



Feds cut EI benefits to Northern capital cities

The federal government announced it is tightening the rules for employment insurance eligibility in the three territorial capitals. See page 2.



Queen refuses to interfere on devolution bill C-15

The Queen of England declined a request from the Dene Nation to interfere on the devolution bill currently before Parliament. See page 6.



College celebrates 1,000 employed mining grads

Aurora College announced 1,000 graduates from its mine training program have obtained full-time employment in their field. See page 15.



Fort Smith Jackrabbits get lesson from the pros

Fort Smith's young cross-country skiers were following in the tracks of two world class coaches and skiers last weekend. See page 23.

NORTHERN Journal

\$1.00

February 25, 2014 Vol. 37 No. 41



Model Jolene Bourgue of Fort Smith shows off a luxurious coyote fur vest, one of the contemporary pieces showcased at last weekend's Gone Wild fur fashion show event. The sold-out event, which featured a marketplace, food and music, was a celebration of the territory's trapping tradition. See pages 12-13.

Photo: Paul Bannister

MLA suspects 'chill' on fracking petition Bromley says GNWT employees intimidated into not signing

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

A "chill" has befallen the various sectors of government bureaucracy in the NWT, preventing employees from signing onto a petition that asks leaders to forward future fracking applications to environmental assessment, says MLA Bob Bromley.

"The word I'm getting through emails is a 'chill,'" he said. "There's a chill on employees and people seem quite adamant about it."

Though he could not speak to specific incidents, Bromley told *The Journal* last week that he had received word from constituents that government employees were being intimidated into withdrawing their signatures from the online petition,

launched Feb. 7, or not signing at all.

"I am still receiving emails of concern and some sharing

up and down, which is a bit strange," he said, noting that instructions have gone out in the past for other petitions

I am still receiving emails of concern and some sharing of experience where they feel they have been unfairly or inappropriately restricted.

Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley

of experience where they feel they have been unfairly or inappropriately restricted," Bromley said.

"I'm hearing that from constituents and the public, and it's been noticed that numbers on the petition go

demanding employees remove their names.

The petition, put forth by the Fracking Action North coalition, asks the Legislative Assembly to trigger a full environmental assessment process, including

public hearings, for any upcoming fracking projects.

The MLA could not say if the alleged political interference was in direct relation to the fracking petition, specifically, or on political action in general, but noted the government's current views on industry.

"We know that this government is obviously very bent on full-speed development," he said.

Bromley said he was asked by the public to clarify the situation for public servants. He indirectly questioned Premier Bob McLeod about the issue last Monday in the Legislature, asking for reassurances that public employees would not be reprimanded for signing.

The premier denied having knowledge of any petition, but said all GNWT employees sign a code of ethics and have to adhere to certain principles.

"I'm sure the honourable member would be the first to cry out loud and clear if an employee of the government of the Northwest Territories would come out and directly criticize it," McLeod retorted.

Bromley said the fracking petition is not critical of government policy, but is instead a forward-looking request hoping to shape future decision making.

"This is not criticizing the government; it's urging the government to take action," he said. See *Balancing on page 3.*

NEWS BRIEFS

Fort Resolution governments to work with GNWT on forestry

The Fort Resolution Métis Council and Deninu Kué First Nation have agreed to work with the GNWT to manage the forestry industry, signing a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) last week. The MOU spells out a team approach to administering the forest industry and specifies limits on the potential purchasers. According to the GNWT, the MOU is the "first step" to seeing a steady supply of timber to support the government's biomass strategy, which aims to see wood used commercially to heat homes and buildings across the territory. The Métis and First Nation have historically not seen eye to eye on forestry matters, but both leaders said they believe the MOU is a positive step.

MLA booted from legislature after refusing to apologize for remarks

Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins was suspended from the legislature during last Friday's sitting after he refused to apologize for accusing Finance employees of purposefully not filling jobs and misusing money for "pet projects." Speaker Jackie Jacobson told the legislature Hawkins' comments questioned the "personal integrity" of a small group not present to defend themselves. When asked to withdraw his remarks and apologize, Hawkins tried to defend himself without directly apologizing and was suspended from the legislature for the rest of the day.

Alexandra Falls voted second most popular waterfall by travelers

The NWT's Alexandra Falls was named one of the top two waterfalls in Western/Northern Canada as part of the 2014 Travelers Choice Awards by *ehcanadatravel.com* blog and online magazine. Beat out only by Kinuseo Falls in northern BC, Alexandra Falls, part of the Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park on the "Waterfall Highway," was selected based on the number of online travelers who visited the falls in 2013 and contributed to the blog. "The highway is one of the best waterfalling routes in the country and should be on every traveler's bucket list," the website reads. *Ehcanadatravel.com* boasts more than 2 million online contributors per year.



Federal Employment Minister Jason Kenney announces changes to employment insurance in Yellowknife, Feb. 20.

Politics Labour

Federal government cuts EI benefits to Northern capitals

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The Canadian government is tightening its rules for employment insurance (EI) eligibility in the three Northern capitals of Yellowknife, Whitehorse and Iqaluit in order to bring them down to par with the rest of Canada.

The unemployment rate used to calculate EI benefits in the

three territories has been set at 25 per cent since the 1970s, but Employment and Social Development Minister Jason Kenney says the actual rates are much lower, amounting to around 4 per cent in Yellowknife.

Kenney, who was in Yellowknife last Thursday to make the announcement, said the issue is about fairness.

"Yellowknife's economy is strong; 4 per cent unemployment is a heck of a lot lower than Toronto and is even lower than in Calgary," he said. "So it's unfair that you would get access to benefits faster and longer than someone who lives in an area with higher unemployment, just because of some fiction from the 1970s."

The new rules mean people in the city must have worked 700 hours in the previous 52 weeks, up from 420 hours, to collect employment insurance. Benefits will only be able to be collected for a maximum of 36 weeks instead of 45, effective Oct. 14 when the changes roll out.

The two-tiered system leaves out the rural areas of the territories, where unemployment sits at a current average of around 12 per cent in the NWT.

The department estimates regular claimants outside of Yellowknife will require 490 hours, or an additional two weeks of work, to access EI benefits. They will be entitled to between 23-45 weeks of EI benefits.

"This change recognizes that jobs and opportunities differ greatly between the capital regions and the more remote regions of each territory," Jordan Sinclair, media spokesperson for Employment, told *The Journal* in an email.

Existing claims submitted before the implementation date will not be affected.

According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, there were 1,900 unemployed people in the NWT in January 2014, with an overall unemployment rate of 8 per cent.

While the announcement has sparked worry that the

changes could hold negative impacts for residents now struggling with the cost of living, Kenney said the federal government already gives "huge support" to the NWT.

"We do recognize a higher cost of living, which is why the federal per capita to the territory are massively higher than anywhere else in every program...which includes federal support for income support delivered by the territorial government," he said. "We give the territories more than anywhere else in the country, precisely to reflect the higher cost of living. But EI is a separate program."

Kenney said he does not expect the changes to EI to negatively impact people's lives.

"I don't think this is going to very seriously affect people in this place because there are so many job opportunities available," he said.

"I think this is positive. It shows our confidence in the growth of this region's economy."

Sports & Recreation Fishing

Fort Smith, Fort Chip fishing derbies cancelled

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Lakes that typically host dozens of happy anglers each year during the Fort Smith and Fort Chipewyan fishing derbies will be left alone this year due to unsafe conditions and health problems, according to organizers.

Richard Mercredi, who has been organizing the annual Fort Smith derby for years, says heavy snowfalls have resulted in widespread overflow that will make it dangerous for snowmobilers making the trek

out to Jackfish, Blackman and Natawa Lakes.

Overflow occurs when heavy snow breaks the ice, pushing water up through the cracks where it pools under the snow and can be difficult to see. Deep overflow can cause snowmobiles to get stuck.

Mercredi said people have already been getting stuck out at the lakes, which are a two-hour snowmobile ride north of Fort Smith.

With the derby typically scheduled for the third weekend of

March, Mercredi says it is highly unlikely conditions will improve before then. The committee is now looking to next year.

"It's getting pretty late now," he said. "We don't have much time to regroup."

This would have been the three-day derby's 23rd year.

Fort Chipewyan's fishing derby was also cancelled this year due to health problems among the organizing committee. The annual event usually draws hundreds, offering up big prizes for the top catches.

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Cabinet votes down motion to save regional boards

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

MLAs defeated a motion last Thursday that would have created regional offices to take the place of those that will be lost when the federal government eliminates regional land and water boards to create one superboard.

The motion, put forward by MLA Bob Bromley and seconded by Deh Cho MLA Michael Nadli, asked the GNWT to work with Aboriginal governments to establish and staff regional offices “as a basis for ensuring meaningful input into land and water management structures.”

Bromley said the motion was put forward in response to the “crystal clear and unanimous voices of our Aboriginal partners,” numerous non-Aboriginal residents and the admission of industry that the regional boards are working well.

With attempts to stop the federal legislation in Ottawa unsuccessful, Bromley thought it was imperative to take mitigative strides at the territorial level.

“We have a situation where we need to try and do something to make the best of a bad situation, keeping the regional capacity in places that allow the boards to keep a finger on



Photo: Bill Braden

A motion to create regional offices replacing those being eliminated through changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act was voted down 11-7 last week.

the pulse of each region and allow for direct engagement with people in each region,” he told the assembly.

“Really this motion...urges Cabinet to sit down with our Aboriginal partners and discuss with them what mitigation can be taken, what specific actions can be put in place and structures to address the gap that this will be leaving.”

Seven in favour, 11 against

Seven MLAs were in favour of the motion, particularly its premise of more consultation.

“This motion asks the government of the Northwest Territories to work with our regional government partners. If you’re doing it already, why should we not continue on and work with them on something which they

think is so terribly important?” commented Frame Lake MLA Wendy Bisaro.

Though Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny agreed that the devolution bill is not perfect, he voted against Bromley’s motion, stating he believes the included regulatory changes are needed to modernize the NWT.

“I believe we are striving for a territory of greater efficiency

The views of Aboriginal governments will continue to be articulated and heard by the government of the Northwest Territories.

NWT Premier Bob McLeod

putting us, in my humble opinion, at the same level playing field as other jurisdictions such as our sister territory of the Yukon,” Dolynny said. “This new concept should allow us to focus on more efficiency and all the while hopeful that we are able to concentrate and further develop our land use plans and have strong, continued negotiations for our unsettled land claims.”

Dolynny, along with three other regular MLAs and cabinet, voted against the motion.

New board will represent regions

Premier Bob McLeod argued there will be no lack of regional representation on the new superboard, which is an amalgamation of the existing regional boards.

