

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Submitted in full TBD

Table of Contents

Introduction

Building and Re-evaluating the Infrastructure of Dissent: OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's

The 40th Anniversary

This project continues and is inspired by Rhiannon Johnson's *History of a Student-Led Organization I* which chronicled the history of OPIRG Peterborough from 1976-1989. The project was facilitated by the Trent Community Research Center and supervised by Yolanda Jones, then-coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough, and Dr. Nadine Changfoot, professor of Political Studies at Trent University. It was prepared for the organization's 35th anniversary. As an identifier of areas for further research in the history of the PIRGs, Johnson's project is particularly useful. In fact, many of the sources reproduced in this project are present thanks to their establishment in Johnson's work. The project is also helpful for those unfamiliar with the PIRGs, as much of the project is devoted to explaining the functionality and purpose of the organization. Beyond this, however, the historical content in Johnson's project is lacking. Little attempt is made to link any of OPIRG Peterborough's campaigns in the 1970's or 1980's to broader historical trends, and little context is given as to why (apart from organizational reasons) these campaigns were initiated in the first place. Though the project moves chronologically – with such detail, in fact, that the historical narrative is separated by each individual year –no broader connection between the PIRGs and the historical landscape that they inhabit appears. What is significantly missing are analyses regarding how both history shaped the organization, and how the organization shaped history.

This project will utilize a different focus and approach than that employed by Johnson in her own study. Here, the PIRGs and their campaigns will be placed within their appropriate historical contexts. Most importantly, the evolution of OPIRG Peterborough's organizational identity during the 1990's will be traced. By focusing thematically on 'identity', I will explain the significance of critical events impacting OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's through the "infrastructure of dissent."

The Infrastructure of Dissent

The infrastructure of dissent is conceptualized by sociologist Alan Sears in *The Next New Left: A History of the Future*.[1] Acting as the guiding framework of Sears' analysis of grassroots organizing in Windsor in the 1940's, the infrastructure of dissent aims to explain "the ways… through which [working class mobilizations] develop the collective capacities for memory, analysis, vision, and solidarity required to sustain ongoing currents of resistance."[2] Sears claims that "such an infrastructure allows activists to build forms of counter-power that can challenge the dominance of employers and the state," and that "in the absence of this infrastructure, it is more difficult to sustain effective mobilization."[3] Sears uses the infrastructure of dissent to explain how Windsor auto worker's employed by Ford were "capable of sustaining the long and bitter 1945… strike."[4] Situating his analysis within the political activity of Drouillard Road, a street in Windsor near the Ford plant where many activists mobilized, Sears' work characterizes

[1] Sears has incorporated the infrastructure of dissent paradigm into several other published works, however, *The Next New Left* is perhaps the best showcase of its historical function. For an interesting sociological retooling of the infrastructure of dissent into 'infrastructures of resistance,' see Shantz, Jeff. *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance.* New York: Routledge, 2016. For our purposes, the infrastructure of dissent as it is conceptualized in *The Next New Left* is the most effective for historical analysis, based on the fact that Sears himself approaches the study of Drouillard Road historically, noting the historical circumstances of 1945 versus subsequent decades as key to the development (or erosion) of the infrastructure of dissent.
[2] Sears, Alan. *The Next New Left: A History of the Future.* Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2014. 4.
[3] Sears, *The Next New Left,* 5.
[4] Ibid.

the infrastructure of dissent as a "broad range of organizations and networks that [support] the development of activist activities."[5] This last point regarding the infrastructure of dissent is critical to understanding the activities of OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's, as it will be seen that OPIRG Peterborough and the provincial network that it is a part of embodies the characteristics of the infrastructure of dissent laid out by Sears in his study of Drouillard Road.

The infrastructure of dissent being composed of informal groups is important to Sears' original conceptualization, as he notes that "informal neighbourhood and workplace networks" were important institutions when it came to effectively mobilizing.[6] As will be seen in Chapter Three in the context of OPIRG Peterborough, the informal branch of the infrastructure of dissent is critical to developing strategic mobilizing around social justice issues. For all of the facets of the infrastructure of dissent articulated by Sears, however, there are many more facets that remain undeveloped. There are other characteristics of the infrastructure of dissent worth considering, and if developed, they could demonstrate a larger significance for the infrastructure of dissent. These undeveloped facets indicate that the infrastructure of dissent may be more of a universal characteristic of activist mobilization than previously thought, rather than being something strictly applicable to grassroots organizing. As the case of OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's will demonstrate, the infrastructure of dissent is a framework in labour history that warrants further exploration.

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[5] Ibid. Sears describes the infrastructure of dissent present on Drouillard Road as follows: "it was the commercial strip of a residential and industrial district that included not only Ford plants but also the homes of workers and their families. The large taverns served as places for workers after work and on breaks, while politicized ethnic halls, like the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple, provided cultural and educational events as well as meeting spaces. Drouillard Road was also a pedestrian shopping street, a place for informal contact and a location for merchants, who were integrated into the community." In this description, Sears implicates a number of facets of the infrastructure of dissent that appear crucial to its make-up, namely the notion that the infrastructure is largely informal and ethnically diverse.

[6] Sears, *The Next New Left*, 6. Sears' exact wording is more in line with the typical rhetoric of labour histories, but for the purposes of the project may be generalized: "the infrastructure of dissent provides a means to develop knowledge out of collective experience, enhancing the ability to work strategically as mobilizations develop."

OPIRG: Then and Now

OPIRG Peterborough is a non-profit, student-led organization committed to researching and combatting social and environmental justice issues. Focused on education, activism, and generating public discussion regarding such issues, OPIRG Peterborough has been active in the Peterborough community for forty years. Part of the wider OPIRG network spanning Ontario (with similar provincial networks across Canada and the United States), OPIRG Peterborough began on the Trent campus in 1976 when students voted via referendum to create it.[7] This was shortly after the founding of OPIRG Waterloo in 1973, and the successes of Oregon State PIRG (OSPIRG) and Minnesota PIRG (MPIRG) in the United States.[8] Trent University was therefore one of the earliest adherents of the PIRG ideal.

Today, the OPIRG network contains eleven PIRGs with locations in cities such as Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and Guelph. Other provincial PIRG networks in Canada can be found in Alberta, Quebec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. In the United States, where the first PIRGs were founded, the Federation of State PIRGs encompasses over forty-seven states and employs approximately four-hundred professional lobbyists. The administrative characteristics of the Federation of State PIRGs adheres more closely to the cohesive network originally outlined by Ralph Nader, the founder of the North American PIRG movement. The Canadian PIRG model, by contrast, is considerably less involved in a provincial network, with more autonomy given to the local chapters. As will be discussed, this key difference in OPIRG's structure created the opportunity for OPIRG Peterborough to make impressions on the Peterborough community that only a local issues-oriented organization could

[7] The origins of OPIRG Peterborough, as well as detailed information on how PIRGs are formed in both Canada and the United States, are recounted in Johnson's *History of a Student-Led Organization I.*
[8] Nader, Ralph, and Donald K. Ross. *Action for a Change: A Student's Manual for Public Interest Organizing.* New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971. 55.

make. As will be seen moving forward, the Canadian – and more specifically the Ontario – PIRG model injected social and environmental justice activism with an important 'local flavor' unique to each respective chapter.

The PIRG Movement in History and Historiography

Official histories of OPIRG Peterborough are scant. This is not to say, however, that histories of OPIRG Peterborough and the PIRGs do not exist. Important historiographical material concerning the history of the PIRGs can be found in Ralph Nader's *Action for a Change: A Student's Manual for Public Interest Organizing.* Nader, the founder of the PIRG movement, proposed the idea of "initiatory democracy," a "pure" form of democracy wherein the wealthy were expected to give up materialism in the service of the less fortunate.[9] Nader's political philosophy was largely anti-corporate, and this provided the backbone for his intellectual roadmap of the United States PIRG model.[10] In essence, initiatory democracy sought to remove the confines placed upon traditional democracy and return it to a purer form, one that was more concerned with actually "communing" with the people in which it serves.[11]

To Nader, students were always initiatory democracy's key actors.[12] Students had the ideal research capabilities and enthusiasm that was needed in order to create social change. In the

[9] Nader, *Action for a Change*, 15.
[10] Nader, *Action for a Change,* 9-12. To Nader, such greed and lack of compassion in the private sector is the cause of much social injustice, from defunct automobiles, to poverty, and environmental degradation.
[11] Nader, *Action for a Change,* 15.
[12] Nader, *Action for a Change*, 4-5. Nader argues that students are apt to abide by the principles of an "initiatory democracy" – the 'first,' or primitive form of democracy before it is influenced by abstractions of wealth and power – due to their skepticism and general mistrust of power, as they see its uses and abuses more clearly than others. Others are described as the 'parent' generation, or put more crudely, the generation(s) that come(s) before the children of the 1960's. As Nader explicitly describes: "parents remember the Depression and are thankful for jobs… Their children… look for more meaningful work and wonder about those who still do not have jobs in an economy of plenty… Parents remember World War II and remember what the enemy could have done to America; children look on the Vietnam War and… wonder what America has done to other people… To parents, the noxious plume from factory smoke-stacks was the smell of payroll; children view such sights as symbols of our domestic chemical warfare that is contaminating the air, water, and soil…"

United States PIRG model, students were to work closely with what Nader called "on-the-job citizens," otherwise known as whistleblowers: workers who saw injustices, mismanagements, or forms of oppression in their workplaces and sought to combat them.[13] On-the-job citizens were important to Nader because they represented the potential for change to come from within the workplace. They were the most aware of the issues at hand because they could identify such issues, not only in their everyday lives, but in their professional lives as well. The inside intelligence that on-the-job citizens had could expose corporate injustice with ease, as Nader did not believe that external activists had enough knowledge to combat the problem from the outside. The United States PIRG model was Nader's means of channeling students' creativity, passion, and enthusiasm for social justice issues into a meaningful collaboration between students and whistle-blowing lobbyists.[14]

Nader's call for a partnership between whistleblowers and students reflected the marriage of activism and research that took place in the student movement during the 1960's. Federal funding for research, particularly in the sciences, increased at the height of the Cold War, and the population growth in North America brought on by the baby boom ensured that enrollment in university during the post-war period increased substantially.[15] Nuclear energy protest, Black Power, and LGBTQ movements in the 1960's provided "avenues for protest," expanding in the 1990's to include "issues of promoting diversity, group identity, and multiculturalism."[16] By the

[13] Nader, *Action for a Change*, 9. Nader, whose written work began as criticism of the auto industry, uses the example of a General Motors inspector who went public sometime in the 1960's when he realized that "defectively welded Chevrolets…allowed exhaust gases…to seep into passenger compartments." The 'whistleblowing' aspect of the inspector's public outcry came about due to the fact that the inspector had originally reported the deficiency to the plant manager, who refused to fix the problem immediately.
[14] Nader, *Action for a Change*, 14.
[15] Broadhurst, Christopher J. "Camupus Activism in the 21st Century: A Framing." *New Directions for Higher Education.* Volume 2014. Issue 167. (2014): 7.
[16] Broadhurst, "Campus Activism in the 21st Century," 10-11.

1990's, university campuses became highly political entities, providing fertile grounds for research-based activism.

According to Nader's vision, PIRGs were to employ "full-time professional advocates… recruited by and representing students."[17] Nader's "effective" PIRG staffed ten professional lobbyists, whom he estimated would require the support of a campus totalling 70,000 students to properly pay. He acknowledged that few campuses totalled a student population so large, and that likely not all students would support the PIRGs. Here, he assumed the PIRG model would operate as a levy group (referred to in the United States as a "checkoff") which was to be refundable should students decide to withhold their support. Thus, Nader concluded that local chapters working alone would not suffice, and that PIRGs needed to unify as part of a state network.[18]

Though Nader did concede that PIRG structures needed to vary by state, he did provide a "general overview" of what the state network would look like: university students were to elect their peers to a student-led board, and the student board would then elect lobbyists to represent PIRG interests at the state level.[19] In the Canadian PIRG model, however, neither Nader's provincial network nor his professional "on-the-job citizen" lobbyists came to fruition, at least as

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Nader, *Action for a Change,* 31-32; 38-39. There are some inherent issues in this model: "if 71,000 students from 10 schools participate… and pay $1.50 per semester, $213,000.00 would be collected." This figure assumes too much. At best, this would mean that every student votes positively in the referendum and does not opt to be refunded, and that at least half the schools in the state support the idea of joining a state network and share funds. There is no certainty that such decisions can be guaranteed, which Nader fully admits to, opining that his proposed budget is scalable, depending on what level of support from levies and other interested universities in state. This is contradictory, since Nader earlier estimated that a staff of 10 professionals would be the number necessary to operate a successful PIRG.

[19] Nader, *Action for a Change,* 45-47. According to Nader's structure, the local chapters are in near complete subservience to the state boards. Approval must be sought by the local chapter from the state board in order to "avoid duplication" in programs and projects. It is also suggested that the state boards are the main "think tanks," coming up with goals and program ideas and then leaving it in the hands of the local chapters to devise.

seamlessly as it did in the United States. The 'ideal' PIRG exemplified by the United States, therefore, did not provide Canadian PIRGs with a model to replicate.

The second most prevalent sources available concerning the PIRGs are histories written by students or former members of the PIRGs, a good example of this being Johnson's *History of a Student-Led Organization I*. Like the U.S. PIRGs, OPIRG Peterborough began as a response to the irresponsibility of multi-national corporations and government mismanagement.[20] Early in Canadian PIRG history, however, it became clear that the provincial network model that effectively bound the United States PIRGs together would not translate well in Canada. A lack of agreed upon objectives between the local chapters due to regional differences caused confusion within the OPIRG network.[21] The organizational identity of OPIRG, and what the collective focus of the provincial network would be therefore came into question frequently.

The notion of identity crisis is heavily referenced throughout Johnson's history of OPIRG. In the 1980's, a few pivotal moments in OPIRG's identity crisis unfolded, marking lasting changes in the organization's history. OPIRG Western was taken over by the student council, receiving a student council appointed board as opposed to a student elected board; Hamilton and Windsor lost their campus funding; Ottawa PIRG was forced to return much of its loan money due to (alleged) financial mismanagement; and Waterloo, weary of the internal fighting and constant calls for restructuring, declared autonomy from the provincial network, renaming itself WPIRG after officially seceding.[22]

[20] Johnson, Rhiannon. *History of a Student-Led Organization I.* Trent Community Research Centre, 2012. 4.
[21] Johnson, *History of a Student-Led Organization I*, 6.
[22] Johnson, *History of a Student-Led Organization I*, 21.

Certainly no help to the ongoing identity crisis of OPIRG was the widespread protest against nuclear energy in the grassroots community.[23] OPIRG Peterborough in particular wrote extensively on nuclear energy, and in fact had a publication that was devoted to the issue in the 1980's known as *The Nuclear Free Press*. A broadsheet newspaper written, published, and distributed by OPIRG Peterborough, the *Nuclear Free Press* was originally a publication of the provincial network, then called the *Birchbark Alliance*.[24] The two publications merged in 1982, keeping the *Nuclear Free Press* moniker but based out of OPIRG Peterborough.[25] In some student-penned histories, the departure of WPIRG from the provincial network is attributed to the increase in nuclear protest sustained by PIRG publications such as the *Nuclear Free Press*. Waterloo's dependence on nuclear energy for the success of its engineering program made them unable to support the provincial network's commitment to protesting nuclear energy, therefore giving them reason to secede from the provincial network.[26]

In other histories, the Canadian identity of the PIRGs is embraced, with analyses explaining the development of autonomous local chapters as an inherently 'Canadian' development. The tendency in these histories to view the PIRGs through a 'Canadian' lens undoubtedly paralleled the strong currents of 1960's Canadian nationalism that carried on into the 1970's, '80's and '90's. The Canadian nationalist undercurrent in historical study, in the context of the PIRGs, highlighted the ability of social justice to "transform a society that many

[23] Davidson, Matthew. *Contestation in Print: The Nuclear Free Press, OPIRG, and the Environmental History of Peterborough.* Student essay for HIST-3756 "Environmental Crisis": Trent University, 8. Davidson explains the departure of Waterloo from the provincial network differently than Johnson. While Johnson seems to be of the opinion that Waterloo grew tired of the constant infighting and questions of identity, Davidson directly attributes Waterloo dropping out as due to backlash from the engineering community over the growth of nuclear protest.
[24] Davidson, *Contestation in Print,* 3.
[25] Davidson, *Contestation in Print,* 9.
[26] Davidson, *Contestation in Print,* 8.

saw as increasingly fundamentally unjust and unequal."[27] Noting the need for professional lobbyists in the American model, some histories noted that "[the American model was] less relevant in the Canadian context with its parliamentary party systems and less accessible court systems."[28] As such, the issues that the Canadian PIRGs tried to combat were inevitably 'Canadian' in nature.

Despite local chapters operating mostly under their own autonomy, the Canadian PIRGs needed to come together eventually: whenever they tried, however, budget, travel expenses, and distance interfered. Thus, the debate of PIRG centralization resurfaced. Attempts to quell the ongoing debate ended in more unnecessary restructuring.[29] Many OPIRG staff and board members resigned or retired, and the provincial network went on "underfunded and understaffed, trying to please everyone and do everything."[30] An issue particularly recounted in some histories is the fact that giving local chapters more autonomy allowed PIRGS to protest issues that their campus were in favor of protesting.[31]

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[27] Milligan, Ian. *Rebel Youth: 1960's Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada.* Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2014. 4. Milligan's definition of Canadian nationalism has been chosen as a parallel to currents in PIRG histories due to his emphasis on "the central question of the working class and labour unrest." Though the actors of OPIRG Peterborough are not referred to here as 'labourers' and the PIRG campaigns are not considered 'unrest,' Milligan's idea that "debates on social change became key to the very foundation of Canadian New Leftists" demonstrates the parallels between labour history, PIRG history, and the role of 1960's Canadian nationalism in both. The most beneficial way to view the actors in OPIRG Peterborough's history is as Leftists, as described by Milligan.

[28] Farbridge, Karen, and Peter Cameron. "PIRG Power: Public Interest Research Groups in Canada Celebrate 25 Years of Student Activism". *Alternatives Journal.* Vol. 24, Issue No. 3. (1998): 3. Ken Dryden, then-Montreal Canadiens goalie who had interned with one of Nader's groups during his time in law school, called together the heads of student governments and asked them to organize a provincial network at the cost of $10 per student – backlash occurred immediately due to the fact that many student governments were already having a hard time staying afloat with the budgets they were operating on. From here, local chapters developed as opposed to having the more centralized model noted above, common in American systems. Farbridge and Cameron comment that this option allowed chapters to operate on smaller expenses than what Dryden's proposal would have operated at.

[29] Farbridge and Cameron, "PIRG Power," 4.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid. Here, the story of the Birch Bark Alliance/NFP protesting nuclear energy despite three of the eleven PIRGS having strong engineering programs is recounted.

What followed was an interesting experiment in maintaining a decentralized provincial network. Administrative functions of the provincial network were delegated amongst the local chapters. The provincial role of providing staff training became a shared responsibility, falling to the coordinator of each chapter. Systems dedicated to supporting new PIRG programs were established. These efforts reflected each local chapter's commitment to PIRG ideals without having to be supervised by a provincial network. In time, PIRG staff across various chapters recognized that they had found innovative ways to address many of the functions of the provincial organization without the need for a provincial office. Provincial functions each year were determined at the provincial annual general meeting, which board and staff members of all Ontario PIRGs attended. However, planning for provincial campaigns was almost exclusively done at provincial staff meetings. Consequently, student participation in the planning and implementation of provincial activities was reduced. Staff were meeting at least three times a year to share resources and plan for provincial initiatives, but communication and networking between students of different PIRGs remained a challenge.[32]

The inaccessibility of these provincial meetings to students resulted in the removal of the provincial coordinator position in 1994.[33] The provincial network continued to "play a vital role" when it came to financially supporting local chapters, but the commitment to local autonomy discouraged provincial organizing.[34] The departure from the American model was therefore inevitable to the development of a Canadian PIRG identity, as the provincial network model created unanticipated organizational issues, the likes of which were offered no solutions by the American model.

