



The Brief

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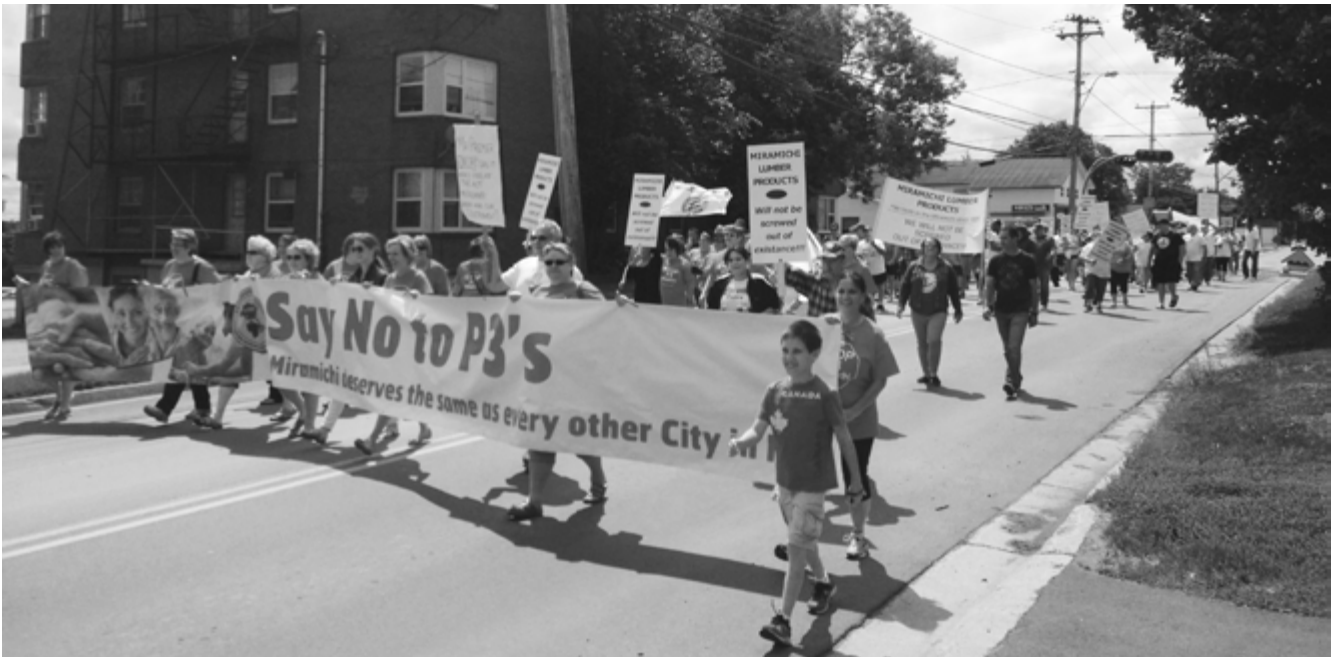
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“We’re going to stand up and be counted:” Miramichi rallies against job losses

By TERRY WISHART



Miramichiers marching against privatization and job losses on August 8. Photo by Terry Wishart.

About 400 Miramichi mill and hospital workers and their supporters gathered on August 8 to demand the return of their jobs. Miramichi has experienced severe job losses with future cuts planned.

Town hall organizer Aaron Allison opened the meeting, saying the people of the Miramichi “are going to stand up and be counted.”

The jobs of at least 40 workers at Hebert’s Recycling are on the line as that company faces a shutdown in the fall.

Fred Hamilton, operations manager at Hebert’s Recycling, said the company is committed to providing good jobs in the community. Hebert’s Recycling receives no public funds in the form of government transfers.

The company and workers oppose the plan to transfer their work to out-of-province companies jointly owned by Pepsi and Coca Cola beverage container company Encorp Atlantic. They call for legislation to ensure beverage containers are processed in the province. This simple move would ensure their operation in the Miramichi.

Further cuts are planned to other industries that affect Miramichi workers. Around 300 public employees at two Miramichi regional senior care homes have been told to reapply for their positions, which will be fewer and lower paying.

