

Let It Be Resolved...

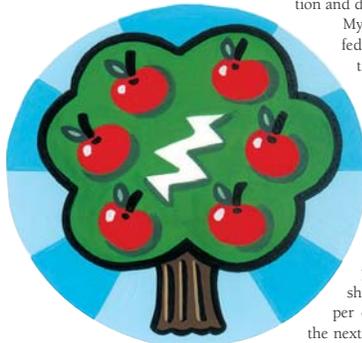
Three professors make New Year's resolutions on Canada's behalf

By HARVEY SKINNER

HOW IRONIC TO ASK A PSYCHOLOGIST TO MAKE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION. People make the same resolutions year after year — an average of 10 times — with limited success. Resolutions have a short life: indeed 25 per cent give up by the end of the first week! Nonetheless, I will set aside my professional reluctance and suggest a resolution regarding health care.

Our challenge is to keep more Canadians healthy longer. Healthy Canadians contribute to our economy and quality of life. They also need medical treatment less often and respond more effectively when treatment is required. Smoking, obesity, poor diet, inactivity, excessive drinking and associated social conditions account for almost 50 per cent of premature deaths. Canadians in the lowest income households live two to five years less on average than those in the highest income households — aboriginal people live five to 10 years less.

We are at a turning point. With healthcare costs escalating six to eight per cent annually there are serious concerns about sustaining a publicly funded system. Pouring more dollars into medical care (supply side) detracts from solutions that reduce the need for services (demand side) through health promotion and disease prevention.



My 2006 resolution for federal/provincial/territorial ministers: Shift the 95:5 balance of Canada's \$142-billion healthcare spending by one per cent from medical care (currently 95 per cent) to prevention (currently five per cent). Indeed, shift the balance one per cent each year over the next half century so that by 2050 we are spending 50 per cent on medical care and 50 per cent on prevention.

Imagine living in Canada when we give as much attention (\$\$\$) to promoting health as we do to treating disease!

I have never bought a lottery ticket. Long ago I learned that I had a greater chance of being hit by lightning than winning a lottery. However, I am feeling lucky so on Jan. 1, I will buy my first lottery ticket. I hope that lightening also strikes health care reform in the coming year.

Professor Harvey Skinner is chair of the Department of Public Health Sciences.

By DANNY HARVEY

WHEREAS CANADA HAS RATIFIED THE UNITED NATIONS Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and

WHEREAS the stated "ultimate objective" of the UNFCCC is the stabilization of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at levels that avoid dangerous human interference with the climate system and that, in particular, allow the natural adaptation of ecosystems, preserve the security of food production and do not undermine sustainable economic systems, and

WHEREAS there is growing scientific evidence that a global average warming of as little as 2 C could lead to major impacts worldwide including, among other things, widespread collapse of coral reef ecosystems, a risk of initiating an irreversible melting of the Greenland ice cap and/or collapse of the West Antarctic ice cap and the eventual extinction of one-sixth to one-third of animal species on land, and

WHEREAS there is growing scientific evidence that current atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations are already sufficiently high to pose a non-negligible risk of provoking an eventual global average warming of 2 C, with the risk of exceeding critical ecological and physical thresholds that increase the more greenhouse gas concentrations are allowed to rise, and

WHEREAS significant ecological effects of global warming and significant regional climatic changes are already being observed, particularly in the Canadian Arctic, and

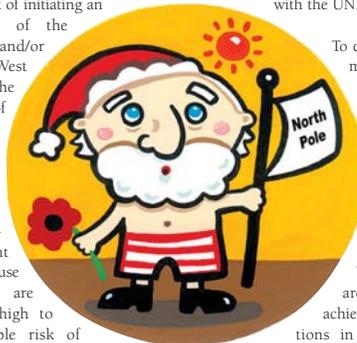
WHEREAS Canada has a moral responsibility as a rich, technically advanced country that has one of the highest per capita emissions of greenhouse

gases in the world, to significantly reduce its emissions, and

WHEREAS technical options exist that, if implemented in a phased manner, could achieve deep (50 to 60 per cent) reductions in Canadian greenhouse gas emissions with little to no net adverse effect on the Canadian economy and with significant co-benefits through, among other things, reduced local and regional air pollution,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

To develop without further delay a comprehensive and co-ordinated package of measures that can, over time, achieve deep reductions in Canadian greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with the UNFCCC;



To develop such a package of measures based on the best available technical, economic and policy advice, without regard to short-term political risks, special-interest groups, vested interests or regional pressures;

To commit such funds as are needed in order to achieve deep emission reductions in the most cost-effective manner; and

To ensure that all the elements of the long-term emission-reduction program are in place by 2012 so that Canada can state that, although it cannot meet its obligation under the Kyoto Protocol without resorting to questionable accounting schemes (allowed under the Protocol), it has a program in place that will eventually not only meet its Kyoto obligations but significantly surpass them.

Professor Danny Harvey teaches in the Department of Geography.

By USHA GEORGE

HERE IS MY LIST OF IMMIGRATION WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR:

- That Canadian immigration policy becomes an effective tool in meeting Canada's labour market needs
- That immigration waiting lists become shorter by the day
- That refugee claimants find the hearing process less intimidating
- That all newcomers find Canada to be a welcoming place
- That all newcomers find Canadian winter truly enjoyable
- That all newcomers find the job search to be an exciting activity
- That all newcomers to Canada can find appropriate employment in line with their qualifications
- That accreditation and licensing of newcomer professionals become less cumbersome
- That the incomes of newcomers are commensurate with their qualifications and experience
- That the income gap between newcomers and the Canadian born narrows every year
- That all newcomers to Canada find good quality affordable housing



- That all newcomers have access to healthcare and social services
- That the barriers to further education are removed for those who want to pursue it
- That all immigrants participate in the political process and elect representatives
 - That all immigrants to Canada develop strong social ties with mainstream Canadians
 - That immigrant families and communities enrich Canadian society and in turn are enriched
 - That no immigrant regrets his/her decision to come to Canada
 - That all immigrants feel that Canada is their permanent home and therefore feel a sense of belonging
- That all undocumented newcomers have access to services and are able to legalize their stays in Canada
- That all discrimination based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability and country of origin ceases to exist and that all Canadians become one happy family

Professor Usha George is associate dean of the Faculty of Social Work and the Royal Bank Chair in Applied Social Work Research.

JENNIFER HERBERT