[32] Farbridge and Cameron, "PIRG Power," 6.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

OPIRG and Ontario in the 1990's

Whilst battling an ongoing crisis of identity, OPIRG Peterborough found itself situated amidst an uncertain political and social climate in the 1990's. Between 1985 and 2003, three different political parties came to power in Ontario, creating significantly different political, social, and economic climates with each successive government.[35] This resulted in four general elections in Ontario within ten years between 1985 and 1995.[36] As some historians have argued, the political upheaval caused by the rapid successions of government resulted in political scepticism by many Ontarians regarding the effectiveness of their leaders.[37]

This scepticism was certainly not allayed by the unpredictable changes that occurred with each succeeding government. Under the Liberal government of David Petersen between 1985 and 1990 , Ontario witnessed a period of heightened social spending.[38] After losing to the NDP in the 1990 election, however, social spending became *too* generous in the views of many in the electorate, a situation exacerbated by economic downturn. Sliding into crisis, Ontario was on the brink of its worst recession since the 1930's when Bob Rae took power:

> "By the spring of 1994, welfare payments amounted to more than $6.2 billion annually and just under 1.4 million Ontarians were on social assistance. Provincial debt mushroomed from $42 billion to $97 billion between 1990 and 1995"; and "shortly after the signing of the North American free Trade Agreement in 1990-opposed by Peterson and Rae for its threats to Canadian culture and out of fears that it would lead to de-industrialization-the Canadian economy went into a tailspin. Manufacturing jobs disappeared. The recession hit Ontario harder than any other region in Canada: by the spring of 1991 unemployment reached 9 .6 per cent. Double what it had been in 1988. Between 1989 and 1993. Ontario lost 200.000."[39]

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[35] Baskerville, Peter. *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario.* Oxford University Press, 2005. 232.
[36] White, Randall. *Ontario Since 1985: A Contemporary History.* Eastend Books, 1998. 93.
[37] White, *Ontario Since 1985,* 92.
[38] Baskerville, *Sites of Power,* 234. Baskerville argues that "for perhaps the first time in the twentieth century, Ontario became a leader in the implementation of social programs in Canada."
[39] Baskerville, *Sites of Power,* 235, 242. Additionally, Baskerville notes that when Jean Chretien came to power, cuts were made to education. The PIRGs were therefore precariously placed between poor social spending and poor educational contributions.

University campuses, where PIRGs received their core funding, were not safe from the crisis. In what historian Randall White has called the "agonized age of Pink Floyd," universities had to cut their spending in order to survive the uncertain economic climate of the 1990's.[40] Federal revenues returned $1 billion less than projected, and promises made regarding post-secondary funding were not kept.[41]

The social spending policies of Petersen and Rae, however, were unlike the calculated attack on social programming made by Mike Harris' Progressive-Conservative government which came to power in 1995. Reducing basic welfare rates by 22%, Harris and the 'Common-Sense Revolution' appeared determined to eliminate the drive for social justice.[42] Winning the premiership on his promise to break the cycles of dependency on social assistance, Mike Harris explained the economic crises as due to generous social spending that encouraged people to be lazy and dependent.[43] Effectively, the 13% of total budget spending on welfare made by Rae in 1994 was reduced significantly. Social assistance now involved job training programs and community volunteering.[44] As will be seen in the coming chapters, the political climate of Ontario subtly though importantly influenced the development of OPIRG Peterborough's organizational identity.

The Theoretical Application of the Infrastructure of Dissent

The infrastructure of dissent paradigm outlined above will not be employed here as an explanatory measure. With each ensuing chapter, Sears' conceptualization of the infrastructure

[40] White, *Ontario Since 1985,* 136.
[41] Ibid.
[42] The 22% figure is provided by Cameron, David, and Graham White. *Cycling into Saigon: The Conservative Transition in Ontario.* University of British Columbia Press, 2000. 140.
[43] Struthers, James. "Welfare to Workfare: Poverty and the 'Dependency Debate' in Post-Second World War Ontario." *Canada Since Confederation: A Reader.* Edited by Edgar-Andre Montigny and Lori Chambers. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 429.
[44] Struthers, "Welfare to Workfare," 430, 445.

of dissent will be re-evaluated. Each chapter will highlight a different facet of the infrastructure of dissent that may not have been considered by Sears, or may not have manifested themselves in an applicable way in his discussion of Drouillard Road. There are three new facets of the infrastructure of dissent worth considering, with each facet being the focus of each chapter.

Chapter One's focus on the larger student movement in Canada will demonstrate that the infrastructure of dissent has an institutional arm, one that legitimizes and supports grassroots initiatives. By analyzing the Peterborough Ecology Garden's merger with Peterborough Greenup in the mid-1990's, Chapter Two will demonstrate that the infrastructure of dissent provides different, though structurally similar grassroots movements with a shared sense of identity. Chapter Three, in slight contrast, will demonstrate that the infrastructure of dissent does not always overburden its organizations with a uniform identity, and that grassroots projects may create for themselves distinct identities, yet contribute to the same goals as the broader infrastructure.

In the conclusion, the facets of the infrastructure of dissent explored in each chapter will be synthesized in order to make a concise re-evaluation of its significance. It will be posited in the conclusion that the infrastructure of dissent is a more universal concept than Sears' analysis of Drouillard Road would have one believe, one that does not need to be restricted to the mobilization of grassroots organizations. Rather, the conclusion will claim that forming an infrastructure of dissent is a fundamental aspect of mobilizing, one that allows any 'dissenting' network of organizations to mobilize effectively against officialdom. Additionally, the claim made by Sears in the conclusion to *The Next New Left* that the infrastructure of dissent erodes during periods of social and economic austerity will be challenged.

A Note on Influential Figures

In several instances, it will be seen that individuals were instrumental in the success of OPIRG Peterborough projects. It is therefore important to state outright that individuals are key actors in the history of OPIRG Peterborough. This may seem somewhat contradictory to the infrastructure of dissent paradigm, as it stresses the strength of dissenting groups. I argue, however, that the relationship in OPIRG Peterborough history between influential figures and the infrastructure of dissent is mutual. The infrastructure of dissent lies dormant if not guided by focused individuals; likewise, the ideas of the individual cannot come to fruition without skillful utilization of the infrastructure of dissent. Appendix C contains biographical and contextual information regarding noteworthy OPIRG Peterborough personnel and affiliates, though it is worth briefly recounting them here.

Though OPIRG Peterborough strives to operate in a non-hierarchical fashion, hierarchical terminology is necessary for outsiders to understand the administration of the organization. In this sense, the coordinator of the PIRG is the leader, usually a graduate or professional who handles most administrative duties and supports the board and working groups by liaising with the provincial network. The board is the creative element of the organization that plans the campaigns, and the volunteers are the facilitators of the board's creativity. The coordinator is therefore the one who ensures that the board and volunteers have the means necessary to implement their campaigns. Often, the coordinator also facilitates professional development workshops that help improve mobilization techniques around social and environmental justice issues. If the coordinator is not a recent graduate, then they are usually an experienced professional activist, making their ability to navigate the infrastructure of dissent all the more important.

Notable OPIRG Peterborough coordinators in the 1990's who were involved in the campaigns discussed here are Keith Stewart, Toby Mueller, and Jillian Ritchie. Stewart and Mueller were largely influential in forming the administrative apparatus that governed the Ecology Garden before its merger with Peterborough Greenup. Their involvement in the steering committee transposed some of OPIRG Peterborough's administrative functionality onto the Ecology Garden, thus creating a recognizable identity. Conversely, Ritchie's tactful networking between a number of ecofeminist and environmental justice groups during her membership in the WHP allowed that working group to separate itself identity-wise from OPIRG, then its parent organization.

In the case of Chapter Two, however, the genius utilization of the infrastructure of dissent can sometimes come from outside rather than within. Cathy Dueck, an occasional volunteer with OPIRG Peterborough, though mostly an independent activist and educator, is an important example of this. As will be seen in Chapter Two, some individuals can work with the PIRGs and the city to achieve successful environmental justice mobilization, themselves being the mastermind of the campaign, not the PIRGs. Moving forward, it is important to understand the important relationships that exist between individual activists and the network of organizations at their disposal.

Chapter One

"In Clown We Trust": OPIRG Peterborough and the Canadian Student Movement, 1993-1998.

Student Protest, Mobilization, and Organization Before 1990

Though student activism in the 1990's displayed noteworthy differences with previous incarnations of the student movement, there were some important thematic trends that remained from prior decades. Specifically, the presence of New Left ideals greatly determined the interpersonal strength of student organizations. Historian Doug Nesbitt has termed this phenomenon "the radical trip," in reference to the important role of New Leftism in student organizations during the 1960's.[45] In his study of the Canadian Union of Students (CUS), Nesbitt demonstrates that New Left ideals helped student organizations mobilize around political issues, but created divisive relations between individual members.[46] Aside from the consistent struggle to adequately represent the needs of French Canadian students, the CUS drew inspiration from American Leftist movements such as the Berkeley protests, Selma, and Vietnam.[47] Following in the footsteps of these events ensured that the CUS became a heavily politicized student organization, shifting away from the service-oriented focus of prior student organizations.[48]

The politicization of student governments is perhaps best exemplified by the *Declaration of the Canadian Student*, a document authored by the CUS in the 1960's that called for free tuition, the "democratization of education," and mobilization around South African apartheid and the War in Vietnam.[49] This development, according to Nesbitt, is the product of the CUS's adoption of student syndicalism, an idea primarily introduced by French Canadian members of the CUS that "define[d] the rejection of apolitical student unions" common prior to the period.[50] The ideals of student syndicalism quickly transformed into the "Student Power" movement when

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[45] Nesbitt, Douglas J. *The 'Radical Trip' of the Canadian Union of Students, 1963-69.* M.A. Thesis. Trent University. January 2010.
[46] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip'*, 4. In particular, Nesbitt notes that the CUS is in fact a rebranding. The organization was originally known as the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS), but after deliberations over the representation of French Canadian students, it was decided that the NFCUS incarnation of the CUS was not as encompassing of the body of student issues looking to be addressed.
[47] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip'*, 5.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip',* 7.

Carl Davidson, a student activist in 1966, began creating a network of "Free Student Unions," dedicated to "[building] up effective opposition to" ineffective student governments.[51] It has been posited that this development radicalized the student movement, propelling the students of the 1960's into a position where they could effectively advocate for social change.[52] Nesbitt notes that although New Leftist factions were minorities in the CUS, the ideals of the New Left movement happening concurrently with the "events of the mid-1960's" made radical mobilization more common.[53]

A similar spike in student activism occurred prior in the 1930's when a number of global events such as "collapsed capitalist economies, the rise of fascism, and the imminence of war" proved "particularly conducive" to student organizing.[54] This period, wherein the CUS's original incarnation the NFCUS began, marked the emergence of the politicized student organizations. Previously, such groups remained neutral in expressing political opinion. The NFCUS, for example, stayed idle during protests of the Depression era.[55] With the onset of the Second World War fast approaching, however, student groups remained incapable of withholding from political involvement. A good example are the French Canadian members of the Canadian Student Alliance (CSA), who fell victim to surveillance by the RCMP after their protest of conscription earned them communist accusations.[56]

Each period of the student movement presented inherent obstacles to effectively mobilizing. In the 1930's, "university authorities did not consider students fully formed adults,"

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[51] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip',* 8.
[52] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip,'* 9.
[53] Nesbitt, *The 'Radical Trip'*, 172.
[54] Axelrod, Paul. *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada during the Thirties.* McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. 128.
[55] Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class,* 129.
[56] Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class,* 145.

evidenced by the firing of a University of Toronto newspaper editor for being atheist.[57] This was less of a problem for students in the 1960's, who Nesbitt has noted above faced the more present issue of New Left minorities and a departure from service-driven organizations. As will be seen in the 1990's, the economic austerity brought on by the Common Sense Revolution forced student organizers to creatively mobilize around an ever-growing horizon of new social justice issues. However, it will be seen that administrative infighting resulting from differences in political opinion remained a common characteristic of student mobilizing in the 1990's.

OPIRG and the Canadian Student Movement, 1993-1998

Although the Canadian PIRG model differed from its American counterpart in terms of administration, perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the organization was never in question: the fact that was composed of, and directed by students. The American PIRGs, as envisioned by Nader, were to facilitate a close working relationship between professional lobbyists and students. Though this relationship never officially materialized in the Canadian model, students in the Canadian PIRGs still directed the focus of events, programming, and initiatives. Even more importantly, the initiatives of the PIRGs were influenced by the political climate in which students were situated. Therefore, the historical development of OPIRG Peterborough cannot be fully understood without also understanding its place within the larger student movement in Ontario and Canada.

This chapter will focus on the local, provincial, and national developments of the student movement that had important implications for OPIRG Peterborough. It is important to note that in some cases, the role of OPIRG Peterborough may appear small, even trivial. In these cases, OPIRG Peterborough's place within a wider infrastructure of dissent will be highlighted. As

[57] Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class,* 137.

such, many important allies and partners in OPIRG Peterborough's history will be discussed, namely Trent University, the Trent University student union (first called the TSU, and then later the TCSA), and the Canadian Federation of Students. Though it may seem necessary to see this analysis as a broader history of the student movement in 1990's Ontario, it is in fact more than that. Here, the historical events that coincide with important OPIRG Peterborough organizational developments will be discussed. The events of chapters two and three, therefore, can be contextualized within the local, provincial, and national developments that occur here.

For the purposes of this chapter, however, OPIRG Peterborough will be contextualized as one of many, though no less important, organizations that propelled the student movement's momentum in the 1990's. As all PIRGs are by some means or another influenced by the politics of the campus on which they reside, this chapter will begin with the controversial introduction of the "sunset clause" to Trent University levy groups in 1993 by the TSU. The "sunset clause" has been selected as an appropriate starting point for the analysis of the broader student movement in the 1990's due to the jeopardy it placed OPIRG Peterborough within, thus propelling the organization into political action *against* Trent University, its primary benefactor. The ensuing dissatisfaction with Trent University's student union will demonstrate the characteristic struggles of the period that OPIRG Peterborough needed to traverse in order to succeed.

The "sunset clause," which was enacted by the TSU in the spring of 1993, ensured that student levy groups were to be subjected to a referendum every four years. The referendum would ask Trent University students if levy groups should continue to receive funding. Quorum to ensure the survival of a levy group was set at 33%, a turnout unseen at Trent University "in

some time."[58] The elimination of funding was therefore an immediate threat to every Trent levy group, OPIRG Peterborough being no exception. Another controversial aspect of the sunset clause was a lottery-like system wherein one levy group would be randomly selected at the end of the year to be audited.[59] Before the tabling of the sunset clause, none of Trent's levy groups were consulted. Another criticism levelled at the clause was the finality of its results: if quorum was not reached, the sunset clause provided no alternative means of survival for levy groups.[60] It is unknown what the reasoning behind the policy was, but given the financial climate of the province during the 1990's, the sunset clause likely reflected the limited social spending characteristic of the economic downturn.

Before the sunset clause was officially enacted, the 1993 semester at Trent was marked by unfavorable funding policies towards levy groups. Claims were made that the deficits of past student governments had been paid off with funding that was meant for levy groups.[61] The TSU remained optimistic that with their deficits eliminated, the funding for levy groups would increase in the 1993 winter semester. Student sentiment towards this notion, however, remained unsure at best.[62]

Some students who ran for TSU office in the 1992 academic year cited their reason for running as the need to improve the financial standing of the TSU, with one student who ran for office claiming that the financial situation of the TSU was a "pathetic situation."[63] Criticism of the TSU's 1993 budget called for more money to be given to levy groups, and to not be limited

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[58] Yates, Robert. "TSU This Week." *Arthur*, November 17th, 1992. Volume 27, Issue 9. 3.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Gulliver, Trevor. "Levy Groups Not Consulted." *Arthur,* November 17, 1992. Volume 27, Issue 9. 10.
[61] "TSU News: Club Funding Updates." *Arthur,* February 2, 1993. Volume 27 Issue 6 2.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Steeves, Bryan. "Political Analysis Through Determination and a Dream." *Arthur,* March 2 1993 Volume 27 Issue 19. 15.

by the exclusiveness of the sunset clause.[64] Calls were also made for honoraria payments made to TSU members as hourly wages to instead be devoted to levy groups.[65] The annual summer retreat for TSU members was criticized as being a costly and trivial manner, and the proposal for more paid positions to be established, such as a Special Needs Commissioner and a Race Commissioner was considered tokenism and ineffective, given the systemic complexity of such issues.[66] As the recession deepened before the victory of Harris' Progressive Conservatives in 1995, the financial situation at Trent University began to reflect a growing right-wing turn, manifesting itself as fiscal conservatism.

The TSU's economic policies on-campus were equally as controversial as their economic policies off-campus. By 1993, Trent's contributions to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), a national coalition of university student unions aimed at representing student's rights at the federal level, were rumored to have totalled $20,000.00, one-third of the TSU's operating budget for 1993.[67] Upon hearing this, Trent students were upset that this money was not spent on funding levy groups.[68] The claim that $20,000.00 was spent per year on CFS membership was later challenged as being unfounded, and a separate figure of $5,300 in CFS contributions per year was proposed instead.[69] At the CFS AGM in June of 1993, held at York University, the CFS requested a $2 membership increase. This request was justified as being an adjustment to inflation, but came at an unfortunate time, as Trent University's membership in the CFS was

[64] Dyck, Kelly. "TSU Reform: Some Points to Ponder." *Arthur,* March 2, 1993. Volume 27 Issue 19. 17.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Speers, Julie. "Canadian Federation of Students." *Arthur,* March 2, 1993. Volume 27 Issue 19. 2. Trent University joined the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in 1991 after an overwhelming majority of students vote in a campus-wide referendum.
[68] Dyck, Kelly. "Controversy Hits the TSU." *Arthur,* September 21st, 1993. Volume 28 Issue 2. 6.

[69] Glaister, Cat. "Canadian Federation of Students at Trent." *Arthur,* September 28th, 1993. Volume 28 Issue 3. 3.

being challenged by Trent students.[70] Over the next few months, popular opinion towards the CFS at Trent University was largely divided. Some accused the CFS of harboring a Conservative agenda, while others argued that it was the safest way to secure student rights and representation nationwide.[71]

Trent University was not the only Canadian university to challenge the representation of the CFS. This is best evidenced by the National Day of Strike and Action, planned by the CFS after federal Minister of Labour Lloyd Axworthy's calls for an Income Contingent Loan Repayment Program (ICLRP).[72] After the announcement of the Income Contingent Loan Repayment Program (ICLRP) in March 1994, the CFS spent the summer of that year preparing to review the proposed program.[73] The ICLRP would guarantee students that they would not have to begin paying back their student loans until they found employment. The main criticism levelled against the ICLRP, however, was that interest still grew on the loans regardless of whether or not the student was employed.[74] After the CFS set the date for the National Day of Strike and Action for January 25, 1995, significant infighting broke out within the CFS.[75] "Broad-left agenda pushing" students focused on ensuring "special democratic representation for groups such as women, First Nations, students of color, francophones, lesbians/gays/bisexuals, and students with disabilities" in regards to the loan program; conversely, right-wing students on the CFS pushed for lobbying through the appropriate

[70] Fellman, Eli. "TSU General Meeting." *Arthur,* October 12th, 1993. Volume 28 Issue 05. 5.
[71] *Arthur,* October 12th, 1993. Volume 28 Issue 05. 6,7,10.
[72] Temelini, Michael. "The Canadian Student Movement and the January 25, 1995 "National Day of Strike and Action"". In *Mobilizations, Protests, and Engagements: Canadian Perspectives on Social Movements.* Edited by Marie Hammond Callaghan and Matthew Hayday. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008. 222-242. 224.
[73] Temelini, "National Day of Strike and Action," 226.
[74] Hassan-Gordon, Tariq. "Student Organizations' Opinions Differ Over Income Contingent Loans Program." *Arthur,* October 1st, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 04. 8.
[75] Temelini, "National Day of Strike and Action," 230.

channels and government officials.[76] 1994 culminated with the secession of certain groups from the CFS due to infighting. "At least a dozen student unions" held disassociation referenda from the ICLRP protest in February and March of 1995, and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations was born of several disillusioned members with the CFS.[77] Therefore, it was not accepted by all Canadian students that the CFS had their best interests in mind. Trent University's struggles with their monetary contributions to the CFS exemplified a local manifestation of the federal frustrations with the CFS.