On behalf of the senior care professionals, CUPE official Patrick Roy said it is unconscionable that health

care services such as the proposed public-private partnership (P3) seniors’ care facilities profit from the care of the elderly in our communities. Government auditors’ consistently conclude that P3 ventures cost significantly more to operate than publicly run services.

The Miramichi town hall meeting was attended by Progressive Conservative Southwest Miramichi MLA Jake Stewart as well as NDP and People’s Alliance Party representatives and company managers. Two empty chairs reserved for local Liberal MLAs Bill Fraser and Lisa Harris made the absence of these representatives at the town hall notable. Stewart defended the Alward government’s secretive negotiations with the J.D. Irving Ltd. that resulted in the company gaining an excess of 440,000 cubic meters of additional wood per year for 25 years from New Brunswick’s public forest.

Danny Anderson, president of Miramichi Lumber Mill, spoke to the crowd about pre-election guarantees from Premiers Alward and Gallant that Crown forest wood would be processed at the mill.

He described the “amnesia” that appeared to set in shortly after they were elected to office. Anderson said that the mill’s management merely wanted a guaranteed allotment of wood to remain in operation.

Anderson said Miramichi Lumber is regularly contacted by investors interested in the Miramichi. Potential investors are turned away because there’s “not one stick of wood being processed in the Miramichi” as Anderson pointed out. He stated “If a company in the Miramichi can’t cut wood then no one should be cutting wood.”

Miramichi Lumber Financial Officer Hal Raper described the company’s plan to build a privately invested \$200 million wood fiber processing facility that would have created 400 jobs. The proposed plan would have processed scrap wood into engineered wood products and created energy for the electrical grid.

“We couldn’t get a meeting with (Alward’s) Minister or the Deputy Minister. We didn’t even get a question from a bureaucrat,” Raper said. “How is that possible unless someone else controls the wood supply in New Brunswick?”

Terry Wishart is a member of the Fredericton Chapter of the Council of Canadians and Green Party candidate for the Mactaquac-Tobique Riding in the 2015 federal election.

Bathurst Festival marred by offensive images of bound and gagged Indigenous women

By MILES HOWE

Trigger Warning: The following article speaks on the topic of sexual assault.

An image of two Indigenous women in full length buckskin dresses, with their hands bound behind their backs and their ankles tied on display at Bathurst Hospitality Days in late July has offended many, leading to calls for an apology and education of the history of settler colonialism in the province.

For the duration of the festival, the image by local artists working with the Bathurst Art Society appeared in a window on the city’s Main Street.

A social media backlash against the image ensued and the City of Bathurst began to receive online complaints.

Patty Musgrave, host of the annual Sisters in Spirit vigil in the Moncton area, penned a scathing letter to Bathurst City Council.

“Yes, I am aware of the sickening ‘legend’ of the Phantom Ship and unlike most of New Brunswick, understand the history of this coastal area and the rapes and most likely murders of Mi’kmaq women that took place with each ship arriving in the bay. Murders. These women are now our Ancestors. They were degraded and used and abused and left for dead over the side of ships. Ripped from their families and for the most part, never to be seen again,” wrote Musgrave.

“Were you aware that still happens today? Were you aware of the social media hashtag #MMIW? It stands for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Were you aware or do you even acknowledge that there are approximately 1,800 missing and/or murdered indigenous



This painting of bound and gagged Indigenous women was part of Bathurst’s Hospitality Days.

Photo via Twitter.

women across this country as we speak? Were you aware that a National Inquiry is one of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee? Do you know what the TRC is? Do you understand what it all means? Have you heard of Sisters in Spirit? Do you know that each October 4th nationally we hold vigils to honour our Missing and Murdered sisters...including those who died centuries ago. Because it is still happening Mayor, Council and Committee. Please feel free to see www.nwac.ca to educate yourselves,” continued Musgrave.

Musgrave is demanding a public apology from city council as well as their education on the history of the Mi’kmaq and Maliseet people in the province. She wants Bathurst to host a Sisters in Spirit Vigil on Oct. 4 to honour the missing and murdered women.

Anne-Marie Gammon, municipal councilor for the City of Bathurst, in an online response to Musgrave’s complaint,

noted that: “The paintings you depict were not accepted or part of the City’s contribution to the Hospitality Days Celebration. The paintings were done by volunteers from the Bathurst Art Society.”

