



# The Brief

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## Wabanaki rallies for Wet’suwet’en and their right to say no to pipelines

By JARED DURELLE



**Miigam’agan, St. Thomas University’s Elder-In-Residence (centre), speaks at the Fredericton rally to support the Wet’suwet’en on Jan. 15, 2019.** Photo by Jared Durelle.

The struggle over the Coastal Gaslink pipeline continues. About four weeks after contractors bulldozed through the traplines of the Wet’suwet’en people, land defenders based at the healing camp continue to resist the pipeline development.

The NB Media Co-op spoke with a representative of the Unist’ot’en healing camp who explained that the people want to keep control of the facility, which is the result of the work of many community members. The healing camp representatives have explored multiple means to halt the further development of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, requiring substantial amounts of legal work. Currently, new investigations and case files are ongoing.

The camp spokesperson said: “We have been struggling to get anyone to listen to what we’ve got going on right now. When the arrests happened all the hotels filled up with news crews from across the country. We know we could get that back if we just shut the gate and put out some people in, but that is not what we want.” Instead, the land defenders are consulting with their own archaeologist about the best way to move forward.

In January, Indigenous people and allies across the country held demonstrations of solidarity and support for the Wet’suwet’en land defenders.

About 100 people rallied on Fredericton’s Westmorland Bridge during the noon hour on Jan. 15, slowing traffic, to show their solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en people who are opposing the Coastal GasLink gas pipeline on their territory in northern British Columbia.

Kyanna Kingbird, a St. Thomas University (STU) student from Esgenoopetitj, organized the rally. At the rally, she was joined by Wolastoq Grand Council Chief Ron Tremblay (Spasaqsit Possesom), STU Elder-in-Residence Miigam’agan, traditional singers, drummers, elders, students and allies, which included representatives of the Communist Party of Canada.

“The system we’re living in isn’t set up to benefit us, and when one Indigenous person is elected to be a part of that and speak for us they just end up benefiting themselves. The system is set up to depend on the economy so that is all we defend,” said Kingbird.

The day before the rally, Tremblay, Alma Brooks, a Wolastoq Clan Grandmother and a dozen allies met with Fredericton Oromocto MP Matt DeCoursey to state their support for the Wet’suwet’en and traditional governments’ right to say no to developments on their territory.

Tremblay told DeCoursey that First Nations are being coerced into supporting pipelines on their territory due to their impoverished conditions, a historical legacy of colonialism. Some First Nations along the path of pipelines in British Columbia are supportive of the projects while hereditary clan chiefs remain opposed.

The Fredericton rally and meeting with MP were part of actions held in mid-January to support the Wet’suwet’en in the wake of 14 people being arrested on Jan. 8 for allegedly failing to comply with a court injunction that ordered people stop blockading the Gitdumt’en access point road so that Coastal GasLink could work on their pipeline.

The Gitdumt’en blockade was part of the Unist’ot’en Camp set up nine years ago to defend Indigenous territory from various resource extraction projects.

According to a Unist’ot’en Camp communiqué released after the take down of the Gitdumt’en blockade:

This fight is far from over.

We paved the way with the Delgamuuk’w court case and the time has come for Delgamuuk’w II. We have never had the financial resources to challenge the colonial court system, due to the enormous price tag of an Aboriginal title case.

Who will stand with us to make sure this pipeline does not go through?

Who will support our work to reclaim our territories and assert our right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent?

Who will insist that Indigenous peoples have the right to say NO to projects that inflict violence on our people and territories?

*Jared Durelle is a journalism student at St. Thomas University.*

## Challenging white supremacy with activism and scholarship

By SUSAN O’DONNELL

On Feb. 16, the CBC published an article on its website: “Preserving a memory” about “great old houses” in New Brunswick. The caption under a photograph of a home in downtown Fredericton included: “The right side of the house was used to house Odell’s slaves.” The slaves or the lost memories of living in the master’s house were not mentioned in the article itself.

During a snowstorm in Fredericton the previous evening, Funké Aladejebi, a professor of History at the University of New Brunswick, presented the third annual Black History Month lecture, “Blackness at the Intersections, Examining History and Black Identity in 20th Century Canada.”

Aladejebi posed a question to her audience: “What are the first two questions black Canadians get asked?” Answer: 1) Where are you from? and 2) No, where are you REALLY from? She displayed images of African-Americans who are well-known in Canada and black Canadians who made significant achievements but are unknown by most white Canadians.

Those questions and responses to the imagery assume that black Canadians are not from here, and if they were from here, memories of them have been erased. Canada’s history is replete with “willful attempts to make black people invisible,” Aladejebi said. Based on her extensive historical scholarship, her lecture was the story of black activism and resistance to erasure in Canada.