“With respect to representation on the amalgamated board, there is a provision in Bill C-15 to allow three people to be appointed to review the

application, including at least one member appointed from an Aboriginal government. This provides for representation similar in proportion to the current representation on regional boards,” he said.

“There is also a provision to allow the chairperson to designate additional board members to deal with the application in addition to the three people designated. This provides continued real representation.”

McLeod said the intergovernmental council to be established with Aboriginal governments through devolution will provide the forum for collaboration proposed in the motion.

“In this way, the views of Aboriginal governments will continue to be articulated and heard by the government of the Northwest Territories,” he said.

He added that members of the review boards are not meant to represent regions, but to take an impartial stance during assessments, as they do now.

Politics GNWT

Balancing loyalty with freedom of expression difficult: deputy minister

Continued from page 1.

The code of conduct explicitly allows GNWT employees to freely comment on political issues, without using their position to lend weight to public expression of their personal opinions. They are advised to “exercise caution” when making comments critical of government policies.

Employees are also required to sign oaths pledging loyalty to the GNWT as their employer, as well as agreements binding them to confidentiality and, in cases where conflicts of interest arise, impartiality.

Deputy minister of Human Resources Sheila Bassi-Kellett said ensuring both freedom of speech and loyalty to the GNWT is a delicate balance.

“We don’t want to limit our employees’ freedom of expression just because they’re public servants. That’s completely inappropriate and that’s not in our interest at all. But what we do need to do is set some reasonable restrictions to just avoid

The point is that the petition itself isn’t critical, but it is taking a stand.

Sheila Bassi-Kellett

Deputy Minister of Human Resources

either a real or a perceived conflict of interest,” she said. “As public servants we have to be seen to be impartial.”

In the case of the fracking petition, Bassi-Kellett said the situation is complicated by the fact that the GNWT hasn’t specifically come out against or in favour of the controversial oil and gas extraction process.

“Our government right now hasn’t made specific comments on this, so for employees to get out ahead is something to be very mindful of or careful around,” she said. “The point is that the petition itself isn’t critical, but it is taking a stand. That’s an issue where you need to stop and think, as a public servant, as someone who has

taken the loyalty provisions in the code of conduct really seriously.”

She said employees are encouraged to talk to their supervisors about whether or not signing a petition would be inappropriate.

The NWT’s first and only fracking operation, currently being carried out in the Sahtu region by ConocoPhillips, bypassed the environmental assessment stage last summer, jumping directly to permitting, raising concerns in the region and across the territory.

More applications for exploratory fracking in the NWT, including one by Husky Oil, are expected in the coming months.

GONE WILD WISHES TO THANK

Logos include: CANADIAN NORTH, Northwestern Air, BNIC NWI, FORT SMITH curling centre, FORT SMITH rec. centre staff, FREUND BUILDING SUPPLIES, MORRIS furs, PTARMIGAN INN, KAKSAD, Northern, CAB CONSTRUCTION, Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources, Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Names listed: Lauraine Armstrong, Kevin & Rita Antoniak, Craig Browne, Rebecca Cabell, Gen Côté, Jane Dragon, Katie Hicks, Janie Hobart, Angela Lockhart, Brittany McArthur, Natalie Melnyk, Darlene Powder, Ken & Mary Schaefer, Marnie Villeneuve and everyone who helped with Gone Wild.

Hosted by Fine Arts Council of Thebacha (FACT) Fundraiser for Fort Smith Circle of Friends and the Food Bank

The Northern Journal is an independent newspaper covering news and events in the western Arctic and northern Alberta.

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Advertising Deadlines

Display ad deadline is Thursday at 4:00 p.m.
Classified ad deadline is Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
Email: ads@norj.ca

Subscription Rates

(867) 872-3000

Prices include GST. \$47.25 in Fort Smith;
\$52.50 elsewhere in Canada;
\$105 in the USA; overseas \$164.30.

Letters to the Editor Policy

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Ekatie Diamond Mines	Inuvik	Tulita
Enterprise	Jean Marie River	Uluksaktok
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Fort Providence	Paulatuk	Yellowknife

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Cheteh	Glenevis	Red Earth Creek
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Enilda	Hythe	
Enoch	John D'or Prairie	

Published weekly by
Cascade Publishing Ltd.

Printed on recycled newsprint
with vegetable ink at Wainwright Star Chronicle.

Is there a Canadian conscience?

Local Mayan populations in Guatemala claim security guards for HudBay Minerals, a Toronto based gold mining company, murdered a local leader who was leading protests against their mine, shot another who is now permanently disabled and gang raped 11 local women.

Other Canadian companies operating around the world have been similarly accused of poor practices and such criminal behaviour, in their pursuit of wealth. The one most often accused is Barrick Gold, the world's largest gold company.

Barrick, on its website, claims it "is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and professional integrity" and that it is "...ethical, honest and accountable ... in accordance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations."

Meanwhile, Barrick has been under fire for a number of years for practices at its operation on the border of Peru and Argentina, including contaminating nearby water sources. Barrick is known to wield tremendous influence in Argentine politics and stories abound of bribery and corruption of high ranking local government officials. Multiple court cases are being pursued by local Aboriginal groups in Chile, Argentina and Peru accusing the giant multinational of serious and damaging environmental and social impacts.

At its Porgera Gold Mine in Papua New Guinea, Barrick is accused of dumping toxic mine tailings directly into the nearby river. Its Bulyanhulu and North Mara mines in Tanzania are said to have been built upon "deaths, displacement and human rights abuses" by its detractors. Similar stories surround their mining operations in the Philippines and Russia.

How do Canadians feel about this? Should companies from this country be required to act in other lands as they would at home, following the same moral guidelines, if not legal standards? Should they

be subject to accountability in Canada?

If we are going to consider the practices of Canadian corporations outside our borders, will that differ from what is allowed by governments in our own country? What, for example, of the latitude and extraordinary license allowed the oilsands industry around Fort McMurray, Alberta? First Nations in the region are ignored when they say their constitutional rights, particularly "the duty to consult," are being abrogated whenever a new lease for an oilsands plant is handed out by the Alberta government. Such complaints invariably end up stalled in lengthy and unproductive court battles.

The Alberta and federal governments, in their rush to further expand the oil industry's industrial footprint in Alberta's northeast, continue to deny the existence of any harmful contamination from the oilsands industry, either airborne or from tailings pond seepage, without supporting studies or scientific evidence. More and more studies, invoked only after considerable public pressure, are mounting evidence of serious pollution involving a multitude of contaminants that present a real threat to human health. Meanwhile, new rare cancers continue to be found among the populations of surrounding communities.

What is happening with the oilsands is similar to the stories of problems connected to Canadian corporations abroad. Meanwhile in both cases we are flooded with messages from all these large corporations assuring us everything they do is benign. They are generally successful in appeasing the concerns of the broader population.

All that may be coming to a head. A ruling in July 2013 by an Ontario judge allowing HudBay Minerals to be sued in Canadian court by Guatemalans sent a shockwave through many boards of directors of Canadian corporations. The

precedent-setting ruling by Judge Carole Brown of the Superior Court of Ontario allowed the claims of 13 Mayans in three related lawsuits to proceed to trial in Canadian courts. Members of HudBay Minerals executive and board may be held legally responsible in Canada for the alleged sexual assaults and murder at their Guatemalan mine site, if the case proceeds and there is a guilty verdict. The case is now in the "discovery" stage where HudBay Minerals is required to disclose all communication and documents relating to the case and its principals are subject to questioning under oath.

Obviously, the implications of this case will be extremely important for all Canadian companies with foreign operations. The court deliberations will be in the public spotlight around the same time more Environment Canada studies reveal the true nature and scope of contamination of land and water by oilsands giants around Fort McMurray. That will also coincide with court battles by local First Nations over their right to have a say in what happens on their traditional land where oilsands companies are operating. All that will coalesce around the time of the next federal election, 18 months from now.

The issues of corporate morality, the obligation of governments to hold companies accountable, particularly in the way local Aboriginal populations are impacted across the globe, is common to all of this. Separate, unrelated controversies are on parallel trajectories and may, by coincidence, become foremost in Canadian public consciousness simultaneously. How do Canadians feel about the way corporations are allowed to pollute the land and impact the health of local people, both in our country and in other lands? That may be demonstrated at the ballot box.



Derek Kaemingk and Amanda Grobbecker spend Saturday evening walking on the "Coldest Night of the Year" in Yellowknife, a fundraiser event for the Salvation Army. The national project has raised around \$2.2 million for the "hungry, homeless and hurting," with Yellowknife raising the second highest amount out of 63 locations in Canada with a total of \$40,846 from 100 walkers. Yellowknife's target was \$25,000.

ARCHIVES

15 Years Ago...

Parks Canada taken to task

Western Arctic MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew and government of the Northwest Territories Minister of Transportation Floyd Roland were told by Fort Smith and northern Alberta representatives that Parks Canada has been almost impossible to work with and must cooperate more with Fort Smith Town Council and Aboriginal groups in the region.

Issue: February 23, 1999

20 Years Ago...

Ministers push to defer leg-hold ban

Some prominent politicians were in Ottawa last week pushing for a one-year extension to the proposed ban on leg-hold traps. The European community announced last year it will decide this coming July whether or not to ban all furs harvested by leg-hold traps from the European fur market as of Jan.1, 1995.

Issue: February 23, 1994

30 Years Ago...

Munro announces exploration deals

The minister for Northern Affairs, John Munro, announced the signing of 16 new petroleum exploration agreements in Yellowknife last week. The agreements will have a total cost of \$152 million for drilling and exploration activities over a three to six year period. Seven companies will be working to develop 15 wells in the Mackenzie Valley and Delta.

Issue: February 23, 1984

Oilsands tailing ponds leakage

Editor,
The report released by Environment Canada on Feb. 20, 2014 confirms claims that toxic contaminants are leaking from Alberta's oilsands tailings ponds into the Athabasca River.

For years, people concerned about the environment have raised the alarm that millions of litres of hazardous, toxic waste have been leaking daily from the tailings ponds. Serious adverse health issues affecting citizens and wildlife around and downstream of the tar sands projects, coincidental

with industry timelines, are well known.

I am dismayed at the position taken by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), the body representing the petroleum industry. I am also very troubled by what appears to be a clear and conscious decision by CAPP and the current federal government to mislead Canadians about the growing and serious environmental degradation of the Athabasca River system attributed to the tar sands industry.

CAPP pledges very positive and proactive action with

regard to environmental care, yet their words and lack of action contradict much of what is promised. Comments by Mark Cooper, a CAPP spokesperson, contained in the report seem far from believable. I quote:

"Current tailings pond and groundwater monitoring in the oilsands shows no substances being released or predicted to be released in quantities or concentrations that would degrade or alter water quality."

