

# ON THE ROAD

## WITH MAUDE BARLOW

This was the summer that the Council of Canadians put the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America on the map. Thanks to the hard work of the Council's staff, volunteers and chapter activists, the SPP is now – finally – a household word.

This didn't come without years of "tough sloggng" by the Council and our partners from other social justice organizations in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. It was initially very frustrating for us to have the media characterize our concerns as a conspiracy theory when we knew that deep integration was happening at a rapid pace.

So we built the movement from the ground up. First, we consulted with groups that we knew would be affected by deep integration, in 10 cities across Canada. Then we launched an even more extensive Citizens' Inquiry on Canada-U.S. Relations. In 2005, I wrote *Too Close for Comfort*, and I embarked on a 22-city speaking tour to promote the book. That same year, former Prime Minister Paul Martin agreed to the SPP, setting the stage for dozens of cross-border working groups to integrate Canada's health and safety, environmental, defence and foreign policies with the whims of the Bush administration.

We knew it was only a matter of time before the issue would catch fire. Then suddenly, in the weeks leading up to our Integrate This! teach-in this spring and the Montebello leaders' summit in August, there was an explosion of interest in the SPP. And the momentum only continues to build every day.

It reminds me of our fights against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment



Christina Riley

(MAI) and the original Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Both campaigns started with just a handful of us trying to tell the story, then they hit a critical peak, and then there was no stopping us.

It's always been my contention that if people knew about the SPP, they would be appalled by its content. Now, thanks to the thousands of people who rallied in Montebello, in Ottawa and across Canada during this August's leaders' summit, more and more people are concerned about the SPP and are dedicated to helping us fight it. To read an in-depth account of what went on inside the Montebello summit, as well as a view from the streets, check out page 9.

In addition to all of our work on the SPP this summer, the Council of Canadians was front and centre in the fight to stop the privatization of health care. We were on the ground in Vancouver in August, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, where "Dr Profit" – Brian Day – took over the CMA's reins. The

Council worked with doctors and nurses from across the country to send a clear message to the CMA that profit is not the cure for Canada's health care system. See page 7 for a full report about our interventions at the CMA meeting.

Our international water campaign, the Blue Planet Project, spent this summer at the annual meeting of the Stockholm Water Conference, challenging the growing influence of big water corporations and protesting against Nestlé's sponsorship of the World Water Forum.

And in September, the Council made a submission to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission on the take-over of Alliance Atlantis Communications by CanWest in collaboration with a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs – a major U.S. investment-banking firm – a move that would jeopardize Canadian control of Canada's broadcasting system.

Our challenges do not let up as we enter the fall and winter of 2007-08, with a fabulous AGM coming up in Kelowna from October 26 to 28, where I will launch my new book, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. I will then begin a multi-city book tour, where I will speak about ways we can protect and preserve water in Canada and around the world. I look forward to seeing you all on this tour. Our members and chapter activists continue to be an inspiration to all of us at the Council of Canadians.

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.