What on Earth does Mother's Day have to do with radiation? Everything!

By Virginia Bradley Hines

I am a mother, grandmother, spiritual seeker, medical practitioner and psychotherapist. I have passionate interest in the mind-body-spirit connection, from my experiential learning in different healing and spiritual traditions, as well as from studying Western research models. As a child in the countryside of Maryland I was able to experience and appreciate the delicate relationship between people and their environment. I began writing poetry about my own relationship with the natural and social world around me and went on to college to major in English with a plan to be a writer. What happened was quite different. Rather than finish school, I took some time off to live in California in the late 1960's, becoming involved in the anti-war and civil rights movements. These activist days planted seeds in me which germinated underground while I was in school to become a physician assistant, raise three children, work in the medical field and later return to graduate school to study psychology. During this time my husband and I settled in Concord, Massachusetts and were pretty content with our lives. There would have been no way for us to anticipate what would happen in the summer of 1997.

Microwave antenna in our church?

That summer a fellow church member told me about a proposed PCS antenna in the steeple of the Trinitarian Congregational Church, my family's church! My reply was "what is PCS?" She told me that she had been to a talk and had learned that the microwave radiation that would be broadcast from the proposed antenna in the steeple had negative biological effects. She gave me a copy of an article entitled: "A Clear Call: America Unplugged-A Guide to the Wireless Issue" by B. Blake Levitt which I read on the train on the way to work the next morning. I learned a lot in a hurry.

According to Ms. Levitt's article, the prohibition in Telecommunications Act of 1996 on considering "environmental" effects in decisions on placement of wireless antennas was intended by its authors (the Telecom industry) to prohibit considering health effects in humans. She stated in the article that even in 1996 there was enough reputable science demonstrating harm from

microwave radiation to caution against a massive build out of PCS antennas– and the telecommunications industry knew it.

It was unimaginable to my husband and me that our church would team up with then Sprint Spectrum to earn $18K a year to broadcast microwave radiation into the neighborhood, which included three nursery schools. We knew we had to do something.

Trying to work with the church.

We prepared a notebook with the then-peer-reviewed science and presented it to the Church Committee. The committee responded by inviting an adjunct professor at the Harvard University School of Risk Assessment to meet with any interested members of the church. (This was not a heavily advertised event.) Several members attended the meeting at which the invited PhD attempted to reassure those present with statements such as "this [the proposed antenna] is no more of a problem than a light bulb."

During this process with the church it was clear to me that we were presenting them with actual scientific research which demonstrated that this technology was harmful and yet they were not able and/or willing to grasp it and act accordingly. Our small group of people threatened a core belief of church members and leaders that technology approved by governmental authorities and highly educated engineers could not harm us. In order to resolve the contradictions between the ideas from the PhD and those from our small group, something had to give. What "gave" was our small group. We had to be managed.

Despite informing church membership that they would be consulted before agreeing to an antenna, the Church Committee signed a contract with Sprint. In response to our small group's objections, the church leaders formed a "Tower Study Group" that included us and other church members who were doctors and scientists. While this group met to study the issue, the antenna was installed in the steeple.

Our small group then forced the church as a whole to hold a meeting to decide whether to honor the contract. Our small group was marginalized as a way to lessen the pressure of what was clearly cognitive dissonance. Surely the Church Committee could not be wrong. They were in

charge and good people. So, it had to be us. The church membership voted to honor the contract. After the vote it was announced that forty people in the church neighborhood had signed a petition that they wanted the church to cancel the contract with Sprint. Those neighbors were not invited to the church meeting nor were their concerns shared before the final vote.

The Concord Citizens for Responsible Tower Siting (CCRTS)

Next, our small group, along with others, formed The Concord Citizens for Responsible Tower Siting (CCRTS). Our first action was to place an article on the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting to be held in the Fall of 1997, to create a moratorium on the placement of any new wireless facilities. This would allow the Town to create a protective bylaw – one that would never allow an antenna placement in a densely populated neighborhood such as the one in my former church.

The moratorium passed at the Special Town Meeting and was approved by the Attorney General of MA. Our group spent the next six months working with the Planning Board to establish a bylaw that would be as protective as possible given the constraints of section 704 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

At the same time that CCRTS was working in Concord, we gave a presentation in the neighboring town of Lincoln on the same topic. Out of that meeting the groundwork was laid for a new organization and a forum on the science and constitutionality of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

The Massachusetts Council on Wireless Technology Impacts (MACWTI)

A follow up meeting was held in Lincoln on May 5, 1998 to "Challenge the Cell Tower Rampage." At that meeting we formed MACWTI with the mission to help towns in Massachusetts create protective bylaws. We gained members from many towns in Massachusetts and spoke at gatherings from Cape Cod to Western Massachusetts. We also had our eyes focused on a national effort.

A Public Forum: "Microwaving America: Does The '96 Telecom Act Jeopardize Our Health, Property and Democracy?"