The cuts to social spending made by Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservatives after coming to power in 1995 caused the CFS to estimate a tuition hike at Trent University as high as $10,000, resulting in widespread anti-conservative sentiment within the student population.[78] Fears of increased tuition became visibly more heightened, with many worrying that student debt could extend to near- perpetuity.[79] In late 1993, Trent University President Leonard Connolly met with the TSU and assured them that rising tuition prices were not limited to Trent, and that they were on the rise nation-wide. Despite this, student groups across Canada remained "divided on the most effective way to address the massive cuts."[80] Federal and provincial student unions separate from the CFS, such as the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), supported the Ontario government's commitment to the ICLRP.

Dissatisfaction with the Harris cuts was evident in October of 1996 when Ontario education minister John Snobelen visited York University to announce the launching of a joint

[76] Temelini, "National Day of Strike and Action," 231.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Hassan-Gordon, Tariq, "Student Organizations' Opinions Differ Over Income Contingent Loans Program," 8.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

degree-diploma program between York University and Seneca College. During his address, Snobelen remained unaware that York and Seneca students dropped a banner behind his podium bearing an image of Mike Harris with a clown's nose, reading, 'In Clown We Trust.'[81] Ironically, this protest came amidst good news, the granting of $37.9 million towards the York-Seneca "venture."[82] The York University demonstration against Snobelen was simply a precursor, however, to a larger, and more widely recognized student demonstration against the Harris government. On 26 October, 1996, an estimated 200,000 students participated in a city-wide shutdown in Toronto to "protest the Conservative provincial government agenda," namely the cuts to educational funding, the rising tuition hikes, and the increased interest on student loans.[83] Known as the "Days of Action," this province-wide demonstration (fourth in a series of many demonstrations before and after 26 October) was an unofficial successor to the 11 December, 1995 Day of Action in London, Ontario, where over 125,000 students "mobilized in London, Hamilton, and Peterborough combined."[84]

A banner reading "In Clown We Trust" is put up behind Snobelen by dissenting York University students in protest of Progressive Conservative social policy and increased tuition costs. Image taken from 15 October, 1996 Volume 31, Issue 06 of the Arthur (digital archives.)

[81] Schmidt, Sarah. "Snobelen Silenced: Education Minister's Visit to York Unleashes Student Anger." *Arthur,* October 15th, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 06. 3.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Hassan-Gordon, Tariq. "Building the Toronto Day of Action: Over Two-Hundred Thousand Expected to Participate." *Arthur,* October 8th, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 05. 8.
[84] Ibid.

The 26 October Day of Action was headlined by a four-kilometer march that ended at Queen's Park, where a subsequent rally was to begin immediately after.[85] The march began at Coronation Park, continued north-bound along Spadina Avenue where the march passed the Metro Convention Center – an intentional move, as the Progressive Conservatives were hosting a conference there – and then onto Queen's Park via University Avenue.[86] Though students were the main dissenters in the 26 October Day of Action, an immense amount of support came from local Toronto unions. One day prior, it was reported that local unions had shut down "office buildings, factories, and schools throughout Metro Toronto."[87] Between the recognition this garnered for the Day of Action and the enormous logistical support it provided for the over 200,000 demonstrators, the place of several Toronto unions amidst the broader infrastructure of dissent cannot be understated. "Except for emergency services," one source wrote, "the public sector was nearly totally shut down – including public transit, the post office, and garbage collection."[88] This included the subway and bus systems operated by the Toronto Transit Council (TTC). Legal action was taken against members of the TTC who were "deemed responsible" for shutting down public transit.[89] At its conclusion, the 26 October Day of Action became the "largest Canadian march."[90]

Concurrently with the pre-established Days of Action, the CFS had been planning their own mobilization. The CFS's "Ontario component" to their Days of Action campaign took place concurrently with the established Days of Action in Toronto.[91] As if Snobelen had not received

[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Campbell, Jim, and Giles Grierson. "Metro Days of Action." *Arthur*, October 29, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 07. 10-11.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

enough public backlash only a few weeks prior at York University, the recognition of his "contributions to education" in Toronto were to be disrupted by a demonstration by the CFS.[92]

OPIRG's contribution to the 26 October Day of Action was small, though it was no less important than the contributions made by the organizers, the CFS, and local Toronto unions. OPIRG Peterborough provided free bus service to dissenting Trent students who wished to take part in the 26 October Day of Action, shuttling them to and from Toronto and Peterborough.[93] Beyond the obvious significance of this being a literal demonstration of the infrastructure of dissent (transport), this enshrined OPIRG Peterborough's involvement in the Days of Action. The number of Trent students and OPIRG members who participated is unknown.[94]

The 26 October, 1996 Day of Action in Toronto remains the largest march in Canadian history. Pictured above is the preceding London Day of Action. Taken from 19 October, 1996 Volume 31, Issue 07 of the Arthur.

The 26 October, 1996 Day of Action was quickly followed by an unaffiliated, though thematically similar strike. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) strike of 1996 began "full mobilization" in December of 1996, after the union's right to strike was earned

[92] Ibid.
[93] "Toronto Day of Action." *Arthur,* October 15th, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 06. 6.
[94] Ibid.

in 1994.[95] OPSEU, a union estimated by historian and then-OPSEU Local 503 president David Rapaport to hold little history of militancy, sprang into protest when the Harris government enacted Bills 7 and 26.[96] The strike, "talk of [which] seemed romantic and adventurist" on the outset, was estimated by Rapaport to have four key features of success, the most notable for the purpose of comparison with the October 26 Day of Action being the "attitude, determination, and arrogance of the [Harris] government."[97] According to Rapaport, the key reason for the OPSEU strike's success was the steadfast belief on behalf of the Harris government that OPSEU would remain docile amidst the gradual erosion of their job security, and their "underestimation" of the union's ability to "organize around… issues" of "job security and pensions."[98] Other factors argued by Rapaport to influence the successful outcome of the OPSEU strike include successful internal organization techniques adopted by the strikers (inspired by the preceding London and Hamilton Days of Action), the integration of information technology into mobilization efforts, and the timing of the preceding Days of Action and the tabling of Bills 7 and 26.[99]

Comparatively with the 26 October Day of Action, however, these other reasons seem somewhat mechanical, as the success of labour organizations even today depend to some extent on the presence of these factors. An interesting parallel exists between the Harris government' approach to the OPSEU strikers and student dissenters such as OPIRG Peterborough during the 26 October Day of Action. The Progressive Conservatives appeared to view student dissenters in the same way they viewed labour strikers: as passive entities that would merely adjust to the significant upheaval caused by the Common Sense Revolution. For this reason, the reason why the 26

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[95] Rapaport, David. *No Justice, No Peace: The 1996 OPSEU Strike Against the Harris Government in Ontario.* London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999. 84.
[96] Rapaport, *No Justice, No Peace,* 12; 84.
[97] Rapaport, *No Justice, No Peace,* 84.
[98] Rapaport, *No Justice, No Peace,* 83-84.
[99] Rapaport, *No Justice, No Peace,* 84-85.

October Day of Action, like the OPSEU strike, mobilized so successfully. The Harris government did not anticipate the level of dissent that would come to characterize both the labor movements of the decade and the student movement.

Though the Days of Action may have marked a victory for the Ontario student movement, student politics at the university level appeared to be suffering. At Trent University, board elections to the 1996 TSA, now rebranded as the Trent Central Student Association (TCSA) were to take place the week of November 18, 1995.[100] This particular election, "marked with poor publicity, little voter interest, and a lack of candidates," had already been delayed an entire month due to "lack of publicity and few candidates."[101] "Student apathy" towards the politics of everyday student life appeared to reach a new low, despite the fact that students were a key component in the largest march in Canadian history.[102] Amidst all of this was the additional fear that conservative student groups would take over the TCSA and remove Trent University from the CFS.[103]

If political apathy was indeed growing in the student population at Trent University, it had yet to reach OPIRG Peterborough. The 26 October, 1996 Day of Action sparked OPIRG Peterborough's interest in professionalizing its methods of non-violently protesting. Former OPIRG Peterborough board member "Brian," (last name unknown) then a member of Toronto Action for Social Change (TASC), visited OPIRG Peterborough not long after October 26 to explain how to best conduct non-violent protest.[104] This workshop largely consisted of the "do's

[100] Forbes-Roberts, S. "Trent Central Student Association By-elections." *Arthur,* November 12, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 09. 3.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Metcalfe, Laura. "Ins & Outs of Civil Disobedience from Toronto Action for Social Change." *Arthur,* November 12th, 1996. Volume 31 Issue 09. 7.

and don'ts" of non-violent protesting.[105] Some of TASC's suggestions included: linking up with affinity groups before a protest, who are like-minded organizations willing to help facilitate demonstrations; having a 'support person' on hand at any demonstration to keep an eye on their partner, bringing attention to them if they are being mistreated; some of the topics discussed in the workshop even included how to withstand the effects of pepper spray, how to minimize bodily damage when being hit with a baton or a club, and how to contact legal representation if jailed.[106] Though these tactics would hardly have been necessary for a student dissenter during the 26 October Day of Action, the increased interest in developing professional activist skills marked a drastic change in tactics for OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's. The threat of violence and brutality began to be acknowledged as a very real threat to dissenters.[107]

In mid-January of 1997, President Connelly announced his resignation.[108] His departure was marked by the onset of a faculty strike in December of 1996, the subject of which was "wage parity with the rest of Ontario's professors."[109] The faculty strike in 1996 resulted in the resignation of three top-tier administrators at Trent before the start of winter term classes.[110] By 1997, the strike had reached a settlement favorable to the faculty, but tensions remained high between faculty and administration over "the way the strike was handled."[111] Some sources suspected that President Connelly's resignation was prompted by these still-bitter conditions.[112]

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Milloy, M.J. "Connelly Resigns in Wake of Strike." *Arthur*, January 14th, 1997. Volume 31 Issue 14. 3.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[112] "More Letters to the Editor". *Arthur*, January 28th, 1997. Volume 31 Issue 16. 16.

Likewise, the TCSA experienced a political setback when their chair, Patrick Brown, stepped down at the end of 1996.[113] Matt Gallinger, filling the chair position in an interim capacity, came under fire when a piece he wrote for the *Arthur* was interpreted as "restoring" the "pristine signification" of President Connelly.[114] Gallinger was also accused of not involving the TCSA or the wider student body in the 1996 faculty strike.[115] By February 1997, wage increases for board executives on the TCSA led many to call for TCSA members to resign.[116] The TCSA AGM of 1996 was reportedly stuffed with Conservative patsies, allegations which would have appeared largely unfounded had they not paralleled the distaste for conservatism present at the provincial level.[117] Amidst the growing dissatisfaction with conservatism, and the political setbacks in both the office of the President and the TCSA, OPIRG Peterborough found itself in a politically chaotic time to mobilize.

The 1997-1998 academic year began with dissatisfaction over the TCSA's lack of agenda regarding the Harris government cuts, and an all time low participation rate of 10% in student elections.[118] Despite this, student mobilization continued to grow across the province. The CFS organized a nation-wide series of Days of Action, which began in January of 1998 when "students from St. John's to Victoria" began to mobilize in ways similar to the 26 October, 1996

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[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

[116] "Letters to the Editor." *Arthur*, February 25, 1997. Volume 31 Issue 19. 11.
[117] Ibid.

[118] Seale, Teslin, and Kate Archibald-Cross. "Local Politics That Matter." *Arthur*, October 7, 1997. Volume 32 Issue 05. 8; Blackstock, Sarah. "TCSA Gets Set For 1997/98: It Could Get Political." *Arthur*, October 7th, 1997. Volume 31 Issue 05. 4.

Day of Action.[119] The tumultuous 1990's, a decade of particular uncertainty for students, continued. It is in this context that OPIRG Peterborough's development must be understood. Though OPIRG Peterborough's involvement in larger provincial and national mobilizations may be less pronounced than other organizations, OPIRG Peterborough both influenced and had been influenced by the larger student movement in Ontario. Moving forward to Chapters Two and Three, the understanding that OPIRG Peterborough was driven by political uncertainty will prove critical.

The implications of the student movement in the 1990's are important when it comes to re-evaluating the infrastructure of dissent. As evidenced by the 26 October, 1996 Day of Action, the infrastructure of dissent has always, to some extent, benefitted from the support of a 'professional' branch of itself, one that is recognized and supported by a private or public institution. This professional branch has the capacity to successfully mobilize grassroots organizations into recognizable action.[120] To consider the 26 October, 1996 Day of Action, the level of strategic mobilization achieved by the demonstrators was made possible due to the cooperation of several Toronto unions. The cooperation of these unions with dissenting students not only allowed the demonstrators to traverse an otherwise insurmountable level of ground, but it provided the student movement with the provincial recognition that it was looking for.

Following 26 October, the infrastructure of dissent allowed OPIRG Peterborough to professionalize its activism. With the help of TASC, OPIRG Peterborough developed skills that

[119] "Students Hit the Streets Across Canada." *Arthur*, February 3, 1998. Volume 32 Issue 17.

[120] Sears, Alan. *The Next New Left: A History of the Future.* Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2014. 6. An important aspect of Sears' conceptualization of the infrastructure of dissent is its ability to "work strategically as mobilizations develop." Here it is argued that this capacity is not only enhanced by the professional arm of the infrastructure of dissent, but that the professional arm is in fact a necessary factor when it comes to mobilizing at the grassroots level.

would increase its professional legitimacy if dissent was faced with armed resistance. Conversely, OPIRG Peterborough's request for TASC's assistance demonstrated OPIRG's understanding that dissent, when confronted with a 'professional' adversary, needed to adapt in order to professionally and peacefully mobilize. This professional aspect of the infrastructure of dissent will resurface in Chapters Two and Three, as it provided grassroots organizations with the capacity to survive economic austerity. The professional arm of the infrastructure of dissent also manifested itself in the form of the university. Trent University, in many cases, provided OPIRG Peterborough with staff, volunteers, and a public forum in which to discuss matters of interest; in return, OPIRG Peterborough pulled the Trent community into the struggles of the Canadian student movement. This was most evidently the case during the 26 October Day of Action, where OPIRG Peterborough provided transport to Toronto. In cooperation with other professional manifestations of the infrastructure of dissent, such as local Toronto unions, OPIRG Peterborough benefitted from being apart of a wider infrastructure of dissent. Moving forward, the professional arm of the infrastructure of dissent, and its ability shield grassroots organizations from austerity, will be identified as a key pattern in OPIRG Peterborough history.

Chapter Two

Developing a Homogenized Environmental Identity: OPIRG's Environmentalism, Community Gardening and the Infrastructure of Dissent, 1990-1995.

The environmentalism espoused by OPIRG Peterborough during its early years was of a completely different nature than the kind of campaigns that what would manifest in the 1990's. Born out of Nader's inherent mistrust in corporate America, the Canadian PIRGs – much like their American counterparts – began their foray into environmental justice by protesting corporate waste and nuclear energy. As discussed in the introduction, the increase in nuclear protest amongst the OPIRG network resulted in considerable backlash from campuses with strong engineering programs, namely OPIRG Waterloo. Coinciding with a number of peace movements and Back to the Land, nuclear protest in Canada adopted the ideals of 'risk

movements,' defined by risk theorist Michael Mehta as "reactions against the encroachments of large-scale technologies on everyday life."[121] Most instrumental in defining these movements in Canada were the "international tensions" created in the 1950's by the nuclear arms race.[122] By 1959, organizations like the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Canadian Committee for Control of Radiation Hazards were established to address the concerns of nuclear radiation fallout and the ethics of nuclear weapons testing.[123] These groups, Mehta argues, "can be viewed as collective risk movements that reject conventional forms of political decision-making which have created ecologically unstable and unsustainable patterns of consumption," corroborated by Nader's drive for decreased corporatization.[124]

In the 1970's, the anti-nuclear movement benefitted from the emergence of scientific professionals lobbying for regulation.[125] For example, Canadian scientist Fred Knelmen condemned the use of nuclear energy at the Learned Societies Conference in 1975, only one year after the testing of atomic weapons in India, an event which itself caused many Western scientists to flock to the anti-nuclear movement.[126] Like the New Left student groups described by Nesbitt in Chapter One, anti-nuclear movements came to be labelled as communist, and as a result struggled to find legitimacy in the eyes of the public.[127] However, as scientific patronization of the anti-nuclear movement increased, campaigns across the country shifted from national to local in focus.[128] Mehta notes that "community protest groups first surfaced in

[121] Mehta, Michael D. *Risky Business: Nuclear Power and Public Protest in Canada.* Toronto: Lexington Books, 2005. 26.
[122] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 38.
[123] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 39.
[124] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 26.
[125] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 39.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 28.
[128] Mehta, *Risky Business*, 40.

Canada in the early 1970's to resist the location of specific nuclear projects."[129] Ontario Hydro experienced a number of such site protests in the 1970's and 1980's as a result of the local anti-nuclear movement.

Though nuclear energy protest continued into the 1990's, a new kind of environmental activism emerged, one with a more local focus, and one that demonstrated the capacity of the infrastructure of dissent to steer environmental non-profit organizations through periods of austerity. In the 1990's, a small community garden was opened in Peterborough on Rogers Street by Cathy Dueck, a then-recent graduate of Trent University in the Environmental Science program, as well as OPIRG Peterborough and several local organizations. Originally a small, one-hundred foot plot located near Activity Haven, the Ecology Garden merged with Peterborough Greenup in 1993, resulting in the expansion of its environmental programming.[130] Though this increase in capacity was gradual since the garden's inception in 1991, the merger with Peterborough Greenup provided a stable funding source, something that sustained the garden's mandate during the austere economic climate of Mike Harris' 1995-2002 Progressive Conservative government. This chapter will situate the Ecology Garden's historical development against the political backdrop of Ontario in the 1990's and discuss certain developments in the Trent community at the time that contributed to its development. Most importantly, the garden's success will be evaluated through the framework of the infrastructure of dissent; it is argued here that the infrastructure of dissent not only allowed the Ecology Garden to survive, but also

[129] Ibid.

[130] Peterborough Greenup is an environmental organization that often partners with schools, small-business, and social justice organizations to promote environmental sustainability and environmental education. It has been active in the Peterborough community for 25 years, and is also a registered charity. Though not itself a provincial government initiative, Greenup programs often receive provincial recognition, an important factor which will be discussed later in this chapter. For information concerning Greenup's current initiatives, please see http://www.greenup.on.ca/who-we-are/

developed a homogenized collective identity between the garden and other environmental organizations in Peterborough that it partnered with.

