

# CHAPTER UPDATE

by Brent Patterson

**Council chapters have been very active this past spring with a great deal of activity around World Water Day, the recent Prairies water tour, regional meetings and much more.**

## WORLD WATER DAY

Forty Council chapters participated in World Water Day events across Canada in March. Chapters distributed close to 44,000 World Water Day publications across the country, highlighting the issues of water sovereignty, water as a human right, and the need for a national water policy. They organized a variety of events to mark World Water Day, including public forums, screenings of the video "Thirst," and efforts to have municipal councils pass resolutions in support of this issue. In many cases, chapters collaborated with other organizations, including the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), KAIROS, and Development and Peace. Their activities were noticed and reported on in more than 20 newspapers and radio broadcasts across Canada.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

Chapter activists from across the country came together over the last two months to discuss Council campaigns and ways that chapters can play an even more effective role in engaging Canadians on the important issues of our time. Four very successful meetings were held in the Atlantic region (Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia on March 18), British Columbia-Yukon (New Westminster, British Columbia on April 1-2), the Prairies (Edmonton, April 22) and Ontario-Quebec (Toronto, on May 13). Thank you to the 125 chapter activists and nine national board members who attended these important meetings.



**Brent Patterson, Director of Organizing, with Chris Maxwell of the Halifax chapter, at the Atlantic Regional meeting in March.**

## PRAIRIES WATER TOUR

Prairies organizer Lyn Gorman and water campaigner Susan Howatt completed an eight-city tour of Alberta and Saskatchewan in April. People came out to hear about the need for a national water policy and to discuss their concerns about water in their communities. The *Leader-Post* newspaper article about the Regina stop of the tour was also printed in the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Edmonton Journal*, which have a combined readership of 459,000 people.

## CHAPTERS IN THE MEDIA

Council chapters have been doing an excellent job of getting the issues of deep integration, fair trade, a national water policy, health care, energy sovereignty, and peace into their local and regional newspapers, radio and television. In the last three months, chapters have appeared in their local media more than 50 times.

## ANTI-WAR EVENTS

The Council's Organizing Team has been key in sponsoring recent anti-war events

in Vancouver and Toronto. Council organizer Carleen Pickard helped to organize the May 6 event in Vancouver with U.S. activist Cindy Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed in Iraq two weeks after being deployed there. Ms. Sheehan is also known for camping outside George Bush's ranch during his vacations, in an attempt to speak with him about the war in Iraq. As well, Council organizer Eduardo Sousa helped bring together an important event in Toronto on May 12 that featured Maude Barlow speaking on *Too Close for Comfort* and U.S. activist Antonia Juhasz speaking on her book *The Bush Agenda: Invading the World, One Economy at a Time*. Activist Steven Staples and war resister Patrick Hart and his wife Jill Hart also spoke against the war in Iraq, encouraging the Canadian government to grant refugee status to U.S. war resisters.

## DEFEAT OF ALBERTA'S THIRD WAY

Congratulations to our chapter activists and members in Alberta for their role in helping to defeat Ralph Klein's "Third Way" health care privatization plans. According to a Friends of Medicare poll, 60 per cent of Albertans indicated that they were opposed to these reforms. Red Deer chapter activist Don Hepburn published an excellent opinion piece in the *Red Deer Express* newspaper, opposing Klein's plans.

## COUNCIL ACTIVIST REMEMBERED

The Council wishes to express its condolences to the friends and family of Campbell River, B.C. chapter activist Don Dobie. We join with the chapter in expressing our sympathy to his widow, Trellis Frame Dobie.

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