

Chapter Action Updates



Paula Kirman



by **Carleen Pickard**

UNBOTTLE IT ONTARIO!

Ontario chapters were very busy at the

beginning of 2009 organizing stops for a whirlwind speaking tour in Ontario focused on the damaging practice of bottling and selling water. CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan and Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow teamed up to work with chapters interested in securing or strengthening bottled water bans in their communities. With the assistance of CUPE Ontario locals, Council of Canadians chapters in 13 communities (see www.unbottleit.org for a complete list) have already had significant impacts. For example, shortly after the stop in London, Ontario, city council passed a resolution that not only bans bottled water from municipal spaces, but also specifically recommends that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities push bottled water bans at the municipal level across the country. Our partnership with CUPE Ontario helped us increase our outreach, creating very successful events and local connections – even in the middle of winter. Thanks to all the members who have come out to support these events. Plans are afoot to expand the tour to northern Ontario in late spring.

Council of Canadians' chapter activists joined with members of Greenpeace for a "March to Mordor" in December to express opposition to the devastating environmental impacts caused by the tar sands.

JIM HARDING TOURS THE ATLANTIC AND VISITS SASKATCHEWAN

Uranium mining continues to be of great concern in the Atlantic region. In November, chapters in Tantramar, Saint John, Moncton, Tatamagouche and the South Shore hosted author, activist and retired professor of justice studies Dr. Jim Harding for presentations on the dangers of uranium mining and nuclear power generation. Dr. Harding spoke of the need to transition to renewable energy resources like wind and solar power generation. While on the east coast, Dr. Harding spoke at a conference called "Mining the Connections," which gathered presenters from across the country to speak about local organizing strategies and provide educational sessions on international struggles to stop destructive mining practices.

Dr. Harding also continued to connect with local chapters in his home province. Most recently the Quill Plains chapter in Saskatchewan welcomed

him for a presentation on "Nuclear Myth Busting."

MARCHING TO MORDOR

Joining in the global activities to mark the Climate Change Day of Action on December 7 (also known as Climate Chaos Day), the University of Alberta, Edmonton chapter, joined forces with Greenpeace and Sierra Club on a "March to Mordor," paying homage to Maude Barlow's reference to her impression of the Alberta tar sands following her visit to the area just before our annual general meeting in late October.

A COAST-TO-COAST WELCOME!

Welcome to new staff Harjap Grewal, BC/Yukon Regional Organizer in Vancouver, and Adrienne Silnicki, Administrative Assistant for the Atlantic Organizing office in Halifax.

CELEBRATING A NEW CHAPTER

The founding meeting of the South Niagara, Ontario chapter was widely publicized in the Welland Tribune with terrific quotes from Chapter Chair Fiona McMurrin, who, after years of activity with the Niagara chapter, wanted to bring in activists on the south peninsula to the Council of Canadians. Fiona stated, "In light of all that is happening around the hospital and the NHS, we are starting to see people surface who want to get involved. It is to the point where ordinary people want to make a difference." Congratulations to all!

FINAL SHOUT OUT

... to our Council chapter in Regina, Saskatchewan. Chapter members have been boosting Council of Canadians' presence in southern Saskatchewan by distributing 300 copies of Canadian Perspectives to local community centres, libraries and cafés. If you would like more information about how to distribute copies in your neighbourhood, contact us at 1-800-387-7177, or inquiries@canadians.org.

Carleen Pickard is the Director of Organizing for the Council of Canadians.