

CHAPTER UPDATE

Council chapters across the country have been hard at work over the summer and fall months on a wide range of issues of concern.

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Montreal chapter members handed out hundreds of Council brochures and fact sheets to Canadian Labour Congress convention delegates in Montreal in June. The convention, which featured a keynote address from Maude Barlow, adopted a “Statement on North American Economic Integration” which criticizes deep integration and commits the CLC to work with the Council of Canadians to promote Canadian sovereignty.

WATER DIVERSIONS

Chapters in the Great Lakes region continued their opposition to the proposed Great Lakes Annex Implementing Agreements. This past July, the second draft of the agreements was released with only 60 days allowed for public comment. Within this short timeline, the Kingston, London and Niagara Region chapters spoke out at the consultations in their communities.

This was an important continuation of their work from earlier in the year, when chapters in the Great Lakes region led the charge against this agreement by packing public meetings and passing municipal resolutions in their communities to oppose water diversions. The *Owen Sound Sun Times* reported that “City council has added its voice to calls to ban water diversions from the Great Lakes basin. Council passed a resolution Monday night after hearing from David Walton of the Council of Canadians about his group’s concerns about draft Annex 2001 Agreements between Great Lakes states and provinces.”



Photo: Murray Mosher

Eduardo Sousa (right) with Montreal chapter member Abdul Pirani at the Canadian Labour Congress convention in June.

HEALTH CARE

In a letter to the editor of *The Guardian* newspaper, Charlottetown chapter activist and Council Board member Leo Broderick wrote, “Many proponents of private health care are now spinning the Supreme Court decision to further their agenda of a two-tier health care system for Canadians. The Maritime premiers’ call for a debate on private health care reflects the pressures from ‘privateers’ to abandon single-tier health care, and probably their own values as well. The words ‘Americanization’ and ‘two-tier health care’ must be kept front and centre in the Canadian health care debate. We know what we don’t want.”

WAL-MART

The Campbell River chapter was key in their city council’s unanimous vote to reject Wal-Mart’s application to build on the heritage Campbell River estuary. Community groups and hundreds of individuals rallied weekly for six months and participated in three days of public hearings just prior to the vote. Members from the Campbell River chapter were active in the public hearings, demonstrations, writing letters to local newspapers, and other public events.

The Vancouver chapter was vocal at a public meeting on a proposed Wal-Mart store in south Vancouver. As reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, “Murray Dobbin of the Council of Canadians ... called the retailer a ‘rogue corporation’ and listed various legal battles the chain has been involved in, over such issues as alleged use of illegal labour and gender discrimination. ‘You can say no to Wal-Mart,’ he told the council.”

FACTORY FARMING

The Peterborough-Kawartha chapter, in coalition with the Rice Lake Rate Payers Association, hosted a public meeting that drew a good-sized audience to the Peterborough Public Library to hear about factory farming. As reported in *The Peterborough Examiner*, “The audience of a panel discussion last night heard those are some of the risks people in the Peterborough area could face if factory farms – large scale operations that slaughter and produce large numbers of animals quickly at low cost – start moving here.”

“THE GREATEST”

The Kamloops chapter organized the “Greatest Kamloopsian” contest to identify the city’s greatest citizen. Based on the CBC’s Greatest Canadian contest, this was an innovative approach to recognize the contributions of citizens to society and – at a dollar a vote – to fundraise in fun and effective way. The Toronto chapter also recently nominated Maude Barlow in the “Ontario’s Greatest Woman” contest. More than 80 women were nominated and, while Maude scored solidly in the top 10, Agnes Macphail won the contest.

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