'Homogenized identity' is used here to demonstrate how the Ecology Garden began as a grassroots initiative heavily influenced by OPIRG Peterborough and the support of some small-scale local committees and organizations, yet became 'canonized,' in a sense, when it merged with a provincial organization. Despite this, the objectives of the garden remained almost unchanged, notwithstanding the expansion of programming it experienced due to increased funding. The creation of the garden's 'homogenized identity' therefore means that the garden, though still a form of environmental 'dissent,' became an official organization with provincial recognition despite its beginnings as a grassroots organization. What remains to be explored, therefore, is how the infrastructure of dissent in the context of OPIRG Peterborough cultivated this unique identity for the garden.

The shift towards agricultural environmentalism and community gardening was not at all a random change of direction for OPIRG Peterborough. The end of the twentieth century in Canada saw the emergence of food empires that controlled nearly every aspect of food production and distribution.[131] By the beginning of the twenty-first century, only five major food corporations controlled ninety-percent of the world's grain.[132] For many, the development of multi-national food corporations resulted in a feeling of distance between the production of food and the consumption of it. This frustration subsequently caused a shift in the focus of grassroots organizing: "community-based food systems" became the preferred method of uniting against

[131] Sefton-MacDowell, Laurel. *An Environmental History of Canada*. University of British Columbia Press, 2012. 226. Food companies and magnates such as George Weston, Labatt Foods, Nestle, and United Fruit had begun to "work closely" with the Canadian food production industry at the end of the twentieth century. In particular, these companies partnered with companies that manufactured farm implements, giving them a stake in the production of food at the industrial level.
[132] Ibid.

the corporatization of food.[133] Levkoe et al, in their comparative study of local food sovereignty movements across Canada, claim that the 1990's in particular marked a "second wave of food activism" characterized by large mobilizations organized by private grocers, rural farms, and food policy councils.[134] Like Sefton-MacDowell, Levkoe et al posit that many of the food sovereignty movements that mobilized across Canada in the late twentieth century were organized in response to the privatization of Canadian of food production.[135] Levkoe is quick to note that the 1990's did not mark a sudden spike in the growth of food activism, instead noting that a gradual growth was attained due to the "continued permeation" of the environmental activism of the 1970's philosophy on 1990's mobilizations.[136] The 1970's in particular was witness to the People's Food Commission (PFC), described by alternative food advocate Sally Miller as "a series of informal hearings on food that inspired new ways of thinking about social change in Canada."[137] As Miller argues, the significance of the PFC for food sovereignty mobilizations in the 1990's was the fact that these hearings brought concerns about large corporations taking over the food system into the limelight, providing the basis for subsequent mobilizations around such issues in the 1980's and 1990's.[138] The Ecology Garden, though not explicitly formed in response to the PFC's continued influence, represented the local manifestation of Canada's food sovereignty movement.

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[133] Sefton-MacDowell, *An Environmental History of Canada*, 235. Sefton-MacDowell also notes that the primary purposes of the first community gardens wer to donate to community food banks, ironically the same mandate as the Peterborough Ecology Garden in its earliest incarnation.
[134] Levkoe, Charles et al. *Propagating the Food Movement: Provincial Networks and Social Mobilization in Canada*. University of Toronto, 2012. 12.
[135] Levkoe et al, *Propagating the Food Movement,* 8.
[136] Levkoe et al, *Propagating the Food Movement,* 12. Dueck also supports this idea in her interview when she notes that many of the contributors to the Ecology Garden were prior members of the revived Back to the Land movement of the 1960's and 1970's. Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 11.
[137] Miller, Sally. *Edible Action: Food Activism and Alternative Economics.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008. 17.
[138] Miller, *Edible Action,* 17.

Volunteers of the Peterborough Ecology Garden came from a diverse selection within the city of Peterborough, though for the first three years of the garden's operation, from the steering committee to weekly workshops, OPIRG Peterborough members were among the most consistent contributors.[139] The 1991, 1992, and 1993 growing seasons marked the most involvement in the Ecology Garden from OPIRG Peterborough and the Kawartha World Issues Center (KWIC), a similar student-led social justice organization with ties to the Trent-Peterborough community.[140]

In the summer of 1991, Dueck began putting her honours thesis project to work.[141] Dueck and a steering committee – made up of then coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough Keith Stewart, KWIC, a landscape architect and a group of young mothers[142]- had been meeting since May of 1990 "to lay the groundwork for a demonstration organic garden within the city limits."[143] The summer of 1991 marked the first of many successes for Dueck, OPIRG, and the steering committee: a garden plot was granted on Rogers Street in east-city Peterborough by Activity Haven and the Parks and Forestry division of the City of Peterborough; additionally, start-up funds were provided by the Peterborough Sustainable Development Committee.[144] Staff for the garden during the summer of 1991 were provided by the Environmental Youth Corps, a youth employment agency that assisted students with an interest in the environment in finding employment.[145] The plot was a generous twenty-five by one-hundred feet.[146] The focus of the

[139] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 2.
[140] Interview with Cathy Ducek, *Transcript,* 3. Dueck also notes here that KWIC experienced serious financial troubles early in the early 1990's and had to pull support for the garden. No evidence suggests that KWIC contributed a substantial amount financially to the garden, but the loss of their core funding and inability to handle rising real estate prices forced members to look inwardly rather than contribute volunteers and manpower to the garden's maintenance.
[141] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 2
[142] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 1.
[143] Peterborough Ecology Garden, January 1991 Newsletter. 1.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 1.

1991 season was on day programming for all ages geared at everyday gardening, and the applications of organic gardening in personal greenspaces.[147]

The first season of the Ecology Garden in 1991 reported "terrific harvests," some of which was donated to the Peterborough Foodbank.[148] This was despite drought and the chronic persistence of pests.[149] Outreach was done on several fronts, but OPIRG Peterborough – by no means a stranger to raising awareness and generating event attendance – excelled in attracting student interest in the garden.[150] Groundhogs and earwigs were not the most persistent issues to plague the Ecology Garden, however: interpersonal and administrative issues resulted in the need for mediation. The two summer staff members hired through the Environmental Youth Corps for the 1991 growing season saw differently on nearly every issue, the most important being what their individual roles in the garden were. One staff member, considered the "head-gardener", was unable to reconcile the focus on community outreach and advertising pressed by their counterpart.[151] The practical versus the theoretical came to a head when OPIRG Peterborough was consulted to mediate the differences. OPIRG exercised their expertise in conflict resolution by invoking consensus-based decision making, which proved key to resolving the first 'political' conflict the garden had ever faced.[152]

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[146] Peterborough Ecology Garden, January 1991 Newsletter. 2.
[147] Peterborough Ecology Garden, January 1991 Newsletter. 1.
[148] Peterborough Ecology Garden, October 1991 Newsletter. 1.
[149] Ibid. Groundhogs and earwigs were particularly persistent that year.
[150] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 4. Dueck notes that student involvement in the garden, especially in the early years on Rogers Street, was "overwhelming."
[151] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 6.
[152] Ibid.

Summer 1991. Keith Stewart (left), then-coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough, assists young children in the construction of bird feeders at the Ecology Garden on Rogers Street. Photo donated by Cathy Dueck.

The governing model for the Ecology Garden that OPIRG Peterborough provided differed from the decentralized nature of similar local food campaigns across Canada. Pointing to the geographic size of Canada (as well as the "urban-rural divides" characteristic of Canada's geography) Levkoe et al note that the decentralized model of several food movements poses "difficulties around ensuring inclusivity and developing equitable governance structures and strategies."[153] With a more central model than its national counterparts, however, success continued for the Peterborough Ecology Garden in its second growing season: 1992 was wet and cool, as opposed to the drought experienced in 1991; corn and peppers sprouted late, but this did not stall another successful donation to Peterborough Food Bank; most importantly, Activity Haven expanded the Rogers Street plot by fifty extra feet.[154] New additions included "raised beds, a meeting area, [a] children's area, and [a] wildlife garden."[155] The expansion of the plot, a mark of the overall success of the garden, allowed the garden's program offerings to expand,

[153] Levkoe et al, *Propagating the Food Movement*, 8; 4. Food issues groups in Canada with comparable goals to the Peterborough Ecology Garden that also operate with decentralized governing models include The British Columbia Food Systems Network, Food Matters Manitoba, The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming in Ontario, and the Food Security Network in Nova Scotia. Pg. 5.
[154] Peterborough Ecology Garden, Spring 1992 Newsletter. 1.
[155] Ibid.

therefore accommodating the expansion of community partners. The Ecology Garden could now facilitate children's workshops, have an information table staffed regularly, and offer weekly public workshops.[156] New volunteer agencies were now part of the garden's employment network: in addition to the Environmental Youth Corps, agencies such as Canada Employment Centre and SSFC Futures Program contributed manpower to the Ecology Garden.[157] In the fall of 1992, the Ecology Garden was even able to help OPIRG Peterborough construct a medicinal herb garden outside of their offices for instructional and public demonstration-related use.[158]

Even with a change in leadership in the early 1990's, OPIRG stayed heavily involved in the early development of the garden. The departure of Keith Stewart and the arrival of Toby Mueller as the new coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough ensured a continued practical interest in the garden.[159] Toby's interest in the local food movement, and heavy involvement in the garden itself, ensured that a staple of OPIRG's organizational *modus operandi* – consensus-based decision making – was adopted by the Ecology Garden steering committee. Toby's involvement in the steering committee introduced the consensus model to committee meetings, the advent of which provided consistently clear focus for the garden moving forward.[160] As argued by Yolanda Hansen in her case study of community gardening in Saskatchewan, "capable leaders" are needed to ensure the successful upkeep of any community garden, and OPIRG Peterborough

[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 3. Here, Dueck notes that Keith Stewart – though no more or less supportive and interested in the garden than Toby Mueller – was more theoretically interested in the advent of community gardening; Mueller, conversely, was "passionately interested in food production," as Dueck comments that community gardening appeared to be more of Mueller's "issue area."
[160] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 6. Here, Dueck acknowledges that much of the administrative functions adopted by the Ecology Garden steering committee were inspired by "information that the various PIRGs had put together."

served this purpose well for the Ecology Garden.[161] This is not to say that Dueck and the steering committee were incapable of taking charge of the garden's initiatives themselves; rather, OPIRG Peterborough served the 'leader' role defined by Hansen as an individual or institution with "political knowledge and the ability to manoeuvre within city hall," a "structure" that Hansen claims is "most relevant to the continuation of community gardens."[162] OPIRG Peterborough's provision of a governing structure for the garden allowed the goals of the garden to become streamlined and easier articulated to those who could ensure the garden's economic survival.

The continuous success reaped by the Ecology Garden eventually necessitated a change in location. The Rogers Street location was no longer sufficient to accommodate the multiple personal plots, workshops, and demonstration areas, especially with heightened interest that appeared to show no signs of levelling off.[163] On 23 October, 1993, the Ecology Garden moved from its Rogers Street location to Beavermead Park.[164] No longer affiliated with Activity Haven, it became known as the Ecology Park.[165] The parks division of the City of Peterborough, involved in the Ecology Garden's network since the first season of 1991, was to thank for the new space, as well as the continued expansion of programs and initiatives.[166] Ironically, the Ecology Garden's original application for space in 1991 was for space in Beavermead Park, but

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[161] Hansen, Yolanda. "Growing Community: Community Gardens as a Local Practice of Food Sovereignty." In *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems*. Edited by Annette Desmarais, Nettie Wiebe, and Hannah Wittman. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2011. 161.
[162] Hansen, "Growing Community," 161.
[163] Peterborough Ecology Garden, Autumn 1993 Newsletter. 2. By June of 1993, over 300 children had visited the Ecology Garden for children's programming. This figure does not consider the increasing number of personal users, elderly users affiliated with Activity Haven, and weekly workshop-goers. Additionally, before the move to Beavermead, the Rogers Street plot contained five different gardens: a family garden, focused on high yields and nourishment; a children's garden, which was activity based and focused on fostering stewardship in youth; a heritage garden, where plants with historical, local roots were planted; a wildlife garden, constructed with the intention of attracting wildlife and insects; and an "edible landscaping" garden, known only as the 'experimental' side of the garden.
[164] Peterborough Ecology Garden, Autumn 1993 Newsletter. 5.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

the experimental model of community gardening had, at the time, little authority to speak on.[167] The Rogers Street location had given the Ecology Garden three successful years to prove to the City of Peterborough that community gardening was a sustainable and affordable model of producing local food and maintaining local greenspace.[168]

The move to Beavermead Park allowed a second expansion of programming, including workshops on shoreline ecology, the installation of a butterfly garden, and the ability to low-water landscape.[169] The most notable aspect of the Beavermead expansion was the installation of a tree nursery in the summer of 1993 – a project that the Rogers Street location would not have been able to accommodate.[170] Some members of the steering committee, however, saw beyond the surface rewards of bigger plots and increased programming. Toby Mueller in particular saw the potential for a crisis of identity to challenge the autonomy of the Ecology Garden.[171] The move to Beavermead Park meant an inevitable merger with Peterborough Greenup, the established environmental organization that had occupied Beavermead well before the arrival of the Ecology Garden. The benefit of the merger meant exposing Ecology Garden members to more politicized environmental issues and widening the garden's already expansive selection of interests; the drawback meant no longer being the 'Ecology Garden' that spent three arduous years proving itself as a civic benefit in the 'training grounds' on Rogers Street.[172]

The identity issue came to a head when Dave McLeod, - "the manager of the expanded Greenup," – presented the merger to the steering committee, who, despite the benefits of the

[167] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript*, 7. Dueck notes that at the time of their original application, the Ecology Garden was considered "just a bunch of pretty flowers," a sentiment that Dueck suggests was not uncommon to similar local food initiatives in the early 1990's.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Peterborough Ecology Garden, *Autumn 1993 Newsletter*. 5.
[170] Peterborough Ecology Park Spring/Summer 1993 Newsletter. 1. Trent University also donated greenhouse space devoted to growing young seedlings for the Ecology Park.
[171] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript*, 8.
[172] Ibid.

move to Beavermead, remained apprehensive due to the question of identity.[173] Nonetheless, Dave McLeod's assertions were settled privately, and the Ecology Garden – now the Ecology Park – became a part of Peterborough Greenup.[174]

The garden's identity certainly transformed, becoming a more recognizable political entity. Under the Greenup umbrella, the Ecology Park came to be associated with national environmental issues, namely energy conservation.[175] The Ecology Park's association with these issues also gave them access to "bigger chunks of a funding pot" such as the provincial government.[176] The Green Communities Initiative spearheaded by Bob Rae's NDP government was one such way for the Ecology Park to receive provincial funding, and the Ecology Park's affiliation with Peterborough Greenup allowed them to apply to be part of the initiative.[177] As part of the Green Communities Initiative, the Ecology Park was given more money to spend on community outreach, allowed more money in the budget for staff members, and began to implement school visits into their youth-oriented programming.[178]

The Green Communities Initiative's lifetime was short, however. The 1995 election of the neoliberal Harris government saw an end to much of the Ecology Park's sources of funding. Gone were the days of Rae's financial leniency in environmental spending. The Green

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[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid. Regarding the friction experienced between Greenup and the Ecology Park, Dueck notes: "I remember there being a great deal of hostility because Dave was really trying to lay down the law and [he] was the boss and we were all "hey, just a minute, this is our project here," and so it took a lot of personal negotiation with Dave after the meeting to try and get him to back off."
[175] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript*, 9.
[176] Ibid. Dueck suggests that the Rae government provided a provincially-recognized drive to combat environmental issues.
[177] Ibid. Regarding the Rae government's leniency towards environmental spending, Dueck reveals that the Ecology Park's application to join the Green Communities Initiative progressed as follows: "we said to them "we have a greenspace aspect to our program, so can we include that" and they said "well no, we can't fund greenspace." So we just decided when we put in our application to them that we were just going to include it anyway – they said don't do it, we did it anyway… all they can do is say no. And they ended up saying "oh, all right."
[178] Ibid. Dueck admits that school visits may also have been a part of the Rogers Street garden's programming, but that nonetheless, school programming expanded once financial support was guaranteed under the Green Communities Initiative.

Communities Initiative was folded, seemingly overnight; the Environmental Youth Corps no longer provided the Ecology Park with vital manpower and volunteers; estimates at the time placed the loss of financial funding at 85%.[179] Talks at Greenup were certainly pessimistic, with some foreseeing no possible way to remedy the damage done by the Harris cuts and opting to leave the organization.[180] Those who stayed with Greenup and the Ecology Park had to resort to more creative measures to secure funding. Amidst the austerity brought on by the Progressive Conservative victory in 1995 the "inherent sense of financial instability", argued by Hansen to be universal in regards to community garden models, became apparent in the Peterborough Ecology Park.[181] In these uncertain economic times, however, the Ecology Park demonstrated its effective use of the network that it had worked hard develop. From the Otonabee Conservation Authority, Greenup was given cheaper office space, out of the way from its plots, but more affordable amidst rising real estate prices.[182] The parks department of the City of Peterborough, another long-time ally since the first iteration of the Ecology Garden, provided some funding, as did Peterborough Utilities, which at the time was a separate entity from the City of Peterborough.[183] Most importantly, however, Greenup turned to their most reliable benefactors – the people of Peterborough – and asked for material and financial donations.[184] Weathering the financial austerity of the Harris government in the mid 1990's meant relying on the broader network of environmental organizations that had established favorable rapport with the Ecology Park for support. The success of the Ecology Park, and its continued survival today, should be evaluated

[179] Ibid. This is Cathy's estimate.
[180] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 13.
[181] Hansen, "Growing Community," 155.
[182] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 13.
[183] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript,* 12.
[184] Ibid, 12-13. Charges for services such as school visits and plant adoptions were also introduced.

in this context, namely its organizational survival due to its place in a broader infrastructure of dissent.

What the Ecology Garden's historical development demonstrates is that the infrastructure of dissent provides grassroots environmental organizations with a homogenous, shared identity despite the multiplicity of focus in environmental organizing. Aligning itself with similar environmental organizations such as the Environmental Youth Corps ensured that the youth perspective was ever-present in the everyday operation of the garden. Likewise, the garden's early affiliation with Activity Haven allowed seniors to participate in the garden's activities, garnering the "good press" that the Ecology Garden needed when it was to later incorporate with a provincially-recognized organization.[185] The inclusion of seniors in the everyday operations of the Ecology Garden also created a unique conviviality, one which demonstrated the civic benefit of the garden beyond its environmental importance. The move to Beavermead Park and the merger with Greenup, although a contentious issue, politicized the issues that many of the Ecology Garden's programs focused on, allowing it to receive provincial funding and recognition under the Green Communities Initiative. Most importantly, OPRIG Peterborough embued some of its key administrative attributes onto the Ecology Garden, attributes which proved highly beneficial to the Ecology Garden in times of administrative doubt. Most noticeably, the clarity that consensus-based decision making introduced to the Ecology Garden allowed it to survive an identity crisis that had developed when the merger with Greenup was tabled. It is argued here that without the introduction of consensus-based decision making to the garden's administration, the identity crisis that arose in late 1993 would have had a much different outcome.

[185] Interview with Cathy Dueck, *Transcript*, 7.

As demonstrated in Chapter One, a professional branch of the infrastructure of dissent has always proven critical to the survival of OPIRG Peterborough. Though it is important to stress here that the infrastructure of dissent has the capacity to homogenize social-justice initiatives, the City of Peterborough cannot be seen as a passive actor in the historical development of the Ecology Garden. In fact, the City of Peterborough (much like Trent University in Chapter One) facilitated the success of the Ecology Garden in times of need. Beginning in 1990, the City of Peterborough proved a beneficial ally to the Ecology Garden, particularly when it came to land procurement and finance. Activity Haven, in conjunction with the Parks and Forestry Division of the City of Peterborough, provided the initial plot that would later reap great reward for the early incarnation of the Ecology Garden. Likewise, the Peterborough Sustainable Development Committee provided start-up funds in conjunction with OPIRG Peterborough and the Kawartha World Issues Centre. Equally as important was the Peterborough Food Bank, where many of the Garden's seasonal harvests were donated, which provided the Garden with a local stakeholder that encouraged continuity of service.

