

ON THE ROAD

with Maude Barlow



Pat Conneau

Hello, friends.

The last few months of 2006 will be filled with challenges and much work. The Harper government has shown itself to be allied with the Bush administration in every aspect, from its views on social conservatism and the environment to foreign policy and the military, giving new meaning and impetus to our campaign against deep integration.

The Council is fighting to preserve public health care and we're involved in local campaigns all across Canada. We were front and centre in Charlottetown in August when the Canadian Medical Association chose private-clinic owner Dr. Brian Day as its new president-elect. See page 10 for a report on the Council's actions to protest against Dr. Day and stand up for public health care. You can also check out our Profit Is Not the Cure website (www.profitisnotthecure.ca), which includes an online petition and action centre, with dozens of fact sheets and campaign tools for you to distribute in your community.

We are also stepping up our criticisms of NAFTA in light of the softwood lumber deal, meeting with other organizations in Canada to intensify the pressure on the government to renegotiate or scrap the agreement altogether. The Council was involved in the opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and, in particular, to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

The Council joined millions from around the world to celebrate the mid-summer announcement that the so-called "Development Round" had collapsed from lack of support. In addition to noting the great work done by our own staff, I want to recognize the work of some very special colleagues – Tony Clarke, Ellen Gould and Scott Sinclair – who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to preserve our public services and defeat the GATS. (See page 9 for an analysis of the WTO's failure by Jean-Yves LeFort, the Council's Trade Campaigner.)

Our chapter activists will be presenting at public hearings in Alberta on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and reminding Canadians that with NAFTA, Canada signed away its sovereign right to safeguard its own energy resources. We will also be warning against the dangers of the rampant destruction of water in the mining operations of the Athabasca tar sands.

Our campaign for a national water policy to protect Canada's water reserves continues. We are also building a new network of Canadian organizations to pressure the federal government to change its position against the right to water at the United Nations.

Council members continue to express horror at the death of so many Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, and we are calling on the government to bring our troops home safely and immediately. The Council of Canadians believes that Canada must move away from its increasingly uncritical support of U.S. foreign and military policies and reclaim the more enlightened, valued role of an independent, neutral power committed to peacekeeping. The more Canadian military policies mirror the policies of the U.S., the less they will serve the best interests of both Canadians and the world.

At our Annual General Meeting in Charlottetown from October 27 to 29, we'll be bringing great activists, authors and academics together to discuss how Canada can promote strong social programs and public services, restore independent foreign and trade policies, and protect our water, energy and natural resources. It will be a wonderful event and I hope many of you will be able to join us.

My own travels continue to take me far and wide – not only all across Canada, but also to Bolivia, Colombia, Australia and Norway in the last few months alone. Everywhere I go I meet people with the same dreams and aspirations, who are working for a better future for their children and fighting for a more just and sustainable world. It is very important to remember that whenever we struggle for social justice, we make it easier for people everywhere to do the same. Hope is a moral imperative. We must never lose it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maude Barlow".

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of The Council of Canadians