



Fort Chip asks oilsands to fund solar power project
Fort Chipewyan is hoping oilsands companies upstream will help fund ground-breaking solar power projects in their community. See page 3.



Sahtu MLA upset with anti-fracking groups
Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya along with the region's land corp. are accusing anti-fracking groups of "disrespecting" the Sahtu land claim. See page 7.



Earth Day event a call to action in Fort Smith

Environmentalists in Fort Smith hope their Earth Day event last weekend will encourage people to protect Mother Nature. See page 22.



Inuk actor plays climate change activist on stage
NWT-born actor Renelta Arluk stars in *Sila*, a play discussing the impacts of climate change on the Arctic. See page 27.

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From left, Aurora College graduates Denise Robert, Dolly Loreen and Dori-Ann Lefoin of the Business Administration certificate course receive bouquets to celebrate their graduation at the annual Thebacha campus convocation in Fort Smith last week. See page 14-15 for more.

Photo: Paul Bannister

'We're failing children': NWT Health Department staff, MLAs meet with auditor general

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

There is no denying that the NWT department of Health and Social Services is failing to support families and protect children, deputy minister Debbie Delancey voiced again last week following meetings on a recent report by the auditor general exposing major gaps in services.

Delancey and other departmental staff met with MLAs and representatives of the auditor general's office last week in Yellowknife to go over the long list of recommendations made in March meant to address critical problems with child protection and system-wide accountability in the NWT.

Those problems include a lack of follow-up by child protection

workers on case files, a high percentage of unscreened foster homes and a lack of department-wide reporting, among other key measures meant to prevent

what he heard at the meetings about government inaction on the issues, likening the current child protection system to an extension of the "scoop"

long, sad policy of removing Aboriginal children... from their homes, no different than what was done in the '40s, '50s and '60s

Seriousness of crisis wasn't known

While Delancey said the department was "not surprised" to learn of the systemic shortcomings, adding that many improvements have been in the works since the last legislative assembly when an internal review of child and family services was done, she noted the seriousness of many of the findings in the March report were not fully known previously.

"What I think is important is to note that some of the findings and conclusions in the current auditor general's report were not raised in the previous report by the 16th Legislative Assembly," she said.

See Department on page 2.

kids from falling through the cracks - some of which were known about for years.

Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya said he was "appalled" at

that accompanied Canada's residential schools legacy, despite good intentions.

"We continue to see that this is another form of a

- and '70s - of the residential school era," he told *The Journal*. "We did a makeover and called it child and family services."

NEWS BRIEFS

Two in hospital after Conklin drive-by shooting

Two men suffering from gunshot wounds were sent to the hospital following a drive-by shooting in Conklin, Alta. two weeks ago. Wood Buffalo police responded to a report of the shooting at 4:30 a.m. on Apr. 18 and were shortly on scene where they found two men suffering from non-life threatening gunshot wounds. According to the RCMP's initial investigation, the victims are believed to be known to the suspects. No arrests have yet been made and police say there is no danger to the public. Those with information are asked to contact Wood Buffalo RCMP by calling (780) 788-4000 or Crime Stoppers at 1 (800) 222-8477 (TIPS).

US further delays Keystone XL pipeline decision

The government of the United States has announced it is once again delaying the approval decision for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, stating that government agencies will now have until the end of May to comment on the project. The delay likely means the decision will be postponed until after the Nov. 4 mid-term elections. The Keystone XL pipeline, a project of Calgary-based oilsands company TransCanada with a proposed route from Canada's oilsands to refineries in Texas, has been awaiting US approval for the past five years.

Two Fort Resolution teens charged with arson and theft

Two 16-year old boys have been charged with multiple offences including arson and theft in connection to a fire that consumed three buildings and multiple vehicles in Fort Resolution two weeks ago. The fire occurred Apr. 19 on Highway Rd. and spread to a large workshop and two residences, causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage. The main residence was also broken into and vandalized. The two boys were charged in connection to the crime after a police investigation led officers to search two homes in the community where they say they recovered stolen property. Both teens will appear in territorial court in the next few months.



File photo

Deputy minister of Health and Social Services Debbie Delancey said the department recognizes it is failing to help children and families, but is actively working to implement changes recommended by the auditor general.

Health & Wellness Child & Family Services

Department working to help communities support families

Continued from page 1.

"Although we knew the act was out of date, we knew there were pressures, we knew there were problems,

some of the actual file audits they did that showed, for example, child protection workers not doing the adequate follow-up on foster care homes or not doing followup on implementing a plan of care agreement, or not doing the appropriate interviews with children, that was fairly new information."

Some of that information had begun to come to light over the past year and a half through internal audits, Delancey said. Other gaps in the accountability framework, identified by the auditor general in both the recent report and one made in 2011, are in the process of being solved.

Short-term fixes coming first

While the system as a whole needs major upgrades, Delancey said the alarming findings about the state of child protection in the NWT have pushed the department to find short-term solutions for the immediate crisis in the interim.

"We have to do the short-term fixes in the way we're administering the system today, because clearly it's failing children, but it's more important that we make this paradigm shift where we're supporting families to keep kids in their homes rather than having them come into care," she said.

To start, the department will be designating the CEOs of each regional health authority to oversee child and family services as an assistant director - a

measure that will make reporting and accountability much simpler and more effective. That will come this summer after each has received the necessary training.

In addition, the information system is being updated to include compliance monitoring: digital red flags that will remind protection workers to do their follow-ups and report to supervisors when work is not being done.

Because that will take time to build, Delancey said in the meantime the department is enforcing a system of quarterly reporting to begin in September.

Keeping children in their homes

Yakeleya said he wants to see more ways that communities and Aboriginal governments can work with the department to keep children - especially of Aboriginal families - in their homes.

"I'd like to see Aboriginal people in the communities working closely with the families, where they can do budgeting, family work, counselling - work with the families, keep the children with the families," he said.

In the NWT, the vast majority of children in foster care are apprehended in cases of neglect, often due to a combination of drug or alcohol addictions and poverty. Most of those are Aboriginal.

Delancey said the department recognizes the difference between children who are at risk due to outright abuse versus those at risk due to neglect, and needs

to develop new ways of addressing that difference.

"The idea is we can't treat all those situations the same. We need to find a way...to work with families so that instead of taking children out of those homes, you build on the family's strengths - a more supportive approach to families at risk, the idea being to create a circle around the family so the kid is not at risk. It requires a shift in thinking."

Whether that means new money or new ways of using money, Delancey said the department doesn't know yet. One idea is to create a sort of a "family preservation worker," like that mentioned by Yakeleya, who may not be a GNWT employee but part of an NGO or interagency.

Additionally, the department plans to continue working with communities to establish child and family services committees across the territory. While that initiative has failed, thus far, Delancey said it's time to go back to the drawing board and find ways each community and Aboriginal government wants to and can be involved in supporting families.

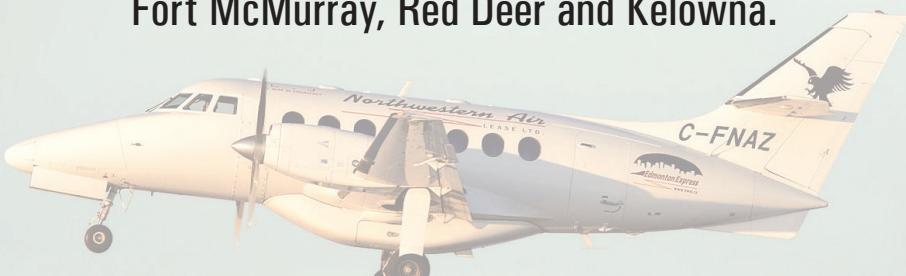
"First of all, in a small community, that's a really tough role to play - in taking away someone's child. So I think what we need to do, and we need to change the legislation or initially work outside the legislation...is to work at the community level and say, 'Where do you want to be involved in supporting families? Let's work together.'"

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Oilsands asked to finance Fort Chip solar project

ACFN getting ball rolling by installing first solar panels this spring

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

After living in the shadow of the oilsands for over four decades, people in Fort Chipewyan are hoping the giant fossil fuel industry located upstream near Fort McMurray will help shed a more positive light on the community by funding a groundbreaking residential solar energy project.

Members of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN), led by ACFN member and founder of the Fort Chipewyan Renewable Energy Society Mike Mercredi, are currently in talks with Suncor Energy about financing a solar project that would see panels installed on every ACFN household and building in the community - approximately half of the hamlet's 700 homes.

"It would save them a lot of money, for one. In a place of high cost of living and where power bills are \$300-\$400 a month, that's just money they're going to save," Mercredi told *The Journal*. "We're isolated and in an area that's not easily accessible, so fuels are costly. It's just using common sense that if we had something that didn't cost so much, maybe it will work for us."

Mercredi, who has been dreaming of bringing renewable energies to the remote northern Alberta community for years, said his motivation is not only to lower costs of living for people right now, but to install a new way of looking at energy sources - and fuel dependency - in the younger generations.

"Our generation is so used to flicking on the light and knowing that it's coming from a power generator that's powered by diesel, which is a fossil fuel. So if we can plant in the next generation's head that the light they flicked on came from the sun and from the land and not from a non-renewable resource, then hopefully that's going to change their conscious thinking about how we can do things in the future," he said.

"It's basically helping the next generation move ahead - the tools to step further, rather than us stepping in the same mud puddle."

And in a community where many people work for the nearby oilsands industry despite its impacts on the water, land and traditional livelihoods, Mercredi said demonstrating that a viable alternative exists is important.

"It's showing our independence a little bit," he said.



Mike Mercredi, an ACFN member and founder of the Fort Chip Renewable Energy Society, presents information on solar power at a community meeting in 2012.

Solar could power whole community

Mercredi conducted his own renewable energy feasibility study for the community years ago with the help of Keepers of the Athabasca, a local environmental organization, who also got the Pembina Institute on board to do an energy audit of Fort Chipewyan.

The findings showed strong potential for solar in the community.

"If we were able to switch over entirely, solar would be able to power the entire community for free," Mercredi said.

Potential also exists around small-scale hydro, wind and even biogas capture projects in the community.

According to Mercredi, wind could account for about 71 per cent of Fort Chipewyan's power annually, though an even better solution would be a run of the river, small-scale hydro turbine that would require a lot more funding to get off the ground.

Beyond that, there's potential for geothermal heating and power from biogas capture at the landfill, Mercredi said.

"There are other sources that haven't been touched, but right now we're focusing on solar because it's viable," he said.

ACFN getting ball rolling this spring

The residential solar project would be part of the First Nation's impact benefit agreement with Suncor, which has funded things like community playgrounds in the past.

Negotiating such impact benefit agreements with

industry can take years, said Mercredi, who noted the ball is now in the company's court.

That said, the community isn't about to sit around and wait to get things rolling. In his role with the renewables society, Mercredi already managed to secure a \$7,500 grant from the Alberta Eco-trust Foundation.

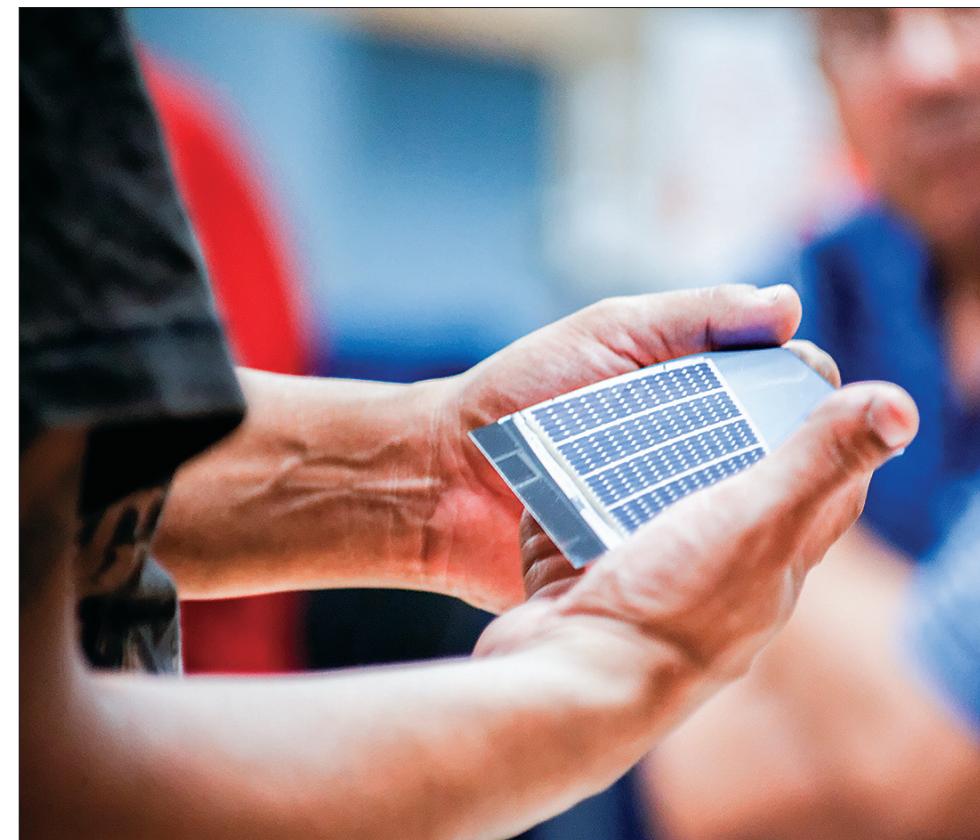
That money will go to training. Having teamed up with Randall Benson of Gridworks Energy Group, a Métis solar energy company in the McMurray area, Mercredi said around six interested community members will soon learn everything they need to know about installing solar panels.