Though not a local organization, the province of Ontario provided similar support to the Ecology Garden. The Environmental Youth Corps, before its loss of funding under the Harris government, provided volunteers and employees to the garden. The Garden's emergence into the provincial domain was later solidified by the merger with Peterborough Greenup in 1993, where the Garden's projects and initiatives benefitted from provincial recognition, support, and funding. Both the Environmental Youth Corps and Peterborough Greenup are indicative of the professional branch of the infrastructure of dissent.

After the merger with Greenup and the subsequent funding cuts implemented by the Harris government, the City of Peterborough once again came to the aid of the Garden. The

Otonabee Conservation Authority provided cheap office space in downtown Peterborough for Greenup administrators when their old offices became too expensive. The Parks and Forestry Division also returned in the post-merger days to provide whatever funding was available amidst the massive cuts, as did Peterborough Utilities. In both the early development of the Garden and after its transformation, therefore, the City of Peterborough played a crucial role in its survival and development. The Garden's individual resilience, therefore, must be paired with the support of the City in order to fully appreciate how it survived the age of austerity in the 1990's.

The capacity of the infrastructure of dissent to homogenize the identities of grassroots environmental organizations serves as a noteworthy foil to the work of Laurie Adkin, who suggests that the plurality that is characteristic of the environmental movement has stunted its progress. Adkin, who argues that "the meaning of 'environmentalism' is the object of discursive struggles among antagonistic social actors," points to the difficulty of other environmental movements to maintain long-term projects.[186] In her study of Pollution Probe, Adkin notes that Pollution Probe and another environmental justice group known as Friends of the Earth (FOE) endorsed a green-product line introduced by Loblaws in 1989.[187] The reason for this, according to then-director of Pollution Probe Colin Isaacs, was that the market could be manipulated in a way that could influence consumer habits, thus leading to the normalization of purchasing green products.[188]

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[186] Adkin, Laurie in William K. Carroll. "Counter-Hegemony and Environmental Politics in Canada." *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice.* Toronto: Garamond Press, 1997. 125. Here, Adkin specifically cites movements such as "feminism, the peace movement, freedom of sexual orientation, anti-racism, or coalitions formed around economic relations with the Third world" as campaigns that have struggled with "creating legitimacy" around a unified discourse. 126.
[187] Adkin, "Counter-Hegemony and Environmental Politics in Canada," 140.
[188] Ibid.

Adkin contrasts Pollution Probe's apparent cooperation with the market to the public interest discourse, which is generally critical of the market and calls for increased market regulation to promote environmental stewardship.[189] Such "contradictory pulls" in both discourse and approach in groups such as Pollution Probe and Energy Probe leads Adkin to conclude that there is no "homogenous collectivity" between environmental groups due to a "mix of discursive practices."[190] Similarly, Ryan O'Connor's study of Pollution Probe concludes with the argument that the "diversity of goals" was the organization's ultimate undoing.[191] O'Connor notes that "recycling, energy, environmental law – while all fighting for a healthier environment – are not unified in terms of targets and goals," thus corroborating Adkins' claim that the plurality of environmental justice movements are detrimental to long-term initiatives.

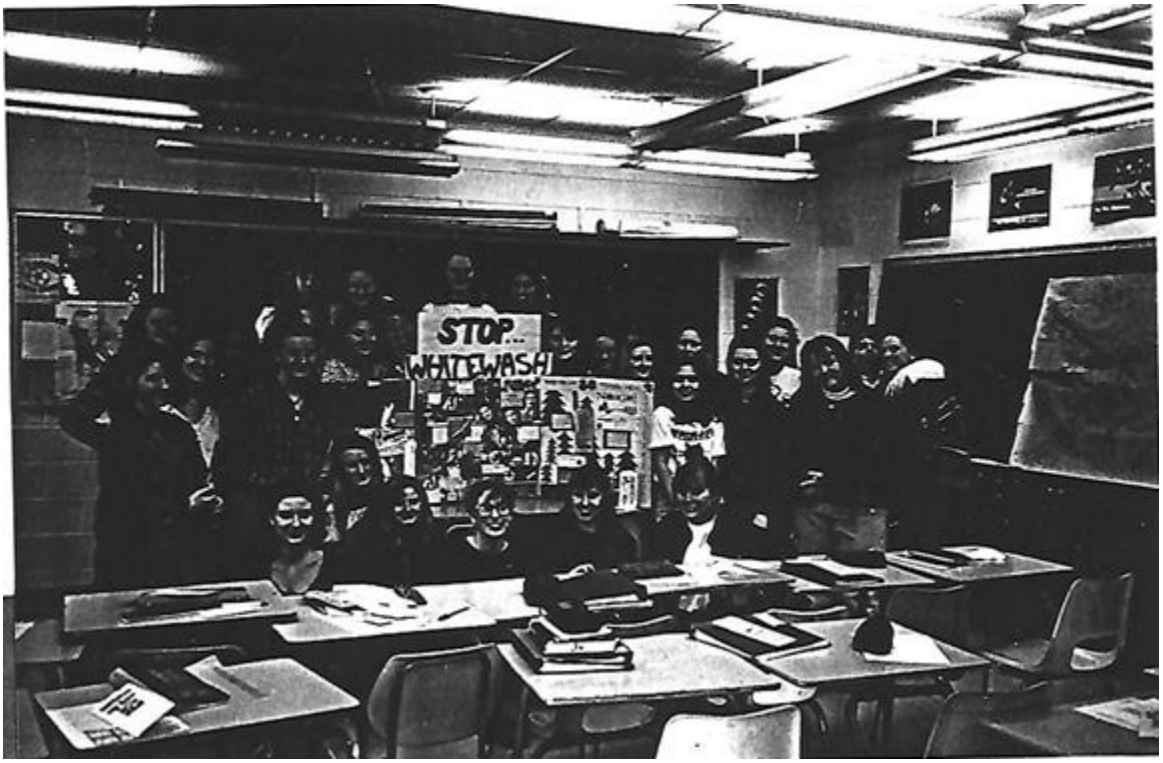
Though Adkins' analysis of the modern environmental movement ends on an optimistic note - one that is careful to identify the powerful alternatives to modern consumer practices presented by environmental justice organizations- Adkin's analysis illustrates the environmental movement as a fractured mosaic of independent movements, marked by conflicting differences in approach. The foil that the Ecology Garden presents to both Adkin and O'Connor, however, is that formal partnerships with differently-aligned environmental groups does not necessarily mean irreconcilability. The Ecology Garden's survival by merging with Greenup demonstrated the ability of the garden to weather the austere economic climate of the Harris government.[192] This survival, facilitated by the infrastructure of dissent, demonstrates not only the ability of

[189] Ibid. Adkin evokes the concept of eco-capitalism to frame the approach of Pollution Probe, whereas the approach of other 'whistleblowing' activist groups is more in line with the traditional New Leftist approach.
[190] Adkin, "Counter-Hegemony and Environmental Politics in Canada," 142, 150.
[191] O'Connor, Ryan. *The First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario.* Toronto & Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015, 98.
[192] Sears, Alan. *The Next New Left: The History of the Future.* Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2014 5. Sears makes explicit that a key feature of the infrastructure of dissent is its ability to "[allow] activists to build forms of counter-power that can challenge the dominance of employers and the state." Sears cautions that the failure of the infrastructure of dissent to meet this criterion can result in a campaign's failure in the face of austerity.

environmental movements to survive when faced with austere economic policy, but demonstrates the wider potential of the infrastructure of dissent to create homogenous identities within otherwise fractured environmental justice organizations, and thus avoiding the organizational collapse experienced by similar organizations, notably Pollution Probe.

Chapter Three

Creating Organizational Identities Through the Infrastructure of Dissent: The OPIRG Peterborough Women and Health Project (WHP), 1993-1998



23 March, 1993. Four members of the WHP present in a Grade 10 girl's health class at Crestwood High. Photo retrieved from the person library of Jillian Ritchie.

While the Ecology Garden demonstrated the potential for the infrastructure of dissent to unify grassroots environmental movements despite differences in core ideology, another OPIRG Peterborough project that was developed in the same period also demonstrated the potential for the infrastructure of dissent to create autonomous identities for its working groups. The Women and Health Project (WHP) is one example of a working group that, despite being part of OPIRG Peterborough, created an identity for itself separate from the organization. Like the Ecology Garden, the WHP began as a small group of interested students who wanted to make their academic pursuits worthwhile by putting their learning into practice. A small project with initial start-up funds provided primarily by OPIRG Peterborough and other local organizations with ties to the grassroots community, the WHP was largely experimental in nature. In this case, the 'experimentation' of the WHP was its approach of speaking openly regarding the realities of menstruation and sexuality, with a particular focus on the significance of these topics for the lives of adolescent women. Later, the experimental nature of the WHP came to include open discussions of HIV/AIDS and safe sex, a topic that even today remains difficult for institutions to appropriately discuss.

The WHP was an ecofeminist OPIRG Peterborough working group that was inspired by the larger "Whitewash" movement, a feminist campaign that sought to bring global attention to the harmful environmental impacts of disposable menstrual products. The focus of the WHP, however, was on providing educational youth workshops to high-school age girls on the subject of alternative menstrual products. Unlike the Ecology Garden, the WHP did not have to weather a period of economic austerity, despite the project coinciding with Harris' premiership. In fact,

the project enjoyed a relatively stable base of funding, both from OPIRG Peterborough, the OPIRG provincial network, and other local and provincial organizations. The project's success took place simultaneously amidst the growing public discussion of HIV/AIDS in the 1990's, providing fertile ground for openness on the topic and experimental methods of public education. Another contrast worth noting between the Ecology Garden and the WHP was how being part of an infrastructure of dissent shaped the organizational identities of each group. Where the Ecology Garden found survival from an age of economic austerity by amalgamating with provincial officialdom, the WHP reaped its rewards by diverging from traditional methods of educating young women about sexual health. In this chapter, the historical development of the WHP will be traced with particular attention given to its success amidst the larger women's health and HIV/AIDS historiography of the 1990's.

The focus of this chapter will be on how the infrastructure of dissent, despite its proven capability to homogenize organizational identities, can in contrast allow grassroots movements to create their own unique identity. In the case of the WHP, provincial recognition was given to their women's health workshops, therefore broadening and improving the public discussion taking place around women's health. Though this may seem somewhat contradictory at first vis a vis the argument posited in Chapter Two, it is argued here that the WHP's place in the infrastructure of dissent demonstrates the its ability to both homogenize yet simultaneously differentiate the identities of grassroots organizations.[193]

[193] The sources used to recreate the timeline of the WHP come from the personal library of Jillian Ritchie, who was OPIRG Peterborough's coordinator from 1995-1999. Additionally, Ritchie participated in an oral history interview. Therefore, this chapter is comprised of archival and oral history pieces; however, the 'archival' sources consulted in this chapter are not of the traditional type, as Ritchie donated them herself and the documents were not present in OPIRG Peterborough's archives. The only materials cited in this chapter that are otherwise accessible through OPIRG's archival holdings are the annual reports of 1995, 1996, and 1997. The other sources are all personal materials collected by Ritchie – like the 'Red Book,' which is an instructional workshop manual – or created by Ritchie, such as her M.A. thesis *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group*, and some written

Women's health, even before HIV/AIDS had entered public discourse, had been well established in the 1990's as a social justice issue. Several provincially-recognized organizations had matched the WHP's success during the early and mid-1990's. To name a few achievements, the Federal Working Group on Women's Health released a report entitled *Working Together for Women's Health: A Framework for the Development of Policies and Programs* in 1990, which lead to the subsequent inventorying of national women's research areas in health by 1994 by the Medical Research Council Advisory Committee on Women's Health.[194] By 1996, the Canada-USA Women's Health Forum recommended environmental health, occupational health, violence against women, and health issues relevant to Aboriginal women as key areas of focus in future research.[195] Outside of the research aspect of women's health, activism and public education on these issues came from the Canadian Women's Health Network (CWHN). Much of the work of the CWHN was focused on criticizing the cutbacks in social spending that effected health and "the privatization of health services."[196] The CWHN also faced the even more problematic challenge of the "biomedical focus" of women's health education, wherein women were characterized as "a set of parts to be fixed by practitioners who alone know what [was] best for women."[197] This problematic characteristic of the women's health movement in Canada was

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personal reflections. Here it is important to acknowledge the nature of some of the sources that are used to create PIRG histories, here but also in the wider historiography of the PIRGs. Archival holdings are a fraction of the sources available to historians when retelling PIRG histories; as evidenced here and in Chapter Two, many former members and affiliates of PIRGs keep personal collections that, for a multitude of reasons, never made it into official PIRG archives. As much of PIRG history is recent history, the importance of oral history to PIRG historians becomes much clearer. Engaging surviving members of the PIRGs in interviews allows the historian access, should the appropriate rapport be built, to the interviewee's personal collections. As with Chapter Two and as seen here, these 'hidden archives' and unofficial materials allow a broader and in-depth exploration of PIRG administrative histories. Without these materials, these stories would never be told.

[194] Morrow, Marina. "Our Bodies Our Selves in Context: Reflections on the Women's Health Movement in Canada" in *Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy.* Edited by Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky, and Colleen Varcoe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. 50.
[195] Morrow, "Our Bodies Our Selves," 50.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Morrow, "Our Bodies Our Selves," 54.

exactly what the WHP set out to change: instead of treating the young women of their workshops like patients who needed treatment, the WHP sought to speak to young women on more personal terms that would show an understanding of the difficulties of menstruation and the misconceptions that abounded in traditional curricula regarding safe sex.

As will be evidenced during the discussion of the safe-sex workshops that were developed after a period of heightened success by the WHP, the HIV/AIDS epidemic provided the perfect opportunity for the WHP to construct a highly personal narrative that engaged young women with health issues that directly effected them. The concept of 'vulnerability,' here meaning who could be effected by HIV/AIDS, was a key theme of the WHP's safe sex workshops.[198] Critical counter-cultures of HIV/AIDS that responded to contemporary approaches to sex education in the 1980's and 1990's called for increased attention on both those effected or at risk of the virus, and the social meanings behind the implications of the virus.[199] In fact not only was vulnerability thought to be limited to certain genders, but to certain sexualities as well.[200] As women's health specialist Meredith Raimondo notes, lesbians were thought to be near-immune from the virus based on what were thought to be "relatively safe" sexual behaviours.[201] As similar misconceptions were abound in traditional women's health education practices, the WHP needed to develop an approach that subverted the "structural constraints on

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[198] Raimondo, Meredith. "Between Visibility and Vulnerability: Women and HIV/AIDS" in *Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy. Edited by Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky, and Colleen Varcoe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.* 390-391. Here I use the term 'vulnerability' interchangeably with its broadly conceived definition (who it can be transmitted to) and Raimondo's use of the term (which highlights the "social factors shaping the AIDS pandemic.")

[199] Raimondo, "Between Visibility and Vulnerability," 383. Raimondo notes that "the early and virulent association of AIDS with gay men created a highly politicized context around questions of identity." As will be seen later in this chapter, this issue in tandem with a selection of others contextualized the issues and traditional modes of thinking that the WHP's workshops had to work against.

[200] Raimondo, "Between Visibility and Vulnerability," 385. Raimondo argues that "the mass media in the 1990's constructed 'women' as a category defined in part by its distance from the [HIV/AIDS] epidemic."

[201] Raimondo, "Between Visibility and Vulnerability," 387.

agency" that plagued similar grassroots movements when it came to women's health.[202] Understanding the significance of the WHP, therefore, goes beyond understanding its key structural differences from similar movements, and instead understanding how its structural differences – facilitated through the infrastructure of dissent – allowed it to make a name for itself within the broader women's health movement.

The WHP began in 1993 as an ecofeminist working group based out of OPIRG Peterborough. The inspiration for the working group came about largely from OPIRG Peterborough member Jillian Ritchie's personal experiences in two facets of her curricular and extra-curricular life: a 1992 Public Interest School (PIS) workshop called "Stop the Whitewash", and her enrollment in a "special-topic women's studies course on ecofeminism" during her undergraduate studies at Trent University.[203] The 1992 PIS workshop's focus was on the efforts of other feminist working groups in other Ontario PIRGs to raise awareness of the environmental damages caused by disposable menstrual products.[204] The "whitewash" movement was inspired by the recent publication of *Whitewash: Exposing the Health and Environmental Dangers of Women's Sanitary Products and Disposable Diapers : What You Can Do About It* by Liz Armstrong and Adrienne Scott, which was the first mainstream North American text to engage in public discussion of the environmental degradation caused by chlorine-bleach based menstrual products.[205] Ritchie's enrollment in the special-topics women's studies course promoted

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[202] Raimondo, "Between Visibility and Vulnerability," 393. Here, Raimondo challenges the vulnerability discourse by claiming that "vulnerability suggests that education and self-help cannot be employed effectively if structural constraints on agency are not directly addressed." I assert in this chapter that the WHP's success lay in its ability to structure itself differently than other organizations – grassroots or not – so that it could address the growing discussion on women's sexual health in an interpersonal way, fresh to the period.

[203] Ritchie, Jillian H. *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group.* Supervised by Allan Quigley. Nova Scotia: St. Francis Xavier University, 2006. 41.

[204] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 40.

[205]Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 41. "Whitewash" by Armstrong and Scott was itself a response to the publication of *The Sanitary Protection Scandal* by the Women Environmental Network in 1989. "Protection Scandal" critically detailed the efforts of developed European countries to divest from

community involvement, due to the presence of community research projects that could be undertaken for course credit.[206]

The WHP started in January 1993 with the first official meeting attended by eleven women (some of whom were OPIRG Peterborough board members and volunteers), interested participants in other grassroots environmental organizations, and members of the Whitewash campaign.[207] The WHP's first meeting resulted in the decision to disseminate the ideals of the Whitewash campaign to the broader community by delivering instructional health workshops to high-school health classes.[208] While the focus was primarily on menstrual health and alternative menstrual products, other focus points of the workshops included body images portrayed in the media, and safe sex and preventative measures against HIV/AIDS.[209]

The 1993 workshops began with an activity where tear-outs from magazines depicting women's health were distributed to participants. Participants were asked to stand up if, for example, their "ad [showed] a woman wearing white" or if their ad showed a happy, energetic woman.[210] This introductory activity was meant to demonstrate the prevalence of stereotyping and body shaming in mainstream advertisements of women's health.[211] As follow-up, a facilitator then drew a T-chart indicating "advertisement" on one side and "reality" on the other.

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disposable menstrual products. "Whitewash" marked the first widespread introduction of this topic to North American audiences. Ritchie implies here that the September 1992 publication of "Whitewash" played a large thematic role in the development of the annual fall 1992 PIS that she attended.

[206] Interview with Jillian Ritchie, *Transcript*, 3. In my interview will Ritchie, she remarked that the original members of the WHP were "very fortunate both that there were lots of resources and opportunities to share and learn from what was happening in other communities [regarding women's health education], and" that they "were very fortunate to have very supportive professors at Trent. [The WHP] worked a lot with [Professor] Marg Hobbs, who was involved with Women's Studies department, and several local high school teachers." Here, Jill implies that the course under Hobbs' direction was key to the community outreach component of the WHP.

[207] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 43.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 44.

[210] "Learning from Each Other: Peer-Facilitated Health Education for Young Women." Edited by Jillian Ritchie. OPIRG Peterborough. 14.

[211] "Learning from Each Other," 14.