And yet Canadians continue to be the recipients of a concerted CAPP advertising

campaign that attempts to affirm the environmental impact caused by the petroleum industry is insignificant. The self-funded scientific research used in their glossy advertisements is misleading and for the most part flies in the face of both an abundance of independent scientific research and common sense.

Who do Canadians hold responsible for the environmental devastation and significant adverse health issues attributed to the Alberta tar sands industries?

Rick Le Noury

MVRMA changes 'critical' for development

Editor,
For decades, Northerners have been seeking the ability to make decisions about their own lands and resources, lands in their own backyards. Through C-15, this government is working to bring the benefits of devolution to the Northwest Territories (NWT) which can only be realized through a modern, efficient and effective regulatory system that would make the NWT a competitive and attractive place to do business.

To clarify, an improved regulatory framework is critically important and will ensure that resource development continues in a manner that respects the environment, while ensuring the long-term prosperity of the NWT for many

generations. The government of the NWT will have significantly increased province-like powers over its land and water resources, and final decisions on most resource projects wholly within the territory will rest with the territorial government.

The restructuring of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) is just one aspect of the legislative changes proposed under Bill C-15. The board restructuring does not change the existing mandate of the MVLWB, but continues to support the principles of proportional and regional representation, and is consistent with existing land claim agreements. This has been set out in Chapter 25.4.6 on the Sahtu Dene and

Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement; 24.4.6 of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement; and Chapter 22.4.1 of the T'licho Final Agreement.

Devolution and regulatory reform in the NWT is the result of years of ongoing consultations. The provisions, signed by all parties, under Bill C-15 are outlined in the final Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, and this larger board was explicitly contemplated when the comprehensive land claim agreement was signed by all parties.

Governance is one of the key pillars of our government's Northern Strategy, and as the prime minister recently stated, "We want to

be able to see Northerners... masters of their own affairs to the same degree as southerners are." I cannot overstate this significance enough, for the ability of the NWT to determine its own political and economic future for this vast and beautiful resource rich territory. Finally, I applaud Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington for supporting this bill, in the best interest of his constituents, as this government has been doing for the past eight years.

Please visit the AANDC website and our "Ask Us" page for more information about devolution and Bill C-15.

*Minister Bernard Valcourt
Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada*

School for everyone

Editor,
Millions of children will go to school again this week. They are fortunate. Millions of others will just not have this opportunity.

Around the world, almost 57 million elementary school-aged children – especially girls – don't go to school at all. Millions more receive a poor-quality education and will not be able to read, write or count.

Investing in basic education is one of the best ways to fight poverty.

As you might know, the number of out-of-school primary school-aged children has decreased from 70.5 million to 57 million in six years, with support from mechanisms like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Such a decrease will most likely have a huge impact on reducing poverty over a long period of time.

The GPE is an effective global partnership, devoted to ensuring that all children

are enrolled and receiving a quality basic education. Established in 2002, it is now providing assistance and incentives to develop and implement sound national education plans in 59 countries around the world.

Canada is among the rich countries contributing to the GPE, but it is still not contributing its fair share as a developed country. To do so, it would need to increase its contribution to \$150 million over a period of four years.

A total of \$150 million over four years is not such a big commitment for a country like Canada. Let's remember that by restoring corporate tax rates to what they were before 2008, Canada would raise over \$10 billion this year.

Let's just hope Canada will decide to move in the right direction over the next months.

*Bruno Marquis
Gatineau, QC*

MUKLUK



FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Northern Journal 2014

With extensions granted on health and infrastructure funding for the Northern territories, NWT Finance Minister Michael Miltenberger said the 2014 federal budget brings good news for the territory.



Federal budget brings 'good news' for the NWT : minister



John T'seleie: nice jacket...wonder who made it?



Last Tango for Che: Good work, Ms Wohlberg. Your article is truly reader-friendly. Now that is a lot of money allocated to the NWT. I hope it serves you well. In Toronto, everyone is crying the blues about the budget. Ha ha.

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Forecast

Inuvik Yellowknife

-14 High	Sun	-22 Low	Wednesday	-25 High	Sun	-36 Low
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-19 High	Sun	-23 Low	Thursday	-25 High	Sun	-37 Low
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-11 High	Sun	-27 Low	Friday	-24 High	Sun	-34 Low
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-12 High	Sun	-14 Low	Saturday	-19 High	Sun	-31 Low
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Norms: -21°C and -30°C Norms: -16°C and -27°C

Hay River Fort Smith

-25 High	Sun	-31 Low	Wednesday	-24 High	Sun	-33 Low
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-27 High	Sun	-33 Low	Thursday	-25 High	Sun	-36 Low
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-23 High	Sun	-36 Low	Friday	-26 High	Sun	-38 Low
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-23 High	Sun	-36 Low	Saturday	-17 High	Sun	-30 Low
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Norms: -13°C and -24°C Norms: -11°C and -24°C

Queen won't interfere on NWT devolution bill

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The Queen of England has declined action requested by the Dene Nation on the NWT devolution bill now before Parliament.

Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus wrote to the monarch earlier this month, expressing concerns about regulatory changes included in Bill C-15 that would eliminate regional land and water boards established by land claims in the territory.

"We felt the need to inform Her Majesty of the Government of Canada's endeavour to pass federal and territorial legislation on Bill C-15," said Erasmus, who argues the proposed legislation breaches Treaties 8 and 11, "therefore creating uncertainty in the North and within Canada."

In a letter response to Erasmus last week, Queen Elizabeth's senior correspondence officer said the matter would be referred to the Governor General of Canada, David Johnston.

Though the queen is said to have taken "careful note" of the Dene Nation's views, the letter indicates those concerns have been forwarded



Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus, centre, speaks with Dehcho Grand Chief Herb Norwegian and his legal counsel Larry Innes at Bill C-15 hearings in Yellowknife.

the Dene and Great Britain, which Canada is answerable to, the prime minister of Canada does not have the last say."

First Nations in the NWT spoke out against the amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA) included in the devolution bill at recent hearings in Yellowknife. Though the majority of Aboriginal governments support devolution, many worry the regulatory amendments will take away First Nations' say on industrial development.

Attempts by Opposition MPs in the House of Commons to split the omnibus bill in two, separating the MVRMA changes from the transfer of authority over lands, water and resources, were unsuccessful.

Erasmus plans to request a meeting with the Governor General prior to Apr. 1, the date devolution comes into effect, and hopes Johnston won't sign off on the act.

Dene leaders from across the NWT are meeting in Dettah on Mar. 4 to discuss the bill.

back to her representative in Canada.

Despite the lack of action, Erasmus said he is pleased

with the response, which indicates an acknowledgement of First Nations' equal status with the Crown.

"Indian treaties are outside the authority of the prime minister," the chief said. "The government of

Canada is limited when exerting its powers in relation to our treaties. Because these accords are between

Photo: Bill Braden



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NOTICE GENERAL MEETING UPDATES FOR ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION MEMBERS

March 5, 2014

Mamawi Community Hall - Fort Chipewyan, AB

March 6, 2014

ACDEN Building
220 Taiganova Cres.
Fort McMurray, AB

Both meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

Environment Oilsands

Federal study confirms oilsands tailings leaching into Athabasca

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

New federal research confirms what residents downstream of the oilsands have been saying for years, that tailings ponds along the Athabasca River are seeping into the waterway via groundwater.

The study by Environment Canada compared the chemical composition of the tailings with groundwater under the Athabasca River.

It found the fingerprint of the chemicals in the tailings ponds, noted to be different from chemicals found in naturally occurring bitumen deposits, matched samples of groundwater around mining operations and underneath the river.

The research was done as part of the federal-provincial joint oilsands monitoring program and was published earlier this year in the *Environmental Science and Technology* journal.



A scarecrow meant to deter water fowl stands guard over an oilsands tailing pond.

Previous research estimates 6.5 million litres per day are leaking from a single pond into the river.

Independent researchers carried out a similar study last year on the Athabasca using traditional knowledge to locate a site on the river where groundwater was suspected of flowing

into the Athabasca from the nearby Suncor tailings pond.

Tests done matched the chemical composition, including the presence of toxic heavy metals and carcinogenic hydrocarbons, of the water from the underground channel with the nearby tailings.

Photo: NWF Blogs

Funding targets unemployed older workers in Behchoko

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories have teamed up to provide training for unemployed older workers in the Behchoko area to secure jobs.

Federal Employment and Social Development Minister Jason Kenney was at Aurora College in Yellowknife last Thursday to make the announcement, promising over \$285,000 in funding cost-shared by the territory and Canada to help older workers improve their skills and re-enter the workforce as part of the tourism industry.

The funding will go to skills upgrading, hands-on experience, safety training and certification with the expectation that graduates will get jobs as instructors or guides, employed by the Tlicho government.

“We’ll help 16 unemployed older workers develop the skills they need for jobs,” Kenney said. “This is a program that, in some places, folks who’ve been working in one job for most of their lives end up, for whatever reason...find themselves unemployed and



The annual Trails of our Ancestors canoe trip is one of several programs run by the Tlicho Government that will be looking to hire older workers who are currently unemployed.

just need to start a new career. This is just to support them in doing so.”

The 2014 federal budget proposes renewing the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) for three years, representing a total

investment of \$75 million across the country.

To date, the initiative has helped more than 32,000 unemployed older workers across Canada, including 100 in the NWT. It targets adults normally between ages 55 and

64 in small, vulnerable communities of 250,000 or less that are experiencing high unemployment, significant downsizing or closures.

“Behchoko is considered an eligible community under the current TIOW

The approved proposal indicated that there would be positions available within the Tlicho Government as on the land instructors, trainers and supervisors that could build on the local tourism industry.

*Jacqueline McKinnon
Education, Culture and Employment*

program guidelines,” Jacqueline McKinnon, spokesperson for the NWT department of Education, Culture and Employment, told *The Journal*. “The approved proposal indicated that there would be positions available within the Tlicho Government as on the land instructors, trainers and supervisors that could build on the local tourism industry.”

Training already underway

The upgrading initiative, called the Wilderness Safety Training Program,

is currently being offered by the Tlicho Government, looking to train people between the ages of 50 and 64 to become instructors in on-land programs.

The program will build on existing on-land skills by providing occupational health and safety training and outdoor safety certifications required to work as foremen, crew bosses, boatmen and activity supervisors in the Tlicho Imbe program, Trails of our Ancestors Canoe Trip and Pu-berty Camps.

That program will run from Feb. 24 to May 16.