"Part of it is also creating employment," Mercredi said. "If we get the money from Suncor to do the ACFN members' homes, then our community members will be the ones that will be doing the installation."

Mercredi said ACFN has already purchased solar panels for its Youth and Elder Lodge, to be installed in time for this summer with Gridworks, and the new elders' care facility may also follow suit.

Those could be aided by private funding from Tom Steyer, a wealthy climate change activist from California known as the "green billionaire," who was recently in Fort Chipewyan to see how his money could help the community.

If those projects are successful - and if Suncor comes on board with ACFN's proposal - Mercredi said the initiative could spread like a wave across the community, sparking similar action by



Photos courtesy of Keepers of the Athabasca

the Mikisew Cree First Nation and the Fort Chipewyan Metis, and beyond.

"I can share with them

how we all got it started, got it going, and how to get the funding," Mercredi said. "And if the idea works, there's

so many other isolated First Nations communities in Northern Canada. If it works here, it's going to work there."



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Eagle feather stalls trillion dollar industry

Did you hear that last week Chief Sharleen Gale of the Fort Nelson First Nation stood up to the BC government and served notice that the ambitious plans for a new liquefied natural gas (LNG) export industry are at risk unless they change their ways?

At a First Nations hosted conference in Fort Nelson last week intending to foster goodwill over planned LNG developments between representatives from both government and industry, Chief Gale dramatically asked government contingent to leave. It had been revealed that a few days earlier the fracking industry had been given an exemption from the normal environmental assessment process by cabinet through a secret order in council. The government representatives neglected to mention that when they conferred with First Nations in planning the LNG conference.

BC Premier Christy Clark's plans for gas exports to China and Japan include exploiting the gas-rich shale that is plentiful in the northeastern corner of the province with hundreds more fracked gas wells. Several pipelines would move the gas to the coast where a number of multinational corporations, including Chinese state energy giant CNOOC, are looking at building new LNG processing terminals.

"I respectfully ask government to please remove yourself from the room. I'm going to ask industry to stay," said an angry Chief Gale. Drummers on stage with the chief chanted as they drummed the BC government officials out of the room. Chief Gale stood at the podium holding an eagle feather above her head. Stunned, the large government contingent shuffled slowly out of the hall.

Chief Gale then lectured the industry

representatives, telling them if they wanted to extract wealth from First Nations land they are required to respect the wishes and direction of First Nations governments. She said that is the only way any development will be allowed to proceed. She then asked them to leave the meeting as well.

Reaction from First Nations across the province was swift. Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs said, "In a stunningly stupid move, the province has effectively declared war on all BC First Nations and jeopardized all LNG discussions throughout the entire province of BC."

Later that day, the BC cabinet did an about-face and reversed its order in council. The environment minister issued an apologetic statement saying they are committed to "a strong, respectful and productive relationship with First Nations."

The tactics of secret approvals for large industrial projects seem to be common practice for the current BC government. In March, the provincial ministry of Energy and Mines secretly approved a permit amendment allowing Texada Quarries to expand its coal-handling operations almost twenty-fold at Powell River north of Vancouver. It would become the final transfer point for up to 8 million tonnes annually of Asia-bound US thermal coal shipped from Wyoming. The approval took place without informing local First Nations or the regional government. There was no public consultation. Local residents are concerned that some of the coal, which contains high amounts of arsenic, often gets spilled into the water. The Shíshálh (Sechelt) First Nation says it is prepared to form a blockade

to keep coal ships from passing through its territory. Following the meeting in Fort Nelson, such hard-line actions will likely be more common.

Chief Gale is not your typical radical, but behind her charm and infectious smile the 33 year-old leader is obviously a person of conviction, willing to stand up for what she believes. She was not the first to use an eagle feather when sending a defiant message. Elijah Harper, the former Manitoba MLA and MP who passed away last year, was a key figure in the 1990 defeat of the Meech Lake Accord, then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's strategy to convince Quebec to be a willing partner in Confederation. Harper famously raised an eagle feather when he cast the dissenting vote in the Manitoba legislature that killed the initiative. It had been signed by the Prime Minister and all provincial first ministers, (dubbed "the 11 men in suits") including the Quebec premier. The deal would have embraced Quebec as "a distinct society." Harper said First Nations had not been consulted in the process and refused to support it. One man wielding an eagle feather as a symbol of power and spirit changed the fate of Canada.

LNG is already the "next big thing." The NWT Power Corp. plans to use it to displace fuel oil to generate power in many Northern communities - sourced from BC and hauled north by truck. BC Premier Christy Clark's big plans to export it to China and Japan are projecting a trillion dollar industry that would bring much needed economic prosperity and jobs to BC, generate wealth for investors and pay off the massive provincial debt. It seems the power of an eagle feather may stand in the way.



Ria Coleman, left, holds up a mask she made during a mask making workshop in Fort Smith last week, while "professor of masketry" and workshop instructor Douglas Witt tries his own on for size. The Fort Smith "masketeers" were hard at work fashioning their paper machete faces during the two-day workshop put on by the Aurora Arts Society.

WEATHER

Inuvik



Weekly Norms:
High 9°C Low 2°C

Yellowknife



Weekly Norms:
High 6°C Low -5°C

Hay River



Weekly Norms:
High 8°C Low -3°C

Fort Smith



Weekly Norms:
High 11°C Low -2°C

Continuing Cold Lake oil spills a shame for Alberta

It is a sad day, not just for Cold Lake First Nations, but also for the citizens of Alberta. Over one million barrels of oil have been released into the environment as a result of the disastrous spill at Canadian Natural Resources Limited's (CNRL) Primrose South pad site. Both CNRL and the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) admit they do not know the cause of the ongoing, uncontrollable release of bitumen into the lands, lake and groundwater. The AER refuses to hold an inquiry or a hearing to determine the cause of the catastrophic spill or identify solutions to stop the spill and ensure it does not happen again. Instead the AER decided last week to allow CNRL to continue steaming operations in the Territory of Cold Lake First Nation.

This should be of concern to all Alberta. Not only is CNRL destroying the natural heritage of our lands but also giving the oil industry, Alberta and Canada a bad reputation. The AER is complicit in allowing this to happen by foregoing all good reason in continuing to accommodate CNRL. CNRL has had four other major spills in their Primrose operations area during

the same time period and has one of the worst track records for spills in Alberta.

All Albertans should be concerned, as the province's ability to transport oil in a safe, environmentally responsible way are being scrutinized. People are watching to see if the AER will live up to its mandate of providing for "safe, orderly and environmentally responsible development of Alberta's energy resources." What they learn will inform their decisions about allowing Alberta's oil to be transported into their lands, yet just when the spotlight is on Alberta, the AER has lost all credibility on the national and international stage.

copy of CNRL's application to resume steaming activities.

We then proposed to the AER that once we met with CNRL to understand this very technical application we would describe any concerns we had to the AER. We proposed doing

The AER has lost all credibility on the national and international stage.

so within two weeks of having a meeting with CNRL and made ourselves available for a meeting immediately. CNRL deferred this meeting until May 6. When we met with the AER representative on Apr. 17 to arrange for a meeting date, we were handed a copy of their approval for CNRL to resume steaming operations. Cold Lake First Nations (and the public) have a right to be involved, yet as a result of their actions, it appears that the AER and CNRL colluded to ensure this would not happen, an unfair process.

Where does this leave us today? It is no secret that the

AER and CNRL do not agree on the cause of the leak from the underground bitumen pool. Likely the caprock has been fractured, which means bitumen will continue to flow into our groundwater. For years our Peoples have been promised that the caprock will never be compromised. We have been present when technicians and oil company executives have stood up in meetings giving this assurance over and over again. They were wrong. But what makes their mistake worse is the AER's willingness to accommodate CNRL continually, while our Peoples and Albertans are disallowed a say. The AER has announced there will be no public inquiry, not even a hearing during which the public and affected parties can hear the evidence and participate. No cause identified, no solution, no hearing and inadequate information provided to the public. This is an unfair process that smells of political interference and the regulator's bias to help CNRL. All Albertans should be concerned and ask: What is happening behind the scenes that we don't know about?

We share the same desire for a fair process, accountability

and transparency, so that we can have a healthy environment and economy. We call on the Alberta Energy Regulator to immediately suspend their approval of CNRL's Feb.

4, 2014 application and to hold a hearing to determine a cause and a solution to this ongoing catastrophic oil spill.

Cold Lake First Nations

CORRECTION

In the Apr. 22 story "Award winning Imbe camp returns this summer," it was incorrectly stated that Chief Jimmy Bruneau warned the Tlicho people to be "strong like two people" in the late 1800s. In fact, Bruneau's warnings were made in the 1970s and were later articulated as "strong like two people" by elder Elizabeth Mackenzie. *The Journal* apologizes for this error.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Northern Journal 2014

MGM shut-down opens up NWT oil leases



MGM Energy Corp. will be closing its doors forever within the next two months, but who will be taking over its shares – and leases in the Northwest Territories – has yet to be determined.

Carol Collins: Who will be the next grandfathered lease, that is not right. That is how they keep development going on a permit. Pine Point mines were grandfathered and guess who owns it Peggy Whitty from Giant Mines. I do not agree with this!

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ARCHIVES

15 Years Ago...

Métis agreement

The government of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNA) signed a seven-year framework agreement last week. The signatories were Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Dave Hancock, MNA president Audrey Poitras and representatives of the province's six Métis Zone Regional councils.

Issue: April 27, 1999

20 Years Ago...

Another break-in at PWK

Students at PWK High School arrived for classes last Monday morning, only to be greeted by graffiti splattered on interior walls, lockers and doors. PWK principal Ken Malanchuk says the vandals must have entered the school at some time late Sunday night or early Sunday morning.

Issue: April 27, 1994

30 Years Ago...

Inuvik force base under review by feds

The Canadian forces base in Inuvik may be closed down. Then again, it may be expanded. After 20 years as a communications research station, the department of National Defense is assessing the role of the Northern base. General Dodd, the chief of Northern Command, is concerned about the prospect of CFB Inuvik being moved.

Issue: April 26, 1984



White Girl Yamoria, A Legend: Part 3 of 3

Shyly everyone crowds in to see what we will do.

A few words in Slavey to each other, "They are really white, funny eyes, are they blind? (We have blue eyes). Their eyes must be weak like that, so strange a colour." "Like water, can they see anything with weak eyes like water?" I say something back in Slavey. "Oh, she can talk, maybe they are people, too." A call from the lakeshore; a canoe has come in with a load of fish from a net. All kids rush in that direction at a full gallop.

There is a whale of a lake trout in the bottom of this canoe. One of the men finds a wheelbarrow to haul the fish. This lake trout was too long for the wheelbarrow. Finally the fish is positioned half inside, mostly outside. The tail and head flop over the ends of the wheelbarrow, the belly fills the middle.

My baby brother is a little guy; this fish is lots bigger

than he is. At this stage in his life he does not like fish, even a little bit. Everyone decides that we need to figure out how much bigger the fish is than my brother. Deh, (come) come quick, this fish, it's way bigger than that white kid! Everyone is in on the action now, they are all teasing Kurtis.

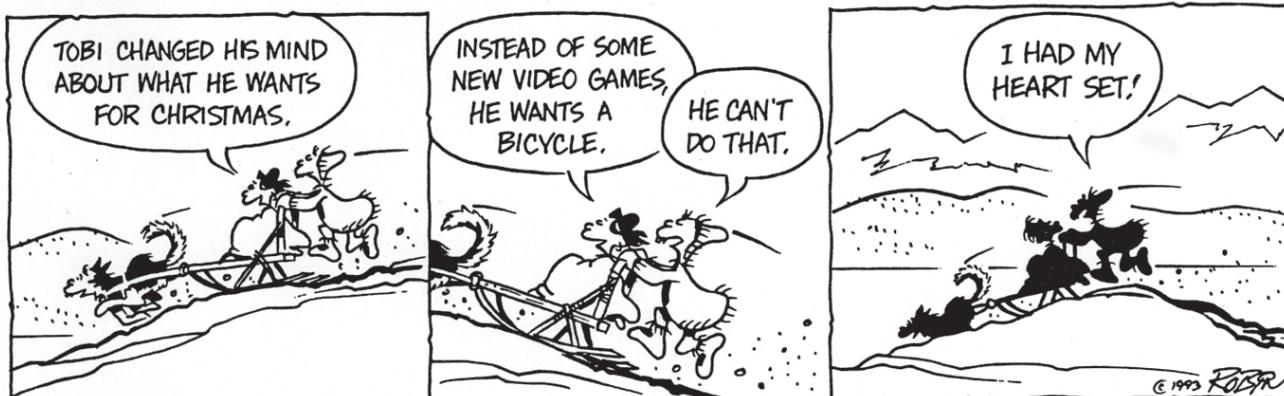
They are pretending that they will put Kurtis into the wheel barrel to take the measurement. Kurtis is having no part of this; this is not funny to him. He can run like the wind even at the age of two and so he did. He headed for the bush, wanting no part of this damned fish. Everyone is watching him in amazement! Look, look at that baby run. He was two years old at the time, but in size about as big as a large baby. And he was gone; he became legend, the baby that could outrun the kids.

