

TAKE IT BACK!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PROMOTES A PEOPLES' VISION OF NORTH AMERICA

by Donna James

In October 2007, chapter activists and social justice advocates from across North America converged in Kelowna, B.C., for the Council of Canadians' 22nd annual general meeting. In keeping with the AGM theme, the panels and workshops focused on ways to take back what is ours – our democratic right to participate in discussions about Canada's future within North America.



Paul Manly

PUBLIC FORUM

More than 500 people attended a public forum on Friday, October 26, to hear keynote speakers Maude Barlow, Wenonah Hauter and Claudia Campero Arena.

Wenonah is the executive director of Food & Water Watch in the U.S. She has worked extensively on energy, food, water and environmental issues at the national, state and local level. She focused on the way that U.S. corporations have eroded environmental and health and safety regulations, and how citizens and consumers can fight back.

Claudia is a founding member of COMDA (Mexican Committee for Defense of Water Rights), and is currently involved in the campaign to enshrine the right to water in the

Mexican constitution. She focused on ways that activists from northern and southern countries have worked in solidarity with each other to challenge water privatization.

PEACE RALLY



Paul Manly

Council members joined the local chapter of the Canadian Peace Alliance and the Raging Grannies in a peace march and rally to protest against the war in Afghanistan.

WATER WORKSHOP ON WHEELS



Paul Manly

National Water Campaigner Susan Howatt and Kelowna chapter member Carol Kergan organized a bus tour to the top of Knox Mountain to explore issues of sustainability and how to pro-

tect our water for people and nature. John Wagner, a cultural anthropologist from UBC Okanagan, spoke about how urban sprawl is putting pressure on local watersheds. Susan spoke about how a national water policy could help protect water in Kelowna and across the country.

AWARDS AND CELEBRATION

During the 2007 AGM, the Council of Canadians presented awards to long-time activists to honour their commitment to the Council and to social justice. **Art Manuel** from the Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade was named Activist of the Year, in recognition of his outstanding leadership and commitment to achieving recognition for Aboriginal Title and Treaty Rights at the national and international levels. **Anita Strong** (Kamloops chapter) and **Karen Abramsen** (Kelowna chapter) were given the Ken Wardroper Founder's Award in recognition of their many years as chapter activists in British Columbia. Nanaimo chapter member **Paul Manly** and CEP President **Dave Coles** were presented with Special Awards, recognizing their role in exposing police provocateurs at a peaceful protest during the Montebello Summit in August 2007.

To hear keynote speeches and see more photos from the Council of Canadians' 2007 AGM, visit our website at www.canadians.org.

Donna James is the Council of Canadians' Executive Assistant and the coordinator of the 2007 AGM.