Politics First Nations

Neighbouring First Nations want consultation on Fort Liard claim

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

With the recent announcement that Fort Liard’s Aboriginal governments are one step closer to finalizing their land claim with the government, neighbouring First Nations are reminding officials that they still need to be consulted.

The Nahæ Dehé Dene Band (NDDB) in Nahanni Butte and Sambaa K’e Dene Band (SKDB) in Trout Lake issued a press release last week to ensure that the parties to the recently signed agreement-in-principle (AiP) on lands and resources for Fort Liard invoke the court-ordered consultation process before finalizing anything.

Officials with the territorial government first announced they had signed an AiP with the Acho Dene Koe First Nation (ADKFN) and the Fort Liard Métis on Feb. 17. That agreement has now been sent to the federal government for signing.

While neither First Nation is opposing the general provisions of the AiP, both say they have outstanding issues with the agreement that should have been noted by the GNWT in its announcement.

“SKDB and NDDB do not oppose the essential provisions of the AiP but strongly oppose the proposed size and geographic extent of the settlement area as well as the selection of fee simple lands by ADKFN within the SKDB and/or NDDB primary land use areas,” the two bands said in a statement issued last week.

Previous legal action taken by the two First Nations in relation to the Fort Liard claim resulted in a 2012 court decision ordering the territorial and federal governments to consult with Aboriginal governments whose boundaries overlap those under negotiation for land claims.

Justice McTavish of the NWT Supreme Court ruled Canada has a duty to engage in “deep, meaningful and adequate consultation” with both SKDB and NDDB to accommodate their concerns with respect to ADKFN’s land claim.

The decision has been employed across the territory since the ruling was made, forcing lengthy consultations with the Akaitcho First Nations on the NWT Métis Nation claim over the past year.

The ADKFN agreement is part of phase one of the community’s comprehensive land claim process, which will see a land and resources agreement created for the community, followed by a self-government agreement in the second stage.

Self-government negotiations cannot begin until 10 years after the completion of the land claim, according to the framework agreement, signed in 2008.



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Cynthia White at (867) 872-4732.

Fort McKay reaches deal on Dover oilsands project

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

After years of negotiation and firm opposition from the First Nation, Brion Energy and the Fort McKay First Nation came to an agreement late last week on the Dover oilsands project planned for the Moose Lake area.

The two parties signed an agreement last Friday, with the Fort McKay First Nation agreeing to remove all of its objections relating to the approval of the mine after receiving word from the company that many requested environmental protection measures will be put into place.

Sustainability director and chief negotiator for the First Nation, Alvaro Pinto, told *The Journal* that the agreement is all about environmental protection for the culturally and ecologically sensitive Moose Lake area, seen as the last refuge for Fort McKay members to practice their traditional activities.

"They've agreed to several environmental protection terms that we couldn't agree to before," Pinto said of Brion Energy. "We've been in negotiations for almost two years. At this point in time, Fort McKay feels very confident that the measures that we've agreed upon are very strong in terms of providing



The Fort McKay First Nation has lifted its objections to Brion Energy's Dover oilsands project after the company accepted several environmental protection measures.

the necessary protections to the Moose Lake area."

Though he could not name specifics due to a confidentiality clause in the agreement, Pinto said the company has agreed to many pieces of the management plan developed

by the First Nation that sought to balance development with the protection of treaty rights.

That plan proposed a 20-km buffer zone around the Moose Lake area, which would have cut into the company's lease area.

"The Moose Lake protection plan that we developed consists of a series of mitigation measures in terms of access management practices, protection area around the reserve," Pinto said.

"I can't disclose any specifics on the environmental component, but as I said they are very strong environmental protection measures."

Pinto said there is an economic opportunities component to the impact benefit

agreement, as well, but it was less of a priority for the First Nation than the mitigation of environmental impacts.

"In this case, it is essentially all about the environmental... We didn't even talk about the other terms before the environmental component was agreed upon and finalized," he said. "We knew that if we didn't have an environmental agreement, we wouldn't have an agreement at all."

Brion's chief executive officer and president Zhiming Li said the agreement comes down to being "good neighbours."

"Our lease and Fort McKay's reserves at Moose Lake sit next to each other," Li said in a press release. "As good neighbours, Brion is committed to developing the lease in an environmentally sound manner, while delivering social and economic benefits for the local community."

The Alberta Energy Regulator approved the Dover project on Aug. 6, 2013, but it has yet to receive final approval by the provincial government.

Brion, based in Calgary, is a joint venture between Athabasca Oil Sands Corp. and Phoenix Energy Holdings Ltd. The company was formerly known as Dover Operating Corp.

Photo courtesy of Brion Energy



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Police and first responders arrive at the scene of a deadly, multi-vehicle accident on Hwy. 63 south of Fort McMurray last Wednesday.

Transportation Highway 63

Fiery head-on collision kills two on Hwy. 63

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Alberta's Hwy. 63 to Fort McMurray was closed on Wednesday after a fatal head-on collision between two transport trucks ended in flames and two people dead.

The two trucks crashed approximately 75 km south of Fort McMurray near mile 173 just before 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Both drivers, who were lone occupants, died on scene. Their names and genders are being withheld.

At least four other vehicles, including three pickups and a tractor trailer, took to the ditch to avoid the accident. None of the occupants were injured.

Though Wood Buffalo RCMP are still investigating the cause of the crash, it appears the two trucks, traveling in opposite directions, collided head-on. One of the trucks was a tanker carrying what is believed to have been diesel fuel, resulting in a fire.

Roads were reported to be icy at the time of the crash.

The highway was closed in both directions on Wednesday and motorists redirected to Hwy. 881. It reopened Thursday morning after police concluded their initial investigation.

Twinning still in works

The Alberta government is currently twinning the

240 km between Edmonton and the province's industrial capital, known for heavy traffic and frequently fatal accidents.

Starting last Monday, the province began work on two new bridges spanning the Wandering River as part of the twinning efforts. Construction is expected to be completed by Aug. 15, weather permitting, and to cost \$5.5 million.

By March 2014, Alberta Transportation will have invested more than \$1.4 billion in Hwy. 63 and 881 infrastructure projects since 2005.

The province's deadline for twinning the highway is 2016.

Photo courtesy of Wood Buffalo RCMP



Fort Chipewyan trapper Charlie Cardinal shows off his traditional clothing, along with fur that he harvested, during the winter carnival indoor festivities Friday evening.



A motocross ice racer makes a sharp corner on the track carved out on Fort Chip's frozen Lake Athabasca on Saturday.

Arts & Culture Winter Carnival

Frosty fun at Fort Chip Winter Carnival

By MARIA CHURCH

It takes more than -30 degree weather to keep the community of Fort Chipewyan

from celebrating the season of snow.

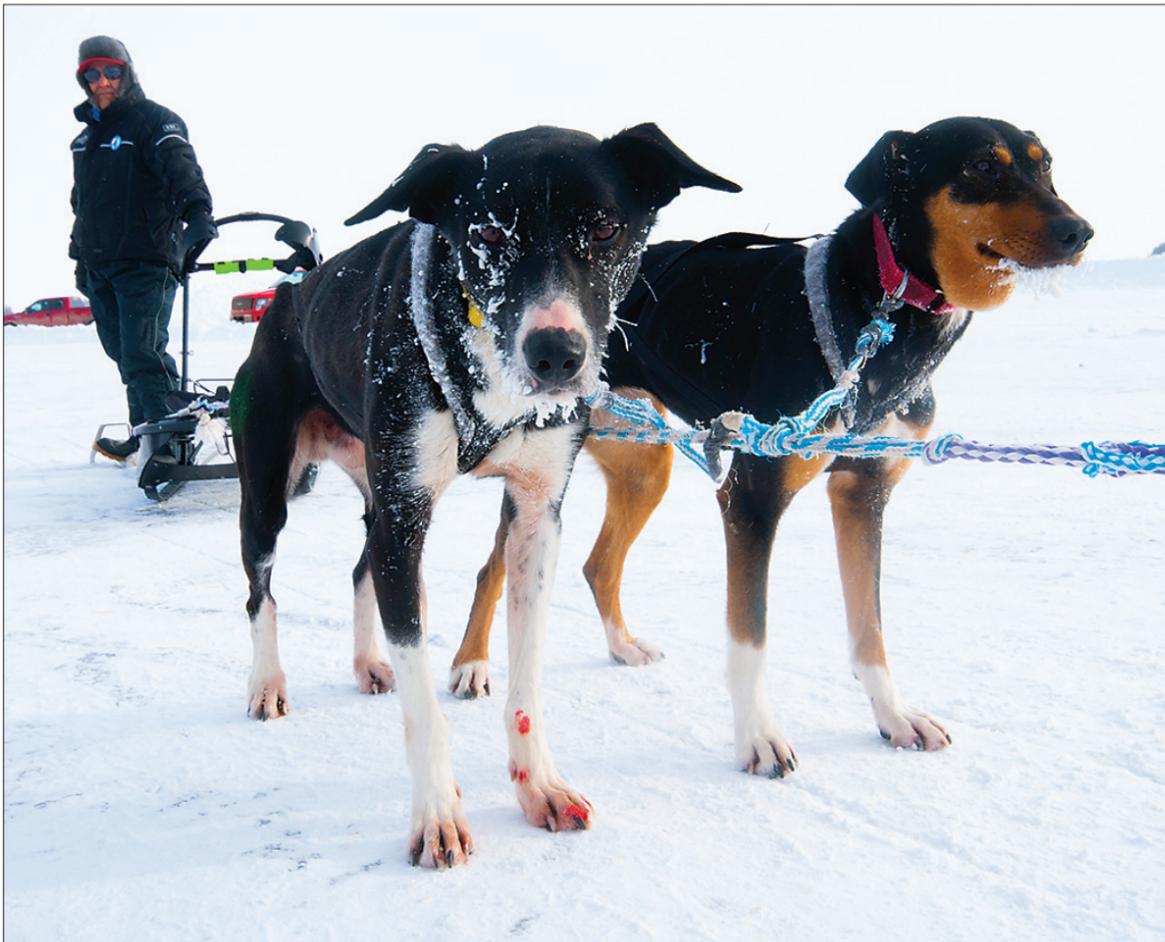
Residents young and old braved the blast of Arctic

wind last weekend to partake in the annual Winter Carnival, joining in on the indoor activities that included a

traditional wear fashion show and entertainment from visiting pow wow dancers, and packing into their vehicles to

watch the outdoor lakefront races including sled dogs, snow quadding, motocross and snow cross.

The weekend wrapped up with a community feast Sunday evening at the Mawawai Hall.



Paul Smith keeps an eye on his sled dogs Spencer and Dana as they cool down after the first dog sled race Saturday morning at the lake front.