With the facilitator writing, participants brainstormed the reality versus ideal of menstruation.[212] Next, facilitators spent ten minutes demonstrating "the life cycle of a disposable menstrual product" with illustrations, meant to highlight the environmental impact of disposable menstrual products on the environment.[213] The next activity was known as the 'pad puzzle', where a ten-piece puzzle resembling a tampon was assembled by the participants and the significance of each word on each of the ten pieces was elaborated upon by the facilitators.[214] One such word was "Maxis," significant because that particular brand of pads was not required to list their ingredients on their packaging.[215] Participants were then asked to brainstorm potential alternatives to disposable menstrual products before being shown several types of alternatives provided by the facilitators.[216] A list of suppliers in Peterborough that carried alternatives were then noted.[217] Though the workshop activities appeared unorthodox and were perhaps uncomfortable for some participants, they demonstrated the overarching aim of the WHP to address issues of women's health directly rather than brushing over uncomfortable or taboo topics of discussion without fully addressing the significance of such issues.

Within the first four months of the WHP's conception, three young women's health classes at local high-schools in the Peterborough area were presented to, including Crestwood High on 23 March, 1993.[218] The tenth-grade class that the WHP visited at Crestwood – despite some initial skepticism regarding the prospect of reusable and hand-made menstrual pads – engaged with the presentation and expressed noticeable curiosity and enthusiasm to try reusable

[212] "Learning from Each Other," 15.
[213] "Learning from Each Other," 16.
[214] "Learning from Each Other," 19.
[215] Ibid.
[216] "Learning from Each Other," 20-21.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 43.

products.[219] The success at Crestwood was echoed in other presentations given in 1993, with members of the WHP particularly noting the engagement by young women in discussions surrounding the media's portrayal of how women were expected to behave during their menstrual cycles.[220] In one instance, the WHP was invited back to a school they had already presented at in order to present to a different class later in the year.[221]

A crucial component of the WHP's administrative structure was the 'teach-in potluck,' an occasional informal gathering of the WHP at a member's house over a dinner-type setting. At the teach-in potlucks, members would prepare brief presentations on key women's health issues in order to inform the other members of the issue's relevance to the goals of the WHP.[222] Each member, therefore, was considered a 'specialist' in that particular issue area, and from there could work to incorporate their research findings into WHP programming. Separate from the WHP's regular meetings, the teach-in potlucks served two purposes: to broaden the academic, research-related understandings of the group, and to ensure a hospitable inter-personal relationship between all members of the WHP.[223] As discussed in relation to the early years of the Ecology Garden in Chapter Two, interpersonal conflict could seriously stall the progress of grassroots campaigns. In the case of the WHP, the main concern was that those involved in the Whitewash campaign prior to joining the WHP had the potential to become unofficial "experts" in the material, thus creating a power dynamic that would run opposite to the consensus model inherent to OPIRG's working group administration.[224] The informal setting of the teach-in potlucks ensured that the "working relationship" among the members felt more like that of

[219] Document entitled "March 23rd, 1993 Workshop at Crestwood H.S.". Jill Ritchie's Personal Collection. Photocopy.
[220] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 44.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 45.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.

friendship than professionalism, and eliminated the opportunity for 'experts' to take intellectual charge over the rest of the group.[225]

The WHP's programming beyond the workshops included "Make Your Own Pad" workshops, held on Trent University's Peterborough campus, and eventually a talk by Liz Armstrong herself.[226] The pad-making workshops, like the workshops that were given to local high-schools, engaged participants in a discussion regarding the environmental implications of disposable menstrual products, but a key feature of these workshops was that participants made their own flannel menstrual pads.[227] The Liz Armstrong talk signified the growing recognition of alternative women's health and ecofeminism.

By fall of 1994, the WHP's capacity expanded. The Summer Experience Employment Development Program and the Ontario Women's Directorate granted the WHP $7,400 "to cover project expenses during the fall and winter to produce a volunteer training manual."[228] This grant allowed the production of the 'red book,' an instructional manual that future members of the WHP used to facilitate the women's health workshops in local high-schools. The "Make Your Own Pad" workshops and regular teach-in potlucks were mainstay programs of the WHP by 1995.[229] The women's health workshops for young school-aged women that had been developed

[225] Ibid. Ritchie comments that this feature was "vital to the success of [their] work," a claim that is true, though I believe for a more significant reason than what its surface entails. As discussed in Chapter Two in relation to the Ecology Garden, the power dynamic created by grassroots activists with more experience than others can result in conflicts that have important implications. With the Ecology Garden, the interpersonal issue detailed in Chapter Two could have resulted in a loss of vital labour if one member were to have quit, thus derailing the garden's success; here, in the case of the WHP, if the former Whitewash campaign members entered into a position of official or unofficial power, the direction, goals, and objectives of the WHP could have been at the mercy of a minority in the group, thus creating a departure from the consensus model.
[226] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 45-46.
[227] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 45.
[228] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 47.
[229] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 47-48.

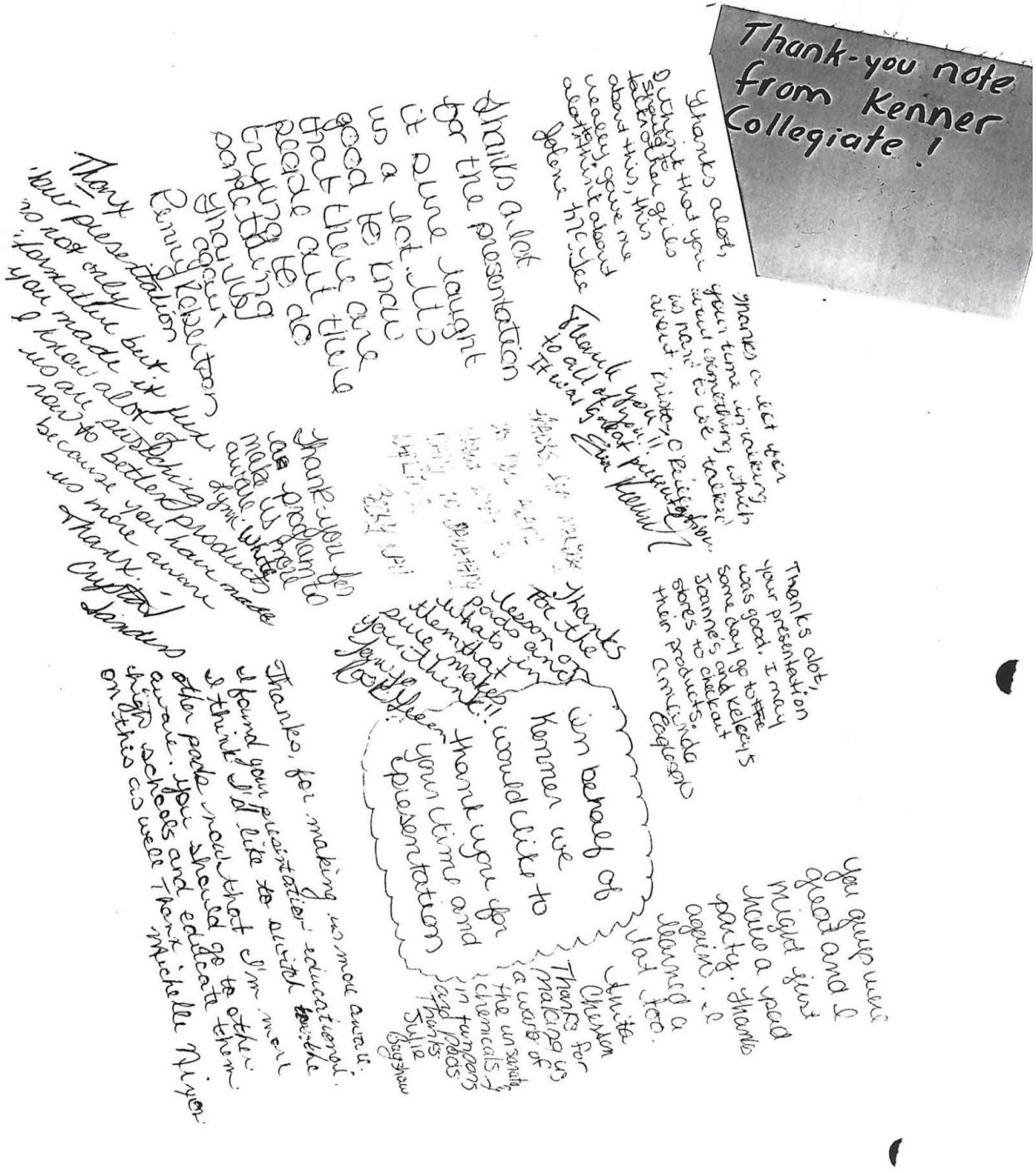
in 1993 continued, though with an undetermined frequency.[230] The WHP was also granted air-time on Trent Radio, contributed frequently to the Trent University student newspaper, the *Arthur*, and planned a large-scale "Menstrual Action Day."[231] The largest aspect of expansion, however, was the shifting focus from menstruation to safe sex. Caught up in the growing public discussion surrounding HIV/AIDS in the 1990's, the introduction of safe sex to the WHP's mandate appeared to be a logical next-step.[232] Similarly to the Ecology Garden, however, the change in focus brought on by the expansion of programming resulted in a challenge to organizational identity. Debates surrounding how to approach public discourse on sexuality abounded, though the ground rules that were laid at the teach-in potlucks, in tandem with OPIRG's consensus-based decision making model, ensured that the debates were nowhere near as catastrophic as they had the potential to be.[233]

The "Safer Sex for Young Women" workshops in 1996 began with a media collage. Participants were divided into groups and given magazines, tape, and board paper. Some groups were "positive," tasked with finding what they believed were positive images of women to add to their collage; the other group was "negative," tasked with finding images that were believed to portray women negatively.[234] Once the allotted time expired, the negative group was asked to identify the positives of the positive group, and the positive group was asked to identify the negatives of the negative group. A discussion regarding the significance of these images to

[230] Ibid. It is unclear the exact number of workshops that were delivered to local high-schools post-1993. Ritchie's "Transformative Learning" states that "five menstruation workshops in local high schools and at the university [took] place after the success of the first," thought it is not specified if this is inclusive, or separate from, the three workshops held in 1993. Regardless, "Transformative Learning" indicates the continuation and expansion of the women's health workshops post-1993.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 49.
[234] "Learning from Each Other," 25.

young women would then ensue.[235] Next was an activity known as "Body Tracing," where a silhouette (drawn on chart paper by the facilitators) was laid before the participants. Markers were distributed, and the participants wrote non-body and non-physical related words onto the silhouette in order to identify what made someone beautiful without relying on the body. Discussion ensued at the end when the poster was put up on the wall for all to see.[236] This was followed by an activity called "Power Dynamics." Participants are asked to brainstorm who in their lives has "power-over them," and to explain why.[237] Two short activities followed and were mostly facilitated by the group: "Visualization" and "Challenging Myths." Visualization involved having the facilitator explain that everyone had "absorbed ideas about lesbianism and bisexuality" and participants were then asked to reflect on what their ideas of such things were. In "Challenging Myths," the facilitator defined 'myth 'and described myths concerning lesbianism and bisexuality.[238] Then flash cards were shown to each participant and they were asked to identify if each behaviour was a safe sexual act, or how the sexual act could be made safer.[239] Wrap up included a game called "The Sex Tree." An anonymous facilitator was given the role of "person with HIV." The object of the game was to get three peoples names on your partner card (distributed to each participant.) At the end, the facilitator who "ha[d] HIV" was revealed, and the number of times her name was written on someone's partner card was meant to show how quickly HIV/AIDS could be transmitted and contracted.[240] The game ended with a discussion of how HIV was spread, where to get tested, and the importance of safe sex since HIV is not readily identifiable.[241] The similarities between the safe sex workshop and the

[235] Ibid.
[236] "Learning from Each Other," 26.
[237] "Learning from Each Other," 27.
[238] "Learning from Each Other," 30-31.
[239] "Learning from Each Other," 32.
[240] "Learning from Each Other," 33.
[241] Ibid.



menstruation workshop was intentional: both workshops were intended to confront their subject matter directly, in a way wherein the young women who were directly effected by the issues could be involved in a collaborative effort to critically engage the material.

A thank-you note received by the WHP from Kenner Collegiate, one of the many high-school's presented at during the peak of the WHP's operation.. Retrieved from the personal library of Jillian Ritchie.

The 1995 academic year continued with success, with the publishing of the volunteer manual being one of its important milestones. The document gave the WHP volunteers "tangible evidence of their achievements," and helped to "ensure that [former volunteers'] work [was] remembered."[242] A total of forty volunteers were trained in the 1995 academic year to facilitate women's health workshops in local high-schools.[243] In essence, the financial endowments provided to the WHP by the Employment Development Program and the Women's Directorate created a sense of progress as well as a feeling of certainty moving forward.

The 1996 academic year marked the professionalization of the WHP and its transformation into an organization of its own. A project coordinator was hired at the beginning of the 1996 academic year after funding was provided by "the local district health council community grants program."[244] Though the WHP was undoubtedly a campaign on its own legs by 1996, OPIRG Peterborough's role in its development cannot be understated. By 1996, the WHP still primarily operated out of the OPIRG Peterborough office, despite many of the original members of 1993 having graduated and left the community. Training opportunities, such as consensus-based workshops, anti-racism, and anti-oppression seminars were provided to members of the WHP through OPIRG Peterborough. Many of the baseline funds, beyond those secured through the Employment Development Program, Women's Directorate, and local health initiatives, were also provided by OPIRG Peterborough.[245]

Support and recognition of the WHP was also provided by the wider student population, not limited to OPIRG Peterborough. As previously noted, the WHP's association with the Women's Studies department at Trent University allowed much of the work for the WHP to be

[242] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 50.
[243] "1995-1996 OPIRG Peterborough Annual Report". OPIRG Peterborough. Jill Ritchie Personal Collection.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ritchie, *Transformative Learning in a Women's Health Activist Group,* 50-51.

done for course credit. The support of the Women's Studies department "ensured that the group's praxis was grounded in a feminist analysis" while supplying volunteers and maintaining project continuity.[246] At the end of the 1997 academic year, the WHP was awarded the Peggy McKay award for environmental preservation, a provincial OPIRG award named after the wife of the first OPIRG Peterborough coordinator and editor of the Nuclear Free Press, Paul McKay.[247]

The WHP enjoyed support not only from its local financiers and the OPIRG Peterborough chapter, but the wider provincial OPIRG network. Every six weeks beginning from the project's inception, the coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough and the provincial OPIRG representative would meet to discuss support options for the campaigns of PIRG working groups.[248] Fortunately for the WHP, the OPIRG provincial network was host to a number of women's health-related projects during the 1990's.[249] The financial, material, and administrative support provided by both OPIRG Peterborough and the OPIRG provincial network eventually culminated in the annual Women and Health Conference where women's health activists could convene with one another from across the province to share their experiences, methodology, and techniques.[250] Here it can be seen that the WHP's capacity greatly expanded with the help of its financiers, primarily OPIRG Peterborough and the OPIRG provincial network. What began as a

[246] Ibid.
[247] "OPIRG Annual Report, 1996-1997". OPIRG Peterborough. Jill Ritchie Personal Collection.
[248] Interview with Jillian Ritchie, *Transcript*, 4.
[249] Interview with Jillian Ritchie, *Transcript*, 3. Ritchie did not state in her interview specifically whether there were other working groups at other Ontario PIRGs doing similar educational workshops to the WHP, only that "OPIRG Peterborough had a really active and engaged women and health working group, so did all the PIRGs across the province."
[250] Interview with Jillian Ritchie, *Transcript*, 4. This conference was similar to the Public Interest Schools, wherein a different campus hosted the Women and Health Conference each year, and despite being open to the public, many OPIRG board members and volunteers would convene to discuss mutual interests and learn activist strategies from one another.

group of four young women preparing two-hour workshops for high-school health classes quickly evolved into an annual provincial conference with governmental recognition.

The historical development of the WHP demonstrates a number of key elements of the infrastructure of dissent, which sustained the project's success from 1993-1996. As defined by Sears, the infrastructure of dissent serves as a "process of collective capacity-building," which "takes a variety of forms, ranging from informal neighborhood and workplace networks to formal organizations and structured learning settings."[251] The WHP certainly embodied the 'neighbourhood' category of the infrastructure of dissent, evidenced by the importance of teach-in potlucks to the development of both research and activism. However, the WHP, like the Days of Action and the Ecology Garden, also benefitted from a professional arm of the infrastructure of dissent. As Ritchie's interview revealed, much of the initial inspiration for the project and even the early networking opportunities came from the Women's Studies Department at Trent University. Most important of all, the OPIRG provincial network recognized the WHP's effort as one that coincided with a wider provincial movement, therefore introducing the project to a network of like-minded activists. The success of the WHP can therefore be explained due its use of informal and formal branches of the wider infrastructure of dissent. The informal teach-in potlucks allowed one of the key criterion of the infrastructure of dissent to be met, namely the means "through which people develop the collective capacities for memory, analysis, vision, and solidarity required to sustain ongoing currents of resistance"[252]; conversely, the professional arm of the infrastructure of dissent provided the administrative essentials of meeting space, program funding, professional development, and training.

[251] Sears, Alan. *The Next New Left: A History of the Future.* Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2014. 2.
[252] Sears, *The Next New Left,* 3.

I argue here that the WHP transformed itself into something entirely unique with the help of the infrastructure of dissent. While this phenomenon is certainly not limited to the WHP, the historical development of the WHP is particularly revelatory. Key to Sears' conceptualization of the infrastructure of dissent is the notion that "the infrastructure of dissent erodes as the life and work circumstances of people change"; further, that it "needs to be regenerated in forms appropriate to transformed conditions."[253] The WHP serves as an exemplary foil to the traditional definition of infrastructures of dissent, which characterizes it as something with a lack of institutional memory. On the contrary, the WHP ensured that their objectives could be carried on by other members even if those in positions of unofficial leadership left the project. This was a key feature of the teach-in potlucks, which focused on having members teach other members about emerging research in the broader women's health movement. In fact, the increased funds that were received from the OPIRG provincial network also facilitated the creation of a workshop manual which would allow others to carry out the workshops despite potentially having no role in developing them. The WHP created for itself a unique identity, one that was not only different from any working group affiliated with OPIRG Peterborough, but one that was vastly different from the traditional women's health education movements in Ontario in the 1990's.

[253] Sears, *The Next New Left,* 2. This is part of Sears' larger claim that "the left has shrunk to the extent that there can be little continuity between previous waves of radicalism and the next one." Sears, 4.

