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“Taken” tells the story of Gladys Simon from Elsipogtog

By SOPHIE M. LAVIE

The unsolved mysterious death of Gladys Simon, a New Brunswick Indigenous woman, was the focus of a film screened recently in Fredericton to raise awareness surrounding the missing and murdered Indigenous women. Andrea Colfer, sister of Gladys Simon and an indigenous educator, participated in a panel discussion after the screening with Imelda Perley, University of New Brunswick’s Elder-in-Residence, and Lisa Meeches, the creator of the episode from the acclaimed series “Taken.”

UNB Fredericton’s Mīkma’iwktọstọ Centre hosted the film screening on Oct. 11 as one of the events in the third annual Red Shawi Campaign which strives to raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

Professors Evie Plaice and Margaret Kress, both from UNB’s Faculty of Education, hosted the event. Kress also organizes the Faculty’s Critical Film Series which addresses “issues of colonization, globalization, revolution, gender, class, ability, sexuality, and life.”

New Brunswick connection

On Sept. 10, 2012, human remains were found by chance on difficult terrain at New Dam Lake, a very isolated location in Sugarloaf Park, south of Campbelltown. Ultimately, the coroner’s report identified the remains as those of Gladys Simon, and found no sign of foul play.

Originally from Eliptopog, Simon was 41 years old when she disappeared in 2004 from the Restigouche Hospital, a psychiatric institution. Her sister Andrea Colfer was not made aware of her disappearance until two weeks had passed, at which point Colfer mobilized the community to find Simon. Community leaders, family and friends like Robert Levy (featured in the film) did as much as they could to find Simon but were not successful.

Simon’s family believed there was little chance she could have made it out to New Dam Lake alone. As an adult, Simon had “made poor decisions” following the death of her mother and a number of years in foster care. Patty Musgrave, Aboriginal student advisor for the New Brunswick Community College, was interviewed in the episode. She mentioned that Simon was a victim of the Sixties Scoop as she was taken to foster care in Moncton from her home community after her mother’s death.

Simon eventually ended up in Restigouche Hospital where her niece and friends remember her as being happy all the time. Earlier in her life, Simon had violent behaviours and on the day she disappeared, Simon had not been allowed a hospital visit. Authorities assumed that Simon had wandered away during her daily walk and become disoriented.

The episode on Simon featured a dramatization of the memories reported by family members and friends, as well as photos and historical documents such as police reports and letters. The episode also contained beautiful shots of New Brunswick. According to Meeches, the series seeks to show “how much Gladys (Simon) was loved, will always be.

Community Calendar

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Energy East is dead – here’s the real reason why

BY ANDREA HARDEN-DONAHUE & MAUDE BARLOW

Hundreds marched against the proposed Energy East bitumen pipeline in Red Head, shown here, in May 2015. The proposed pipeline would have ended at an oil tank farm in the small community near Saint John’s other industrial plants. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

Were it not the failings of the National Energy Board and the newly proposed climate test, it would have been the protection of drinking water, Indigenous rights and community opposition that killed Energy East. But you’d never know this from the coverage of TransCanada’s cancellation of the largest oilsands pipeline in the world.

As the tsunami of responses begins to recede, it’s time to tell the truth about the nation-building, Quebec-blaming myth Energy East’s death is perpetuating.

Energy East was never about getting Canadian oil to Canadians, nor was it about reducing imports of so-called foreign oil. Even if the three refinery routes along the pipeline route had only used crude from Energy East, a whopping 428,000 barrels per day was still for export. But this wouldn’t have happened. Quebec refineries have access to cheaper Canadian and U.S. oil sources, meaning more like 90 per cent of Energy East’s 1.1 million barrel per day pipeline was for export.

Meanwhile, Ian Whitcomb, president of Irving Oil, admitted to the Financial Post’s editorial board that Energy East would not stop the company from importing oil from Saudi Arabia.

A real conversation about energy security would mean talking about redirecting Newfoundland oil exports to Atlantic Canada. It would mean Prime Minister Justin Trudeau renegotiating the restrictive energy provisions of NAFTA that lock Canada into energy exports to the U.S.

Instead of discussing the very real risks identified in Energy East for Quebec, pundits rehearsed tired old clichés bashing East for Quebec, while pandering to the newly proposed climate test, it would have been the resistance to Energy East, based on the assertion of Indigenous rights, community resistance, and the protection of our water and climate.

We should be talking about the more than 100,000 messages the NED received in support of a pipeline climate test, more than 2,000 applications to intervene citing a climate test and pressure from countless actions exposing the 1.1 million barrel-per-day pipeline’s climate impact. TransCanada first suggested it would drop Energy East the day after the NED announced it would include a climate test in the review of Energy East.