Bobby Hunter of the Edmonton Heavenly Skies Dance Society entertains with a men's traditional pow wow dance.



Snow quad racers tear around the frozen corner of the ice track on the lake front.



Ronald Campbell and his sled dog team come roaring across the finish line.

Photos: Maria Church

Visiting scholar urges college students to break the 'sovereignty crisis' mindset

By MARIA CHURCH

Aurora College students in Fort Smith were given a challenge by one of Canada's foremost Canadian circumpolar historians: Set the country straight on Northern sovereignty.

Whitney Lackenbauer, a history professor at the University of Waterloo, was in the NWT last week to launch his latest book, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* in Yellowknife. The author's visit included a stop in Fort Smith where he held several lectures for students at Aurora College's Thebacha campus.

During Lackenbauer's lecture on Northern Canadian sovereignty on Wednesday, which chronicled Canada's historical interest in the North, he urged students to be the force that breaks the cycle of government interest waxing and waning in the North.

"I hope all of you will be in the forefront of making sure we don't allow southern Canadians to get caught up in that sovereignty crisis mindset that, when the crisis doesn't come true, people just forget about the North," he told the class.



Whitney Lackenbauer says he hopes Northerners take the lead in correcting "crisis" perceptions of Arctic sovereignty.

Photo courtesy of Whitney Lackenbauer

Canadian understanding of sovereignty needs to move away from the vision of an Arctic military threat that has coloured the media in the last several years

to rest on the people who occupy the land, Lackenbauer said.

"You hold Canada accountable in being partners with you to make sure that

the potential of your communities is being realized. That's a huge challenge and it's a very scary challenge, but it's going to allow us to break out of that history

of southerners getting interested and really worried and then forgetting about you," he said.

Lackenbauer is among those scholars arguing that

Canada does not face a military threat in the North. While it's evident the Canadian military is building up its Northern capacity, it's not to invade, he said.

"Every country is responsible to defend itself, but that doesn't mean that you are going to use that to attack others," Lackenbauer said.

Under Stephen Harper's administration, the Canadian government's stance on the North began with a "use it or lose it" hard military stance, but has changed over time to include infrastructure and development, he said.

In the last federal budget announced two weeks ago, the Harper government pledged \$90 million for "asserting Canada's sovereignty" in the North, including economic development, infrastructure and health funding.

While funding is important, it's up to Northerners to make sure the governments, federal and territorial, invest in ways that address social issues and capacity concerns, Lackenbauer told the class.

"You all have an essential role to play in making sure Northerners are able to seize these opportunities," he said.

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Author sees Canadian Rangers as military success

Yellowknife launches book on 'living' history of the Rangers

By MARIA CHURCH

Clothed in red and patrolling Canada's most dangerous terrain, the Canadian Rangers have become icons of the North, but even as their reputation grows, the author of the Rangers' first history book says their story means so much more.

Canadian Rangers are proof that there can be an "incredible relationship" between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian Forces, Whitney Lackenbauer, author and historian from the University of Waterloo, told *The Journal*.

Lackenbauer's recently published book, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History*, is the first of its kind to tell the little-known story of the red-sweatered, largely Aboriginal locals who provide surveillance for the military in some of Canada's most remote communities.

Media will often fixate on the idea that Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government are long-time adversaries, the author said, but the Rangers stand in defiance of that narrative. They continue to work with the military, guiding and teaching, but



Whitney Lackenbauer speaks at Aurora College's Thebacha campus last week.

Photo: Maria Church

with no obligation to serve in the army.

"It's this incredible example of Canada's diversity and how (by) figuring out ways to accommodate that diversity and respect it, it becomes this force multiplier," Lackenbauer said.

The author was in the NWT last week to officially launch his book in the company of the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group in Yellowknife. His tour included a stop in Fort Smith where

several members from the local Ranger patrol came out to hear him speak at Aurora College.

Lackenbauer shared stories from 12 years spent researching for the book, which involved tagging along on dozens of training exercises and military operations with Ranger patrols.

Historical roots

The history of the Canadian Rangers dates back to World War II when the

country's West Coast began pressuring the government to provide protection from the threat of a Japanese invasion. Pressed for manpower and coin, the government opted to arm volunteer civilian groups with rifles, creating the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers.

Spreading north to the Yukon and east to Nunavik and Labrador, the group became officially recognized as the Canadian Rangers in 1947.

Military interest in the Rangers ebbed and flowed as the government responded to potential threats to Canada's sovereignty and security.

Today, military sources refer to the Canadian Rangers as the army's "eyes and ears of the North," but, as Lackenbauer was once told by a Ranger, a more accurate description is the "eyeglasses, the hearing aid, and the walking stick."

Military increases focus on Arctic

Ashleigh Stokes and Terrence Campbell, both Canadian Rangers in Fort Smith, came out with four others in their patrol group to hear Lackenbauer speak at Aurora College's Thebacha campus last week.

Stokes, who has been a Ranger for seven years, noted that military attention on the Rangers has increasingly turned to the Arctic.

"Being in the southern communities (of the NWT) as compared to the more Northern communities, they have more opportunities, they are given more training and they are given more material," Stokes said.

Campbell, a recent recruit to the Rangers, has been wearing the red sweater for less than a month. He said he long ignored the nudges from friends to sign up, but the incentive finally came in late January when the Fort Smith patrol group went on its first training operation in two years.

Message to government

With the Harper government facing mounting international pressure to increase their defence profile in the North, the author urged that the spirit of the Canadian Rangers not be lost along the way.

"The takeaway from learning this history is because (the Rangers) are this incredible grassroots force...It's important that we not lose sight of the relationship that makes it work," he said.

That means the organization must maintain its current balance between Rangers' connection to the military and their role as community members, he added.

"It's not broken, so don't break it," Lackenbauer said.



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AURORA COLLEGE WEEK

FEBRUARY 17 - 21



You can get anywhere if you go one step at a time.



Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment



Model Isabella Bourque reveals the hidden softness lining one of the contemporary jackets provided by Morris Furs.



Lucy Tulugarjuk, originally from Igloolik, Nunavut, opens the show with drumming, throat singing and words of pride in the seal hunt while wearing designer Attuat Akkitiq's award winning amauti parka.



Models Larissa Lusty, left, and Farrah Freund model Salt River First Nation Chief Frieda Martselos' stunning alpaca and fox fur wraps during the fashion show.

GONE

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The models and performers were not the only ones going wild at Saturday's fur fashion show in Fort Smith, where most of the town showed up sporting their own traditional garments.

"There were people in the audience wearing fur that I've never seen before," remarked Gone Wild organizer Patti Kay Hamilton.

"It was so wonderful to have people walk in the door

in anything from Dene Fur Cloud scrunchies to mink coats to hats, mitts; people trying to honour that tradition of hunting in this community - tradition and future."

The sold-out event, which featured an arts and crafts marketplace, fashion show, musical performances and wild meat and wine tasting, was meant to celebrate the territory's longstanding trapping industry and run contrary to

the anti-fur protests led by southerners.

The event was dedicated to the local trappers who spent the majority of their lives working in a sustainable industry that was devastated by animal rights backlash, the guest of honour being Fort Smith trapper Pi Kennedy who spent over 70 years on the land.

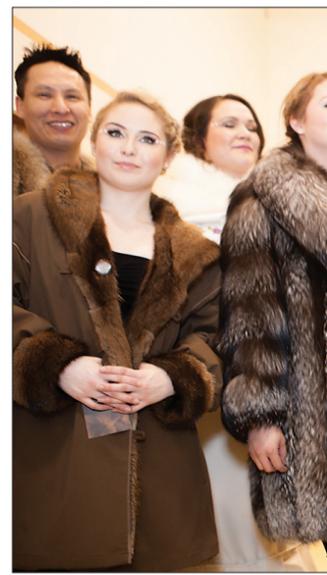
"I know how hard those guys worked and how humble



The models gather with Gone Wild's guest of honour, long-time trapper Pi Kennedy. Though he spent over 50 years trapping, it was the first time Kennedy had seen many of the furs in garment



Model Rob Laviolette beams in a coyote fur jacket loaned out for the show by Morris Furs in Edmonton.



The models gather backstage. The event was meant to celebr



Fort Smith elder and trapper Jane Dragon shows off her fur pieces with pride at Saturday's Gone Wild event.



Wrapped in beaver fur from head to toe, model Larissa Lusty shows fur is both functional and fashionable.



Former Olympian skier Sharlene Spence, guest of the fashion show. A j rings at the marketplace.



Joan Bevington adds a pair of Dene Fur Clouds beaver mittens to her matching mink coat and hat ensemble during the vintage collection portion of the fashion show.

WILD

they are," Hamilton said. "People in the Northwest Territories never imagined that people in the south would have such a misunderstanding of their attitude towards wildlife, and not even try to understand it."

Kennedy, who was sitting front row for the show, teared up at the recognition.

He said it was "very nice" to finally see a lynx coat for the first time after trapping the animal for decades.

"I'd never seen that before," he said. "I like that wolverine there, too. I caught quite a few in my day; one year, I caught nine...I had a lot of fun in the bush. I'm just an old timer here... Now I can't go in the bush, but it doesn't matter. I had my go of it...Over 50 years."

While several of the garments modelled during the show were those of acclaimed designers D'Arcy Moses and the up-and-coming Tishna Marlowe of

Lutsel K'e, many more were the heirlooms of Fort Smith's various clans, modelled by their children and grandchildren.

"When I saw the girls in the change room, you could tell it meant a lot to them," Hamilton said.

Hamilton said she was impressed by the cross-section of community members represented at the event.

"I was really proud of how many people came out," she said.



Stephanie Laviolette models her sister Tishna Marlowe's award-winning bridal gown. Marlowe of Lutsel K'e is making a name of herself with her company, Six Red Beads.



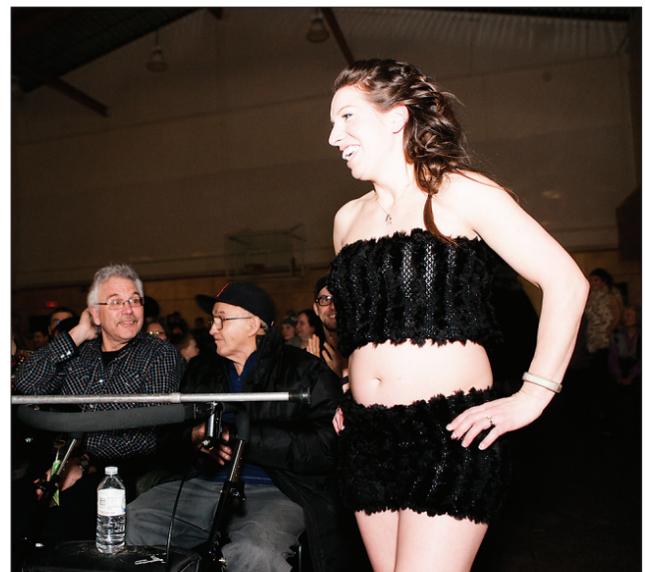
With *Gone Wild* organizer Patti Kay Hamilton, front centre, women share the history and future of NWT's long trapping history.