Conclusion

Towards a Universal Infrastructure of Dissent

OPIRG Peterborough After the Austere 1990's

The analyses of each chapter has highlighted a selection of OPIRG Peterborough's projects and campaigns in the 1990's in order to showcase the historical development of a number of OPIRG Peterborough campaigns. Chapter One demonstrated that despite departing from the American PIRG model in a number of key administrative ways, OPIRG Peterborough (in tandem with the provincial OPIRG network) retained its capacity to effectively mobilize and contribute to wide scale social movements. Chapter Two marked a change in OPIRG Peterborough's environmental justice focus, shifting from protesting the use of nuclear energy to developing local food gardens and maintaining local greenspace. Chapter Three chronicled OPIRG Peterborough's departure from traditional means of providing health and sex education to adolescent women and the recognition their efforts received from the provincial government. These campaigns and projects were by no means representative of the entirety of OPIRG Peterborough's programming in the 1990's, but are important projects that mark the departure from previous programming as seen in Johnsons' *History of a Student-Led Organization I.*[254]

Though many of the projects outlined in Chapters One to Three are no longer continued today, OPIRG Peterborough remains a key social justice organization in the Peterborough community, particularly regarding the provision of social justice services and mobilization. A

[254] For a more extensive look at OPIRG Peterborough's initiatives in the 1990's, please see Appendix A. The timeline is included to provide a sense of scope regarding the focus, length, and outcomes of other OPIRG Peterborough projects.

large-scale mobilization on the scale of the October 26 Day of Action has not been seen in Canada for some time, and the Ecology Park has not received formal support from OPIRG since the mid-1990's. That said, OPIRG Peterborough does use the Ecology Park spaces and gardens on occasion. Additionally, the WHP is no longer active in the Peterborough community. This does not indicate, however, that the campaigns of the 1990's were unsuccessful; rather, this is indicative of a wider pattern that is characteristic of the PIRGs, namely that the nature of student organizing is ever-changing, manifesting itself as a continuous rotation of social justice interests. The mobilizations and environmental efforts may not be as grand as the 26 October Day of Action, nor as niche-oriented as the Ecology Garden, but the mobilizations and environmental focus of OPIRG Peterborough in recent years is more demonstrative of a change in scale and focus. In January 2015, OPIRG Peterborough and Sustainable Trent, a student-led environmental justice organization based out of Trent University, collaborated to mobilize against the use of fossil fuels. This protest culminated in a rally inside of Lady Eaton College "demanding" that Trent University's Board of Governors divest from the use of fossil fuels.[255] Divestment Week is a noteworthy bookend to the projects outlined in Chapters One through Three due to its capacity to mobilize, seen through the rally organized at Lady Eaton College, and its local-oriented activism, indicative of trends identified in OPIRG programming in Chapters One and Two. While the scale of Divestment Week was smaller than the Days of Action, the focus was still local, and the capacity to mobilize was still impressive. OPIRG Peterborough therefore has retained both its capacity to mobilize and its local focus.

[255] OPIRG Peterborough. *Divestment Week.* OPIRGPeterborough.ca. http://opirgptbo.ca/events/divestment-week/ The Divestment week campaign was also focused on boycotting Israel's occupation of Palestine. The week-long campaign involved a film screening, a debate hosted by the Canadian's for Mining Awareness working group, and a talk with Palestinian Solidarity workers Nausheen Quayyum and Anne Menely.

OPIRG Peterborough's organizing around women's health and sex education has changed substantially since the 1990's. In keeping with the growing trend of awareness and recognition of LGBTQ values and fluid sexualities, OPIRG Peterborough's women and sexuality mobilizing has come to encompass education regarding sexual identity, much like how the WHP incorporated HIV/AIDS education into its programming when public discussion regarding the issue grew in the 1990's. Nowhere is this transformation more evident than in OPIRG Peterborough's Self Love Week campaign. OPIRG Peterborough's Self Love Week in February 2014 included a facilitated discussion open to the community regarding LGBTQ and sexual identities at Sadleir House, and culminated in a Women's Memorial March from Water Street to Trent University.[256] Similarly to the WHP, Self Love Week is an OPIRG Peterborough campaign that embraced a different approach to tradition, challenging social mores where possible. Like the WHP, Self Love Week is characterized by its open and popular education-based approach to taboo social issues. This manifested itself in the WHP as an open discussion regarding women's health and sexuality, whereas Self Love Week is focused on abandoning the commercial approach to Valentine's Day while also promoting open discussion on LGBTQ values and sexual identities.

While campaigns such as Divestment Week and Self Love Week can be understood as transformations of OPIRG Peterborough's approach to mobilizing, it is also important to view the broader transformation of OPIRG Peterborough's programming as a natural change resulting from the transience of the student population. The "four-year window" that students have to develop campaigns therefore results in a "a lot of turnover," preventing some long term projects

[256] OPIRG Peterborough. *Self Love Week 2014.* OPIRGPeterborough.ca. http://opirgptbo.ca/2014/self-love-week-2014-2/ It is part of OPIRG Peterborough's board member's mandate to boycott traditional celebrations of Valentine's Day, and Self Love Week has manifested itself in recent years as their version of this.

from being carried out effectively.[257] While former OPIRG Peterborough coordinators have identified this trend as a potential challenge to the organization, hints of optimism have demonstrated that this model is crucial to the development of Nader's whistleblowing on-the-job-citizens.[258] The evolution of OPIRG Peterborough campaigns and their focuses, therefore, should be understood as both a shift in social and environmental justice interests over time, and as an inherent administrative characteristic based on the length of time students can commit to the organization.

The Infrastructure of Dissent Re-Evaluated

This project has successfully re-evaluated the infrastructure of dissent paradigm as originally framed by Sears in *The Next New Left.* Sears' claim that the infrastructure of dissent erodes in the face of austerity has been effectively challenged by the case of OPIRG Peterborough in the 1990's. As seen in Chapters Two and Three, the Ecology Garden and the WHP respectively did not collapse because of funding losses or unfavorable social climates.[259] Instead, these projects and their leaders resorted to creative means of securing funds and receiving the appropriate support that facilitated their survival. Perhaps most importantly,

[257] Interview with Matthew Davidson, *Transcript,* 6-7. The "four-year window" concept, though articulated by Nader in *Action for a Change,* is perhaps best contextualized by former OPIRG Coordinator Matthew Davidson, who I was fortunate to interview. Davidson explains that "you've got a four year window to work with these students, so there's going to be a lot of turnover as a result, even with year to year, because you've got summer vacation and people have to go home to work so they can pay their increasing tuition, and whatnot. So that was always a challenge to work through the in-and-out-in-and-out of folks, and you don't have a lot of organizational memory and consistency because of that."

[258] Interview with Marnie Eves, *Transcript,* 4-5. Another interview that I was fortunate to participate in was with former OPIRG Peterborough Coordinator Marnie Eves. Optimistically, Eves noted that though her time with the organization was short, PIRG values (namely the consensus-based decision making model) carried over into her working life as a health professional. She notes that many of the values instilled in her by OPIRG Peterborough were ones that were relevant to making her workplace more accessible. It may therefore be worth noting that this is a key role of Nader's on-the-job citizen, to spot workplace injustices and combat them. Here, Eves suggests that the short-term work done by students while they are employed by the PIRG extends beyond student mobilization, and instead manifests itself in the workplace.

[259] I do state in Chapter Three that the WHP did not experience any shortcomings in funding, but the newly public discussion of HIV/AIDS and the lack of effective mainstream education surrounding menstruation and safe sex is justified here as a kind of social austerity, posing a social roadblock to the WHP's work rather than an economic one.

Chapter One has shown that the student population was not dramatically impeded by the cuts to education made by the Harris Progressive Conservative government. While university campuses (Trent University being no exception) experienced a brief period of political apathy, social justice organizations such as OPIRG Peterborough reached out to groups such as TASC to prepare them for their next mobilizations, demonstrating an almost renewed sense of vigour and optimism regarding mobilizational methods.

Additionally, each chapter has proposed previously underdeveloped facets of Sears' original conceptualization of the infrastructure of dissent. Chapter One has proposed that the infrastructure of dissent requires a professional component or 'branch' in order to facilitate the survival of its organizations, one that is affiliated with the provincial or federal government or a union. Chapter Two has suggested that the infrastructure of dissent has the capacity to unify fractured environmental justice organizations into partnerships with shared identities and mutually satisfying objectives. Chapter Three, in slight contrast, demonstrated that the infrastructure of dissent could foster the development of unique identities within the broader infrastructure of dissent. These facets are not meant to change the way the infrastructure of dissent is understood, rather they are meant to emphasize the importance of the infrastructure of dissent when it comes to helping social justice organizations weather austerity.

Given these points of re-evaluation, the infrastructure of dissent may be more 'universal' than Sears' original concept. There in fact may be a more definitive, and even cross-cultural infrastructure of dissent that does not need to be limited to grassroots organizations or student mobilizations. The infrastructure of dissent may be key to understanding social movements,

broadly conceived, not just limited to class-labour or leftist-political dichotomies.[260] As Sears notes, his work is not an attempt "to provide a complete history of radical organizing through the twentieth century," and that "rich local histories would deepen the analysis tremendously, while a genuinely global scope would enrich [the infrastructure of dissent] in different ways."[261] It is likely that this call for increased dissection of the infrastructure of dissent was made under the assumption that labour-political frameworks would be at the forefront of any forthcoming analysis. Future development of the infrastructure of dissent could benefit from increased environmental or ecofeminist focus; beyond this, religious mobilization or ethnic mobilization may also contain elements of a universal infrastructure of dissent worth exploring.

[260] Sears certainly has a cross-cultural component to his analysis, as areas of focus are given to North America and Great Britain, and to groups such as First Nations communities. However, these areas and communities are analysed with a labour-political bent. What is argued here is that the infrastructure of dissent, given the previously undeveloped facets outlined above, may also lend itself to effectively understand *non*-labour-political mobilizations.
[261] Sears, Alan. *The Next New Left: A History of the Future.* Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2014. 23-24.

Appendix A

OPIRG Peterborough Campaigns and Events Timeline, 1990-2015

A key project deliverable for OPIRG Peterborough was a timeline of events from the 1990's-Present. In her project, Johnson's chronological focus was key to the historical narrative, as the project's purpose was more or less an inventory of events from 1976-1989. As the approach of this project is thematic, the timeline's inclusion as an appendix will provide a sense of other campaigns that occurred concurrently with the campaigns of major focus.

1990

- **May, 1990:** Inspired by her honours thesis project, Cathy Dueck co-founds the Ecology Garden on Rogers St. Demonstrates, promotes, and tries to help community live sustainable lives in an urban environment.
- **1990 (academic year**): Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) approach Peterborough City Council and "propose a joint effort to identify and protect natural areas in the City."[262] A steering committee is formed by the city and other local "environmental groups" to begin project development. This eventually leads to the OPIRG Urban Green Areas Project: UGAP. (see more on UGAP in 1991, 1994, 1995, and 1996.) Though PFN are not affiliated with OPIRG Peterborough, this initial proposal of theirs becomes a project under OPIRG's supervision in 1996.

1991

- **1991 (academic year):** OPIRG's refundable levy checkoff increases from $7.00 to $9.00 per student
- **November, 1991:** Clifford Maynes, former coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough during the 1980's, publishes "Environment and Local Government: How Local Governments Can Protect the Environment and Implement the Principles of Sustainability" through OPIRG. Focuses on how local governments, schoolboards, and utility commissions can be sites of potential action. "Intended to be an introductory guide" to be used by voters, candidates, and people in local office when pursuing sustainable practice at the local level – document is accessible in nature. Document was created "as part of a 'Local Government Project for Environmental Priorities' kit prepared for the November 1991 local government elections."[263]

[262] "OPIRG's Urban Greenpaths Action Project: Photo Contest Sparks Interest in Naturalization." *Arthur*. Tuesday, September 24th, 1996. 10.
[263] Maynes, Clifford. *Environment and Local Government: How Local Governments Can Protect the Environment and Implement the Principles of Sustainability.* Published by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) Peterborough, 1991. 3.

- **December 1991:** Peterborough Natural Areas Study, a project of the UGAP Steering Committee, "documents the geographical, biological, and cultural characteristics of natural areas and corridors on the city."[264] This project is elaborated upon and later updated by OPIRG and the UGAP committee, forming the basis of their inventory in 1996 (see more on UGAP in 1994, 1995, and 1996.)

1992

- **September 1992:** OPIRG Peterborough's Housewarming Project working group -- where students go into low income houses and prepare the infrastructure and residents for efficient energy use-- calls for 1992-1993 academic year volunteers.
- **1992 (academic year):** First Resource Librarian hired, along with first Women's Issues Coordinator and first Media Outreach Coordinator

1993

- **1993 (academic year):** Ecology Garden moves from Rogers St. location to Beavermead Park as part of Peterborough GreenUp. 5 more acres of land obtained due to the change in location.
- **February 2nd, 1993:** OPIRG hosts speaker Randy Thomas, former journalist and current environmentalist responsible for the founding of Gulf Environmental Response Team, at Peterborough Public Library. Discussion focused on the environmental impact of the Gulf War.
- **March 10, 1993:** Liz Armstrong, author of *White Wash*, speaks at Traill College about removing chlorine from women's products and the "power of women to make change."
- **April 1st, 1993:** New OPIRG constitution presented at AGM.
- **October 5th, 1993:** Talk given by Barbara Rutherford (Canadian Environmental Law Association – CELA) that pointed out the correlation between poverty, race, and pollution. Sponsored by OPIRG.
- **October 9th, 1993:** Toby Mueller, coordinator of OPIRG, demonstrates a workshop on the usage of medicinal herbs at the Ecology Garden, a joint venture between OPIRG Peterborough and Peterborough Green Up.
- **October 16th, 1993:** World Food Day – OPIRG and KIWC gave Supermarket Tours from Oct. 12-Oct 15
- **October 1993:** OPIRG hosts International Images Festival (Film Festival) and calls for student films to be submitted.
- **November, 1993:** OPIRG heavily involved in the revision and drafting process of Trent's Human Rights Policy – several open forum discussions held on the future and contents of the document. The Human Rights Policy was adopted during the period of Trent University President Leonard Connelly's 'academic freedom,' wherein there was a push for professors and course instructors to have more freedom in the content they teach. The document was to outline the rights and privileges of students in this more open academic climate.
- **December 3rd, 1993**: "NAFTA: Where do we go from Here?" a talk with local MP Peter Adams about the implications of Free Trade hosted by OPIRG in Champlain College.

[264] "OPIRG's Urban Greenpaths Action Project: Photo Contest Sparks Interest in Naturalization." *Arthur*. Tuesday, September 24th, 1996. 10.

- **December 7th, 1993**: First draft of Human Rights Policy presented in open forum discussion; coordinator Jill Ritchie critical of the document, calling for race and gender to be adequately represented and calling for those that sit on Human Rights committees to be adequately trained. OPIRG highly involved in public discussion of the document.

1994

- **1994 (academic year):** Peterborough Natural Areas Study is resumed by UGAP steering committee, which reconvenes in 1994, deciding to establish a network of green areas in the city of Peterborough (for more on UGAP see 1995 and 1996.)
- **January 16th, 1994:** Sheldon Tetreault, a human rights researcher for OPRIG Peterborough, invites students to an open forum to discuss, debate, make suggestions, or just become better informed on the policy.
- **January 26 – February 5, 1994**: OPIRG and KWIC co-sponsor popular education seminars. Popular education can be defined as accessible ways of relating issues to the general populace through music, dance, theatre, etc… A popular method amongst grassroots organizers
- **January 28-30, 1994**: CUSEN (Canadian Unified Students Environmental Network) Conference on "Community-based Environmental Economics" held at Traill College, cosponsored by KWIC and OPIRG.
- **February 1994:** OPIRG Peterborough hosts annual Public Interest School (PIS.) PIS are open to the public, but are focused on PIRG programming. PIS is meant to enhance activist strategies, network with other PIRGs, and share social justice experiences with a wider audience.
- **February 1st, 1994:** OPIRG Peterborough screens film "Ethnic Notions" as part of Black History Month.
- **February 5th, 1994:** "One Day Asia Conference" co-hosted by OPIRG, KWIC, TIP, and TISA at Peter Robinson College. A celebration of Asian culture, but also focused on educating and myth shattering regarding Asian culture.
- **Februay 6th, 1994:** Sheldon Tetreault, OPIRG's human rights researcher, invites interested stakeholders and members of the community to review Trent University's proposed human rights policy as well "assess the strengths and weaknesses of similar policies across the province."

1995

- **May, 1995** : Jillian Ritchie succeeds Toby Mueller as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough.
- **November, 1995**: A report/inventory of natural heritage sites is drafted by the UGAP Steering Committee. The UGAP project has not yet become an official OPIRG project, but the completion of this inventory becomes crucial for the development of the OPIRG-UGAP project in its final form in 1996. (See the UGAP entry for 1996)

1996

- **April 1996:** Over 600 trees from the Ecology Garden are planted along the Rotary Greenway trail, spanning from Hunter St. to Trent University.
- **Summer 1996:** OPIRG receives financial support from TCSA and Environmental Youth Corps to hire 3 students to work on UGAP a project devoted to "protecting, restoring, and enhancing

Peterborough's natural heritage."[265] These 3 student employees of OPIRG spend the summer inventorying wildlife and flora/fauna along the Greenway trail and promoting ecological restoration through community presentations.

- **Fall 1996**: 3 Summer UGAP Staff hired by OPIRG host a wildlife photo contest, prompting members of the community to submit photos of wildlife, flora, and fauna found along the Greenway trail.
- **Fall 1996:** 3 Summer UGAP Staff also complete a Greenway Trail manual with the purpose of "inspiring interest" in natural heritage. The manual is completed in Fall of 1996 and is distributed to the wider community.
- **September 1996:** OPIRG voices support for proposed construction of student centre and expresses a desire to house their office in it once construction is complete. Claims it will better integrate OPIRG into Trent community, and resolve longstanding space issues at Stratton House.
- **September 17th, 1996:** A bus full of environmentally-conscious students and OPIRG Peterborough members departs from Peter Robinson College at 7pm, bound to Temagami to protest logging practices taking place in the area.
- **October 2nd, 1996:** OPIRG Women and Health Project continues with its first event of the 1996-1997 academic year being "Make Your Own Reusable Pads" workshop, aimed at reducing the amount of waste and environmental damage caused by non-reusable tampons.
- **October 8th, 1996:** OPIRG hosts a panel of guest speakers aimed at raising awareness about unfair logging practices in Temagami. Located in Bata Library film theatre. Panel is made up of Bruce Hodgins (Trent U history faculty), Dan McDermot (author), and Mary Lalonde, a representative of the Caribou Clan of the Teme-augama. Over 160 attendees at this event, despite the film theatre's capacity of 60.
- **October 9th, 1996**: As part of the UGAP project, OPIRG hosts a Bike-a-thon along the Greenway Trail to promote recreational use of the Greenway and inspire interests in natural heritage. Pledges are collected by participants; prizes are given to winners.
- **October 26th, 1996:** The fourth "Day of Action" takes place in Toronto. Comes to be known as the "Toronto Day of Action." Initiated by the Ontario Labour Council protesting Mike Harris and the conservative Ontario regime. Over 200,000 participants. It is known that Trent students and OPIRG members attended this day of action, though the exact extent to which OPIRG was involved remains unknown, other than the fact that OPIRG provided buses to the event for Trent students and OPIRG Peterborough volunteers/board members alike.
- **October 29th, 1996:** Yukon Wildlands Project, an OPIRG working group, puts on a slideshow presentation in Bata Library film theatre. Admission is "3-5 dollars, or whatever you can." Slideshow's focus is on the efforts of norther conservationists to preserve wilderness resources in Canada's far north. Part 1 of a 3-part series.
- **November 1996:** OPIRG Peterborough Prison Violence Project working group (PVP) hosts a speaker that discusses the implications of the Commission on Systematic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. Focuses the discussion on Robert Gentiles and Dudley George, two prisoners killed by prison violence.
- **November 19th, 1996:** Part 2 of 3 – Ontario Wildlands League (Yukon Resources.) Another slideshow presentation, this time focused on ecology of forest health and its relationship to the survival of forest community economies.

[265] "OPIRG's Urban Greenpaths Action Project: Photo Contest Sparks Interest in Naturalization." *Arthur.* Tuesday, September 24th, 1996. 11.

- **November 28th, 1996:** OPIRG co-hosts an information session and workshop with Peterborough Eco-Council on how to access and use the Environmental Registry, an online bulletin allowing public access to proposed amendments and offshoots of the Environmental Bill of Rights. Held at Peterborough Public Library.

