

CHAPTER UPDATE

Council chapters have been extraordinarily active this winter, working particularly hard during this past federal election and organizing Maude Barlow's 25-city *Too Close for Comfort* book tour.

FEDERAL ELECTION

Chapters distributed more than 73,000 copies of the Council of Canadians' voter's guides in at least 141 federal ridings across the country. Chapter activists delivered them door-to-door and dropped them off at libraries and other public spaces. In addition, chapter activists either organized or participated in at least 29 all-candidates meetings across the country.

A brief sampling of chapter activities this past election includes the Toronto, Ontario chapter translating the voter's guide into Arabic; the Cambridge, Ontario chapter fundraising to rent an electronic billboard with the message "Stop private health care"; the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia chapter initiating a call to other chapters to send questions to CBC for "Your Turn with . . ." features with political party leaders; the Comox Valley, British Columbia chapter placing "profit is not the cure" placards around their community; and the Peterborough-Kawartha, Ontario chapter developing an extensive questionnaire for their local candidates and providing voter information in the city's hostels.

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

This past winter, Maude Barlow undertook an extensive cross-country, 25-city tour to speak against deep integration with the United States and to highlight the important issues on this subject outlined in her book, *Too Close for Comfort: Canada's Future Within Fortress North America*.



The Cambridge, Ontario chapter's "Stop Private Health Care" electronic billboard.

Council chapters devoted a tremendous amount of energy and organizing skill to this effort. In the end, as a result of this work, Maude Barlow spoke to almost 6,500 people on the importance of defending Canadian sovereignty against the deep integration agenda. Her message was amplified by more than 70 newspaper, television and radio appearances during the tour.

SMARTEST PROTEST OF 2005

Kingston, Ontario chapter activist Don Rogers made the front page of *The Globe and Mail* in November for paying his VISA bill pennies at a time to protest the outsourcing of credit card information to a U.S. company. Through his protest he made many Canadians aware of this outsourcing as well as the risk it presents, given the requirements of U.S. companies to comply with President George Bush's Patriot Act. Many see the Patriot Act as a serious threat to civil liberties.

ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY

Council chapters in British Columbia-Yukon worked very hard to stop the sale of Vancouver-based Terasen Inc. to American-owned Kinder Morgan. The Houston-based corporation was seeking to purchase Terasen, which includes 64,000 kilometres of natural gas and petroleum transportation

pipelines. Although in the end the British Columbia Utilities Commission approved the sale of Terasen, chapter activists and a range of concerned citizens and public interest groups generated more than 8,000 letters of concern to the Commission, the largest number it had ever received in its history.

COUNCIL ACTIVISTS REMEMBERED

Three long-time Council supporters recently passed away. Community activists Henry Kock died on Christmas Day, Ann Oaks on January 13, and Noel Winston on January 24. Henry was a well-known Guelph-based ecologist and a peace activist; a leader of rallies, street theatre, petitions and protests; and an early advocate of organics. Ann was involved in the start-up of the Guelph, Ontario chapter and was instrumental in getting the Senate to review the legalization of bovine growth hormone (BGH), writing to Senator Eugene Whelan and encouraging him to take this issue seriously. Noel was a founding member of the Montreal Chapter and its second chairperson. He recorded a delightful personal history of how a rousing speech from Mel Hurtig in Montreal sold him on joining the Council for life. The Montreal Chapter has said, "We will miss this man of integrity and humility, a man ever committed to the values and goals of the Council."

THE NEW GOVERNMENT

With the new Conservative minority government, Council chapter activists have stepped up their activism to protect the Canada we want. Chapters have been very busy since the January election ensuring that the bedrock values of Canadians and their desire for a more socially just Canada are respected and heard in Ottawa.

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