

In Brief...

•The Liberal government quietly **abolished the Small Claims Court** on July 15, 2010. The change affects those who cannot afford lawyer fees and those who cannot take the risk of paying costs. In an interview with CBC published online on August 16, 2010, Annalisa Turner, a former lawyer, said, "in small claims court, if either party had been awarded costs, they would have been limited to \$500. Now, there is no limit to costs ... which is a bit scary... Somebody who may have thought about bringing an action may change their mind knowing there could be thousands of dollars of costs awarded against them." New Brunswick's new small claims process is also more intimidating in that claimants must now plead the case before a judge in the Court of Queens Bench.


•The provincial government of New Brunswick is proposing to **change the yearly supplement of \$1,000 paid to people with disabilities** and depending on social assistance. Kelly Lamrock, who was defeated in the 2010 September election, proposed dividing the supplement in twelve monthly payments. The Common Front for Social Justice opposes this change in delivery in payment because it may involve a rent increase. The inclusion of a one-twelfth additional amount (\$83.33) in the regular monthly cheque could provoke a rent increase for those in subsidized housing. In the past, each time, there was an increase in social assistance cheques, there was an increase in rent. Those in subsidized housing are paying 30% of their revenue. If the proposed changes occur, these people could in effect lose one third of their annual supplement (\$300 from the \$1,000).

•The **Atlantic Wildlife Institute**, based in Cookville, NB, is **facing closure** following the provincial government's refusal to continue funding the institute, which provides essential wildlife rehabilitation. According to AWI, the prospect of such a closure is unacceptable, not only on humanitarian grounds, but in the interests of public health and safety.

•On September 10, 2010, two **Jamaican migrant agricultural workers died** as a result of workplaces injuries suffered at Filsinger Farms near Owen Sound, Ontario. While details of the fatalities are pending due to an ongoing investigation by the Ministry of Labour, the Jamaican government is reporting that Ralston White and Paul Roach may have died from the inhalation of toxic fumes. According to Justicia For Migrant Workers, "health and safety violations are an everyday occurrence for migrant workers. From chemical and pesticides exposure, to faulty equipment, to workplace bullying and harassment, migrant workers from across the province have described countless examples of dangers while working. "Hundreds of Guatemalan migrant workers and their allies rallied at the Canadian Embassy in Guatemala City to denounce the abusive treatment of migrant workers in Canada. Four thousand Guatemalans work in Canada's agricultural sector every season.

•A Vancouver Immigration and Refugee Board hearing ordered **the release of the first Tamil refugee** applicant, a pregnant woman with three children who is suffering from complications to injuries she sustained in Sri Lanka. The 492 Tamil migrants who arrived aboard the MV Sun Sea in Esquimalt, BC, on August 13 have been held in detention facilities in the Vancouver area. Children have been put in care by the provincial government.

•Andrea Bear Nicholas wrote in an analysis for CBC on September 3, that, "the only form of education for First Nations children that promises to improve both educational outcomes and the outlook for the **survival of Indigenous languages** is mother-tongue medium (MTM) education." According to Bear Nicholas, "it is the imposition of English or French as the medium of instruction, and with it the physical separation of First Nations children from proficient adult speakers that effectively denies these children the opportunity to become fluent speakers of their mother-tongue. The result has been that we have practically no child speakers of Maliseet or Mi'kmaq at present, and with that scenario these languages are facing almost certain extinction from the face of the earth, unless something very different is done soon."



Andrea Bear Nicholas, a Maliseet woman from Tobique, is the Chair of the Native Studies Department at St. Thomas University. Photo: St. Thomas University.

Changing NB one garden at a time

By MARYLYNN CÔTÉ AND NAJAT ABDOU-MCFARLAND

In these times of economic uncertainty and environmental crisis, many people are turning to gardens as an alternative to grocery stores for their food. In New Brunswick, there are community gardens in Fredericton, Sackville, Moncton, Bathurst and Saint John.

Andi Emrich, an organizer with the NB Community Harvest Gardens in Fredericton, explains that community gardens can “build community, bring people together from different backgrounds, build resilience in the city, build capacity, give people more skills to improve their lives, and diversify green space.” Jeffrey St. Pierre, also with the group, believes community gardens are important because they can provide food to the community food bank, provide inexpensive local nutritious food, as well as provide gardening space for those in apartment buildings.

A variety of community groups such as Daybreak Mental Health Centre and Tantramar Family Resource Centre have plots in the Sackville Community Garden. The garden is also home to Community Forests International's apple permaculture garden and native forest garden.