The organ for the church is balanced in Francis' canoe. We

are two 45 gallon drums of fuel lighter than when we started. Ropes secure the organ for its ride down river and through the St. Charles Rapids. Someone passes us a bunch of dry fish for the trip. I make my nest in the bow of the boat again. The skies are blue, the swallows are dipping and diving, catching pesky mosquitoes. One hundred miles by river to get home tonight, but in this land of Midnight Sun there is no night in the summertime. The kicker is singing me to sleep. What else could you ever want?

P.S. My friend Charlie Gaudet left us on Monday morning, Mar. 14, 2011, for his next great adventure. Fort Norman was his home. We were both supposed to go home and have tea and bannock together. We will have to do this later. Goodbye my friend, see you soon. Charles Gaudet Sept. 21, 1952 to Mar. 14, 2011.

MUKLUK



Sahtu government rebukes 'disregard' by Imperial

Federal, territorial governments back local board's jurisdiction

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The Sahtu regional government has received backing from the federal and territorial governments in its attempts to force Imperial Oil to follow the local land and water board's rules for cleanup and remediation.

Both federal and territorial officials added their support to the Sahtu Secretariat Inc.'s (SSI) rebuke of Imperial for attempting to evade rules requiring the company to provide a security deposit guaranteeing its financial ability to eventually clean up the site.

Imperial, which has drilled oil in the Norman Wells area for over 70 years, is currently applying for a final 10-year extension to its water license that expires at the end of August.

Late last month, Imperial wrote to the Sahtu Land and Water Board (SLWB) expressing its reticence to recognize rules established by local authorities, claiming the National Energy Board has jurisdiction over Imperial's Norman Wells operations, as per an agreement signed in 1944, and not the SLWB.



Imperial Oil was chastised by the federal, territorial and regional government for not obeying the rules of the local regulatory board earlier this month with respect to its nearly 80 year-old Norman Wells oil operations.

"A confidential agreement has been entered into between the Government of Canada and Imperial Oil whereby funds are withdrawn from the revenue stream due to Her Majesty, and held in trust, to cover Her Majesty's share of

the abandonment liability," states the letter in regards to remediation.

Earlier this month, the SSI wrote a scathing reply, calling Imperial's assertions "troubling" and inconsistent with the spirit of the Sahtu Dene

and Métis comprehensive land claim agreement.

"The Norman Wells operations must be managed and regulated in accordance with contemporary standards in a transparent and public process," wrote SSI

chair Ethel Blondin-Andrew. "The SSI have deep concerns that Imperial maintains that the Board has no authority with respect to key aspects of the Norman Wells operations, such as remediation and collection of security."

She added that disregard for local authorities under an established land claim - intended to be interpreted "generously," as directed by the Supreme Court of Canada - is out of line.

"For too long, the Norman Wells operations have operated without any local review or assessment of proposed environmental affects (sic) or any accountability to the Sahtu and local residents. Our views and concerns have been typically disregarded. This is unacceptable," Blondin-Andrew wrote.

Both federal and territorial ministers echoed the assertion that SLWB rules, established as a result of the land claim, must be followed.

"The SLWB was created to breathe life into the intentions, both express and implied, in the Sahtu Agreement and the legislation. The SLWB is therefore

responsible for regulating both land and water in the Sahtu region," reads the reply from the GNWT.

"The GNWT respectfully submits that the SLWB's jurisdiction is broad enough to consider abandonment and reclamation at the Norman Wells Operations."

The federal department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development replied similarly, stating that its agreement with Imperial does not take precedence over NWT legislation or "oust the jurisdiction of the Board (SLWB) with respect to the Norman Wells facilities."

Though the territorial government inherited authority over Crown lands in the NWT on Apr. 1, the devolution agreement leaves regulatory control over the Norman Wells Proven Area with the National Energy Board.

The federal government, which owns one third of the Norman Wells projects, collects a 5 per cent royalty from the wells. As per the devolution deal, that money will then be paid back to the GNWT.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

The Property Assessment Notices for the **2014** tax year were mailed **Friday February 28, 2014** to all Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo property owners.

If you have any concerns regarding any information on the Property Assessment Notice or you did not receive your Property Assessment Notice, please call **780.743.7900** or **1.800.973.9663** and arrange to speak with an Assessor. Assessors will be available during regular business hours – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

If a discussion with an Assessor does not resolve your concern, an Assessment Review Board Complaint Form (accompanied by the appropriate filing fee) may be filed with the Clerk of the Assessment Review Board. For more information regarding the complaint process please call **780.743.7001** or **1.800.973.9663** or visit www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/arb. The deadline to submit an Assessment Review Board Complaint Form is 4:30 p.m. on **May 2, 2014**.

Council will set the 2014 tax rates in May. Property Taxes are determined by applying the appropriate tax rate to the assessed value shown on your Property Assessment Notice. Property Tax Notices will be mailed in early June.

$$\text{ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE} \times \text{PROPERTY TAX RATE} = \text{PROPERTY TAX BILL}$$

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT NOTICE CAREFULLY.

For more information, check out our web site at
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Politics Regulatory

GNWT makes first regulatory approvals

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

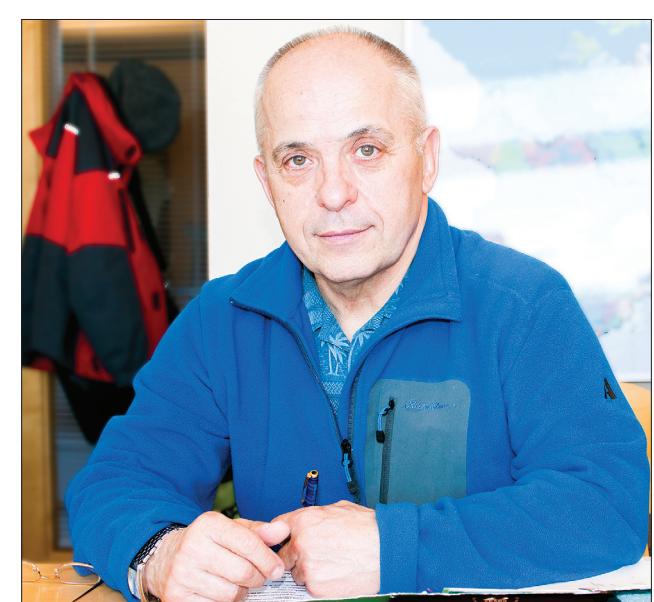
The territorial government celebrated another inaugural moment in devolution last week with the approval of two water licence amendments.

Environment and Natural Resources Minister Michael Miltenberger signed off on amendments to two Type A water licences on Thursday, marking the first time the territorial government has exercised its newfound authorities over lands, water and resources, inherited from the federal government on Apr. 1.

Miltenberger remarked on the "thorough and timely manner" in which the amendments – received on Apr. 4 and 10 – proceeded through the NWT regulatory regime.

"This demonstrates the success of Northern control over Northern resources and our capacity for undertaking these responsibilities," he said in a statement last week.

The first amendment was granted to the North American Tungsten Corp., whose mining and milling operations at the CanTung Mine site near the Yukon border in the Mackenzie Mountains



Environment and Natural Resources Minister Michael Miltenberger signs off on the first water licences post-devolution.

required permits to establish a permanent wastewater treatment facility and discharge treated water to the Flat River.

The second went to Miramar Northern Mining Ltd. for its defunct Con Mine in Yellowknife, which allows for changes to cover designs being constructed during the ongoing closure and reclamation of the site.

Previously, such amendments would have to have been approved by the federal minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. New legislation, mirroring federal laws, gives the government of the Northwest Territories regulatory powers.

Letters approving the amendments have since been directed to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

Anti-fracking groups 'disrespecting' Sahtu land claim

MLA, land corp. criticize Yellowknife interests in Canol play

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Yellowknife-based groups opposed to fracking in the Sahtu region need to butt out and leave decisions to the management regime set up through the region's land claims, according to local land corporations and the region's MLA who responded to calls for a public review last week.

A letter writing campaign spurred by a coalition of Ecology North, Alternatives North and the NWT Council of Canadians kicked off earlier this month in response to an application by Husky Energy to horizontally drill and hydraulically fracture up to four exploratory wells this winter near Norman Wells.

The letters piling up at the Sahtu Land and Water Board (SLWB) office, including one from Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley, call for a full environmental assessment of the proposal, which if approved would mark the second time horizontal fracking has occurred in the territory.

In the past, referrals to environmental assessment at the exploratory phase have tended to fizzle out oil and gas development due to financial uncertainty.

Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya said it is not the place of people living outside the Sahtu to attempt to control the region's destiny, especially without providing an economic alternative to the people living there who struggle with unemployment and want to end their dependence on government.

"You have people outside the region telling us how to live our lives, and not respecting the people in the Sahtu - not respecting the land claims," he said. "The Sahtu people have the ability to create their own economic freedom...We certainly don't poke our nose in other regions."

Yakeleya said the co-management regime established through the Sahtu Dene and Métis comprehensive land claim agreement, aided by the recently completed land use plan for the region, has jurisdiction and is more than capable of making sound decisions when it comes to industrial development, regulation and negotiating impact benefits for the people.

"We have the mechanisms in place; it's not like the wild west, chuck wagons and cattle. We've got terms and conditions that were set by the people in the Sahtu," he said. "That's why we have the



Natural gas flares to atmosphere at the ConocoPhillips fracking site near Norman Wells last winter. Concern that the project did not go to environmental assessment has many groups calling for a public review of a new application by Husky Energy.

opposed to fracking in the region.

"There is so much opposition, and only a little handful of leaders on the Tulita Land and Financial Corp. made the decision for us," she told *The Journal* earlier this year. "They own businesses and stand to benefit, so they were in a conflict of interest. This is too big a decision for them to make for us."

Council of Canadians co-chair Lois Little said making it a Yellowknife vs. Sahtu issue misses the point.

"This is not about who lives where or about people making decisions for others. It is about asking for a process where everyone has a voice, research can be evaluated and the best decision can be made," she said. "We all have a stake in democratic processes and in protecting water, our life source."

Public comment on the Husky application closed on Monday, Apr. 28. The Sahtu Land and Water Board now has until May 19 to decide if it will approve the application or refer it to environmental assessment.

land claim: so we could do business in the way that Sahtu people feel they have some sense of control and ownership and decision-making authorities."

That sentiment was echoed last week by the Tulita District Land Corp. (TDLC), representing Dene and Métis land claims groups in Norman Wells and Tulita, which told the SLWB it "fully supports the exploration of this world class shale oil resource" on Sahtu lands.

who live outside of our territory, will control our economic destiny," Hall said.

Discontent within region

Not all opposition to fracking is coming from outside the region. Yakeleya tabled a petition earlier this year in the legislature signed by 120 residents calling for a regional vote to determine whether or not the controversial drilling practice should be permitted in the area.

are related to people who own businesses that could benefit from oil and gas development.

That's the view of Sheila Karkagie, a Tulita resident who authored the petition

You have people outside the region telling us how to live our lives, and not respecting the people in the Sahtu - not respecting the land claims. The Sahtu people have the ability to create their own economic freedom...We certainly don't poke our nose in other regions.

Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya

"It is our inherent right to develop resources in our ancestral lands," stated a press release from Land Corp. CEO Richard Hall last week.

Hall said local organizations are working with territorial and federal governments along with industry to ensure development is being done responsibly with respect for the environment and economic growth for the people.

"The TDLC, while it respects the opinions of those

While Yakeleya noted such discontent exists, he said it needs to be directed locally through the land claim organizations, including the review boards.

"This is a decision that was made by land claim corporations and they agreed to open the land for nominations...for exploring for energy," he said.

Still, the most vocal critics of fracking in the Sahtu say the land corporations are biased and at a conflict of interest, since many of the directors

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Alberta regulator allows company to resume oilsands production near site of ongoing leaks

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Alberta's energy regulator is allowing Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. (CNRL) to resume oilsands extraction at some of its operations near Cold Lake where millions of litres of bitumen have been oozing to the surface uncontrollably for nearly a year.

The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) approved CNRL's application to "modify steaming" at its Primrose and Wolf Lake sites, though the suspension imposed in 2013 remains in place at the Primrose East and Primrose South locations.

"In July, the AER completely restricted steaming operations in the four areas that have bitumen releasing to the surface. Those restrictions remain in place," AER president and CEO Jim Ellis said in a press release. "We also directed CNRL to modify steaming operations within the rest of its Primrose site, which included reduced volumes and increased



Photo courtesy of CNRL

CNRL works to contain bitumen leaking into a lake at its Primrose operations near Cold Lake. The leaks, which began last May, are ongoing.

monitoring. This application is a direct response to that request."

The approval includes requirements that CNRL conduct no steaming within 1 km of the site where bitumen

continues to flow to the surface, and that the company adopt modified steaming operations, which includes lower injection volumes.

Prior to using steam injection, the company is asked to

review all existing wellbores in the vicinity and provide a risk assessment and mitigation plan to address any potential wellbore failures.

CNRL is also required to ensure monitoring protocols

are in place to trigger an enhanced response to "potential issues."

The AER continues to investigate the four bitumen leaks at Primrose and Wolf Lake, where bitumen was first discovered seeping to the surface in May 2013. A separate request from CNRL to resume drilling at those sites was denied by the AER in March.

CNRL was issued a cleanup and remediation order by the Alberta government last September, four months after the company reported bitumen surfacing in four separate areas on its Primrose and Wolf Lake sites.

