



Mark Calzavara

# Chapter Action Updates

by Brent Patterson

Council of Canadians Organizing Assistant Rachel Small (left) and Peterborough Chapter activist and Council Board member Roy Brady (right) took part in a march and rally in support of the Grassy Narrows First Nation's campaign for cleanup of mercury contamination in their territory.

**Council of Canadians chapters are active in almost 60 communities across the country. Here are just a few examples of what they have been doing in recent months:**

## Glyphosate is dangerous

The Kent County chapter pressed New Brunswick's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health to release a report on glyphosate, a herbicide that is widely sprayed in the province. In June, chapter activist Ann Pohl wrote to Dr. Jennifer Russell, stating, "We need to see that report on glyphosate that you promised we would have before the spray season begins. We need to see that report now. It is not clear to us if your report has been scrapped, suppressed, or something else has happened." In late July, the government had released the report that shockingly concluded there is "no increased risk for New Brunswickers exposed to glyphosate." This despite the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer saying glyphosate "is probably carcinogenic to humans."

## Support for immigration detainees

The Peterborough chapter rallied in support of immigration detainees being held in a prison in nearby Lindsay, Ontario. Indefinite immigration detention is an issue of concern for many Ontario chapters as well as chapters across the country. In July, the chapter rallied outside the constituency office of Maryam Monsef, the Minister of Democratic Institutions, demanding that she call on Ralph Goodale, the Minister of Public Safety, to meet with immigration detainees on hunger strike. The international standard is to limit immigration detention to 90 days, but in Canada there is no such limit. Unfortunately, instead of moving to this

international norm, the Trudeau government decided in August to spend \$132 million on new prison facilities for immigration detainees to replace older institutions.

## "Colonialism No More"

The Regina chapter supported the "Colonialism No More" camp outside the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) office in that city. The camp called on the government to revoke the Indian Act, honour the Treaty rights, and address long-standing issues impacting First Nations, including poverty, housing and education, inadequate drinking water and a lack of job opportunities. A spokesperson for the camp said, "We're tired of the suicides. We're tired of the poverty and the water that's not drinkable." After almost 125 days camping in front of the INAC office, and a visit from Regina MP and federal Cabinet minister Ralph Goodale in late July, the camp folded near the end of August.

## Fair trade, not corporate power

The Victoria chapter is working to get the municipal councils of Victoria, Saanich and Esquimalt to pass resolutions against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Chapter activists Ted Woynillowicz and Neil Mussell highlighted the undemocratic nature of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provision in the TPP that allows transnational corporations to challenge government decisions made in the public interest. Chapter representatives stated, "The TPP is a contentious so-called free trade agreement that has little to do with trade and much to do with a transfer of power to multinational corporations."

## Key wins

Since the last issue of *Canadian Perspectives* this past April, Council of

Canadians chapters have celebrated several key campaign wins, including an indefinite moratorium on fracking in New Brunswick, the Niagara Falls Planning Department recommending against zoning changes needed to destroy the Thundering Waters forest until five conditions are met (including consultation with Indigenous peoples opposed to the development), and Fredericton City Council admitting that it erred when it sent a letter (voted on at a council meeting closed to the public) to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau supporting the controversial Energy East pipeline.

## In memoriam

The Council of Canadians mourns the passing of Brockville chapter activist Jim Riesberry, who passed away on May 3, 2016, at the age of 82. Jim founded the chapter and served as its chairperson for eight years. Several years ago, Jim commented, "Over the last 10 years we have presented to city council, participated in demonstrations in Ottawa, met annually with our MP, screened documentaries, and hosted Maude Barlow and the Unbottle It! tour, among other things. We don't get to celebrate as many victories as we would like, but we have the joy of working with others across Canada and together being an influence." Our sincere condolences go out to Jim's family and friends.

*To read more about how chapters are acting for social justice in communities across the country visit [www.canadians.org/community](http://www.canadians.org/community).*

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