

ON THE ROAD WITH MAUDE BARLOW

Dear friends,

Summer brings us time to pause and rest and assess the work done over the past winter and spring. And what a winter and spring it has been! World Water Day, our National Day of Action on Energy, national and local protests against private health services, collecting renewed evidence on the Harper government's commitment to deep integration under the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), spreading the word on TILMA, marching for troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, exposing the dangers of the Bush security agenda in Canada – these and many other activities have kept us going at top speed. Our chapters have never been busier or more productive, and our ability to communicate our message at home and internationally continues to grow and astound me.

While I was part of all these struggles, the last several months also took me on a tour of the United States with the American release of *Blue Covenant* as well as for the release of the fabulous new film on the global water crisis by Irena Salina called *FLOW, For Love Of Water*. Food and Water Watch, a terrific Washington-based organization dedicated to fighting corporate control of food and water, and whose board I now chair, sponsored my tour. It was truly an amazing experience. Everywhere I went, I met Americans saying the same things as Council members. Everywhere, I met people who are embarrassed about their government, who want the war to end, who are worried about jobs and the rising price of gasoline and housing. Everywhere, people yearn for the values of inclusion, justice and sustainability.

I spoke at university campuses, church basements, lecture halls and demonstra-

tions. (My favourite sign at an anti-war rally in Washington said, "Make awkward sexual advances, not war." It made me think this is a more tentative generation than my own!) I spoke at a fabulous Green Festival in Seattle, which drew many thousands of environmental enthusiasts, and launched a campaign in Hollywood to save the lovely Lake Naivasha (where *Out of Africa* was filmed) from the European rose industry which is sucking the lake dry. Perhaps most exciting was my testimony before the Vermont Legislature to promote a law extending the public trust doctrine to groundwater, which passed unanimously a week later.

My time was also spent penning a paper called *Our Water Commons* for a new network dedicated to reviving the notion of the Commons and to fighting the modern version of its "enclosure." In April, I joined water activists from around the world at a retreat in the Adirondacks to talk about the next steps for this fledgling movement. A negative experience in the U.S. was the April SPP meeting of the three heads of state inside a bubble of five star hotels and stretch limousines. (See pages 6-9 for more information.) It reminded me of the "two Americas" of which we must always be conscious.

On a personal note, I was honoured to receive another honorary doctorate in June, this one from Nipissing University in North Bay. As well, I was honoured to receive the Citation of Lifetime Achievement Award of the Canadian



Meera Karamanathan

Maude Barlow joins protesters against Shell outside the Canadian Environment Awards where she received a Lifetime Achievement Award in early June.

Environment Awards at a gala event in Toronto in early June. Before accepting the award, sponsored by Shell, I joined protesters outside the event and echoed the call against Shell's plan to destroy shared headwaters of the Skeena, Nass and Stikine rivers in B.C., and also to support concerns raised about petrochemical production plants in Sarnia, Ontario that are having devastating impacts on those living nearby. As I said in my speech that night, I could only accept the award on the understanding that I am part of a family of activists and environmentalists in Canada and around the world, and accepted the award in their (your) name as well as my own. I have said it before and will likely again, that you, our members, are what keep us going, not just in that your support allows us to do our work, but that your trust gives us – and me – the energy and courage to carry on.

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