

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT?

I liked the articles about “Dr. Profit,” “The Jelly Bean Summit” and the unfairness of the American Bush administration in criminalizing their protesters, such as Ann Wright (*Canadian Perspectives*, Autumn 2007).

However, I wondered about the facts cited in the article about “Activism in the Alberta Heartland.” It refers to the Sturgeon/Strathcona chapter members living approximately 30 km northeast of Edmonton, and then states that the members shared with cyclists the many challenges they face “living so close to the tar sands, including poor air quality and toxic fumes.”

The tar sands are located at Fort McMurray which is about 435 km northeast of Edmonton. How can these people talk about living so close to the tar sands when the tar sands are 400 km away to the north?

Glenn Ursel
Surrey, BC

Editor's note:

Thanks for your note. We stand corrected. The Sturgeon/Strathcona area is indeed over 400 km away from the tar sands and we should have better explained the close ties between the tar sands and the industrial heartland. Still, the fact that the tar sands are 400 km to the north does not diminish the effect that the resulting pollution has on communities hundreds and thousands of kilometres away. To learn more about the impact of the tar sands on surrounding communities, visit www.canadians.org/energy.

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In the last issue of *Canadian Perspectives*, we introduced you to Ann Wright, a tireless anti-war activist from the United States, who joined the Council of Canadians in Montebello in August 2007 to protest against the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America.

Ann served 29 years in the U.S. Army. She was a U.S. diplomat for 16 years and served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Mongolia and Afghanistan. She was one of three U.S. diplomats who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Bush administration's war on Iraq.

When Ann crossed the border in August to join us in Ottawa and Montebello, she was detained and interrogated for several hours, and was almost denied entry, because Canadian border



Sonia Vanni

Ann Wright and Ariel Troster, protesting in Montebello in August 2007.

officials said her name appeared on the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, and anyone convicted

of a criminal offence, including a minor misdemeanour for peace and social justice, was “inadmissible.”

Several months later, on October 4, 2007, Ann attempted to cross the border into Canada again, and was denied entry. Anti-war group CODEPINK promptly sent out an action alert, saying, “We can't sit back and watch our civil liberties erode, one by one. We can't sit back and let peace activists be treated like dangerous criminals.”

To date, almost 16,000 people have signed a CODEPINK petition demanding that Canada stop shutting out activists who come in peace. Visit www.codepink4peace.org today, to sign the petition and protest against the integration of Canadian immigration and security policies with the United States.

– Ariel Troster, Editor, *Canadian Perspectives*

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