While a cause has yet to be determined, the company maintains the leaks are the result of wellbore failures, though some independent scientists and environmental groups have suggested the leaks may be due to damage to the caprock caused by steam injected underground

at overly high pressures for long periods of time.

Though Ellis said CNRL's application met all the technical requirements for approval, Greenpeace oilsands campaigner Mike Hudema said allowing the company to continue its in situ oilsands mining while bitumen is still leaking shows the AER has "no teeth."

"It's unbelievable that they would allow CNRL to start injecting high-pressure steam within 1.5 km of where bitumen is still leaking into a lake and has been for the last 10 months," he told *The Journal*.

"The AER needs to reverse its decision and reject all new steaming applications until its investigation is complete, the spills are stopped and solutions to prevent them are fully identified. Allowing CNRL to re-steam before then just shows CNRL's profit margin is more important to the Alberta government than the health of its environment or its communities."

Politics First Nations

First Nations question Teck oilsands review process

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

First Nations downstream from Teck Resources' proposed Frontier oilsands mine are expressing a lack of faith in the effectiveness of the

joint provincial and federal review process as public comment on the draft agreement between the company and the regulator came to a close on Apr. 17.

Both the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) and Fort McKay First Nation submitted expressions of concern to the joint review panel late last month, calling into question the scope of the review and the weight of the panel's following recommendations.

"While the scope of the panel's mandate is sufficient

to capture some of the key impacts of the Frontier mine on Aboriginal communities, we believe the real issue is how Alberta and Canada addresses the recommendations and findings of the panel," states a letter from Daniel Stuckless, environment and regulatory manager for Fort McKay.

"The joint review process can provide valuable information and recommendations to government. However, in our experience neither Alberta nor Canada follows up on the recommendations made by Joint Review Panels. This means it is questionable whether there is any value to First Nations participating in Joint Review Panel assessments," Stuckless said.

Those concerns could be remedied, Stuckless said, by requiring the provincial and federal governments to submit mitigation and accommodation measures for the Frontier mine project as part of the review process.

Representatives from ACFN and the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) have filed numerous concerns about the review process over the past two years, citing disorganization and inadequate information on the part of Teck as hindering their ability to effectively participate in the review.

According to ACFN, delays in responses from the company left the two First Nations very little time to

respond with followup questions or comments.

Several submissions from ACFN to the joint review panel express further frustration that Teck's application lacks sufficient information on impacts to the environment and Aboriginal rights, from traditional land use to groundwater, wildlife, wetlands and air quality, among others.

"In addition to the gaps relating to the biophysical environment and socio-economic conditions, there remain very concerning gaps relating to ongoing adverse impacts to traditional land use and culture and how the project may add to those adverse impacts," states a joint letter on Mar. 27 from Lisa King and Melody Lepine, ACFN and MCFN's directors of industry relations, respectively.

Both reiterated their requests for "full and timely" responses by Teck to their information requests prior to the start of the hearing process.

The Frontier project would mine approximately 240,000 barrels of bitumen per day from a site approximately 110 km north of Fort McMurray located on the west side of the Athabasca River, and would include two open pits, an ore plant, a bitumen upgrader, tailings facilities and more.

The project would stretch north of the Firebag River, a zone declared by ACFN to be off limits to further oilsands development.

SAFETY IN BEAR COUNTRY

Spring is here! With the melting snow and warmer weather bears are starting to come out of hibernation.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources advises the public to treat bears with respect and take precautions when travelling or camping in bear country.

For more information on bear safety, contact your local ENR office or visit www.enr.gov.nt.ca

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Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources



Chinese companies increase stake in oilsands

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

One week after Athabasca Oil Corp. announced its complete sale of the Dover project to PetroChina, news emerged last Wednesday that China's national oil company CNOOC would be advancing its takeover of Nexen Inc. by replacing the company's chief executive.

A news release issued last week announced that former Nexen CEO Kevin Reinhart, who negotiated the company's sale to CNOOC for \$15.1 billion last year, would be "departing" the Calgary-based subsidiary and would be replaced by Fang Zhi, an executive vice-president based in Beijing.

That decision was made by CNOOC, who did not respond to requests for comment.

CNOOC's president Li Fanrong originally said Nexen's management and staff would be retained following the buyout in July 2012, which sparked controversy with respect to how much foreign, state-owned interest in Canadian resources should be allowed.

The Conservative federal government introduced a "net benefit" test under the Investment Canada Act in 2012, preventing foreign national companies from buying up major

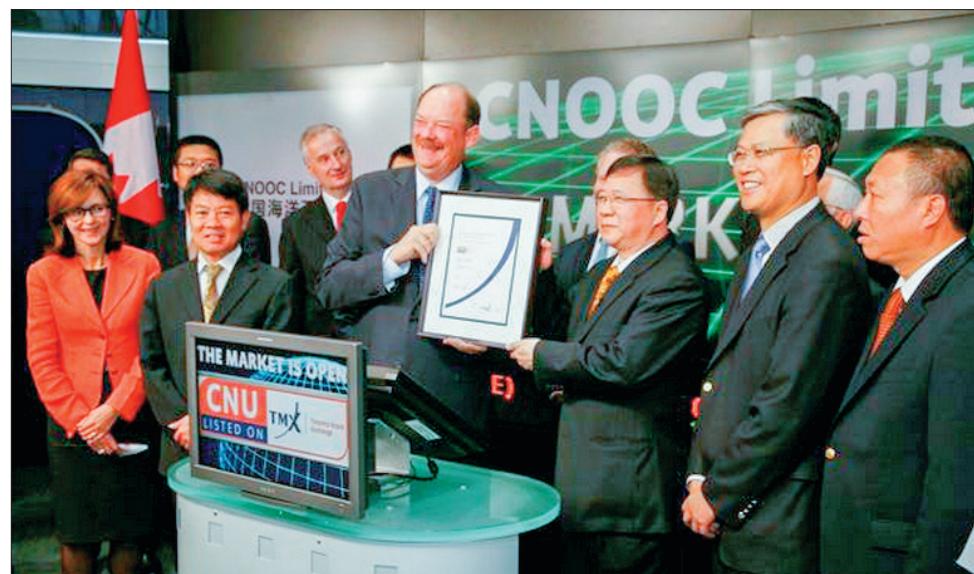


Photo: Nexen Energy

China's national oil company, CNOOC Ltd., begins trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange in September 2013 following its takeover of Nexen Energy.

control in the oilsands unless in "exceptional circumstances."

CNOOC's purchase was ruled as being of "net benefit" to Canada in December 2012 by the federal government, which indicated the partnership deal would bring capital to the sector.

Reinhart was with Nexen for 20 years, becoming chief financial officer in 2009 and stepping in as interim CEO in January 2012.

The press release stated that Fang would bring "considerable operational and technical depth to the position" based on his 30-year career with CNOOC, which would enable him to "lead Nexen to collaboratively deliver results for CNOOC Ltd."

According to the release, Fang has been directly involved in all aspects of CNOOC's Nexen takeover for the past year.

"Nexen is well positioned to create significant value for CNOOC," Fang said in the release. "Our portfolio of assets is world-class."

Nexen has an interest in more than 300,000 acres in the Athabasca oilsands. Its largest interest is in the Long Lake steam-assisted gravity drainage (SAGD) project, which began production in 2008 and holds the potential to produce 72,000 barrels of bitumen per day.

Analysts have linked the change in management to operational disappointments at Long Lake, where CNOOC has a 35 per cent stake. Though the project ended 2013 with a nearly 6,000 barrel-per-day increase in production, at 41,886 barrels per day it continues to sit well below its target despite ongoing investments.

The company is also developing a stand-alone SAGD project in the Kinosi area, south of Long Lake, and holds interests in several other projects in the region, including a 7.23 per cent stake in Syncrude's oilsands mine, a 12.39 per cent equity interest in Canadian oilsands company MEG Energy, and a 25 per cent working interest in Japan Canada Oil Sands' Hangingstone project, which is planned to start production in 2016.

Second full buyout by PetroChina

Chinese ownership in the oilsands continues to expand with the recent announcement by Athabasca Oil Corp. that it will be selling its remaining stake in the Dover oilsands project to its partner, PetroChina.

The \$1.32-billion sale, conditional on final regulatory approval of the 250,000 barrel-per-day project, will give the state-owned Chinese company its second fully owned oilsands project in the province.

PetroChina secured a 60 per cent interest in both Athabasca's Dover and MacKay River SAGD thermal oilsands projects in 2010 for \$1.9 billion.

That sale - and the option to sell the remaining 40 per cent to PetroChina - came two years before Canada's decision to change the national investment act.

According to Athabasca president and CEO Sveinung Svarte, the sale was triggered by Alberta Environment's decision to give final approval to the Dover project last Wednesday.

Cabinet approval and a settlement with the Fort McKay First Nation, which first opposed the project, in March helped seal the deal.

Athabasca's joint venture operating company in charge of Dover, Brion Energy, will become part of PetroChina when the sale is complete.

Athabasca will receive approximately \$1.23 billion after \$85 million in closing adjustments following the sale to Phoenix Energy Holdings Ltd., PetroChina's subsidiary in Canada.



Photo: Bill Braden

Super soccer kicks it up in Yk

Three Aklavik girls beam after scoring against their Fort MacPherson opponents during the Super Soccer tournament in Yellowknife over the weekend. The team won the \$1,000 Diavik Diamond award for the Outstanding team in the under-12 girls competition. Created in 1993, Super Soccer has emerged as one of the NWT's premier annual sports tournaments. It is staged over two weekends in late April for school and adult soccer leagues. Approximately 1,300 youth (100 teams) from 25 schools across the North flood into the city for the junior event.

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Inuvik revs up for tourism season with new staff

By NATHALIE HEIBERG-HARRISON

Inuvik is ramping up for a huge tourist season this summer, and laying the groundwork for more sustained tourism in the region.

For the first time ever, the economic development and tourism department at the Town of Inuvik has three full-time staff, including manager Jackie Challis, assistant Heather Moses and Kaylie-Anne Hummel, the recently-hired tourism and marketing coordinator from Mayo, Yukon.

In addition, a group of tourism stakeholders continues to meet every month to share plans, ideas and coordinate activities. The group includes representatives from Parks Canada, the GNWT, the Town of Inuvik, Up North Tours, the Inuvialuit Regional Corp., the Inuvik Community Greenhouse, the Inuvialuit Community and Economic Development Organization and local MLAs' offices.

"A couple years ago we made a concerted effort to pull the group together," Challis said. "Everyone in this room is doing so many things. I come away from these meetings and I'm like, 'This is why we do what we do.'"

RM of Wood Buffalo protests education tax hike

Residents facing 87 per cent tax increase from 2012

By MARIA CHURCH

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is asking the Alberta government to reconsider changes to education taxes that will see an increase of almost 18 per cent from last year shouldered on Wood Buffalo residents and businesses.

On behalf of the municipal council, Mayor Melissa Blake sent a letter of protest to Alberta's Minister of Education, Jeff Johnson, detailing the council's objection to the hike in taxes, which will hit the residential category hardest with average single family homeowners paying nearly \$750 more in property education tax from rates in 2012 - an average increase of 87 per cent.

The jump in tax requisition for Wood Buffalo is the result of the province's decision to remove the cap on market-based assessment, which was designed to buffer communities where property values are rapidly increasing. That decision was made in 2013 with a plan to phase it in over two years.

"It was dropped on us last year without any forewarning, to be quite honest with you. Last year we saw a very



Photo courtesy of RMWB

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Mayor Melissa Blake says the education tax hike must be matched by a much-needed increase in education funding from the province.

significant increase in requisition from the province. They announced it in their budget last year and basically sent out the bill the next day," Brian Moore, director of tax assessment for RMWB, said in an interview last week.

Moore said residents in the booming oilsands municipality will now pay the highest education taxes in the province

with no increase in education spending in the region.

According to Blake, the Wood Buffalo region has been struggling with a lack of education and infrastructure dollars for years, unable to keep up with a burgeoning population quickly rising from the flood of employment opportunities with oilsands and servicing companies.

"When we correlate what this region contributes in terms of their new rates on the education per proportion that we send to the province, we do not see that returning in the same proportion back to the region...even though our education systems certainly struggle with their budgets; especially being in the location that we are and having increasing student population. It's a bit of double whammy," she said.

According to Moore, the province is now collecting more revenue than ever from RMWB and putting it towards education spending in major cities like Calgary and Edmonton.

"Taking this revenue out of this region and actually investing it in municipalities south of here does not make sense, particularly when the entire provincial economy depends upon the success of this municipality," he said.

"Fort McMurray is already an expensive place to live, so when you start adding in additional housing costs like this without any forewarning to the taxpayers, it makes the ownership of housing much more difficult," Moore said.

Greg Weadick, acting minister of Municipal Affairs - the department in charge of provincial tax collection - told *The Journal* the cap removal has brought all Alberta properties to a fair market value so that "nobody was subsidizing someone else."

Wood Buffalo is one of four municipalities in Alberta hit hardest by the cap removal because of higher than average home values, along with Chestermere, Banff and Waterton.

Weadick said Wood Buffalo has the highest education costs in the province, around 30 per cent higher than in Edmonton and Calgary,

and will now be paying an equal market share into the provincial education budget.

Wood Buffalo lashes out

The RMWB protest letter, sent on Apr. 11, was the result of a municipal council meeting resolution to protest the tax hike in early April, which passed unanimously.

