

# CHAPTER ACTION UPDATE



Rick Savua

Participants in a World Water Day event in Prince Albert, SK performed songs of protest, peace and hope for the Earth.

by Brent Patterson

## SPP SUMMIT PLANNING

On August 20-21, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, U.S. President George Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderón will be meeting in Montebello, Quebec for the Security and Prosperity Partnership Leaders' Summit. The Council of Canadians will be organizing in opposition to this summit and chapters across the country will be mobilizing for a national day of action to be held on August 20.

## CHALLENGING PENSION PLAN ON PRIVATE WATER

On May 30, the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan (OTPP) announced that they would be heavily investing in two private, for-profit water companies in Chile. Chapter activists have been calling on the OTPP to stop this planned purchase, which is expected to be finalized on August 15. Since Chile's efficient, publicly owned water utilities were privatized in 1998, people there have seen dramatic increases in their water rates, job losses for those working for the water companies, and excessive profit margins for the new owners.

## VICTORY OVER BOTTLED WATER IN CHARLOTTETOWN

In April, Charlottetown Mayor Clifford Lee officially banned bottled water from "all city premises and workplaces and all city council and committee meetings," according to the *Charlottetown Guardian*. This move was made in response to a request from the Charlottetown chapter of the Council of Canadians. Congratulations to Leo Broderick and the rest of the chapter!

## REGIONAL MEETINGS A SUCCESS

Approximately 125 chapter activists attended the four annual regional meetings of chapters that took place between April 14 and May 12 of this year in New Westminster, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; St. Catharines, Ontario; and Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. These meetings were a great success and produced many creative recommendations on political work for the Council to pursue this year.

## OPPOSING PESTICIDE HIKE AT FARMERS' MARKETS

On May 8, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that "Canada is set to raise its limits on pesticide residues on fruit and vegetables for hundreds of products." This is part of a move to harmonize Canadian pesticide rules with those of the U.S., an initiative that is being fast-tracked thanks to the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. Chapter activists across the country will be distributing handbills at farmers' markets this summer opposing this measure, and raising awareness about the dangers that the SPP poses to Canada's food safety and environmental regulations.

## WORLD WATER DAY

On March 22, 36 chapters actively participated in World Water Day, with 4 chapters involved in more than one event

in their community. The World Water Day event organized by the Montreal chapter, featuring Board member Louise Vandelay, attracted 300 people.

## ATLANTIC WATER TOUR

On February 19, the Council of Canadians launched a 10-city Atlantic water tour highlighting the need for a national water policy. The 12-day tour reached 1,250 high school students, 130 university students, and an additional 300 people at evening public forums. The tour garnered a great deal of coverage by the media, including CTV in Halifax, CBC Radio in Moncton, the *Sackville Tribune-Post* newspaper, C103 Radio in Moncton, the *Etoile* French-language newspaper in Moncton, CBC-TV in Saint John, and CBC Radio in St. John's.

## HEALTH CARE RALLY

On February 9, more than 200 people attended a "protect universal access to health care" rally in Toronto. The *Peterborough Examiner* reported, "Three Peterborough health care activists rallied with dozens of others outside a meeting of provincial health ministers in Toronto ... Roy Brady said the 45-minute protest was to remind federal Health Minister Tony Clement that private companies have no place in a public health care system."

## CHAPTER MEDIA

Chapters have continued to enjoy a steady presence in the media. They appeared in the media 151 times between January 1 and April 30 of this year. This means, on average, a newspaper article with a chapter reference is published every 19 hours and reaches on average 29,245 readers with each article.

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