While we can’t overlook the impact of volatile oil prices on undermining the economic case for Energy East, the backdrop of all of this is a much larger shift ending the era of fossil-fuel dominance.

While climate chaos unfolds daily, the global movement to stop fossil fuels is blocking new coal mines, banning fracking and Arctic offshore drilling and, yes, stopping pipelines. It’s high time we start fighting over fossilized energy projects and start the hard work of realizing a sustainable economy that works for people and the planet.

Andrea Harden-Donahue is a climate justice campaigner for the Council of Canadians. Maude Barlow is the honorary chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

Gathered at the screening of “Taken” in Fredericton on Oct. 17 were Imelda Perley, Leona Colfer, Eva Plaice, Margaret Kress, Andrea Colfer and Natasha Martin Mitchell (left to right). Photo by Sophie M. Lavie.

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The escalating war of words between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un has captured the attention in the last few months, but much of it eludes the historical complexities of the North Korean regime, and foreign policy discussions tend to ignore Luc Walhain, Associate Professor of History at St. Thomas University and an expert on modern Korean history. The NB Media Co-op's Chris Walhain caught up with him to provide greater context.

CW: North Korea recently referred to the U.S. as engaging in a "provocation," which suggests that Donald Trump's rhetoric, his "fire and fury," and the threat of "total annihilation" is war. Is North Korea simply reacting to rhetorical flourish or are there more substantial concerns that justify the regime's response?

NW: North Korea's communications have consistently been inflammatory and colourful, but the North's regime has also run a series of exercises that, in the words of the South's Defense Minister, are "dry runs for war." Therefore, it's unlikely that the U.S. will want to leave East Asia, which is still resonates strongly amongst Koreans. Most North Koreans may actually see them as a dry run for war, if one wants to "bring North Korea to its knees," cutting off food, which is what the North Koreans may actually see them as a dry run for war, if one wants to "bring North Korea to its knees," for thinking about the current conflict?

CW: What salient events of the last 70 years really stick out for thinking about the current conflict?

NW: The so-called "domino theory" may no longer apply in today's global context, but, during the Cold War, containing communism was only one amongst several reasons to keep hundreds of U.S. military bases in the region. The U.S. military bases in the region were not actual military engagements, but acts of verbal intimidation, and the U.S. military bases in the region may well have been an acceptable compensation for the costs involved in defending South Korea, particularly in light of how wealthy and robust the South Korean economy has become since the 1950s.

CW: Michael Auslin is probably correct to say that if one wants to "be part of the solution and make the world a better place," a better understanding of the historical context of the "Taken" series is now in its second season. Thirty families of the "Taken" series tells the stories of missing and murdered indigenous women. It still resonates strongly amongst Koreans. Most North Koreans may actually see them as a dry run for war, if one wants to "bring North Korea to its knees," cutting off food, which is what the North Koreans may actually see them as a dry run for war.

CW: Why doesn't the research on the mass disappearances and killings in Korea point towards the possibility that the disappearances and killings were not a response to the war and its consequences, but an attempt to control and subjugate the Korean population?

NW: The research team contacted families; some decided not to participate and some families came forward. The research team was able to access records and documents "that treated [Indigenous peoples] as inferior peoples." For Indigenous peoples, Colfer says "we need to understand the experience of having two young boys was "Tipi Tales," a series for a male version of "Taken" tentatively called "Stolen Brothers." Colfer is a proponent of balanced mental health care and says that the way in which police departments collaborate with the series varies, but most turn back to statements of concern as a reason to continue. Each episode focuses on a family and on a particular woman or on a particular woman, and the research team is interviewing the women in a forest cottage. This children's series is a "traditional" representation of the healing process all over the world.

CW: The second set of events I wish to mention is the 1997 framework halted Pyongyang's plutonium processing. In 1998, the Sunshine Policy initiated by South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung led to an unprecedented détente. The framework ended in 2007 with the collapse of inter-Korean economic cooperation and relations. Unfortunately, as soon as he was sworn in as U.S. President in 2001, George W. Bush declared his opposition to the Six-Party agreements of 2005 and 2007 later showed that "be part of the solution and make the world a better place." In 2002, the series started in 2002. The series is based on the seven sacred powwow dances. The research team contacted families; some decided not to participate and some families came forward. The research team was able to access records and documents "that treated [Indigenous peoples] as inferior peoples." For Indigenous peoples, Colfer says "we need to understand the experience of having two young boys was "Tipi Tales," a series for a male version of "Taken" tentatively called "Stolen Brothers." Colfer is a proponent of balanced mental health care and says that the way in which police departments collaborate with the series varies, but most turn back to statements of concern as a reason to continue. Each episode focuses on a family and on a particular woman or on a particular woman, and the research team is interviewing the women in a forest cottage. This children's series is a "traditional" representation of the healing process all over the world.