The letter accuses the provincial government of "avoiding serious discussions" with local school boards about the

need for new schools to meet a growing demand on the current educational services.

The letter requests the Alberta government extend the two-year phase-in of the tax cap removal. It also requests a meeting with Johnson as well as the regional MLAs Don Scott and Mike Allen to hear the municipality's concerns.

Blake said the council received an almost immediate response from the education minister agreeing to a meeting, but she's not getting her hopes up.

"The willingness to meet doesn't necessarily mean things are going to change in the situation, it's just that if we are able to advocate for our region then we are certainly pleased to be able to do that."

Weadick said his department, along with the department of Education, is fully intending to meet with the RMWB council to discuss their concerns.

"We don't want to see them adversely affected. We want to make sure the taxation is fair so that anyone with a (high) home value does also pay a fair share compared to anyone else," he said.

An open letter to parents on education in the Northwest Territories

There has been much debate about Junior Kindergarten and as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment as well as a father of five children, I would like you to consider the following points as you have a conversation with your neighbours about the introduction of Junior Kindergarten in your community schools. We are making positive changes in the way we deliver early childhood programming and providing **free, quality, optional, safe and fun, play-based programs** in our schools for all 4-year-olds is part of that change.

I know from my own experience that the best environment for our little kids is their own home, being raised by their parents or caregivers. The fact is, however, that in today's world not all parents can stay at home to raise their children until they are ready to go to school. Daycare is expensive, especially if you have more than one child, or a low-paying job.

Accessing childcare, whether it is daycare or Junior Kindergarten is a very personal choice and we respect that. That is why Junior Kindergarten is completely optional. What it does do, however, is add to the choices parents and caregivers have. Just like any other parent, I want the same thing for my children as you do for yours: Making sure my children get the right start and have access to quality

education and programs. As parents, we constantly ask ourselves whether we are making the right decisions for our children, and if there was one more thing we could do for them, you know we would. On the other side of that coin is the fact that there aren't always programs for them in your community that will help with their development. I know that this is the case for a lot of parents across the territory. That is why we have introduced Junior Kindergarten; **it's free, high quality, safe, optional and fun.**

So I ask you to watch for the information we'll be sharing in the coming weeks. We are making sure that everybody in the NWT has the support they need to succeed in life, starting with our kids. Junior Kindergarten is one part of our plan to achieve our goal of healthy, educated people free from poverty. We hope you understand that this is for the benefit of all, and that we are not compromising, but we are asking everyone to work together for solutions, and for a little courage to help us take these steps.



Masi,

Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Minister
Education, Culture and Employment



Residential compost carts to roll out this fall in Yk

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Gardeners and green-living advocates received good news last week from the City of Yellowknife with the announcement that a new waste disposal cart system, separating organic waste from landfill garbage, will launch this fall.

The new black and green cart system was announced at the city's Solid Waste Forum held last Wednesday during Earth Week.

According to the city, black carts for garbage will be rolling out to all single family homes across Yellowknife this fall, followed by green carts starting with the Kavanaugh route and spreading across the city each year.

Mayor Mark Heyck said the carts will modernize the city's waste collection, making the system more efficient as well as more sustainable.

"The composting program will help us reduce what's going into our landfill," Heyck said. "The program will increase the rate of waste diversion, reduce the overall cost of solid waste management and make the Solid Waste Facility a safer place for workers and residents."

The cart program is an indication of the success of



Ecology North staff Myka Jones, left, and Susie Turner process compost at the landfill collected through the city's commercial composting pilot project.

The waste will be picked up every two weeks, with compost and regular garbage pickups alternating each week.

Scott said the carts will be pest proof, helping to decrease the litter problem created by ravens on the streets, and will likely decrease the bird problem all around at the landfill after most of the organic waste is separated out.

Some of the paper recycling will be combined into the compost-making process, meaning less paper to be shipped south, which will further reduce costs for the city.

It will also be safer for the garbage pickup crews, as the carts will be picked up and dumped using truck lifts.

"There's a whole host of savings there and benefits," Scott said. "And in the end we come out with a beautiful black soil, which is really in demand from gardeners in the North, especially in Yellowknife because we don't have soil. We sell out immediately every time we have a compost sale."

Model for the NWT

Scott said the Yellowknife project was developed with the goal of assisting other

communities interested in creating their own residential composting program, in the same way that Yellowknife benefited from the knowledge of Whitehorse and Iqaluit.

"The mandate is to basically lead by example and provide help to the smaller communities," he said. "I'm hopeful some other communities will follow suit and realize that it's not really that hard to do."

Though the project is just getting its bearings in Yellowknife, other communities around the NWT are also looking into composting alternatives, including Hay River, which is considering the option of centralized composting.

While Fort Smith has no plans as of yet for a residential composting system, which Mayor Brad Brake said is more needed in areas with higher populations and less usable growing space, he said the town has purchased some "excellent" backyard composter units through grants that are available to citizens for purchase.

"In this way we are encouraging composting in the community," Brake said.

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Greening up for Spring: This is great therapy, says Reynaldo Lau-a, of his job at the Arctic Farmer's nursery in Yellowknife. It's easy to see why, as he waters some of the thousands of bedding plants and baskets in the warm, humid earthy comfort of the greenhouse in the Kam Lake Industrial Park. After Yellowknife's coldest, longest and dreariest winter in 33 years, crabby local green thumbs are anxious to get sprouting.



Dene elder Francois Paulette speaks to a group of Fort Smith residents gathered to celebrate Earthfest at the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre last weekend.



Youth sit quietly as residents take turns expressing their thoughts about the importance of protecting the natural world for future generations.



More than 30 people gather into a crowded teepee to share stories and discuss the state of the environment to mark the international celebration of Earth Day in Fort Smith.

Photos: Maria Church

Environment Earth Day

Fort Smith marks Earth Day with a call to action

By MARIA CHURCH

For the more than 30 participants of Earthfest in Fort Smith, the celebration of Earth Day held last weekend was both an ode to Mother Nature and a call for action.

Huddling around a fire in a crowded teepee, Fort Smith residents engaged in a discussion led by Dene elder Francois Paulette about the importance of standing up for the Earth in the face of growing corporate greed and environmental apathy.

"Our people say that the only way things are going to change is because they are forced to change. People are forced to change the way they look at the world. They have to be connected to the Earth and they have to reconcile with the Earth," Paulette told the group between stories of the river, community history and local wildlife.

Residents took turns chiming in on ever-increasing environmental concerns and their effect on the North, mentioning events like the spill from Obed Mine last October that dumped millions of litres of coal tailings into the Athabasca River.

"People must stop the habit that we all as Western people have of thinking, 'I'm just leaving whatever mess I've made in the place and going somewhere else.' We must start thinking about the places we live and their history," Marina Devine said.

"It has to be responsibility on a grand scale. I can stand on the river bank and feel personally responsible, but I am just one person and there's value to that, but there's only so much value. The higher up people will have to be forced," Hilary LeRoy-Gauthier shared.

Sarah Rosolen, one of the event's organizers, said the goal was to bring residents together to get a pulse on environmental strides happening on both a large and small scale with town events and organizations.

"It's to find out what's happening, to find out what's being done and what we can do," she said. "Some of us do get a little disenchanted with the state of the environment and it's good to get together with people that are committed and feel positive."

While the original theme for the event was "Is this the end of the world as we know it?"

co-organizer Diane Seals said they opted to scrap the theme in favour of a less doomsday, more celebratory theme, but that didn't take away from the seriousness of the message.

"People want to do something and they want to be able to take action. We can talk about it and feel like, 'Yeah, I appreciate the Earth,' but it can be such a big task. I like the idea of action and what actions can be taken," Seals said.

From actions as small as choosing to have a garden each year to become less reliant on manufactured goods and shipping, to large scale lobbying against companies with poor environmental track records, everyone can play a part, she said.

Earthfest's evening celebrations included a slideshow of wildlife and nature photographs by local professional photographer Dan Hillert and the screening of the new documentary *Cold Amazon* that highlights the importance of preserving the Mackenzie River Basin.

Earth Day, marked internationally on Apr. 22 since 1990, is the largest environmental event in the world.

**The Town of Fort Smith
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Graduating Class of 2014
Good luck to all of you!**



Fort Smith is proud to be part of the education centre of the NWT.





Margo Harney hugs graduate Cassandra Norris during Aurora College's Thebacha campus convocation ceremony, held at the Fort Smith recreation centre last week.



The Aurora College Thebacha



Pierre-Luc Berube gives the thumbs up after receiving his Environment and Natural Resources Technology diploma.

Education Aurora College Grad

Aurora College salutes 29

By MARIA CHURCH

For 29 Aurora College graduates from Thebacha campus in Fort Smith, tears mixed with laughter as they took to the stage in front of guest speakers, college staff and a crowd of loved ones at the college's annual spring convocation last week.

Sporting blue robes, this year's graduates from the schools of Business and Leadership, Arts and Sciences and Education received their degrees and diplomas Friday at the Fort Smith recreation centre where hundreds gathered to congratulate them.

"This is truly a milestone in your life," guest speaker George Tuccaro, commissioner of the Northwest Territories, said in addressing the graduating class. "You have my deep respect and honour for what you've accomplished today."

Bachelor of Education graduate Aleda Lafferty, a mother of three from Fort Resolution, was chosen as the 2014 valedictorian and received the Board of Governors' award for student leadership.

Graduation is an emotional, exhilarating and exciting time for all of them, she said in her valedictorian address.

"We are all parting ways, which does not mean an end to the lasting friendships we have made, but rather an end to the passing of each other in the halls, visiting in the lobby or in the parking lot, or seeing each other in the computer lab when we are all stressing over an assignment, which is probably due the next day," she said, inciting a ripple of laughter from the crowd.

"It may be the end of our lives as students, but it is the start of our journey, which we

will embark upon. We have completed one chapter and are beginning another," Lafferty said. "I wish you all the best."

Aurora College president Jane Arychuk gave a nod to the family and friends of the graduates and acknowledged the importance of relationships.

"Your family and friends have been there when you needed emotional, physical, academic and I'm sure even financial support during your educational career," Arychuk said.



Krista Mantla is handed a congratulatory bouquet after collecting her Bachelor of Education degree.



From left, graduate Dana Fergusson shares a laugh with Education Minister Jackson Laff of Governors' chair Sydney O'Sullivan and Aurora College president Jane Arychuk.



na campus graduating class of 2014 celebrates receiving certificates, diplomas and degrees by throwing their graduation hats.

graduates in Fort Smith

our lives as students, but it is the start of we will embark upon. We have completed beginning another.

Aleda Lafferty

For many graduates, their education at Aurora has meant leaving the support of friends and family in their hometowns, but they have come to forge new relationships with classmates and other students at the college, she said.

"Some of those have become close relationships and provided support you needed right when you needed it to be successful," Arychuk said.

work and dedication proves you have what it takes to contribute to the prosperous, strong future for the North."

"You folks are the best resource we have in the Northwest Territories and that's qualified, educated learners," Miltenberger said.

Other Board of Governor awards went to Susie Wernoski for innovation and college improvement, Cherie Stewart for instructional excellence and Laura Aubrey for service quality.

Lafferty received the Town of Fort Smith student award as well as the Student Association student of the year award, along with Pierre-Luc Berube.

Convocations for Aurora College's Yellowknife North Slave campus will be held May 3, and at Inuvik's Aurora campus May 9.



Valedictorian Aleda Lafferty gives her address to the class of 2014.



Graduate Victoria Drybones awaits her turn to walk the stage and collect her Bachelor of Education degree.



Vallery Vermilion, graduate of the school of Business and Leadership, gets a big hug after accepting her certificate for Business Administration.

Hay River Relay for Life on brink of cancellation

South Slave cancer fundraiser short on manpower

By MARIA CHURCH

The 10th annual South Slave Relay for Life in support of cancer research is on the cusp of cancellation this year due to a lack of volunteers stepping up to run the annual fundraising event.

The relay, which alternates each year between the communities of Hay River and Fort Smith, was scheduled for June in Hay River, but despite repeated attempts by former organizers to muster a volunteer base, the event does not have enough people on board.

Lorna Deveau, revenue development coordinator for the Canadian Cancer Society in the NWT, said the news is a blow to the society and the event's former organizers.

"We've done every single thing and more that we can think of and there's nothing more that we can do," she said. "I don't know where else to go."

Past relays in Hay River have been put on by the Lions Club, but Deveau said the five former organizers are getting on in age and finding it difficult to take on the volunteer workload. When they sent a call out to the community for help, nobody came.



Photo: Shari Olsen

Teams march to fundraise for cancer research during Hay River's biennial Relay for Life in June of 2012. This year's June event has been canceled due to a lack of volunteers, but could still happen in September.

"They reached out to the community in November, publicized it and said, 'Look, we are going to start Relay for Life and we need some help this year'...but not one person showed up to that meeting," she said.

Not yet discouraged, Deveau and the Lions Club organizers again reached out

to the community through social media and flyers distributed for free in the Super A Foods newsletter. Only one person responded.

"There's doors just slamming in our face, unfortunately," Deveau said.

This would have been the tenth year the South Slave has held a relay that each year brings

in a significant chunk of change for the society. Two years ago, the Hay River relay fundraised \$90,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society, while last year's Fort Smith event brought in a whopping \$112,000.

"The Northwest Territories - Yellowknife events included, as well as Fort Smith and Hay River - bring in the

highest per-capita revenue in the country," Deveau said. "These are very small communities, very tight-knit communities that do themselves proud. That's why it just breaks our hearts that we can't get this going this year."

