



Quality of Life Committee

8 January 2008

TO: CUST Community

FROM: Stephen Petrina, Chair
CUST Quality of Life Committee

RE: Drinking Water in CUST Lounge

Dear CUST Community,

As you probably noticed, we installed a new drinking water system in the CUST Lounge. This was done on behalf of a recommendation made by the Quality of Life Committee, which includes the discontinuation of our Canadian Springs water system. In place of CS bottled water the QLC recommended a month-to-month (for now) contract with the local WA-2! filtered water company, which has numerous contracts on campus.

This is specifically in response to the CUST Green Plan, and generally in response to a national and international movement to return to the tap. See *MacLean's Magazine* (14 May 2007) on this trend in Canada

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=M1ARTM0013092>.

The reasons we are moving to the WA-2! system are as follows:

1) **Sustainable** in that the WA-2! filtering system has a **much** smaller ecological footprint than Canadian Springs or other large corporate bottling operations. WA-2! draws on our GVRD tap water as a source rather than spring water that has to be tapped by invasive glacial systems, trucked in from afar, bottled in large bottling plants, and then trucked in again to local distributors, and yet again to UBC. In order to maintain this operation, national and multi-national companies are insinuating themselves into small mountain communities and buying up rights to pristine springs. This is being done globally as well as nationally. Canadian Springs is a large national company; WA-2! is small and local. See <http://www.watwo.com/> for information.

2) **Cost-saving** in that we calculate an annual savings of something in the order of about \$200 to \$250 annually. Remember as well, cost is not merely economic, but includes a footprint across a spectrum of culture and the environment.

3) **Taste Re-adjusting** when taste is understood as political as well as personal. With the filtering system of WA-2!, the differences in physiological taste buds are negligible.

WA-2! tastes better when we realize that we are making a difference in the environment. Perhaps our personal water consumption will increase with the new system, which is healthier overall for us!

4) **Empowering** in that we are reclaiming access to our drinking water in Scarfe and on campus. Recall that one of our graduate students addressed this issue a few years ago by testing the water and confronting administration on the relationship between drinking water on campus and the Coca-Cola contract

<http://www.cust.educ.ubc.ca/workplace/issue7p1/pdfs/cookpetrina.pdf>.

5) Last but not least, CUST will continue to provide **leadership** across the Faculty on issues of sustainability (We are seen as trend-setters with many various ideas and solutions that are often copied across the Faculty).

We are currently offering both the WA-2! and Canadian Springs systems side-by-side. Please direct any feedback to the QLC, which meets on a monthly basis.

Thanks for giving the new WA-2! system a chance!