Mary Schaefer models a north Finnish wolf coat as a surprise. Schaefer, a jewellery designer as well, also sold her feather earrings.



Fort Smith trapper turned model Mary Schaefer sports a beautifully detailed coat and moccasins.



Spicing up the night with a final surprise, Helen Panter of Fort Smith busts out her beaver fur bikini to the tune of Wild Thing to ring in the evening.



Gord Rothnie shows off a contemporary coat from Morris Furs in Edmonton.

Photos: Paul Bannister, Don Jaque and Meagan Wohlberg



Aurora College student Sonja Minoza sings "Black Velvet" during College Idol at the Thebacha campus Friday, one of several events put on for students to mark Aurora College Week.



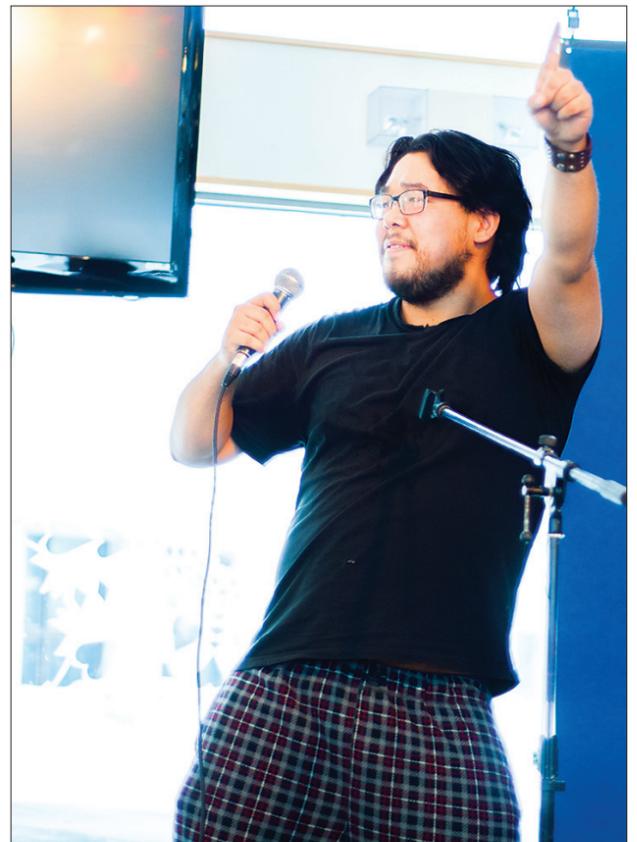
JJ Mckinney, right, pulls Todd Venne on a crazy carpet, racing against fellow Aurora College students in a friendly relay competition at the Thebacha campus last week.

Education Aurora College Week

Activity abounds for Aurora College Week



Carpentry students Sam Olsen and Chris Rockel coax their fire brighter while a crowd looks on during the tea boiling competition held for Aurora College Week at the Thebacha campus last Tuesday.



Aurora student Derrick Thrasher rocks out during College Idol at Thebacha campus in Fort Smith.



Aurora College student Joseph Parsch splits wood during the tea boiling competition last Tuesday at the Thebacha campus in Fort Smith.



Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Ernie Campbell receives an alumni award from Aurora College president Jane Arychuk.

College celebrates 1,000 employed mining grads

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Aurora College and the NWT Mine Training Society celebrated an important milestone last week, announcing that 1,000 students have not only successfully graduated from the mine training programs, but have now obtained full-time employment.

Conan Zoe, a Tlicho student based in Yellowknife, was honoured last Thursday at a special event at Aurora College featuring federal Employment Minister Jason Kenney.

Zoe was one of 11 students to enroll in the underground mine training program offered through Aurora College by the Mine Training Society last March in Behchoko.

Last August, Zoe was offered a training position at Rio Tinto's Diavik diamond mine, where he received his certification as a Level 1 underground miner.

He was hired full-time in January, becoming the thousandth student assisted by the Mine Training Society to receive full-time employment in the sector.

Zoe thanked the program for supporting young people like himself to build their skills and get hired.



Photo: Bill Braden

From left, federal Employment Minister Jason Kenney, mine training grad Conan Zoe and Aurora College president Jane Arychuk celebrate 1,000 students turned miners.

"They really helped us every step of the way, writing our resumes and going out there and looking for work, and we got hands-on training in heavy equipment," he said. "I'd just like to thank everybody for the opportunity you guys have given me. Now I've got full-time employment."

While at the college, Kenney was treated to a try of

the new underground mining simulator, with the coaching expertise of Zoe.

The simulator is one of many programming aspects obtained through a partnership with the Mine Training Society, a cooperative enterprise that has won national and territorial awards.

Aurora College president Jane Arychuk said in addition

to the underground miner courses and mineral process operator program, the college will now also be offering a new program this spring developed in partnership with the Mine Training Society to train geoscience field assistants.

"These programs, plus a wide variety of skills and service-based courses, have

They really helped us every step of the way, writing our resumes and going out there and looking for work, and we got hands-on training in heavy equipment.

Conan Zoe

Underground mine training program

helped to create a skilled workforce for the mining industry in the Northwest Territories," she said.

Kenney said the training provided by the college and society partnership will only become more valuable as mining activity increases in the territory, where skilled labour is already in shortage.

"In much of Northern Canada, we are looking at hundreds of billions of dollars in investments in mining, commodities, resources and related infrastructure, which together over the next decade or so represent hundreds of thousands of potential jobs," he said.

Economic growth in the NWT is projected to be 3 per cent in 2015 and 8 per

cent in 2016 with the advent of new mines, each requiring hundreds of employees. That's one of the reasons the federal government pledged \$5.8 million last year to the Mine Training Society, the minister said.

"We want to make sure that the Northern economy is an economy in which Northerners fully participate, making good livings, taking care of their families, giving back to their communities," Kenney said.

"We don't want to develop a Northern economy that's all about flying people in and flying them out to do the work that is here...We want the people who've been unemployed or underemployed to be first in line to accept those jobs that will be opening up in the future."

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Nutritionist shares heart healthy message with college

By MARIA CHURCH

Heart disease might not be on your average college student's radar, but taking care of your heart is a message people of every age need to consider.

That was one of the messages Fort Smith dietitian Jared Tam shared with college students at the Thebacha campus last week as part of a healthy snacks informational session for Aurora College Week.

February is Heart Month across Canada, so as a community dietitian, Tam said he's taking every opportunity to share preventative measures to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Heart disease is consistently among the three leading causes of death in the NWT and as recently as 2007 was the highest, according to Statistics Canada data.

Tam's advice for those looking to maintain a strong heart is, in short, to eat healthy and exercise.

"Nutrition and activity are the two biggest modifiable risk factors for heart disease," Tam told *The Journal* in between chatting with college students at the booth he set up in the college's foyer last week.



Jared Tam, Fort Smith's dietitian, shows an example of a heart-healthy snack during his informational session at Aurora College's Thebacha campus last week.

It seems straightforward to eat well and exercise, but many people struggle with setting "S.M.A.R.T." goals, Tam said. "People say, 'I want to lose weight,' but that's not a goal. It's not smart: S.M.A.R.T.

It's not specific, it's not measurable, it's not achievable, it's not realistic and it's not timely. That's what smart stands for," he said. "I want to exercise 30 minutes a day on a treadmill, at

8:00 p.m., while watching *Seinfeld*. That's a specific goal," Tam said. Tam's booth at the college focused on the nutritional side of a healthy lifestyle by identifying which snacks foods are

A lot of people know how to eat well, but the biggest challenge for me is trying to get people motivated enough to make the changes for themselves.

Jared Tam

the "right stuff," like fruits, vegetables and whole grain crackers, and which should be labeled "food porn," like candy, chips and pop.

"A lot of people know how to eat well, but the biggest challenge for me is trying to get people motivated enough to make the changes for themselves," he said.

Stress, busy lives and a lack of sleep are other areas that Tam said can affect heart health.

Tam, who has been working in Fort Smith for six months now, said most of his clients come to him through referrals from the health centre, though he welcomes self-referrals as well for those struggling to attain a healthy lifestyle. His services are free of charge through the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority.

Tam said he's been happy with many clients' progress thus far.

"I've already seen a lot of people change both knowledge-wise and their whole approach to physical activity," he said. "Fort Smith has never had a permanent dietitian before, so I've got a lot of people who are willing to learn."

His not-so-secret approach is that all his suggestions are simple and straightforward. "Everything I tell them I do myself," he said.

Tam also holds cooking classes once a month for those who might struggle with preparing healthy meal options. "We're making fresh, healthy and most importantly tasty meals with those foods," he said.

To learn more about Tam's services, contact the Fort Smith health centre at (867) 872-6203 or Tam directly at (867) 872-6218.

LEGEND
 FORT MCMURRAY URBAN SERVICE AREA

Fort McMurray

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MARCH 1 - OCTOBER 31

Free fire permits now are available through your local Environment and Sustainable Resource Development office. Between March 1 and October 31 fire permits are required for all burning except campfires outside the Urban Service Area of Fort McMurray. This includes:

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- Fort Mackay
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- Anzac
- East Draper Road
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- First Nations Communities

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WHERE TO GET YOUR FIRE PERMIT?

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Nineteen performers collaborate over the weekend to create a soulful 30-minute performance of dance, voice and instrumental exploration of the healing power of music. They were led by Yellowknife musician Pat Braden and music therapist Jennifer Buchanan.

Health & Wellness Wellness Conference

Wellness conference offers eclectic health spread

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG
The second annual NWT Wellness Conference in Yellowknife offered up a varied

mix of health and wellness oriented workshops over the weekend. From the healing power

of music to fitness, nutrition and an eclectic offering of naturopathic and new age remedies

to modern ailments, the three-day event at École Sir John Franklin High School worked hard to fulfill

its mission of enhancing personal and community wellness. All proceeds from the

conference went to the Native Women's Association of the NWT's Victim Services Program.



Capoeira, led by Yellowknife musician Meta Antolin, is a vigorous Brazilian cultural dance that mimics no-contact combat with gymnastics. Antolin leads audience volunteers in some simple moves on Sunday.



Dancer Melanie Kuznircy weaves a graceful flow of motion through the collaboration work at the Wellness Conference.



