

# The Role of the CNS Lay Member in Nuclear Outreach

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# The Problem

- *“Nobody trusts a pro-nuke”*
- Almost everyone involved in nuclear outreach is a current or previous employee of the nuclear industry or academia → perceptions of bias
- Nuclear outreach is limited, both geographically and demographically
- *“Find another way to make a living Whitlock. The time is almost up for your deadly work.”*

# The Lay Expert

- Society is full of technophiles
- Some of them become lay experts on certain industries or technologies, with which they have no social or economic ties
- Some of them are good writers, or speakers, or organizers
- Some of them have credibility in their community as knowledgeable, well-read, critically-thinking individuals
- Some of them become motivated to speak out in favour of an industry or technology

# The Lay Spokesperson

- A lay expert, **suitably informed and kept up to date**, can be a lay spokesperson
- An “ambassador” in the community, with significant credibility
- Can have links to demographic groups, or regions of the country, or community events, that would not typically be reached by traditional industry spokespeople
- Many (most?) anti-nuclear activists are lay spokespeople



# The CNS Lay Member

- CNS membership does not require professional nuclear status
- A growing number of CNS members are lay members, collected from the technophilic watershed, often attracted by contact through the internet
- Motivation can be simple interest, or a desire to “do something” about a technology seen to be suffering a perception problem
- CNS gives such members the opportunity to become lay experts, to contribute, to interact with others – with (almost) coast-to-coast local branch presence

# The Alberta Experience

- Zero historical nuclear presence in the culture
- Low familiarity with electricity infrastructure
- Suspicion of Big Industry, Centralized Technology, and anything coming from the East
- Wary of large debts, government interference
- Have only heard bad things about nuclear
- Into this environment, Energy Alberta – later Bruce Power – introduces the prospect of 2 to 4 large power reactors
- Into this environment came the CNS!

# CNS Lay Members in Alberta

- CNS Alberta Branch established ~2006
- ~30 members to date, including professors (current and retired), computer technologists, municipal politicians, a political scientist, a retired Information Technology person, a rancher, and a high-school graduate
- Participated in debates, attended meetings, wrote letters to media and government
- Alberta Teachers' Association Science Conference, CNS High-School Geiger Program
- Organized speaking engagements for nuclear spokespeople, lay and otherwise
- Effective counter-measure against Caldicott visit to Alberta



Questions?