"I don't know where else to go. Everybody that has been involved has been

phenomenal. I cannot say enough about these individuals, but we are now batting 1,000 here. It's too late for June," she said.

The Hay River relay could technically still happen in September, but it would be a small miracle at this point, Deveau said. All the material for the relay is available through the Canadian Cancer Society, but it takes around 10 or 11 dedicated individuals to make it happen.

While two years ago there were three June Relay for Life events in the NWT, held in Hay River, Inuvik and Yellowknife, this year they are down to just the one in Yellowknife with both Hay River and Inuvik backing out.

For the "devastated" former organizers in Hay River, Deveau said they have already committed to driving to the Yellowknife Relay for Life scheduled for Friday, June 13 at the Yellowknife Fieldhouse.

On a more positive note for the Canadian Cancer Society in the NWT, Deveau said Fort McPherson recently contacted her with 11 committee members on board to run a Relay for Life in September.

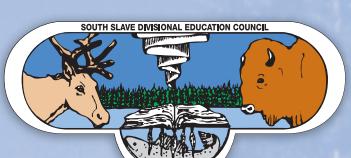
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Creating Futures



South Slave Divisional Education Council

Congratulations Aurora Grads!

The South Slave Divisional Education Council would like to congratulate all the Aurora College graduates on their achievement and wish them the best as they pursue their careers.

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Boat building project sets sail in Hay River

Project teaches youth shipping history and trade skills

By MARIA CHURCH

A project to reconnect Hay River youth with their historical ties to the shipping industry has had enormous success since it launched earlier this year, say its creators.

Run as a partnership of local businesses and organizations, the NT Boats Project aims to teach the history of shipping along the Mackenzie River while also introducing youth to a variety of shipbuilding trades.

Alice Coates, project co-ordinator, said the program, which launched in February, has been well received by around eight youth who have been attending the workshops on a regular basis.

"The reaction has been really good because some of the kids don't have access to shop at school. Here they get to do things and learn things that they would not even have heard about. We're doing things on the side like knot tying and getting some history from our instructors, as well," Coates said.

Running every Monday and Wednesday at the Northern Transportation Company Ltd.'s workshop, each lesson



From left, Kim Rapati and instructor Albert Bourque discuss the finer points of shipbuilding during an NT Boats Project workshop in early April.

Photo courtesy of NT Boats Project

is led by veteran boat builders and tradesmen in the community like Albert Bourque and Tom Makepeace.

The group has been taking on small projects each week with an eventual goal of fully refurbishing two 12-foot tug boats. Now almost three months in, the group is close to finishing that goal.

"We're making something that floats and travels and carries goods, which is really what Hay River is about in the first place. This goes back to the foundation of the community. It's the transportation hub of the North for a good reason," Coates said.

She said trades are an important skill for youth to

be introduced to, and while some high schools offer a shop class, they are not often taught industry specific skills like shipbuilding, which includes carpentry and welding.

Funding for the program has come entirely from community support. Donations of funds, supplies and shop space from organizations and

We're making something that floats and travels and carries goods, which is really what Hay River is about in the first place. This goes back to the foundation of the community.

*Alice Coates
NT Boats Project Society*

businesses has allowed the organizers and instructors to offer the workshops for free.

"It's great that they support it and they see potential in there to get kids interested in the trades jobs that are available to them in Hay River," she said.

Coates said the plan for the program is to expand into a summer camp held in Hay River in the first week of July that could accommodate up to 40 youth.

The camp will again have the youth refurbishing transportation boats, but also focus on getting the boats on the water and learning operational skills such as navigation.

While the program thus far is limited to fixing up already-built boats, Coates said in the future they have ambitions to build a York boat from scratch - a vessel used during the fur trade by the Hudson's Bay Company that was a larger, more spacious successor to the voyageur canoe.

"That's the long-term goal, to get youth moving up, not in an overwhelming way, but so they get more skills so that the kids who've been there each year are really expanding their skill set as they go," she said.

For more information about the NT Boats Project, visit <http://ntboatsproject.com/>

Celebrating Aurora College Graduation!

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Congratulations!

We wish you continued success in your careers.

On behalf of all staff and volunteers at FSHSSA congratulations to the graduating class of Aurora College, Thebacha Campus.



Snowmobile racers take a tight corner on the Mad Trapper Rendezvous track during the men's 600 and under race.



Rita Arey and Henry Jerome compete in the jiving contest at the Sittichinli Recreational Complex Saturday night.

Arts & Culture Spring Carnivals

Delta families swarm Aklavik for annual Mad Trapper Rendezvous

By NATHALIE HEIBERG-HARRISON

The annual Mad Trapper Rendezvous brought residents from across the Mackenzie Delta to Aklavik on Easter weekend.

Events kicked off Thursday, Apr. 17 with a feast, guest speakers and the crowning of the king and queen.

On Friday, the Eddy McLeod 10-mile open dog

race was held, as well as cross-country snowmobile races at the Peel River and a talent show at Moose Kerr School.

On Saturday there were various games, including the five-legged race, plank walk, egg throw and obstacle race. A \$10,000 bingo was held in the evening, followed by an old time dance at the Sittichinli Recreational Complex.

Sunday featured more games on the river site, followed by more snowmobile races on the track. On Monday, snowshoe races, as well as the final track races, were held. Closing ceremonies followed at the Sittichinli Recreational Complex.

The 2014 rendezvous was dedicated to Dean McLeod and family who were unable to attend.



Xander Joe enjoys the jiving contests held on Saturday night during the Rendezvous.

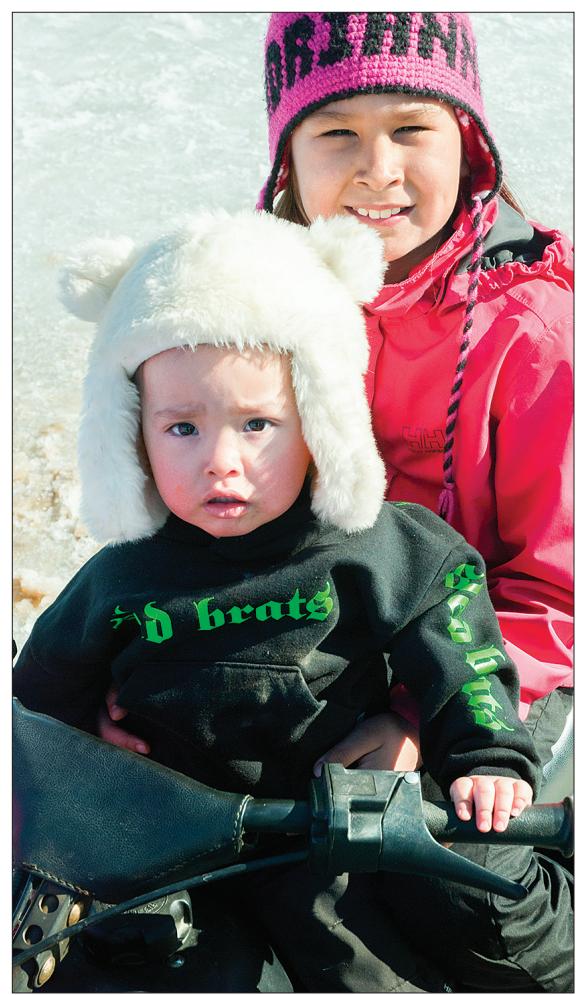


Hundreds crowd the Peel River Monday afternoon to watch snowmobile racers compete in the men's and ladies' 600 and under track race, and the grand finale men's open class 75-mile track race. More than a dozen skidoo racers were scheduled to compete in the Mad Trapper Rendezvous, held Easter weekend in Aklavik.

Photos: Nathalie Heiberg-Harrison



Julie Ann Andre, Rose Day and Melba Mitchell make a mad dash for second place in the women's snowshoe race Saturday.



Zendel Blake and Adrianna Hendricks ride around the jamboree's river site on skidoo Saturday afternoon.

Arts & Culture Spring Carnivals

Tsiigehtchic jamboree wraps up spring carnivals

By NATHALIE HEIBERG-HARRISON
Niditchie School gym. A feast and crowning of the jamboree king and queen followed.

season in the Mackenzie Delta.

The three-day event kicked off Apr. 25 with opening ceremonies at the Chief Paul

Niditchie School gym. A feast and crowning of the jamboree king and queen followed.

Saturday's events included snowshoe races, snowmobile

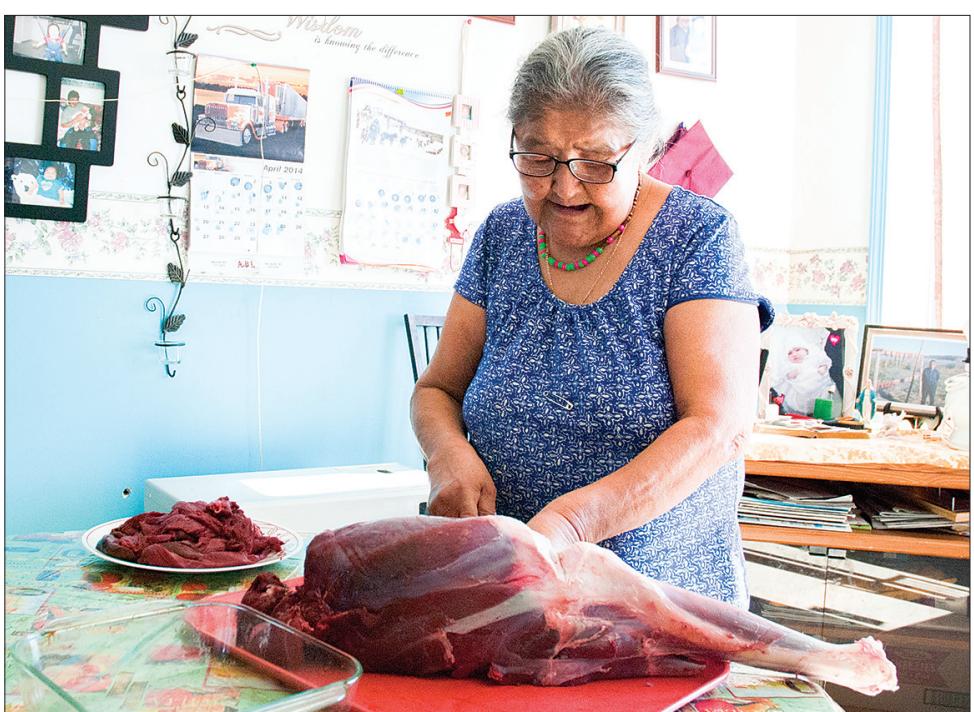
races for children and adults, traditional games and a rifle shoot. A \$4,000 bingo was held, followed by an old time dance of jigging and jiving.

Sunday featured a pancake breakfast and more games down on the river, including a three-legged race, piggyback race and tug of

war. The final cross-country snowmobile races were held well into the evening, followed by closing ceremonies at the gym.



Curtis Gruben competes in log sawing Saturday afternoon as Jefferey Amos looks on. Other traditional events included nail driving, tea boiling and dizzy stick.



Irene Kendo prepares caribou for soup she sold out of her house during Tsiigehtchic's Mackenzie Jamboree. Vendors also sold various types of food at the river site.



Jack Blake, left, Jared Blake and Darius Andre compete in the egg toss competition Saturday afternoon at Tsiigehtchic's Mackenzie Jamboree.

Photos: Nathalie Heiberg-Harrison

Robertson headframe seems destined for scrapheap

City to discuss report on mining icon, beacon for travellers next week

By JACK DANYLCHUK

An engineering report commissioned on the state of the Robertson headframe goes to city council next week, but the fate of the iconic structure appears to be demolition sometime this year.

"It's what we expected," was all that Dennis Kefalas, the city's chief administrative officer, would say of the report that will provide details of the headframe's condition and the cost of maintaining it.

Annual maintenance costs for the headframe have been estimated at \$100,000 to \$250,000 a year, and its eventual demolition at \$1 million or more. Headframe owner Newmont Mining Corp. might put the demolition cost in a trust fund, but is waiting for the city to declare its intentions.

"It's a large liability to take on," said Kefalas, who originally recommended that the city pass on the opportunity to take ownership of the headframe and let Newmont get on with demolition.



Photo: Jack Danylchuk

A welcome beacon for Yellowknifers traveling on Great Slave Lake since 1977, the Robertson headframe will likely fall to the wrecker's hammer later this year.

In the six months since Walt Humphries, president of the NWT Mine Heritage Society, challenged

councillors to get an engineer's assessment of the headframe, no one has come forward with the money

needed to preserve the relic from the days when gold was mined beneath the city's streets.

The task was too large for the society, Humphries said, and he has found residents to be divided on the future of the 76-metre structure – the tallest in the Territories and a welcoming beacon on the skyline since it was erected in 1977.

"Long-time residents would like to preserve the headframe, but people who have come here more recently don't have the same attachment to it," Humphreys told *The Journal* in a recent interview.

Mark Heyck never predicts how councillors will vote, but the mayor, who grew up in the shadow of the headframe when his father worked for Con Mine, believes they are "realistic" about the challenges of preserving the structure.

"There are serious costs, without any idea of the end use for the headframe," Heyck told *The Journal* last week. "Newmont wants to complete remediation of the site and the headframe is one of the last items on their list."

Before it was scaled back following last year's civic

election, Yellowknife's district heating plan appeared to be the last best hope for the Robertson.