White Canadians have created a dominant narrative that slavery and oppression of black people happened south of the border, and that that Canada is the country at the end of the freedom railroad, where slaves became free. On the contrary, since the 1600s and until 1834 when slavery was abolished across the British empire, many people of wealth in the French and British colonies owned and traded slaves. As evidenced in the recent CBC article, slave owners and their slaves lived in “great old houses” still serving as family homes in New Brunswick.

One of Aladejebi’s central arguments is that the forced labour of black people in Canada was concurrent with the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, and the two narratives must be understood in relation to one another in order to recognize that white supremacy is the common feature in both stories. However, those intertwined narratives are complex and sometimes contradictory.

**Read the rest of the story at [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org).**

*Susan O’Donnell is a member of the NB Media Co-op editorial board and the principal investigator of the UNB RAVEN project.*



**Funké Aladejebi at the Third Annual Black History Month Lecture at UNB Fredericton on Feb 15.** Photo by Susan O’Donnell.



# Living the good life in rural New Brunswick

By TRACY GLYNN



Amy Floyd is championing rural New Brunswick as a place to work, grow food and live the good life.

Taymouth shares many of the struggles faced by rural communities in New Brunswick but newcomers choosing to make their home in its rolling hills are part of a different, more hopeful story about rural New Brunswick.

Taymouth was once home to a downtown street with shops, a post office and a train station. Today, the shops and post office are closed and the train is no longer heard but a growing number of young newcomers are making Taymouth home.

A short drive to the province’s capital Fredericton, Taymouth, with a population of about 600, is an attractive place to live for those seeking a good life on the land in close proximity to an urban centre with an airport and other amenities.

Jim Emberger came to Taymouth with his wife Marcy in 2006 from Baltimore, Maryland.

“We were both approaching retirement age and weren’t looking to be farmers or pioneers, but we feel at home in nature and were seeking that, plus a feeling of community,” recalls Emberger.

“The land surrounding the confluence of the Tay and Nashwaak rivers certainly filled our desire for natural beauty, but the deciding moment to move to Taymouth was when we stopped by the small community center, which had once been the local schoolhouse. It was closed, but the entrance was filled with notices for a weekend market, a musical event, classes for Tai Chi, etc. It just felt like the place we had been looking for. Rural, but with a sense of community,” adds Emberger.

Amy Floyd grew up in Cassidy Lake, a Southern New Brunswick rural community that was adversely affected by the closure of the PotashCorp potash mine in the late 1990s. She moved to Taymouth in 2015 and is part of making Taymouth thrive as a community.

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“We need to create our own jobs,” says Floyd who is championing local food production as a volunteer with the Hayes Urban Teaching Farm in Fredericton. The teaching farm, one of New Brunswick Community Harvest Gardens’ main projects, is repurposing an 8-acre farm in Devon, on the city’s north side, to foster a new generation of farmers.

Recently, on a chilly December morning, Floyd installed wood duck boxes for the Nashwaak Watershed Association along the Nashwaak River. The boxes provide habitat for cavity nesting birds like wood ducks and kestrels.

“In the afternoon I went skiing along the river and entered the trail just as the snowmobile club groomer was leaving. What a beautiful day. I’m so thankful to live on the Nashwaak,” recounts Floyd.

Along with settlers who have deeper roots in what is traditional Wolastoq territory, they are choosing to live a life on the land and they are among the province’s fiercest opponents to risky resource extraction—namely shale gas and the proposed Sisson open-pit tungsten and molybdenum mine and tailings dam—that could harm the Nashwaak watershed.

The Nashwaak River is deemed one of the most pristine in the province and is one of the last places where the endangered Atlantic salmon spawn.

Floyd and her Nashwaak neighbours are challenging the dominant narrative in New Brunswick, promoted largely by the Irving-owned Brunswick News newspapers in the three largest cities. Their narrative suggests that the future sustainability for rural families and communities depends not on their resilience and innovation but rather on their support for mineral and gas extraction and pipelines.

Amanda Wildeman came to New Brunswick from Alberta to study human rights at St. Thomas University. After her degree and a stint in Guatemala working with farmers growing fair trade coffee and practicing permaculture—the art of living and working with nature—she decided to stay in New Brunswick.

Wildeman recently settled on a farm in Taymouth on the banks of the Nashwaak River. “I chose to live in Taymouth for many reasons, I wanted to be on the water, I wanted to be close to Fredericton, I wanted to have a bit more land and space to raise chickens and bees, and I wanted community,” says Wildeman.

The former executive director of the National Farmer’s Union, Wildeman ran for the Green Party in the Taymouth area in the 2018 provincial election and has been an outspoken critic of the Sisson mine proposed in the Upper Nashwaak. Like Floyd, she is enjoying the perks of rural life.