Grand Tea Master Sadé guides an attentive class through a lecture on the art and craft of making a perfect cup of tea.



Storyteller and musician William Greenland plays the Native American flute during a writing workshop.

Photos: Bill Braden

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SC439367

- Various Communities, NT -

The objective of this work is to define the state of traditional and scientific knowledge and known uncertainties regarding the nature and extent of surface and groundwater in the Central Mackenzie Region.

Sealed proposals addressed to the Contracts Administrator, Department of Public Works and Services, Government of the NWT, 5009 - 49th Street, Stuart Hodgson Building Floor 1, Yellowknife, NT, will be received before:

3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, MARCH 13, 2014

Documents are available electronically by emailing: pwstenders@gov.nt.ca

General inquiries to: Tanya-Louise Gray
Contract Administrator
Public Works and Services
Government of the NWT
Phone: (867) 873-7230
Email: pwstenders@gov.nt.ca

The GNWT *Business Incentive Policy* and Chapter 5 of the Agreement on Internal Trade will apply to this procurement.

For contract opportunities visit www.contractregistry.nt.ca



REQUEST FOR TENDERS

Single Asphaltic Surface Treatment Overlay CT101377

- Highways 1 and 3, NT -

The Supply and Application of a Single Asphaltic Surface Treatment Overlay.

Sealed tenders addressed to either the Transportation Office in Hay River or Yellowknife under the conditions contained within the tender documents, will be received before:

3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, MARCH 20, 2014.

Contractors may obtain tender documents from the above addresses as of February 17, 2014.

Pre-tender meeting: 1:30 pm, February 24, 2014, 76 Capital Drive, Suite 201, Hay River, NT.

General inquiries to: Charlene Lloyd
Phone: (867) 920-8001

Technical inquiries to: Gilles Roy
Phone: (867) 874-5019

The GNWT *Business Incentive Policy* and Chapter 5 of the Agreement on Internal Trade will apply to this procurement.

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REQUEST FOR TENDERS

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Gallery Lighting

CT101387

- Yellowknife, NT -

Replacement of the Gallery Lighting within the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Sealed tenders addressed to the Contracts Administrator, Department of Public Works and Services, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), 5009 - 49th street, Floor 1, Stuart Hodgson Building; to be received by:

3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, MARCH 24, 2014.

Contractors may obtain tender documents from the NWT Construction Association at (867) 873-3949.

To be considered each tender must be submitted on the forms provided and must be accompanied by the security stated in the tender documents.

Pre-tender meeting: 9:30 am, March 4, 2014, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

General inquiries to: Tanya-Louise Gray
Contract Administrator
Public Works and Services
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Phone: (867) 873-7230

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Time capsules give students a snapshot of 1998

By MARIA CHURCH

Grade 7 students from Paul William Kaeser (PWK) high school in Fort Smith were given a rare glimpse into what life could have been like for them in 1998 and, for the most part, they found it pretty funny.

Heritage Week took on a personal meaning for the Fort Smith students last week when they opened two time capsules at the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre packaged 16 years ago.

"My dad wears one of those," one student exclaimed about the faded jean jackets pictured on several 1998 pop culture magazine covers found in the time capsule.

"What are pogs?" another student asked, laughing with the rest of the class when museum director Mathieu Doucet described the collectible disc game popularized in the 1990s.

"They were super hooked in," museum administrator Diane Seals shared with *The Journal*



Photo: Maria Church

Museum director Mathieu Doucet reveals magazines found in the time capsule.

after the first capsule was opened on Monday last week.

Seals said the time capsules were actually addressed to the Grade 6 class of 2013, but they had been buried in the museum's storage room and forgotten about until she recently unearthed them. She also found one addressed to Grade 6 students in 2018.

Despite it being a year late for the 2013 capsules, the museum decided to open the capsules with the Grade 7 class, who would have had the honour last year, as a part of Heritage Week in the NWT.

Each item was carefully removed from the capsule and held up by Doucet for the students to see and discuss.

Among the items discovered was a Nintendo Power magazine, hockey cards, a floppy disk with photos and cassettes with music playlists.

Seals said a challenge now is finding the older technology to be able to access the data on the floppy disk and cassettes, a problem that likely didn't cross the minds of students in 1998.

"Within 15 years we are already struggling to figure out old technology, which is crazy," she said. "We talked about that. The students want to make a time capsule now, so what kinds of things would you put in given the fact that within 15 years technology is already outdated? Would you put in a USB clip of digital stuff or would you just put photos in? It's interesting."

Each student was also able to open a letter written to them by one of the 1998 Grade 6 students.

"It's really interesting, especially the letters," said Krizia Concepcion.

Going off the reactions she saw, Seals said Grade 6 is an ideal age to appreciate the value of a time capsule and what it means to cultural heritage.

"They're still kid enough to know what the games are, yet they're old enough to understand what's going on in the world and the current events.

It's a nice balance," she said.

The activity hopefully will spark students' interest in the value of learning about their past, Doucet said.

"You can go look at the history books and see what was happening here in 1998 - we all know the benefit of knowing history - but having that exchange from a student your age that might have the same perspective as you is a connection that really makes it enjoyable and personal," he said.

The museum hosted the Grade 7 class twice during Heritage Week, opening one capsule each day and taking the time to discuss what was happening in 1998 and how it relates to our present.

"Doing a time capsule isn't going to solve history or it's not going to make pivotal change, but it's small and fun activities that create a positive reinforcement towards the importance of history and heritage and brings them into the museum," Doucet said.

Arts & Culture Fur

Muskox hides to be marketed through pilot program

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Standing on the successes of its booming trapping industry, NWT's fur program is expanding to include muskox pelts as a new pilot project of the department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI).

ITI Minister David Ramsay announced last Wednesday that the department will be purchasing muskox hides from hunters to sell to leather and qiviut producers in southern Canada and abroad.

The muskox pilot adds to the existing Hide and Fur Procurement Program, which gives moose and caribou hide tanners a market to sell their finished hides. Those hides are then sold back to NWT craftspeople at the same price. The same is done for seal skin and beaver pelts.

The department is now planning to further expand the program to include more species of fur to be used by the territory's traditional arts and crafts sector, and intends to increase the price of seal up from its current value of \$55 per pelt.

"Here in the NWT we cannot keep up with the demand from our arts and crafts sector," Ramsay said. "It is estimated that fur bought and sold through this program last year generated almost \$350,000 for craft producers



Photo: John Blyth

Muskox gather on the airport runway in Sachs Harbour. The NWT's Hide and Fur Procurement Program is now expanding to include muskox hides to be sold to leather and qiviut producers both locally and internationally.

in the NWT. Their beautiful creations promote our cultural diversity and are part of our socially responsible and environmentally sustainable economic development strategy."

Ramsay delivered the news as part of his update on the Genuine Mackenzie

Valley Fur Program, which he called "the envy of the Canadian trapping industry" despite its small-scale approach.

The program provides NWT trappers with access to an international auction market, while allowing trappers to maximize their

earnings with training on best trapping practices and pelt preparation.

Last year's trapping season yielded the highest returns the territory had seen in over 30 years, with sales exceeding \$2.7 million. About 80 per cent of that went to China, which

currently leads the world in fur garment manufacturing.

Ramsay said demand is expected to stay strong this year, due to the growing base of hardworking trappers.

"Last year a small amount of marten branded with the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur label fetched an astronomical

\$1,300 per pelt. But this type of success would not be attainable if trappers did not first learn and invest the time in properly handling and preparing their fur," he said.

"Our trappers are the very best in their trade, and as a result, so is the fur they ship to market."

Northwords 2014 a celebration of risk-taking

'Brave New North' festival focuses on science fiction

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The brave new world imagined by legendary science fiction author Aldous Huxley may have been less than utopian in its vision of the future, but writers in the Northwest Territories are embracing the title for their upcoming celebration of literary risk-takers.

The ninth annual Northwords festival, scheduled for June 5-8, is making science fiction a focus this year under the theme of "Brave New North," which was also adopted to convey the courage espoused by the North's experimental and emerging writers responsible for launching the region out of the cliché and into the modern.

"People are taking real risks to tell the deeper stories of the North," said Northwords executive director Annelies Pool. "For a long time, a lot of the writing we had coming from here was what I would call the cliché North



International award-winning science fiction author Robert J. Sawyer headlines this year's Northwords.

- the North of winter and the explorers and the miners."

Pool said writing has become more personal, focusing on both the triumphs and

struggles faced by Northerners, such as residential school experiences.

"They need to be told and they need to be celebrated

as part of who we are," she said. "The literary culture has to reflect what's really going on here, and not all of it is absolutely wonderful. There's a lot of tough stuff going on here, and we need to acknowledge that...The tough experiences are what make us who we are."

On the sci-fi front, Canada's premier writer Robert J. Sawyer will lead the charge at this year's festival. The author is the only Canadian to join seven other writers in winning all three of the world's top awards for a science fiction novel in a single year.

Sawyer will be joined by sci-fi author and publisher Hayden Trenholm, winner of the 2008 Canadian Science Fiction Aurora Award, and author Liz Westbrook-Trenholm.

"We'd never had any science fiction element in the festival before, and we know that there's a whole community of science fiction readers

and some aspiring writers out there as well, so we thought it was a good time to reach out to them," Pool said. "We thought it would be fun."

Pool said she is still working on compiling the slate of Northern authors for the festival, and is once again encouraging the territory's closet poets, storytellers and novelists to emerge for one of the festival's notable open mic events.

"In my view, they're one of the highlights, the most important parts of our festival, and what I particularly like about our open mic nights is we schedule our guest authors and we also open it for anyone who wants to sign up," Pool said. "We don't give anyone special treatment... All authors, no matter at what point you're at in your career, whether you're highly acclaimed or published or an emerging Northern writer getting up for the first time, we treat everybody with respect as authors."

The festival's most popular event, the Blush erotica open mic night, will take its now permanent place on the schedule, as well.

"It's become a Northern tradition," Pool said. "It's almost our signature event, it's become so popular. Last year, it was amazingly funny; people were laughing. It's almost like being at a rock concert."

Also continuing from last year, Northwords will be branching out to Fort Smith for a second time. Monique Gray Smith, an Aboriginal author whose semi-fictional novels of addictions and recovery are being taught in schools and universities across Canada, will be visiting the community on the Thursday.

The festival will also feature its standard panels, workshops, mentorships and readings, still to be announced.

"It's the tried and true Northwords formula and it will all be there," Pool said.

Arts & Culture Photography

Inuvik to host NWT's first Arctic Image Festival

By MARIA CHURCH

The Town of Inuvik will be playing host to the NWT's first Arctic Image Festival celebrating photography and videography shot around the Arctic Circle.