Drawing heat from the mine shaft, which reaches more than a mile into the rock beneath the headframe, was the centrepiece of a banquet of choices that consultants laid out in a report to the city's heritage committee several years ago.

Even the bargain basement proposals were beyond the means of groups that pressed the city to preserve the headframe: \$1 million to cover the south wall with solar energy panels, \$3 million to install a climbing wall or \$5 million for a restaurant with stunning views of Yellowknife and Great Slave Lake.

Humphries described the headframe with its distinctive red, white and black colour scheme as one of the last of its kind.

"Mining technology has changed since it was built," he said. "New mines use inclines, not vertical shafts to reach the ore, and headframes aren't needed."

Politics Aboriginal

Inuvialuit paid dividends while Inuit beneficiaries go empty handed

By JACK DANYLCHUK
Inuvialuit beneficiaries have one more reason to celebrate the arrival of spring this year.

Annual payments to 4,360 Inuvialuit over the age of 18 have been plumped up to \$551.57 by averaging income from investments over 10 years, said Lucy Kuptana, operations director for the Inuvialuit Regional Corp. (IRC).

Traditionally delivered on May 1, payments dipped to the \$400 minimum in lean years for the Inuvialuit corporate group, "and we were looking for more balance, while ensuring there are sufficient profits for reinvestment," Kuptana said.

Beneficiaries who live in the south will receive their payments in the mail, while those who live in the settlement region can pick up their cheques from Inuvialuit offices.

"I'll have to warn the bank that beneficiaries will be cashing their cheques," Kuptana said.

The money arrives as many Inuvialuit are preparing the head out on the land to fish and hunt, and buy ammunition and nets, said Kuptana, who will pool her windfall with her husband's.

"We're going to buy an ice auger, so more fishing and no more chipping holes," she said.

IRC subsidiaries, including the Inuvialuit Development Corp., Inuvialuit Investment Corp., Inuvialuit Land Corp. and Inuvialuit Petroleum Corp., contribute to the distribution.

The distribution policy ensures sufficient money is left over to guarantee the growth of land claim capital, along with programs like elders' assistance and the Inuvialuit Harvesters

Assistance Program, among others.

Inuit miss out on cheques second year running

It's a different story for Inuit in the Eastern Arctic where Nunasi, their birth-right corporation, is restructuring and shedding underperforming businesses.

Nunasi recently sold its interest in NorTerra to the Inuvialuit Development Corp., its partner in the holding company that includes Canadian North and Northern Transportation Co. Ltd., which Nunasi directors saw as financial liabilities.

Nunasi did not pay dividends last year and Okalik Eegeesiak, who chairs the Nunasi board, estimated that it will be another year before Nunavummiut beneficiaries get a dividend cheque in the mail.

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NWT top cop retiring after 34 years in RCMP

Chief Supt. Wade Blake moving to department of Justice

By MARIA CHURCH

After a 34-year career with the RCMP and a four-year stint as head of the Northwest Territories "G" Division, chief commanding officer Wade Blake is calling it quits.

The top cop is leaving big shoes to fill for his replacement, Supt. Ron Smith, who has been second in command of the NWT division for the past two and a half years.

Since moving North for the position in February of 2010, Blake has made a name for himself by traveling to all detachments in the territory at least once a year to consult with community leaders.

Blake - who officially retires from the RCMP on Apr. 30 - said in an interview with *The Journal* last week that his travels to often remote and isolated Aboriginal communities was the best part of his job.

"The highlight was to get out and to talk to community members and to talk to our RCMP members, as well, and their families to see if we were hitting the mark and what we can do better. I really enjoyed that part of it," he shared.

In 2012, as a result of his travels and consultations, Blake established an advisory committee to get feedback from Aboriginal



Wade Blake, Chief Supt. of RCMP "G" Division, is officially retiring on Apr. 30.

communities on how RCMP officers were performing in their roles.

The committee's goal was to determine if policies, such as requirements for new recruits to learn the local culture, were working or failing to build up community trust in the RCMP.

Blake said his advice for his successor, Smith, is to continue visiting communities and build up a now-established groundwork of programs and partnerships for consultation and improved transparency.

"My advice to him was that it's all been laid. It's

We're very excited that we're getting a fellow with that type of experience into the department of Justice. I think it's a great catch for us and we're happy to have him.

*Minister David Ramsay
Department of Justice*

very successful and people are happy they get a say in what we do in each of the communities. We need to continue that; he needs to build on that," he said.

Pursuing a new career

Blake, who joined the force at 18 years old in 1980, said his plan all along was to quit the RCMP after 35 years. But at only 54, he jokingly said he's "just a baby" and not ready to retire.

"I knew I was going to go at 35 anyway, I'd said that all along, but I'd also said that retiring at age 55 wasn't in my cards either. I didn't know what I was going to do. I wasn't going to sit home and take up some hobby. I still feel now as I did then that I can be productive in another field somewhere," he said.

The timing couldn't have been more perfect for Blake

to receive a job offer from the GNWT department of Justice to fill a director position in charge of community justice and policing.

Working with the RCMP, Blake will oversee programs that deal with restorative justice, domestic violence, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and victim services, to name a few. It's a job for which Blake said he has a considerable background and "passion."

That drive comes from a belief that there's not always an outside solution for harm prevention, he said.

"There also needs to be a community solution, so the passion comes in how to get the communities to engage in making their own community safe and having input. If you have input then you have ownership," Blake said.

With his new hat, Blake said he will be pushing

for more local involvement in community justice programs offered by the GNWT.

Department pleased with new recruit

Justice minister David Ramsay said he is looking forward to having Blake on board.

"We're very excited that we're getting a fellow with that type of experience into the department of Justice. I think it's a great catch for us and we're happy to have him," he said. "The fact that he's staying in the North is good, too. That's a good sign."

Ramsay said the department has had a long-standing focus on diversion - keeping people out of the main court system - and he believes Wade's experience will be a huge help in bringing new strategies to the table.

Northerners Medal Recipients

NWT residents, RCMP officers receive bravery awards

By MARIA CHURCH

Six NWT residents had their bravery in the face of hazardous situations honoured in Ottawa last week at a ceremony conducted by Governor General David Johnston to award Decorations of Bravery.

The Governor General gave out 42 Medals of Bravery and one Star of Courage at the ceremony held at Rideau Hall last Thursday. Three NWT RCMP officers and three residents of the territory were awarded with medals.

For four of the NWT recipients, that bravery was recognized in connection to a house fire in Inuvik in October of 2011.

The incident occurred early in the morning when Larry Angasuk Jr. from Inuvik and Teddy Omilgoituk from Fort McPherson, 15 and 11 respectively at the time, rushed into the

flames to rescue two children trapped in the burning house. While Angasuk Jr. was able to bring one child to safety, Omilgoituk was overwhelmed with smoke trying to reach his little sister upstairs.

RCMP constables Andrew Aucoin and Todd Glemser were quickly on site and clamoured into the flaming house for the child. While

they were able to bring her outside, the little girl later died in the Inuvik Regional Hospital. The two officers and both boys were each awarded a Medal of Bravery for their actions during the incident.

Cpl. Scott Young was the third RCMP officer to receive a medal in the territory. In 2010, Young swam into the numbing waters of

the Slave River's Rapids of the Drowned outside of Fort Smith to rescue a 23 year-old suicidal woman. Lutsel K'e resident Sheldon Catholique was the final recipient of a bravery medal. Catholique was honoured for his actions in 2011 after the small passenger plane he was on crashed outside of his home community. Catholique,

though suffering from injuries himself, brought a badly injured fellow passenger to a safe distance and cared for her while help was on its way.

GNWT congratulates RCMP officers

Minister of Justice David Ramsay congratulated the three RCMP officers on their Medals of Bravery last week, calling their actions selfless deeds that put the lives of others before their own.

"These fine RCMP officers, through their courageous actions, have demonstrated their commitment to the people they serve in our communities. We are grateful and very proud to have them stationed here in the Northwest Territories," he said in a press release.

"On behalf of each person in Inuvik, Fort Smith and all our communities whose

lives your fearless actions have touched, please accept our heartfelt thanks," Ramsay said. "We congratulate each of you today on your well-deserved honour and recognition."

Outgoing NWT Chief Supt. of the RCMP Wade Blake said the officers' bravery is a model for them all.

He said he remembers getting goosebumps when the briefings came in for both incidents that involved RCMP officers.

"Those things could have been way more tragic than they turned out to be, but our members - and they continue to be this way - are the ones that are running always towards the danger, without consideration for themselves, to save somebody else or to prevent more damage or injuries from occurring," Blake said.

Five NWT musicians illuminated by Searchlight

Predator/Prey surprised to be named NWT regional finalist

By MARIA CHURCH

For five musicians in the Northwest Territories, an online contest to find Canada's next greatest artist has elevated them and their tunes into the national spotlight.

Grey Gritt, Bryce Young, Dana Sipos, Predator/Prey and Between Gigs were chosen as the top five regional finalists for the NWT on CBC's Searchlight - an online contest that has Canadians voting to find the country's best new artist.

Thousands of submissions flooded in from across the country for the annual spring contest representing a variety of musical styles from rock to blues to folk. The top five in each region were selected by vote and announced last week.

Gritt, a Yellowknifer and last year's NWT regional finalist for Searchlight, has a long repertoire of musical performances including numerous appearances in Canadian music festivals. The soul and blues artist said the North is the perfect place for emerging Canadian indie musicians because of the low market saturation.

"We have a small pool of musicians that are pretty high



Photo courtesy of Predator/Prey

Predator/Prey and their song Unkindness of Ravens is the NWT's regional finalist selection for CBC's Searchlight contest to find Canada's best new artist.

calibre," Gritt said. "We have a lot of extremely talented artists that are Juno award winners and nationally and internationally renowned and they are extremely accessible to folks here."

Gritt said Searchlight is a good opportunity for artists to further expand their musical network outside of the NWT and make friends with

other independent musicians across the country.

Young, a Fort Smith local, said he was floored that his acoustic, instrumental submission was counted among the top 230 tracks from emerging Canadian artists.

"It's definitely flattering," he told *The Journal* last week. "I checked the numbers and they said

something like there were 4,500 people across Canada who entered and I'm one of the 230 left, top five in the NWT. It's definitely a confidence booster."

Young, 24, has been playing the guitar since he was a youth. While he has played in a number of high profile music festivals and events in the North, he has never

seriously considered taking up music professionally.

Currently working at a diamond mine, the young artist said his unexpected success in Searchlight has made him reconsider that option, but for the moment, he's happy knowing his hometown supported him 100 per cent.

"I'm beside myself in disbelief in the amount of support they've all given me and I'd love to thank them all personally," he said.

Predator/Prey named NWT finalist

For Predator/Prey, a band comprised of Adam Phipps and Dak de Kerckhove, the elevation of their track *Unkindness of Ravens* to the NWT regional finalist was something of a surprise.

"We were really excited and we felt that it was unexpected," de Kerckhove said. "We're of course very happy with our album, but it's exciting to see how much great talent there is out there. When you see it all you think, wow, it's a tough, competitive field, so we didn't really think we were going to be the winning band."

The band's genre is listed as folk psychedelic, which de Kerckhove said is a strange

mix, but makes more sense when considering their concept-driven sound that varies from song to song, fluctuating between folksier tunes and harder electronic tracks.

The band has released two full-length albums, *Predator* and *Prey*, both performed with the help of Carrie Phipps' vocals and Brian Moyer on trumpet. Each song is a reflection of an animal and its experience as either predator or prey.

"We tried to choose something ecological or scientific about the animal's life and have that drive the song musically and lyrically," de Kerckhove said.

Predator/Prey's unique sound has already made waves online and to keep up the momentum, the band teamed up with 15 other artists on Searchlight to create a mixtape of their song submissions, including Sipos' top-five entry, *A Coronary Tale*. The mixtape can be downloaded for free at <http://thepredatorprey.com/searchlight-mixtape>

Voting for Searchlight's top five national tracks closed Monday and the winners in the pool of 23 regional finalists will be announced Tuesday morning.

Arts & Culture Books

Familiar faces captured in *Yellowknife Street Stories*

By JACK DANYLCHUK

At \$45 for 49 pages of text and stark black and white photos, *Yellowknife Street Stories* is a slim, expensive slice from the lives of a dozen of the city's most impoverished residents.

Kyle Thomas spent a year photographing and talking to some of the most familiar faces among Yellowknife's estimated 300 homeless persons and self-published the result.

Several pages are devoted to Charlie Delorme, a shy benefactor who died shortly after donating \$17,000 from his residential school settlement to Yellowknife charities, and the late Walter Edgi, a member of the Northwest Territories Sports Hall of Fame.

Readers meet regulars from Canada Post benches on Franklin Ave., the recyclers, dish washers and sidewalk cleaners:

Riel, a migrant worker from Quebec; Douglas from Manitoba; J.J. from someplace above the Arctic Circle; Leonard and Gina, a migrant couple from Prince Edward Island; and Dave, a victim of sexual abuse.

"It is likely that some of the people in these pages are ex-criminals who may have done horrible things," Thomas writes in the introduction.

"But I hope this book will

introduce you to the kinder, more vulnerable side of some of the people you walk past every day."

