

A. Les McDonald, Founding CNAC Executive Director

(Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the Globe & Mail "Lives Lived" section on April 3, 2008. It was written by Les' good friend, Ron Jette. I am pleased to share it with you. It's hard for me to believe it has already been six months. Ron really captured Les' spirit and made me hear my good friend's laugh one more time. Thanks Ron. – Cheryl)

Health educator, history lover and loyal friend, A. Les McDonald was born October 24, 1928, in North Bay, Ontario. He died suddenly—and unexpectedly—of natural causes in his Toronto home on December 11, 2007, at the age of 79.

By RON JETTE

A. Les McDonald – simply "Les" to everyone he knew – was a big man with a big voice. "We don't give, kid," he claimed to have once told a small child who came to his office to solicit for some charitable cause, "we take!"

No one who knew him believed the story, of course. That just wasn't Les.

Could he be intimidating to the uninitiated? Absolutely. His stature, his voice and his steadfast dedication to his beliefs left no one in doubt as to how he felt. Deep down, however, this was a man who cared profoundly about people and who dedicated himself to public health.

Born and raised in North Bay, his family had a house on Lake Nipissing where the kids used to swim daily from the minute the ice broke in the spring. But this was during The Great Depression when life wasn't so easy.

His dad was a fur trader and jack-of-all-trades so while there was usually food on the table, there wasn't much else – putting cardboard in the shoes and fishing for dinner was a way of life for the McDonalds. But, what doesn't kill you... He grew up a tall, strong man, determined to make the world a better place for both him and others.

Whether it was organizing national or international conferences, pressing for bigger and better Canadian influenza campaigns or working with his colleagues nationally to reduce tobacco use, Les always did his best work on the front lines. He was instrumental in the formation of both the International Asthma Council and the Canadian Network for Asthma Care (CNAC). After retirement, his interest in CNAC remained strong – he was always quick to offer guidance and advice.

Perhaps his proudest moment came in 2004 when he was the first recipient of an award named in his honour, CNAC's *A. Les McDonald Award for Innovation and Excellence in Asthma Care and Education*.

Over the years, he was also recognized for his contributions by both the Canadian and Ontario Lung Associations, the Canadian Council on



Smoking and Health, the Canadian Public Health Association and the World Health Organization.

While his interests were very public, A. Les McDonald was a private man. Although he never married or had children, family was very important to him – he was very close to his parents, taking care of his ailing mother until she died when she was well into her 90s.

Taking care of people was what Les seemed to do best. He was an organizer, a details man, a doer. He loved a good challenge that tested both his intellect and his organizational abilities. And he relished the feeling of a job well done, taking obvious pride in his accomplishments.

But he also loved the quiet moments, reading, reflecting, thinking. The Globe and Mail was among his favourite newspapers as was the Sunday New York Times. Almost inevitably during our conversations, he would tell me about something

he had read that was truly bizarre. "I could hardly believe it!" he would boom.

A former city councillor in Sudbury – where he moved to go to university – and a staunch Liberal, Les often turned his attention to politics. He collected, read and studied the memoirs of past prime ministers and Canadian political figures, savouring them as he would a tumbler of Johnny Walker Black – on the rocks, just a little water, please.

His collection of signed prime ministerial photographs – which has since been bequeathed to his beloved alma mater, Laurentian University – was often the topic of conversations with Les. "I need just four to complete the collection," he would tell anyone who would listen, "MacKenzie, Abbott, Thompson and Bowell. Any ideas?"

Just days before his death I had dinner in his apartment. I pointed to a framed photo leaning on a chair in the living room. "What's that? I asked facetiously, pointing to a photo of the current prime minister.

"That's my latest acquisition," he replied with a grin. "I'm just trying to figure out an appropriate place to hang it." Not too long after that dinner, I was back at home when the telephone rang.

He's gone. And he won't be back.

I could hardly believe it.

Réseau
canadien
pour
le traitement
de l'asthme



Canadian
Network
for
Asthma
Care

THE ISSUE 1 NUMBER 1
Educator

**For Certified Asthma &
Respiratory Educators**

Executive Director's Report by Cheryl Connors

Welcome to the very first issue of **THE Educator**. This newsletter will be published when we have information that we would like to share with our Certified Asthma and Respiratory Educator community. We will also supplement this newsletter with online bulletins throughout the year.

