

Water activist featured at MC2-sponsored session April 14

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Just turn on the tap and there it is, more than enough to quench our thirst.

But what if it didn't come our right away? What if it was unsafe, and everywhere we go, we have to get out our wallets to quench that thirst?

The Environment Committee of the Mono Mulum Citizens' Coalition (MC2) will be hosting a public information and discussion session with Maude Barlow, a Canadian water activist, to discuss the ever-present issue of access to clean drinking water.

Dubbed Clean Water: A Public Right, it will be held at Orangeville's Westminster Church on Saturday, April 14. Doors open at 9:00 a.m., and although it's free, donations to cover the expenses for Ms. Barlow's visit will be encouraged.

Ms. Barlow has campaigned nationally and internationally for access to safe drinking water for everyone. She is the Honorary Chairperson of the Council of Canadians and chairs the board of Food and Water Watch. She has received many honorary doctorates and awards for her contributions. In 2008/09 she served as the Senior Advisor on Water to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, and has written several books on the subject.

Arnold De Graaff, board member of the environment committee, says the topic of clean water has been on the committee's agenda for a while, and approached Maude because of her well-known, and tireless advocacy efforts.

?No doubt she will highlight that there are no national drinking water standards - its safety and availability in Canada; that many dangerous chemicals are not tested by Health Canada; that the maps for aquifers and groundwater are inadequate or non-existent for certain areas and that protection is insufficient.?

When asked about the rise in Orangeville's sodium in drinking water, Mr. De Graaff says this presentation is more important than ever for a number of reasons, as many are not aware of how precarious our drinking water availability is.

?We could lose control over our local water under NAFTA; inadequate testing. Although Dufferin does a good job, the standards for many chemicals are too low or non-existent; we need to engage the province and the federal government to raise and expand the standards and ways of testing.?

When the subject of paying for drinking water in the future, such as in restaurants, came up, he said many people are concerned about that possibility, especially for future generations.

?Some are despairing and sad that we are up against so many vested interests.?

He added he hopes people will be inspired, encouraged and motivated to take action.

To book a spot for the presentation, visit www.monomulum.com.