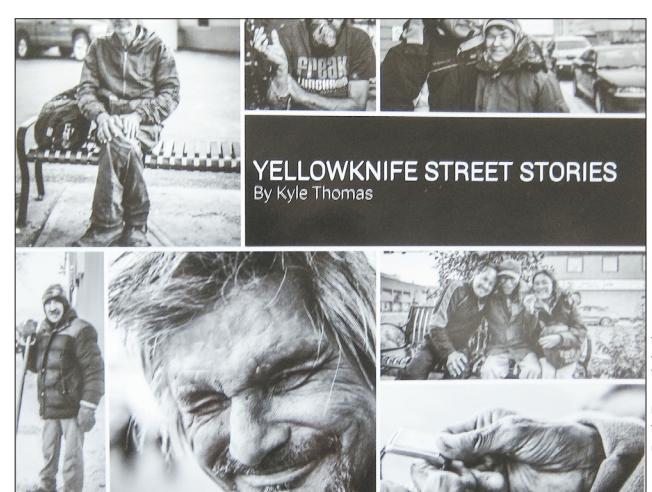
Except for Edji and Delorme, none of the people in *Yellowknife Street Stories* have surnames, because, Thomas said, "I wanted their stories, not their details."

Even then, there were numerous rejections by those who took him for a reporter, writing another story on the homeless. But if the brief stories want for details, the photos do not.

At the book's launch last week, Thomas said he was moved to take on the project during the last municipal election, when street people and the homeless became an issue, but didn't move on it until last year.

"The project is made of two elements: my deep-rooted connection with the homeless people in Yellowknife and my yearning to document, photograph and write stories about the people I meet," he wrote in the introduction.

The book is dedicated to Thomas' mother Cheryl, Delorme and Edgi, but much of the inspiration came from his father Craig, "who went out of his way to care for those he



Money raised from the book will be given to Yellowknife's men's and women's shelters.

met in the street...and instilled this same compassion in me."

Thomas grew up in Yellowknife and traces his connection with the city's homeless to the Sunday nights he spent with his mother and father serving dinners at the Salvation Army, where his parents work.

Thomas turned away from the Sunday dinners in his teenage years, and *Yellowknife Street Stories* is his way of reconnecting with that part of his past, "and giving back," he told *The Journal*.

Financed with an \$8,000

grant from the NWT Arts Council and \$5,000 of his own money, the press run of 300 is moving briskly. After Thomas recovers his costs, all revenue will be divided equally between the men's and women's shelters.

"Publishing a book is quite easy in the Northwest Territories, especially with the assistance from the Arts Council," said Thomas, a project manager with a Yellowknife media company, and blogger. "I was able to pay an editor to look it over."

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New crop of farm training workshops scheduled

By MARIA CHURCH

With spring temperatures well on their way to revealing the fertile soil of the southern NWT, organizers behind the Northern Farm Training Institute expect the second year of the successful pilot school will see a growth in interest, with workshops scheduled in multiple communities.

Based in Hay River, the innovative farming school, the first of its kind in the North, has planned five free, three-day workshops this year to be held in Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson.

"We've already had people sending in applications during the winter before we've even advertised for this year," Jackie Milne, lead instructor for the institute, told *The Journal*.

The first workshop is set for May 16 to 18 in Fort Smith and will focus on how to design and plant a sustainable garden. The class will be taught at the community gardens where Milne said, by the end of the course, they will have designed and planted a full, sustainable garden from scratch.



Students of the first workshops offered by the Northern Farm Training Institute learn to plant seedlings in Hay River last year. A new crop of workshops are set to begin this May.

April because they were late in securing the necessary funding from Education, Culture and Employment in addition to federal funding. The workshops' expenses include providing students with compensation for travel and accommodation.

Full farming campus in sights

Milne said the goal for the institute is to eventually have enough funding and support to build a full farm training campus in Hay River for year-round schooling.

Milne was in Yellowknife last week to discuss the possibility of a full-blown campus with interested government and industry parties, including Agriculture Canada, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Canadian mineral company Avalon Rare Metals.

Like carpentry and welding, farming is a trade and should be trained hands-on as such, she said.

"You can't learn to produce food without being outdoors, touching seeds, soil and such. You really can learn a lot from reading and

books, but to put it into practice, eventually you need to be actually in a living environment," Milne said.

From research she has gathered, the instructor said skilled sustainable farmers can earn the equivalent of a \$60 per-hour job while those starting out can achieve a respectable \$15 an hour.

"If you want to turn it into a business, you can turn it into a very good, well-paid business and you are also producing food for yourself," she said.

Milne said the end goal of the farm training program is to build up a collective skillset for holistic, sustainable living that will carry on through future generations.

Spots are still open to register for the five workshops this summer and Milne said they are encouraging anyone in the NWT to apply.

"The more people we get to apply, the better to really show the interest and get the support we need to continue this program," she said.

For more information on the farm training institute, email NFTIoffice@gmail.com, or visit www.farm-nwt.com

In Loving Memory of Charles (Chuck) William Heron, Jr.

August 12, 1952 – April 21, 2014



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved Chuck Heron on April 21, 2014 at the Fort Smith Health Centre, surrounded by family.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of thirty two years, Judith Heron, son Trent, grandson Mason, daughter Kelsey, mother Mabel Heron and siblings: Brian, Kathy (Dave), Kevin (Diane), Beverly (Lester), Barkley, Jennifer (Melvin), Fred Daniels and many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by father Charles Heron Sr, sister Helen, and brother Gregory.

For thirty years Chuck Heron taught people across the North the skills to work as Heavy Duty Mechanics. He retired from his career as an Aurora College instructor at the Thebacha Campus in 2013.

The Heron and True families would like to express their gratitude to the Fort Smith Métis Council, staff at Fort Smith Health Centre, particularly nurse Phyllis Tarrant, Don, Danielle and Sarah True, Pearl Bird, Mary Poitras, Father Paul, Victor Marie and Josie Weninger.

Our sincere thanks to the many friends and relatives who were a comfort to us during this time of sorrow.

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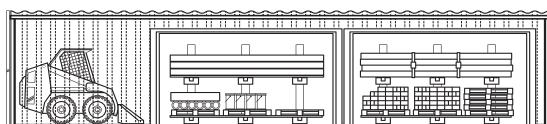
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Tuesday, April 29, 2014

**NORTHERN
Journal**

'Muffled' felt images underline contradictions up North

By JACK DANYLCHUK

Alison McCreesh was living in a tent in the Yukon without access to the studio space needed to sculpt or paint when she first took a workshop on felting, the ancient technique of building fabric with layers of wool or animal hair.

"It doesn't break or take up much space and is fairly durable, although it does attract dog hair," said McCreesh, describing the advantages and drawbacks associated with the material that has been used to create everything from houses to hats.

An illustrator whose work is familiar to readers of *Up-Here* magazine or *EdgeYk*, McCreesh draws heavily on felting in an exhibition of images drawn from life in Yellowknife and a tour of the Eastern Arctic.

McCreesh chose "Muffled" as the name for the exhibition—a word play on the soft felt medium and the effects of distance, weather, climate and political power in making Northern voices heard by the rest of Canada.

The underlying theme that brings together what is two separate shows—"They call



Photo: Jack Danylchuk

Alison McCreesh introduces Muffled, an exhibition of water colours and felt drawings that capture quirky moments of life in Yellowknife's Woodyard neighbourhood and Eastern Arctic communities.

us squatters" and "Snapshots from the Arctic"—is McCreesh's sharp eye for the points where "the traditional and the modern come together,

to mesh or clash, and generate interesting cultural hybrids."

A resident of Yellowknife's Einar Broten Woodyard for the past five years,

McCreesh uses 36 small cartoon sketches rendered in black and white and three large portraits, all in wool felt, to capture

the mood of the bohemian neighbourhood.

The exhibit calls attention to the contradictions in Woodyard life, "how you can

have a smartphone but not a flush toilet. It's those quirks that make it interesting."

There is a lot of that going on in "Snapshots from the Arctic", a series of finely painted water colours based on photos McCreesh took on a tour of Eastern Arctic communities: a satellite dish hovers above stretched polar bear hides; a mother drinks from a paper cup and carries a child in an amautik.

McCreesh was impressed by the swift, savvy response on social media to American comedian Ellen DeGeneres' condemnation of seal hunting by Nunavummiut and highlighted Arctic issues of poverty, hunger and global warming.

"The 'selfie' campaign is a powerful example of the Arctic today, illustrating the meeting of tradition with contemporary life where young Nunavummiut eat muktuk while listening to Justin Bieber on their iPods," McCreesh said.

McCreesh "likes things that are quirky and humorous." It's those moments that bring cohesion to the collection of images she said will continue to grow.

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Arctic play offers on-stage activism for Inuk actor

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

"Being an indigenous artist is always being a political activist. I really believe that," says Renelta Arluk.

That statement is doubly true for the NWT-born stage actress and playwright, currently playing the role of an Inuit climate change activist in the world premiere of *Sila*, an Underground Railway Theatre production now on stage in Cambridge, Mass. until the end of May.

Arluk, an Inuvialuit, Dene and Cree actor originally from Fort Smith, plays the role of Leanna, a 50 year-old woman inspired by real-life Inuit activist and author Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who struggles with the rapidly changing Arctic environment alongside a suite of characters, from scientists and Coast Guards to polar bears.

Sila, which can translate as air, breath, climate, wind or life-force in Inuktitut, is the work of Montreal playwright Chantal Bilodeau, who merges Inuit myth with contemporary Arctic science and policy to illustrate the impacts of climate change

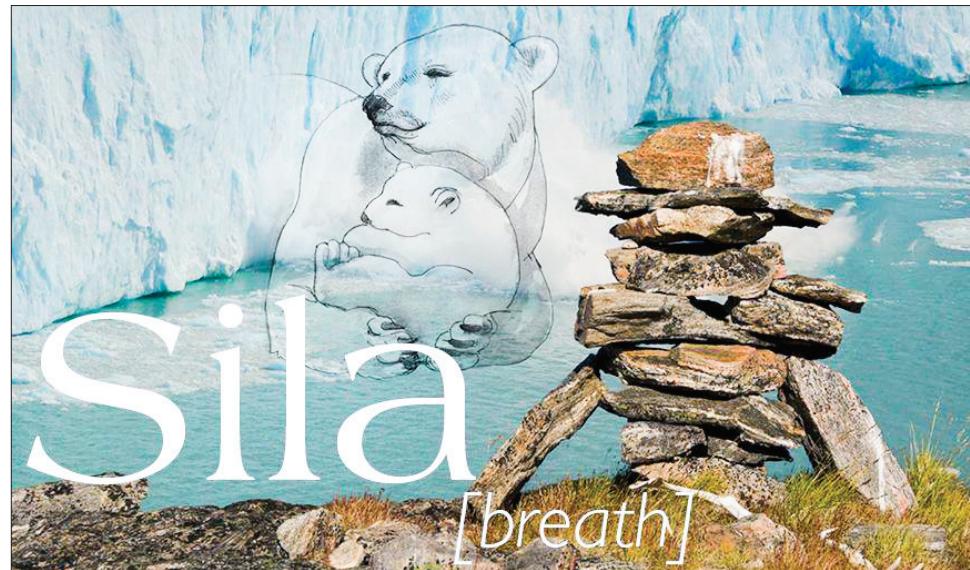


Illustration courtesy of Underground Railway Theatre

Sila, which can translate as breath, wind, air, climate and life-force in Inuktitut, is a play that centers on the impacts of climate change in Canada's North.

on eight seemingly separate characters situated on Baffin Island.

The play is the first in what is planned to be an eight-play volume focused on climate change in each Arctic region - Canada, the United States, Greenland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia - and combines dialogue, spoken word poetry, puppetry and projections,

done in English, French and Inuktitut.

While her character is literally an activist in a political play, Arluk said her position as a Northerner and indigenous person on stage also brings with it a political element that persists regardless of the subject matter.

"When you're an indigenous artist, every piece of work that you do has a

form of political content," she said. "Everything that we do in our life has some sense of political attachment to it, because of who we are as a people and our role in this country."

As the production's only Canadian - and person of Inuit descent - Arluk said she knew the role would carry a lot of weight, from having to explain residential schools

to the epidemic of Northern suicide to an American audience, but she said the very engaged, supportive and positive community of Cambridge is offering a rich learning experience for herself, as well.

"I knew when I was coming down that I'd have to come with a lot of knowledge with me, that I would be a source for them and they would have questions and I would have to be prepared for that," she said.

"Cambridge - Boston itself - is a very intelligent city. There's so many universities here...and just listening to their perspectives on the environment, strangely enough it's been very educational for me to see their perspective on climate change that's happening in the Arctic, even though they're so far away."

Arluk said the research she had to do on climate change and Watt-Cloutier for the role also deepened her knowledge on the subject matter.

"I never really made the strong connection between the Americans' emissions,

how they affect the Arctic. I never really saw that connection. Sheila Watt-Cloutier saw that connection, and just being here - it's a consciousness here," Arluk said of Cambridge.

The show opened with a preview last Thursday in front of an audience of around 100 scientists and environmentalists, Arluk said - a change from the typical crowd with which she has staged talkbacks, or post-show dialogues, in the past.

"They're not ones to mince their words, so their words are very sincere and what they share is very sincere, so it was just very positive," said Arluk, who received a standing ovation along with the rest of the cast.

Sila is not the first performance Arluk has done related to climate change. Her own performance art piece, *Anticipation*, which explores themes of cultural duality and climate change while centering on a beluga hunt, debuted in February at the Carbon 14: Climate is Culture exhibition in Toronto.

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