

## Book reviews

**Proceedings of the Twenty-seventh Arctic and Marine Oilspill Program (AMOP) Technical Seminar, Two Volumes, Emergency Sciences and Technology Division, Environmental Technology Centre, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ont., 2004, 1061pp., paperback.**

These proceedings contain the peer-reviewed papers presented at the long-running annual Canadian conference on oil spills. With long shorelines and an extensive arctic land mass, Canada's environmental emergencies branch has conducted research for many years on the impact of oil spills on the environment. They have presented much of this research along with other papers by scientists from around the world at an annual seminar.

These proceedings contain the papers presented at the 27th annual conference held in Edmonton, Alberta, in July 2004. The presentations cover a wide range of topics from the behavior of oil spills to measures for shoreline protection and cleanup.

Moving into a newer area were presentations in a session dealing with counter-terrorism. There were seven papers on counter-terrorism topics contributed by members of Environment Canada, Canada's defense research and development branch, the USEPA and The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

The two volume proceedings set contains 60 papers authored by scientists from eight countries in addition to Canada. Session topics and the number of papers in each section follows:

- Physical and chemical properties and behavior of spilled oil (7)
- Containment and recovery (4)
- In situ burning (1)
- Activity updated and contingency planning (5)
- Detection, tracking, and remote sensing (3)
- Spill modelling (6)
- Special session on counter-terrorism (7)
- Technical seminar on chemical spills (6)
- Shoreline protection and cleanup (6)
- Biological effects of oil and oil biodegradation (4)
- Oil spill treating agents (2)
- Poster presentations (9)

The conference organizer and Chief of the Emergencies Science and Technology Division of Environment Canada was M.F. Fingas. He was the first author of 10 papers and co-author of six others. Dr. Fingas is a prolific researcher who also serves as one of the editors of this journal.

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**Kendra Okonski, Julian Morris (Eds.), Environment and Health: Myths and Realities, International Policy Press, Islington, Great Britain, 2004, ISBN: 1-905041-00-4, 239pp., paperback, L12.99.**

As an editor of scientific publications, I am continually annoyed by articles in the popular press touting "gloom and doom" scenarios that may result from real or imagined chemical releases. The barrage of press releases by populist environmental groups decrying current environmental conditions is never ending.

This book debunks the myths that involve many of the topics of these releases. In it, ten scientific experts challenge "...the conventional wisdom that human health problems (cancer, disease and even death) are being caused and exacerbated by modern industrial society. The book offers an overview by scientific experts of the available scientific evidence concerning the impact of pesticides, dioxin, nitrates, radiation, endocrine disruptors, global warming and the precautionary principle of human health."

The press release accompanying the book summarizes the contents of the eight chapters thusly:

- "On balance, synthetic pesticides are beneficial to humanity, enabling better nutrition and health, and environmental