We have plans for **THE Educator** to grow into a vehicle for CAEs and CREs to share information and assist in continuous learning activities. If you have an article that you would like to have published, you can submit it to the Editorial Committee for consideration. You may claim professional development hours for your work on your articles, even if the article is not selected for publication. We will also be adding an **AskTHEEducator** section in future publications. Submit your questions and our team of experienced educators will share their years of "wisdom"! You might have an innovative educational tool that you would like to tell other educators about. The newsletter would be a perfect way for you to share information.

Information Update Requested

Please review carefully the information update form that we have mailed you along with this newsletter. Make any changes and fax them back to the CNAC office at **(905) 880-9733**. We know that we are missing many email addresses for CAEs and CREs. This is the primary method that we use to communicate with you throughout the year and we will continue to use email to communicate important news (including job postings). We will also be implementing our new online bulletins.

Don't miss out!

CRE Exam a Great Success

The first Certified Respiratory Educator exam was held on Saturday, November 3, 2007. Close to 250 educators wrote exams. This was our largest exam sitting since the first CAE exam in 1999. Three versions of the exam were offered: the CAE exam, the full CRE exam (both asthma and COPD as well as education theory) and a shorter COPD-only exam for current CAEs.

There are now 513 current Certified Asthma Educators in Canada and 165 Certified Respiratory Educators. Congratulations to you all!

Recertification Update

We are finalizing the revised Recertification Application and Guide. We have made changes to streamline and simplify the Option A process (Record of Asthma/Respiratory Education and Professional Development). Some of the changes you will see include: increases in the maximum amount of hours allowed to be claimed for certain activities. You will also no longer be required to obtain supervisor signatures (though you still could be asked for verification if you

are one of the 10% randomly selected for audit).

If you are recertifying this year and still have a copy of the old recertification guide, please remember to send it to the correct address: **CNAC, 16851 Mount Wolfe Road, Caledon, ON L7E 3P6.**

The first recertification guides were printed with Les McDonald's Forest Laneway address on them. Les always forwarded them on to us.

Circle of Care – Taking Control of Asthma



You may have already seen an exciting new educational tool, developed by AstraZeneca Canada. The "Circle of Care – Taking Control of Asthma" storyboard was officially launched at ASED 8 in Halifax in November. Since the launch of the storyboard (which is a tool developed for use by educators), a patient brochure and poster have also been developed.

CNAC has been involved with the project throughout its development and we are quite proud to be associated with its success. In fact, several of our CAEs and CREs were part of the development team. Congratulations to:

Lisa Cicutto, PhD, CAE,
Kay Khan, RN, CAE,
Dale Mackey, RRT, CAE (Working Group Chair), and
Brent West, BA, RRT, CAE.



The shorter COPD-only exam will still be offered in 2009 and 2010. We will be making a decision next year whether to continue to offer the shorter version. For CAEs interested in writing the COPD-only exam to become CREs, you must still graduate from a CNAC-approved COPD educator course. Check out the CNAC website at www.cnac.net for a list of approved courses or contact the CNAC office.

The CNAC office will now be taking over the registration of the exam, though our exam company, HRSO, will still be developing and administering the exam. We are just in the process of developing an online registration system, which will be operating this summer. We will send an email to notify you when it is operational.

Margot Underwood to Chair ASED 9

We are thrilled to announce that **Margot Underwood, BN, CRE**, has agreed to chair ASED 9. Margot was one of the two recipients of the 2007 *A. Les McDonald Award for Innovation and Excellence in Asthma Care and Education* (along with **Donna Hogg, MS, RN, CAE**). We know that Margot, and her planning committee, will put together an exciting program that really meets the needs of Canada's respiratory educator community.

We are in final negotiations with the hotel for our ASED 9 conference. Watch your mail and email for a very exciting announcement. We know you are going to be thrilled with our next destination for ASED 9 in November 2009!

Trudell Medical Essentials Kit

Trudell Medical International has offered to send a free "Medical Essentials Kit" of demonstrator samples to all Certified Asthma and Respiratory Educators. The Medical Essentials kit includes an AeroChamber MAX® Valved Holding Chamber, TruZone® Peak Flow Meter and patient counseling material. To receive your free kit, contact Shae Sartori, at Trudell Medical, directly at:

SSartori@TrudellMed.com

Asthma Society of Canada Launches Patient Bill of Rights & New Patient Group

By **MERIDENE HAYNES, CAE**
 Asthma Society of Canada

The Asthma Society of Canada recently launched the Asthma Patient Bill of Rights. The Asthma Patient Bill of Rights was developed, working with patients that have asthma and drawing on the expertise and resources of specialists from

across Canada and around the world. The purpose of the Bill is to let all patients know about their rights to access new treatments, testing methods, asthma control as well as their individual responsibility to properly manage their disease.

