

G-8 opponents speak to concerned citizens

By Cory Pytlarz
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Raising awareness, and curiosity, were key to a presentation highlighting less positive aspects of the

G-8 summit.

Concerned citizens gathered at the St. Paul Regional High School May 28 to attend the G8 Travelling Road Show and to discuss issues revolving

around next month's G8 meeting in Kananaskis.

Those in attendance listened as Sarah Kerr of Alberta Council for Global Cooperation and Pamela Foster of the Halifax

Initiative spoke about their views of globalization, the history of the G8 and its relation to the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"Globalization and the policies and priorities of the G8 are not working," Kerr said. "They're increasing the economic disparity. They're increasing our environmental devastation and they're destroying our social structures."

Kerr and Foster got the Road Show under way in Grande Prairie on May 25 and are scheduled to visit 11 Alberta cities and towns in two weeks including 10 meetings in 10 nights.

"The issues of the G8 and global corporate capitalism impact all of us and they particularly impact rural areas," Kerr said. "Because rural areas are a little more remote they don't often get this kind of education."

Kerr, from Calgary, is an activist who sees protest as a "tool for social movements" and spent five days in jail resulting from her participation in the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999.

Foster is the coordinator for the Halifax Initiative, a coalition of non-profit groups calling for the

reform of international financial institutions.

"People need to get informed because globalization isn't working and the G8 are the key promoters of globalization," Foster said.



Pam Foster

"I'm concerned with the impact of globalization on rural communities and the impact ultimately that has down the road," said St. Paul resident Scott MacDougall.

Grant Bergman of Innisfree agreed that the G8's decisions will have far-reaching impact.

"The history of the G8 I think is very important ... how it's affecting the whole world, not just St. Paul or Alberta," he said.

The response from the meetings thus far has been positive, Foster said.

"A lot of people have been quite appreciative of the information and a lot of people have gone say-

ing 'I need to more know about this,'" she said. "So that's the key, that we raise enough curiosity about what's really going on out there."

The St. Paul meetings appeared to have a similar



Sarah Kerr

impact. MacDougall said the issues discussed at the meeting are "critically important," yet underexposed.

"What I've taken away is the importance of everybody taking the time to inform themselves and talk to each other about stuff like this," he said.

Foster was hopeful those in attendance last week would go away with a new perspective to explore these issues.

"(Being willing to get informed is) the first level of action," Foster said. "Even if they don't come to Kananaskis, they've still taken some small steps."