Committed to organic gardening and supporting the local economy, the Sackville Community Garden does not use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. The Sackville Community Garden supports the local greenhouse, Anderson’s, by purchasing its Maritime organic seeds. The garden places an emphasis on growing vegetables and fruits that can thrive in the Tantramar area.

Organizers with NB Community Harvest Gardens has approached Fredericton city councillors and staff with their idea of turning patches of Fredericton's public green space into community garden plots. The group has been eyeing a



Dave Thomas holds a bunch of carrots he grew in the Sackville Community Garden. Photo: Najat Abdou-McFarland.

small corner of Wilmot Park on Woodstock Road as a potential site for a community garden. It is near high density dwellings, has access to bike trails, bus routes, sidewalks and parking, and it boasts facilities like water and washrooms.

City officials cite security, pests, vandalism and an “overarching vision to maintain as much unobstructed green space as possible” as reasons for not supporting community gardens in city parks. On the other hand, the city has discussed the possibility of rezoning parkland as surplus land, facilitating development of those lands.

Residents organized a petition against rezoning the parkland in the spring of 2010 while the Conservation Council of NB, Nature Trust NB, Nature NB and the Fredericton Nature Club went on record against the sale, development or disposal of the city's parkland. Due to public outcry, the city passed a one year moratorium on rezoning parkland on May 31st.

Residents welcomed the decision but continue to seek a long term guarantee that their neighbouring natural areas will be protected.

Food security (the availability of food and one's access to it) is a growing problem as oil and food prices rise. More and more small farmers are going out of business to be replaced by large unsustainable industrial farms. Cities now depend on food imports from across the globe. New Brunswick imports 85% of its food. According to some estimates, if trucks stopped due to a hurricane for example, grocery stores would be out of food in three days.

Small-scale family farming was once dominant in our region. Today, agriculture is characterized by higher concentration of land ownership and increasingly mechanized production. Waves of small farmers were and continue to this day to be dispossessed of their farms, forced to join the swelling ranks of wage-labourers without land.

New Brunswick farmers are depending more than ever before on off-farm income to support themselves and their operations, according to figures released by Statistics Canada in August 2010. Off-farm activities such as part-time jobs or operating another business account for 75.6 per cent of the total income of New Brunswick farmers. The provincial government's lack of support to our farmers is indicative in the amount allocated in provincial budgets to agriculture. According to New Brunswick's provincial 2010-2011 Main Budget Estimates, the combined ordinary account budget for the Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture is less than one percent (a paltry 0.56%) of the total provincial ordinary account budget.

The variety of movements around food, including slow-food, local food, organic food and community gardens, are attempting to counteract the symptoms of a broken system.

NB Community Harvest Garden: nbchg.org
Sackville Community Garden: sackvillecommunitygarden.blogspot.com/
Community Forest International: forestsinternational.org

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org. To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email: community@nbmediacoop.org

World March of Women 2010 - Fri, Oct. 22, all are invited to the NB World March of Women reunion in Fredericton, from 11am to 4:30pm. The 2010 slogan: “Women On The March Until We Are All Free!” Join a discussion on women’s economic autonomy, their access to resources, and the struggle to eliminate violence against women. Meet outside the NB Legislature for a short celebration followed by a march to the Delta for lunch and guided discussion on women’s issues during the past 10 years. Women and men are welcome. March participants will wear purple scarves made by women in Guatemala (available for \$10). Registration is \$35. Includes lunch and scarf. Subsidies available. Email: joni.leger@hotmail.com or (506) 858-1617.

Latin Night - Hosted by the YMCA's International Committee. Oct. 23 (8pm-1 am) at the SUB Ballroom, UNB, Fredericton. Tickets available at Cultures, the YMCA or by contacting Trish at fpsyip@nb.aibn.com or (506) 462-3063. Admission is \$10. All proceeds go toward supporting the partnership between the YMCAs in Fredericton and Honduras.

Critical Mass Bike Ride - Take the streets on bikes the last Friday of every month. Upcoming ride: Oct. 29,

5:30pm, Officer’s Square, Fredericton.

Cinema Politica is a network of community and campus locals screening documentaries on issues that matter. In Fredericton, Cinema Politica returns every Friday night at 7:00pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. Cinema Politica locals also exist in Fundy, Sackville, Saint John, Moncton and Taymouth. Check out film schedules at cinemapolitica.org

Membership Options

☐ \$3.00/month

☐ \$10.00/month

☐ \$25.00/month

☐ \$10.00/year

☐ \$30.00/year

☐ \$50.00/year

☐ Other _____

☐ I would like to become a member but I cannot be a sustainer right now.

Payment Options

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Application forms and cheques may be mailed to NB Media Co-op at 180 St. John St, Fredericton NB, E3B 4A9