The Asthma Society has also established the National Asthma Patient Alliance (NAPA). The

NAPA is a grassroots patient group with a mandate to lead advocacy efforts, organize education initiatives and build a network of patient volunteers dedicated to improving asthma care and education. The NAPA was developed to ensure that Canadians with asthma have the support and resources necessary to enjoy a high quality

of life. Membership is free! One of the goals of the NAPA is that all Canadians with asthma become members. Please encourage your clients to join at www.asthma.ca/napa.

Contact the Asthma Society directly if you would like more information or to order copies of the Asthma Patient Bill of Rights posters and brochures.

Recent Media Attention on FDA/Health Canada Singulair Investigations

By **DR. HAROLD KIM**, CNAC President

Many of you will have heard recent media reports that the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and Health Canada have launched investigations into the possible connection between Singulair (montelukast) and suicide. As you may receive questions from clients as to whether they should continue the use of their physician-prescribed Singulair, the Executive Committee of the Canadian Network for Asthma Care felt that it was appropriate to comment.

The CNAC Executive has reviewed the information available at this time. It appears the concerns identified have been based solely on some case reports. There was no indication of a link between Singulair and suicide in the randomized controlled studies conducted with Singulair. Therefore, Singulair should continue to be prescribed for patients who have found that it is helpful in the control of their symptoms and there are no significant side effects.

Any patients with suicidal risk or those with suicidal thoughts should consult their physician immediately to discuss whether to stop using the medication as well as their future asthma management.

International Primary Care Respiratory Group Coming to Canada

By **DR. ALAN KAPLAN**, Chair,
 Family Physician Airways Group of Canada

The **4th IPCRG** world conference occurred in Seville from May 28-31, 2008 and this conference brought more than 900 registrants from over 42 countries. Canada was well represented by physicians and educators attending the meeting. The IPCRG can be found at its website www.theipcr.org. This website can be found through the link on our website www.fpagc.com.

The **5th IPCRG** world conference will occur in Toronto, Canada from May 26-29, 2010. Come and meet respiratory educators from other countries and be involved in a great international conference put on by primary care physicians with an interest in respiratory medicine. Mark those dates now! Hope to see you there!

Making Quit Happen: Canada's Challenges to Smoking Cessation



Canadian smokers want to quit, but don't all have the same support for quitting available to them. That's the conclusion of the Canadian Lung Association report *Making Quit Happen: Canada's Challenges to Smoking Cessation* released May 28, 2008.

To learn what the report says – including its findings and recommendations regarding training for health care professionals – go to www.lung.ca and click on the Making Quit Happen << Read the Report >> button.

Smog Smart

A new survey released by The Lung Association shows that more than half of Canadians with asthma notice that their breathing gets worse on smoggy days, yet few know the range of steps they can take to protect their breathing. Additionally, the survey found that a surprising 62 per cent of Canadians with asthma say their asthma "acts up" on days when air quality is poor.

Results also show that more than half of all Canadians who have asthma know to stay indoors on smoggy days. However, in contrast, very few Canadians with asthma know other strategies to protect their lung health on poor air quality days.

To view the strategies, and access the Air Quality Index, and to learn more about the Air Quality Health Index that will soon replace it across Canada, go to www.lung.ca and click on BE SMOG SMART.

Stop Smoking in Cars - Our Kids Deserve It!

Exposure to cigarette smoke in the confined space of a car is a serious threat to children's health. Yet every day many Canadian kids are forced to ride in smoke-filled cars. You can help change this. Send a message to your elected provincial official (your MPP or MLA) through The Lung Association's e-advocacy campaign to make cars smoke-free for kids. Just go to http://www.lung.ca/involved-impliquez/issues-questions/actionagissez/cleanairforkids-airpurpourenfants_e.php select your province or territory from this list, and press Go.

COPD Program - BreathWorks

Help for people with COPD, emphysema and chronic bronchitis – and their caregivers. ... or go to www.lung.ca/breathworks.

Asthma Handbook

The new Asthma Handbook from The Lung Association is a comprehensive guide for people with asthma.



- Asthma Handbook Chapters:
- What is asthma?
 - Causes and triggers
 - Managing your asthma
 - Medications
 - Pregnancy
 - Exercise
 - Travel
 - Commonly Asked Questions
 - What to do in an emergency

Free pdf versions of The Asthma Handbook, or its individual chapters are available at http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/asthma-asthme/manual/index_e.php.