“Taymouth has a vibrant community of folks who have been there for generations and folks who have chosen to move there more recently. Being only 20 minutes out of town, I still get to actively participate in my regular activities in Fredericton, but I also get a whole new set of activities and people in my life,” says Wildeman.

“And it’s breathtakingly beautiful,” adds Wildeman.

Tracy Glynn is a contributor and editorial board member of the NB Media Co-op and a researcher with Rural Action and Voices for the Environment (RAVEN) based at the University of New Brunswick.

# Community Calendar

To list your community event, email [info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org). For an updated listing of events, check [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org).

## RAVEN Digital Storytelling Workshops

Want to learn how to tell stories about your rural community? Join Rural Action & Voices for the Environment (RAVEN) at one of the following workshops on photovoice (telling stories through photographs), cellphilms (telling stories through cellphones) and participatory video.

Taymouth: Monday, March 11 at 7:00pm at the Taymouth Community Centre

Sussex: Saturday, March 16 at 1:00pm at the AX Centre, 12 Maple Ave.

For more information, contact [raven.unb@gmail.com](mailto:raven.unb@gmail.com).

**Tertulias** this winter at Milda’s Pizzas (732 Charlotte St.) in Fredericton will feature talks on the lives and works of Rumi, Howard Zinn and Judith Butler on scheduled Wednesdays at 7:00pm. For the schedule, Facebook: Tertulia or contact: [fredericton.tertulia@gmail.com](mailto:fredericton.tertulia@gmail.com).

**Cinema Politica** believes in the power of art not only to entertain but to engage, inform, inspire, and provoke social change. Cinema Politica is the largest volunteer-run, community and campus-based documentary-screening network in the world. In Fredericton, films are screened on Fridays during the fall and winter at 7:00 pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. Check out film schedules and venues, or start your own chapter at: [cinemapolitica.org](http://cinemapolitica.org).

# Author expresses beauty of Palestine

By SOPHIE M. LAVOIE

Gaza is more than a place of “despairing gray,” says author Marcello Di Cintio, despite being deemed possibly “uninhabitable” starting in 2020, according to a UN Report. Di Cintio presented his latest book at the Alumni Memorial Hall at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton on Jan. 30, 2019.

Based in Calgary, Di Cintio has written on various topics. His *Walls: Travels Along the Barricades*, published with Goose Lane in 2012, examined the growth of the wall phenomenon around the world.

While a writer-in-residence in Palestine, Di Cintio discovered that “there is more to Palestine than the cruel accounting of bombings and death, an enduring and unsolvable political problem, a place of despairing gray,” as he specifies in his book.

At the Fredericton event, Di Cintio read from his latest book, *Pay No Heed to the Rockets: Palestine in the Present Tense* (2018). The author visited the country for the first time in 1999 when he spent three months there. He returned to the occupied territories in 2015 and 2016 to talk to Palestinian writers and artists who “bare the beauty of a place mostly known for its opposites.”

During his presentation, Di Cintio confessed that he “stole” a line for his book’s title from a text by Mahmoud Darwish, a prominent Palestinian poet, who passed away in 2008. For Di Cintio, this line, which comes after a lengthy recipe for making the perfect cup of coffee, means “we can do the thing that makes us happy” despite being surrounded by “everything the [Israeli] occupation represents.”

For Di Cintio, it was—and is—often literally impossible to “ignore the rockets” and Darwish was clearly being ironic; “preparing for inevitable conflict is a much a part of being Palestinian” as the typical dishes made by two of Di Cintio’s generous hosts in Gaza.

Among the artists and writers he met, one of the poets that has stayed with Di Cintio is Mohammed el-Kurd who was 17 at the time of his interview. Di Cintio says Mohammed’s poems challenge masculine ideals. He is now studying in the U.S. Di Cintio was also struck by a religious young Palestinian woman, Najlaa Attallah who, surprisingly, wrote “highly sexualized and erotic texts.”

When asked what advice he would give journalists covering Palestine, he said they should “take the time to talk to regular people” about their stories. For him, activists, politicians and other dignitaries don’t tell the whole story.

For Di Cintio, “no one visiting [Palestine] could ever come out without sympathy” for Palestinians’ plight. Generalizations and statistics “gloss over” the realities of Palestinian citizens and Di Cintio was able to speak about the people in his book to tell “a human story (...) what things were really like.” According to Di Cintio, after taking the time to visit, it is impossible not to be “pulled into” the political situation but he’s “not a war journalist, that’s not his beat.”

Asked if he has future projects in mind, Di Cintio admitted his fascination with this place: “I’ll end up returning [to Palestine] and writing about something else.”

Sophie M. Lavoie, an editorial board of the NB Media Co-op, publishes on arts and culture for the Co-op.

**Author Marcello Di Cintio answering questions on his book, *Pay No Heed to the Rockets*, in Fredericton.** Photo by Sophie M. Lavoie.