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 afford the risk of being interviewed by CBC published online on August 16, 2010, Annalisa Taras, a former lawyer, said, "in small claims courts, people have 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 is no limit of dollars of costs awarded against them." New Brunswick's new small claims process is also more intimidating as claims must now be presented in case before a judge in the Court of Queen's Bench.

The provincial government of New Brunswick is proposing to charge people $1,000 paid to people with liabilities 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 by payment because it may involve a rent increase. The inclusion of one-twelth of the PCC money ($863.33) 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 would be a rent increase. Today, with social housing 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 cheque).

The Atlantic Wildlife Institute, based in Cookville, NB, is facing closure following the provincial government's refusal to continue funding the organization, 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 Filipino Farm 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 Justice For Migrant Workers, "health and safety violations are an everyday occurrence for migrant workers. From chemicals, pesticides, respirator figure, to faulty equipment, to workplace bullying and harassment, migrant workers from across the province have described countless examples of abuses 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 Nova Scotia works 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 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.

Andrew 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 cultures in the long term is mother-tongue education (MTM) education." According to Bear Nicholas, "it is the imposition of English or French as the medium of instruction for the education 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 is that these children have no one to communicate with, no one to interpret their interests, no one to answer children's questions of Malisile or Mi'kmak 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."

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmedia.coop.org. To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email: community@nbmedia.coop.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 is "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 t-shirts made by women in Guatemala (available for $10). Registration is $35. Includes lunch and scarf. Subsidies available. Email: joni.legier@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. Ticket available at Culture, the YMCA or by contacting Trish at fsp@nb.aibn.com or (506) 462-3063. Admission is $10. All proceeds go toward supporting the partnership between the YMCA's in Fredericton and Havana, Cuba.

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.

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

By MARYLYNN COTE AND JABU DROU- MCFLARAND

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 Tantamar 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.

Commited to organizing gardening and supporting the local economy, the Sackville Community Garden does not use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. The Sackville Community Garden supports the local greenehouse, Anderson's, by purchasing its Maritime organic seeds. The garden places an emphasis on growing vegetables and fruits that can thrive in the Tantamar 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 eying a 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 electricity for the proposers of the project.

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 the parkland.

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 Community Gardens 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, or are being displaced 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 running for a year, 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 commodity prices, 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-laborers with little or no 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% of the total income of New Brunswick farmers. Farmers are going on record against the government's failure to support our farmers is indicative of the amount allocated in provincial budgets to agriculture. According to New Brunswick’s 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: forestinternational.org

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

Membership Options
- $3.00/month
- $1.00/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
- Cash
- Credit card payments
- Cheque
- Direct deposit
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Application forms and cheques may be mailed to NB Media Co-op at 130 St. John St, Fredericton NB, E3B 4K1.