In 1998, a public forum, sponsored by The North Bridge Alliance for Democracy, the Concord Citizens for Responsible Tower Siting and Environmental Health Advocacy League was held in Concord. Our speakers included: B. Blake Levitt as well as scientists and policy and constitutional experts. Two of the attendees would soon play an important role in our involvement in an on-going National effort to educate citizens about microwave radiation.

The EMR Network

Two of the people who attended the Microwaving American Forum were Janet and Dale Newton of Marshfield Vermont. In the fall of 1998, they invited interested activists to attend a meet in Lake Morey, Vermont to form a national organization to address the wireless issue. People from California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and other states met together and formed The EMR Network: Citizens and Professionals for the Responsible Use of Electromagnetic Radiation, which has accomplished a great deal since its formation with the following mission.

So why were we all so concerned?

What was the concern about a technology that allowed people to talk anywhere to anyone at any time without wires? What could possibly be so bad?

The Science

Thousands of peer-reviewed scientific studies show that exposure to microwave radiation (at power levels and frequencies one would be exposed to from wireless antennas and cell phones) causes biological harm. The news media focus solely on cancer, as if that were the only possible consequence of exposure to microwave radiation. In addition, exposure has been shown to cause: breakdown of the blood brain barrier (which protects the brain from harmful substances); short-term memory loss; immune function impairment; decrease in reproductive function; as well as **less- developed memory and attention and slower reaction time in children.** The weight of

evidence that now exists *exceeds* the weight of evidence that linked smoking with lung cancer when public warnings were issued about the hazards of cigarette smoking.

Re-Inventing Wires: The future of Landlines and Networks

On February 5, 2018, a paper entitled Reinventing Wires: The Future of Landlines and Networks, was presented at the California Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. The paper was authored by communications technology expert Dr. Timothy Schoechle, PhD, an international consultant in computer engineering and standardization, former faculty member of the University of Colorado, College of Engineering and Applied Science and Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute for Science, Law & Public Policy. In this report he states: "We are seeing the present national emphasis on wireless technologies because the 'triopoly', of Verizon, AT&T, and Comcast that dominates our access to the Internet, imposes artificial scarcity, planned obsolescence, and high prices to maintain their immense profits. It is in their interest to obscure the fact that advanced copper and optical fiber are far superior to wireless in both cost and performance."

Power dynamics and the move toward cognitive consonance

Tere is enough evidence to begin to resolve cognitive dissonance and move toward what Dr. Leon Festinger called "cognitive consonance". In just the twenty-five years I have been working on this issue, people have gone from holding their phones next to their heads, to ear buds to now holding phones away from their bodies and using the speaker feature on their phones. People turn off their WIFI at night. People are going back to wired systems. Medical lawsuits have been filed, television news programs have aired stories and articles exposing the wireless industry's falsehoods have been published. Specifically, in an article in the March 29, 2018 *Nation* magazine entitled "How Big Wireless Made US Think That Cell Phones Are Safe: A Special Investigation", authors Mark Hertsgaard and Mark Dowie describe in detail how in the 1990's, the Cellular Telephone Industry Association hired Dr. George Carlo to conduct a series of scientific investigations to prove once and for all that cell phones were safe. Carlo's team, Wireless Technology Research (WTR), eventually reported to the CTIA just the opposite. What

happened then was a monumental effort to discredit Dr. George Carlo and his research by Tom Wheeler, then director of the CTIA who, later became the director of the FCC.

Updates

Concord Citizens for Responsible Tower Siting has morphed into **Concord Safe Technology** and we are working on many fronts, including encouraging the Concord Library Sustainability Committee to hard wire the library for internet, the Concord Municipal Light Plant to bring fiber optic cable to houses for communication with electric meters, and the Select Board to develop a policy to protect the Town from 5G, among other projects.
In January 2020, **Concord Safe Technology** and The EMR Network presented a forum in Concord, "Technology in Our Midst: How WiFi, Smart Meters, Cell Phone Antennas and 5G Present Risks to our Health, Privacy, Security and the Planet.

The Massachusetts Council on Wireless Technology Impacts has been replaced by **Massachusetts for Safe Technology** headed up by a dedicated leader named Cece Doucette.

I continue to serve on the board of directors of **The EMR Network,** which is now twenty-three years old. We support other organizations, maintain a website and have an educational face book page: Campaign for Radiation-Free Communities: Places People Call Home.

I was recently asked to join the board of directors of a new organization, **The Leto Foundation**. Our focus is on the protection of children. One of our initial efforts is sponsoring Tech Safe Schools, a project which offers legal, scientific and technical information about the impacts on children from WiFi in classrooms.

I believe that wireless radiation is changing our world for the worse. More and more people are becoming electrosensitive and getting sick from exposure in their homes and workplaces. When I think of my childhood in the country side, free of the microwave radiation which is now, literally, raining down from satellites on my children and grandchildren, I am heartbroken. However, I gather strength when I look into their sweet faces knowing that if I, and my colleagues, continue to work to educate people and change policy there is hope that we will bring people to their senses and, thus, eliminate wireless from our midst.