1997

- **January 8th, 1997:** First meeting of the Anti-Cuts Coalition at Traill College. Sponsored by TCSA Student Issues Commission, but hosted by coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough Jill Ritchie. The Anti-Cuts Coalition was dedicated to creating a public forum wherein the concerns of post-secondary students regarding budget cuts could be heard. Against cuts made by Harris government.
- **January 28th, 1997:** Part 1 of 3 in OPIRG Peterborough's "Environmental Activism Lecture Series": Ecological Bases of Economic Survival, a slideshow and discussion of alternative forestry practices (presented by Wildlands League, like presentations given in 1996.)
- **February 1997**: First ever Women, Health, and the Environment Conference hosted by OPIRG Peterborough and 4th year Women's Studies students. Open to members of the community as well as student body and women of other PIRGs. In the words of Christina Ferguson, one of the conference organizers, the purpose of the conference was to "provide a forum to discuss current interests and networking opportunities" as well as idea for future collaboration amongst different women's health groups across the province.
- **February 4th, 1997:** Part 2 of 3 in OPIRG Peterborough's "Environmental Activism Lecture Series": a slideshow about Temagami, presented by Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. OPIRG Forestry working group discusses local activism regarding the issues. Focused mainly on Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's struggle to end logging in Temagami.
- **February 11th, 1997:** Part 3 of 3 in OPIRG Peterborough's "Environmental Activism Lecture Series": a "follow-up" to the workshop in November of 1996 regarding how to use the online bulletin Environmental Registry. "Designed to familiarize people with the registry," likely the broader public. Also on this day, Cathy Dueck gave a talk on local environmentalism in relation to the Peterborough Ecology Garden.
- **September 1997:** First Nations Solidarity Working Group forms at the beginning of this academic year. Focus is on the intersection of Indigenous land rights and Indigenous environmentalism.

1998

- **March 30th, 1998:** OPIRG AGM hosted at Peter Robinson College, featuring special guest speaker Grainne Ryder of Probe International and author of "Eternal Dam-Nations: The Politics of Large-scale Hydroelectric Development on the Mekong River."
- **October 1st, 1998:** Xavier Grijalva from the Institute Anazanga Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza gives a talk about environmental racism in Biko Library Film Theatre.

1999

- **January 1999:** PIS hosted in Peterborough at Trent University.

- **March 11, 1999:** Cofounder of La Tonera, Violeta Perez, speaks about her work "on human/labour rights in the free trade zones of the Dominican Republic" at Biko Library. Event sponsored by OPIRG.
- **November 26, 1999:** "A group of ten street performers from OPIRG Peterborough gathered in a van and headed to Seattle" to attend WTO protest, "armed with juggling balls, street scrips, a unicycle, imagination and a strong political passion." Engaged in theatre protest free trade.
- **1999 (academic year):** Marnie Eves succeeds Jillian Ritchie as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough.

2000

- **February 12th, 2000:** Peter Robinson College's Sadleir House hosts OPIRG Women, Health and Environment Conference
- **March 1, 2000:** "Privatization and Export of Canadian Water" talk given by CUPE representative. Part of a larger series on "Water and Who Controls It?", cosponsored by OPIRG and KWIC.
- **March 15 2000**: Continues the "Water, who controls it?" series with a presentation from Peterborough Utilities at Trinity Church

2001

- **March 16-17, 2001**: "Trans Identities: A Symposium on Transgender and Transsexual Issues" hosted by OPIRG Peterborough at Traill College. Prolific Transgender activist and speaker Rupert Raj paid by OPIRG to come and speak at this event.
- **October 2001:** TCCBE project (TCRC) "Menstruation and Sexuality Coordinator" begins. Focused on the intersection between women's health and the environment. The end goal of the project is a manual detailing women's health, but the students were also expected to implement workshops themselves as part of the project agreement.
- **November 10th, 2001**: Community response to 9/11 event hosted by KIWC at St. John's Anglican Church, OPIRG invited.

2002

- **2002 (academic year):** OPIRG McMaster publishes one (of many renditions) of the Supermarket Tours. The introduction to the document dates the beginning of the Supermarket Tour around 1980.
- **2002 (academic year):** Food Issues Group (FIG), an OPIRG working group, starts "serving local, organic soup by donation in 2002. The Stone Soup project challenged the food service monopoly that Aramark had at Trent University, offering staff and students more diverse choices as well as food for thought about the prevailing institutional food policies."[266]
- **2002-2003 (academic year**): OPIRG applies for incorporation, but is not approved. (Not approved until summer 2005.) WPIRG threatens to secede from provincial network if "poverty PIRGS" continue to receive funding (Kingston, Peterborough, and sometimes Windsor.) According to Waterloo, who provides most of the funding for the provincial network, 'poverty

[266] *Our History.* The Seasoned Spoon. http://www.seasonedspoon.ca/seasoned-spoon-cafe-0

PIRGs' – so named due to their apparent lack of revenue in comparison to the other 11 PIRGs – continue to be a financial drain and therefore WPIRG should not have to continue to fund them.

- **September 2002:** "Composting on Campus" TCCBE project begins. Some of the project deliverables included a literature review of current institutional composting practices, and a final report to be delivered to Trent's Environmental Advisory Board, Aramark (the current food services provider at the time), and Physical Resource Department. The aim was to begin a composting system at Trent, with the hopes of later expanding into a community-wide composting system.

2003

- **January 29th, 2003:** Food Issues Group (FIG) organizes a march to Aramark's offices on Trent campus and present a petition calling for Fair Trade Practice in food procurement for Trent.
- **February 25th, 2003:** The Seasoned Spoon's grand opening occurs in the Cat's Ass Pub in Otonabee College. The Seasoned Spoon is the vegetarian, free-trade café started by FIG.
- **March 5 + 6, 2003**: Board member Sarah Lamble invites OPIRG and broader Trent student body to attend Trent's Action Forum, wherein the proposed Student Code of Conduct is to be discussed. Lamble argues that this code of conduct "severely restricts political activity at Trent." Held in LEC.
- **Spring 2003:** Seasoned Spoon café moves from Cat's Ass pub to Champlain Junior Common room, where it would reopen in the 2003 academic year.
- **November 18th, 2003:** Seasoned Spoon opens for business in new location, Champlain Junior Common Room.

2004

- **September 2004:** OPIRG Peterborough begins their relocation from Stratton House to Sadlier House.
- **2004 (academic year):** Jessie White succeeds Marnie Eves as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough.

2005

- **2005 (academic year):** The Free Market, a donation-based 'store' with satellite depositories on the Trent University campus, is developed and begins operation. The name for the Free Market is a "play on neo-liberal concept of free market," though the system itself did not rely on trade, bartering, or exchange. Encourages re-use, and battles stigma of reusable items.
- **June 2005:** An accessibility committee is formed by Sadleir House community and concerned community members. The focus of the accessibility committee was to make Sadleir House more accessible for those with mobility-related issues. Marks the beginning of the Sadleir House accessibility project, which in turn resulted in the installation of lifts and ramps to Sadleir House's design. A draft at this time is completed, but "the departure of several key players" for undisclosed reasons delays the progress of the project. (see 2006 academic year below.)

- **August 2005:** OPIRG Peterborough incorporated under province of Ontario. Free Market also moves its office to Sadleir House after OPIRG moves there in 2004-2005 academic year – last OPIRG Peterborough-affiliated office to move into Sadleir House.
- **September 2005 (academic year project):** A TCCBE project is undertaken with OPIRG's direction in the 2005-2006 academic year intending to revise the 2001 publication of OPIRG McMaster's Supermarket Tour. This project eventually published the 2008 Peterborough Supermarket Tour that is commonly distributed today.
- **November 12, 2005:** Self-publishing festival, Zine Expo. Homemade magazines used by grassroots organizations to publish. Hand-made with glue and scissors.

2006

- **2006 (academic year):** OPIRG applies for funding through Canada Summer Jobs for a project coordinator for the accessibility project. Funds are denied.
- **2006 (academic year):** Yolanda Jones succeeds Jessie White as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough.
- **October 15-20, 2006**: OPIRG Peterborough co-hosts Action Against Poverty Week, a series of events dedicated to eliminating the stigmas associated with poverty and discussing the intersections of poverty and mental health. This event has continued into recent years, and has involved other grassroots organizers such as Food Not Bombs, Active Minds, and the Revolutionary Student Movement.

2007

- **2007 (academic year):** Zine Expo.
- **April 2007**: Free environmental workshops given during Early Earth Day, a prelude to Earth Day. These workshops instructed how to use popular education such as song, dance, and theatre to effectively act and educate on environmental awareness. Of note, however, is the Green Menstruation workshop that took place, making reusable menstrual pads that would reduce ecological damage done by disposable pads.
- **April 25th, 2007:** The Free Market wins the Peggy McKay Award for Environmentalism, a few days before the Free Market giveaway on April 29th at Sadleir House.
- **September 2007:** A second project concerning Supermarket Tours edits is arranged by OPIRG through the TCCBE. A follow-up to the 2005 project, both of which resulted in an updated Tours publication. (see "Summer 2008" below.)
- **2007-2008 (academic year)**: To revitalize the Sadleir House accessibility project, OPIRG Peterborough transforms it in to a TCCBE project. Another application for project coordinator is made, and this application is granted. Carolyn Givogue becomes project coordinator, and four main goals are outlined in the project agreement, the most substantial headway made since the committee's formation in 2005: make existing "accessible" regions properly accessible; increase the accessibility of the main floor; make all main entrances accessible; and install elevators/lifts.

2008

- **Summer 2008:** Supermarket Tours edited, final product of a TCCBE (TCRC) community projects.
- **September 2008:** "Ethical Food Sourcing" project begins with TCCBE. Purpose of the project was two-fold: to catalogue food service providers across Canada in the hopes of constructing a database of ethical, free-trade food policies. The case study and the resulting database would then be used to make recommendations to Trent could adopt in its own food sourcing practices.

2009

- **2009 (academic year):** Seasoned Spoon relocates for its 3rd and final time to "the sunnier and more spacious Champlain Senior Common Room." This is where its operations continue today, with over 400 loyal members and 17 staff.

2010

- **2010 (academic year):** Canadians for Mining Awareness (CMA) is formed by future OPIRG Peterborough board member Natalie Guttormson and 2 other interested Trent students. Group is formed after Trent International Studies Department hosts a speaker from an affected mining region. Natalie and her peers, upset with the abuse to social justice, formed the group in the academic year of 2010. The purpose of the group was to work in solidarity with national and international communities affected negatively by mining. The focus was on education, fundraising, and building alliances with other affected communities.

2011

- **2011-2012 (academic year):** Ontario PIRG's charitable status called into question, as the parameters of charitable status have changed since Ontario PIRG was granted such status.
- **January 17-22, 2011:** OPIRG organizes "Unpacking Peace: An Exploration of Peace, Violence, and Conflict," typically referred to as Peace Week. The purpose of Peace Week was to discuss how peace can be achieved, and what it meant to be at peace. Peace Week began with a workshop at OPIRG's office in Sadleir House to define peace, and distinguish it from simply the absence of war. It ended with a screening of the documentary "War Resisters Speak Out," which details the experiences of American soldiers seeking asylum in Canada after refusing to fight in the Iraq war. Consensus and anti-oppression workshops were provided by OPIRG throughout the week.

2012

- **2012 (academic year):** Green Dishes Initiative begins. The initiative is a lending service to prevent waste at large evets. High-profile clients that used this service since its inception include

Peterborough Folkfest, Peterborough Energy Council, Kawartha World Issues Centre Sustainable Trent, and Poverty Network Peterborough.

2013

- **January, 2013:** Matthew Davidson succeeds Yolanda Jones as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough. At 6 years, Yolanda Jones is the longest-serving coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough in the 2000's.
- **September 2013:** The Seasoned Spoon, in partnership with Endeavour Center for Innovative Learning, Building, and Living, constructs the Root Cellar, a small but hard-to-miss 'hut' outside of Champlain College used to store local produce in large quantities. The inspiration for the Root Cellar came from a drive to revitalize the regional agriculture system; the Cellar would aid the Seasoned Spoon in doing so by allowing them to purchase large quantities and even larger varieties of local produce, on a larger scale than was possible with the limited storage space prior.
- **Sept 22, 2013:** Climate Change rally at Purple Onion Festival. Occurred in Millenium Park.

2014

- **Feb 9-14, 2014:** Self-Love Week, marketed as an "alternative to Valentine's Day," generated programming and events focused on safe sex, transgender activism and awareness, and a memorial march for missing Indigenous women.
- **April 26, 2014**: Annual Free Market giveaway.

2015

- **2015 (academic year):** Kay Ma succeeds Matthew Davidson as coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough.
- **Jan 26-30, 2015:** Divestment Week hosted by OPIRG Peterborough and Sustainable Trent. Calls for Trent to divest from the use of fossil fuels for the sake of the environment. Also aimed to bring attention to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in response to Israel's occupation of Palestine. Involved a film screening, a debate on the practicality of divestment, a keynote speaker, and then a rally at the Gzowski bus stop on the 30th of Jan. Certain imagery associated with the campaign caused substantial backlash.
- **February 26th, 2015:** OPIRG Peterborough's annual AGM held in Sadleir House with a keynote address from Alan Sears. A professor of Sociology at University of Windsor, and a trans-activist familiar with the experience of student organizing, Alan Sears' conceptualization of the "infrastructure of dissent" is a good way to think about OPIRG.
- **April 18th, 2015:** Annual Free Market giveaway.

Appendix B

Oral History Interview Questions

These questions received ethical approval from the department of History at Trent University in the summer of 2016. Though in some cases more individualized questions were asked depending on the interviewees relationship to the organization, these questions more or less framed the majority of the discussion with each participant.

Preamble: *(Thank-you for participating in this interview. It will greatly help in the study of OPIRG's history from 1990 to present. The interview questions have been approved by OPIRG Peterborough and by Trent University's department of History. By signing the Informed Consent Form *presented and signed by the interviewee prior to interview* you agree to participate in the interview honestly and respectfully; to have your answers transcribed by the researcher, and reviewed by OPIRG Peterborough, the TCRC, and a Trent University History department faculty member; to have your answers recorded by the researcher electronically, and reviewed by OPIRG Peterborough, the TCRC, and a Trent University History department faculty member; and to have your answers quoted and elaborated upon in the student's written thesis. It is within your prerogative to refuse to answer any questions; to refuse to take part in the interview; to remain anonymous, if desired; and to answer in as little or as thorough detail as desired.)*

Questions:

1. What year did you join OPIRG, and how long was your term?

2. What was your position with OPIRG?

3. Can you describe your main responsibilities?

4. What inspired you to join OPIRG?

5. What were some of the major programs you were involved in?

6. What was the cause of, or inspiration for, these initiatives? For the one's you took part in, what inspired you to be a part of them?

7. In your opinion which programs were the most successful (regardless of your involvement)?

8. Which were the least successful (regardless of your involvement)? Why?

9. To what extent was OPIRG affected by the politics of Trent University, and what are some examples of this?

10. To what extent was OPIRG affected by provincial politics?

11. To what extent was OPIRG affected by federal politics?

7. Did you encounter any impediments to programming, and if so, what were they, and what do you believe caused these impediments?

8. What do you believe accounts for the successes and achievements of OPIRG campaigns and movements? What about the success of OPIRG generally?

9. Were any campaigns/movements directly inspired by events/campaigns being planned by other PIRGs? (Guelph, Waterloo, etc…)

11. What do you believe will help OPIRG with continued success in the future?

12. What can you see being a potential roadblock(s) to OPIRG Peterborough in the future?

13. In your opinion, how does the running of a student-led not-for-profit benefit or impede OPIRG's work? (i.e. having board members, consensus-based decision making, etc..) What do you believe is unique about student-led not-for-profits that work on social justice?

Conclusion: wrap up, questions, swap of contact information, thank-you's

Appendix C

Key OPIRG Peterborough Members, Executives, and Personnel [267]

This appendix is meant to supplement the final section of the introduction, where it is posited that key members of OPIRG Peterborough shaped the outcome of the campaigns discussed. All of these members (with the exception of Keith Stewart) were participants in oral history interviews, and with the exception of Cathy Dueck, all of them were coordinators of the organization during the 1990's.

Keith Stewart, OPIRG Peterborough Coordinator (1992)

Keith Stewart was the coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough until 1992. Records indicating his start date with the organization are spotty, though it is presumed that he took over the position from former coordinator Clifford Maynes in 1986. Stewart was a highly-involved coordinator, evidenced by his place on the Ecology Garden's original steering committee. His interest in the Ecology Garden brought OPIRG Peterborough and all its financial and material resources into the fold, providing the Ecology Garden with regular funding, office space for meetings, volunteers for garden maintenance, and event space for community gatherings. Stewart's environmental activism has continued well into his professional career, as he is now a high-profile lobbyist with Greenpeace and an occasional lecturer in the Environmental Science department at the University of Toronto.

Cathy Dueck, Ecology Garden founder and environmental activist and educator (1990-1996)

[267] For a list of interviewees consulted for this project, please see "Interviews" in "Bibliography."

Cathy Dueck has been active in the Peterborough community as an environmental educator and activist for many years. She is one of the key education specialists at Camp Kawartha, and has provided a number of environmental research opportunities to Trent University students through the Trent Community Research Center. Her honours thesis project in her final year as an Environmental Science student at Trent University led to her developing the Ecology Garden, a small plot of land located on Rogers Street devoted to growing local food. Her original involvement with OPIRG Peterborough came through the Housewarming Project, wherein OPIRG volunteers provided maintenance to low-income housing in order to make the property's energy usage more sustainable. This connection eventually led to the involvement of OPIRG Peterborough coordinator Keith Stewart in the Ecology Garden's original steering committee. OPIRG Peterborough certainly provided a substantial amount of financial, material, and administrative support to the garden, but Cathy consistently remained the architect of the garden's success. Her successful utilization of environmental justice organizations such as OPIRG Peterborough and the Kawartha World Issues Center, combined with her skillful maneuvering of the political landscape of 1990's Ontario, ensured that the Ecology Garden not only survived a period of economic austerity, but created for itself an identity separate from OPIRG Peterborough under provincial recognition. Dueck is currently completing her M.A. in the Canadian and Indigenous Studies program at Trent University. She is also leading a research project with the intent of creating a framework for environmental stewardship education in children and youth.

Toby Mueller, OPIRG Peterborough Coordinator (1992-1995)

Toby Mueller succeeded Keith Stewart as the coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough in 1992. Her interests in food sovereignty changed OPIRG Peterborough's role in the Ecology Garden from a monetary-material relationship to an administrative relationship. As Dueck noted in her interview, Mueller's more hands-on approach to the running of the garden transposed some of OPIRG Peterborough's administrative qualities onto the Garden's administration. Most notable was the inclusion of consensus-based decision making (a staple of PIRG administrative functionality) into the running of Ecology Garden meetings. Dueck also noted in her interview that the incorporation of consensus-based decision making greatly improved the interpersonal relationships between members of the steering committee, and provided the Garden with a clear focus of objectives moving forward. Mueller now lives and works in Lillooet, British Columbia as a Children's Outreach Coordinator.

Jillian Ritchie, OPIRG Peterborough Coordinator and WHP founder/women's health activist (1995-1999)

Jillian Ritchie succeeded Toby Mueller as the coordinator of OPIRG Peterborough in 1995. She was also one of four co-founders of the WHP in 1993, while she was a volunteer before taking the coordinator position. Inspired by the international "Whitewash" movement (elaborated upon in Chapter Three), Ritchie and a number of invested Women's Studies students – who themselves were enrolled in a special topics ecofeminism course at Trent University under the supervision of Professor Marg Hobbs – began the project as an OPRIG Peterborough working group. Under Ritchie's supervision, the project quickly evolved into a series of leading-edge women's health workshops in Peterborough secondary schools. These presentations directly confronted issues of ecofeminism, menstruation, safe sex, and HIV/AIDS in a collaborative way. Ritchie is also largely responsible for the continuation of the project over

many years by developing the “Red Book,” noted in Chapter Three to be a manual created by the WHP to instruct new members on how to facilitate the presentations. Ritchie received her M.A. in 2006, and lives in Peterborough where she works in the public health sector.

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