The inaugural festival will feature the first use of PechaKucha 20x20, a worldwide trending art presentation style where 20 images are selected with 20 seconds of explanation for each.

"It is an art style and there is something interesting about it because with only 20 seconds to talk about each photo, it forces you to think about what you were trying to say when you took that image," said Lynn Feasey, curator of the festival.

More than 500 cities in the world have held PechaKucha events since its inception in 2004. Inuvik will be the first in Northern Canada.

"It's a bit of history in the making," Feasey said. "It's the first festival in the NWT and we are the first in the three territories using PechaKucha."

The festival runs Friday, Feb. 28 to Sunday, Mar. 2, and will feature exhibits from some of Canada's prestigious art photographers, including Dave Brosha, Michelle Valberg and Donald Weber.

Participants will also have a chance to take workshops to improve their photography

skills in the challenging Arctic landscape from Brosha, Valberg and keynote speaker Thaddeus Holownia, a visiting art professor and visual artist from the East Coast of Canada.

"He's an incredible photographer and he'll be bringing yet another level to the festival as part of the jury," Feasey said. "The workshops are a great opportunity for everybody attending to get some valuable knowledge."

Submissions for the inaugural Arctic image contest are divided into three categories: professional, amateur and youth. Each category allows for five submissions from photographers across the world as long as the subject of the art is the Arctic.

The idea behind holding an Arctic Image Festival in the NWT came from a group of local photography enthusiasts in Inuvik who saw a need to share the incredible local art and to offer training to budding photographers, Feasey said.

"There are a lot of photographers that live in the Beaufort Delta area that are taking some amazing pictures of the area and of the people," she said.

Photography from the Arctic Circle is a unique subject matter underexplored in popular culture, but local artists are noticing more and more artists emerging from the area along

with southern artists seeking out the North for the "vastness of the landscape and quality of the light," Feasey said.

"I wouldn't even call myself an amateur photographer, but I love photography as a medium and as an art and

for me it's the light. There is nothing like it," she said.

The festival has more than 20 people submitting images.

To learn more about the festival and to submit images, go online to <http://www.arcticimagefestival.com/>

Junior Kindergarten Right from the Start

Starting this September, the Government of the Northwest Territories is introducing free, optional, play-based Junior Kindergarten for 4-year old children in the NWT.

The program will roll out in the 29 smallest communities across the North for the 2014 - 15 school year, followed by Inuvik, Fort Smith and Hay River in 2015 - 16, and Yellowknife in 2016 - 17.

Junior Kindergarten is not about children sitting at desks in rows. It's a safe place where children can have fun and play together. It encourages curiosity, creativity and exploration - all the ideals of early childhood development.

For more information, call Rita at 867-873-7252 or visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca/features/right-start or www.facebook.com/NWTRightfromtheStart.



Green ends Olympics as Canada's top male biathlete

By MARIA CHURCH

Hay River hero Brendan Green defied the ghost of his past injury to become Canada's fastest male biathlete at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games last week and record a personal best, but told reporters this is likely his last Olympics.

Green took ninth in the men's 15-km mass start event Tuesday, the top Canadian result and his own personal best Olympic finish for what is considered biathlon's most difficult race.

Shooting eight out of 10, Green finished with a time of 43:38.3, just 1:09.2 behind Norwegian Hagle Svendsen, who took the gold medal.

The 15-km mass start is only open to the top 30 competitors and included two of Green's teammates, Nathan Smith and Jean Philippe Le Guellec. This is the first time three Canadians have been in contention for the 15-km race.

Green competed in three events in Sochi, Russia last week, which included the inaugural biathlon mixed relay where he raced alongside girlfriend and Team Canada biathlete Rosanna Crawford.

The Canadian mixed team headed into the race with



Brendan Green says this could be his last Olympic season.

medal expectations, but a fall from Canmore's Megan Imrie early on in the race had the team trying to make up lost time to finish 12th overall in the first biathlon event of its kind.

On Saturday, Green wrapped up his Sochi Olympics events with the men's relay where Team Canada placed seventh overall.

Green, who took a break

from racing for much of 2012 and early 2013 due to a crippling back injury, told *Fasterskier* the season held a lot of question marks about how his injury would affect his performance.

"But I seem to be back in my old form and racing well. And when you're racing well it's a lot of fun," the 27-year-old said. "There's a World Cup in Canmore in 2016. So I think if I'm healthy I'd like to race that, and bring my career full circle and probably end there."

Hometown hero

Green's support from Hay River was non-stop during his two-week Olympic journey.

Bob White, a founding member of the Hay River Ski Club who had been keeping the community up to date with Green's Olympic progress, told *The Journal* even community members who didn't know anything about biathlon took time to understand the sport in order to cheer for their hometown Olympian.

"Brendan has everyone back home, North of 60, cheering!" White wrote on the Hay River ski club's website. "It takes a community to raise an Olympic biathlete. Mahsi Cho!"

Photo courtesy of Canadian Olympic Committee

Canada at the Olympics

Final medal count

Canada				
The Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics				
Sport	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Freestyle Skiing	4	4	1	9
Curling	2	0	0	2
Ice Hockey	2	0	0	2
Short Track	1	1	1	3
Bobsleigh	1	0	0	1
Figure Skating	0	3	0	3
Snowboard	0	1	1	2

The Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics				
Medal standings				
Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1 Russia	13	11	9	33
2 Norway	11	5	10	26
3 Canada	10	10	5	25
4 United States	9	7	12	28
5 Netherlands	8	7	9	24
6 Germany	8	6	5	19
7 Switzerland	6	3	2	11

Images: google.ca

Danny Bayha
Vice-president of the Déljine Land Corporation

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Advance polls: in Déljine and Yellowknife **(Feb. 25 and 26)**

On Voting Day: in Déljine and Yellowknife **(Mar. 10, 11 and 12)**

Your vote matters. If you don't vote, it will be counted as a "NO" regardless of how you feel about self-government. It's important to vote so we truly know what everyone wants.

For information:

www.ourdeline.ca
1-855-428-5522 (toll-free)
Déljine Self-Government Office (Cultural Centre)
Yellowknife Self-Government Office
(upstairs from North Wright Airways at the airport)

Ratification Manager: Gina Bayha
(867) 589-8120

gbayha@hotmail.com

www.ourdeline.ca



Parents, students and coaches of the Jackrabbits program celebrate with champion skiers Sharon Firth and Anders Lenes after a chilly but sunny Saturday afternoon out on the trails at the Fort Smith Nordic Club.



Former Olympian Sharon Firth coaches some of the little ones in climbing hills on Saturday afternoon.

Sports & Recreation Skiing

Following in the tracks of the pros

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Future cross-country champions in training got a helpful hand from two world class coaches and skiers on Saturday in Fort Smith.

The community's Jackrabbits program, which teaches first-time tiny skiers the essentials of the sport, hosted former Canadian Olympian Sharon Firth and Norwegian world champion Anders Lenes on Saturday for a special workshop with the youth.

Firth and Lenes also led a learn-to-ski workshop for adults on Sunday, and joined in on the weekend's regular biathlon program, as well.

The two were in Fort Smith after spending the week touring several communities, delivering goal-setting, motivational seminars to students from the K'at'odeeche First Nation, Deninu School in Fort Resolution and Aurora College's Thebacha campus.



Norwegian world champion Anders Lenes reminds Alex Hawley, 9, to bend his knees before heading downhill.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Whati hosts huge crowd for first annual handgames tournament

The community of Whati nearly doubled in size last weekend when the town of 500 hosted its first annual handgames tournament where a whopping \$20,000 in cash was taken home by the first place team. The tournament, which ran Feb. 20 to 23 at the Whati Culture Centre & Youth Centre, was held in honour of the late elder Charlie Zoe Nitsiza, who was a well known lover of handgames. More than 40 teams were registered by late last week for the tournament that had organizers scrambling to find lodging for the flood of participants and spectators. In the end, teams were put up at the community school with more than 60 extra cots borrowed from the Canadian Armed Forces. A total of \$60,000 in cash was doled out to the top teams of the handgames tournament.



File photo

Hay River to host sixth Polar Cup pond hockey tournament

A date has been set for the sixth annual Polar Cup, Hay River's annual pond hockey tournament on the frozen Fisherman's Wharf. The tournament will see 10 rinks cleared on the river as well as an inflatable tent over the weekend of play, set for Mar. 7 to 9. Earlier this year, organizers of the Hay River Polar Cup considered cancelling this year's pond hockey tournament due to lack of interest, but when faced with the threat of cancellation, a flood of interest and volunteer support put the committee back on track and planning. Pond hockey is played four-on-four and while typically thought of as a recreational form of its indoor-rink, big brother sport, it has its own recognized rules of play that include no goalies, no raising the puck and smaller nets.

Arctic Winter Games parents' charter sells out

The charter reserved for parents of athletes in the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) who want to see their kids in action in Fairbanks, Alaska this March has completely sold out. The Air North charter that seats 120 will be leaving from Yellowknife on Mar. 15, the first day of the week-long event. The charter, while mostly filled with NWT parents, was open to those from Nunavut and Yukon as well.



Photo courtesy of Francois Paulette

Dene elder Francois Paulette lucked out recently when he ran into the Canadian women's Olympic curling team in Calgary. The team, led by skip Jennifer Jones (second from right), went on to win the gold medal at the Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

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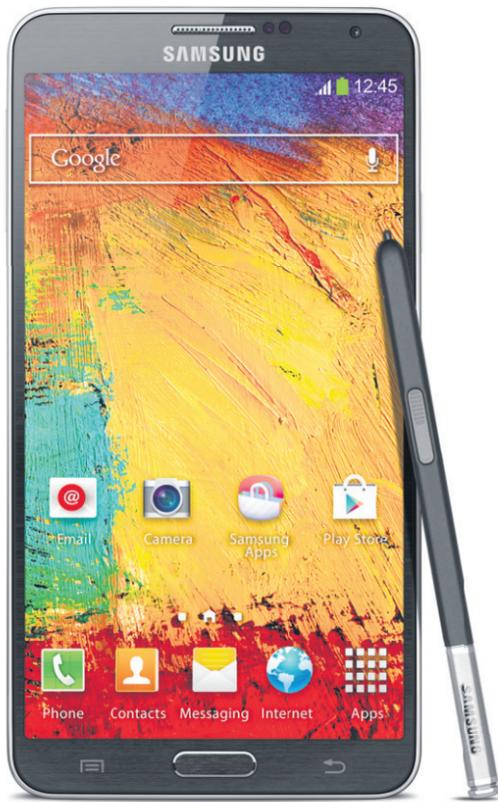
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