Bathurst Art Society President Rita May Gates notes that the offending painting of the bound and gagged Indigenous women has since been removed from Main Street, and that no ill-intent was meant.

“We got together and we decided to do the story of the Phantom Ship. On Friday, we learned that our paintings did offend some people, so we did revise it,” says Gates. “It wasn’t our intention to create a misunderstanding or even to negate the Indigenous people. We just didn’t think at the time that the images would be painful and upsetting and of course we do respect their culture and stories very much. This depiction does open thought and dialogue regarding the plight of Aboriginal women, the abuse and femicide they have suffered over the centuries. We just send prayers for hope and healing going out to First Nations’ people. It was never our intention to hurt anyone.”

In terms of future depictions of Indigenous peoples, bound and gagged and forlornly awaiting rape and murder or otherwise, Gates notes that consultation with “any ethnic group” will be done before potentially putting their likenesses to canvas.

“In retrospect, if we were ever doing anything regarding the Acadians, or any kind of ethnic group, we will consult with them,” says Gates.

Miles Howe is an editor with the Halifax Media Co-op, where this article first appeared. A longer version of this story and Patty Musgrave’s letter to Bathurst City Council can be found on the NB Media Co-op website.

Killing with kindness? Fredericton’s response to panhandling

By ASAF RASHID

In Brief



“Billy” the panhandler, named and dressed by busker Andrew.
Photo by Asaf Rashid.

Fredericton - Downtown Fredericton Inc., in partnership with the City of Fredericton, recently installed new “kindness meters” in the downtown area as part of a strategy to end panhandling.

The meters are refurbished parking meters, painted green and put on downtown sidewalks in areas frequently used by panhandlers and buskers. They each contain the message, “Panhandling is not the answer: donate your spare change to this kindness meter and make a difference. Money collected by this meter will support local community groups assisting those in need with food and shelter.”

The money is currently destined in a 50/50 split towards the Fredericton Community kitchen and Fredericton Homeless Shelters.

Fredericton City Councilor Greg Ericson is chair of a joint task force between Downtown Fredericton Inc. and the City of Fredericton to address the panhandling concerns of downtown merchants and residents.

While aggressive panhandling has been identified as the reason for action on panhandling, ending all panhandling is the objective of the strategy. Bruce McCormack, General Manager of Downtown Fredericton Inc. told CBC on July 6 that, “We want to get rid of the panhandlers, simple.”

Roy, a local panhandler does not fit the description of the aggressive panhandler. “I don’t ask people for nothing.

I sit here and mind my business. If people want to give me a couple of dollars, that’s fine.”

Roy is concerned that the introduction of the meters will be used as an excuse to fine panhandlers more often. Law enforcement can issue tickets for between \$140–\$640 for panhandling.

According to Ericson, the Police Department issued 29 panhandling tickets in 2014. Twenty two tickets have been issued to date in 2015.

Dan Weston, director and founder of the Fredericton Anti-Poverty Organization, thinks the meters will create more harm because they will not replace panhandling income.

“We don’t want taxpayers money going to individual panhandlers. So, all sorts of individual panhandlers will be left high in lurch and will have to discover other ways of making money ... driving people into more situations where they’ll have to break into more and more houses to get some things to take and sell for food or drugs or whatever (needs) poverty brings you,” argues Weston.

Councilor Ericson wants to support income streams for those who panhandle. Within the last 15 years, two bottle exchange plants moved out of the downtown area. Ericson says that the city is considering bringing back bottle exchange plants to the downtown area as a means to provide opportunity for those in need.

Currently, the only piece of the panhandling strategy in place are the kindness meters. The Joint

Task Force on Panhandling is expecting them to yield results. However, Ericson notes that their effectiveness in combatting panhandling in Montreal, Ottawa, Windsor and Victoria is unknown.

Ericson wants the province of New Brunswick to join the city of Fredericton in their anti-poverty measures. “We have yet to have provincial members at the table, which is a tremendous loss. The Department of Social Development, this is within their mandate. Their absence diminishes our chances to do anything effective here,” says Ericson.

Also notably absent from the panhandling committee have been panhandlers and buskers. “There has not yet been members invited to the table who have lived experiences of poverty... I want them to sit at the table,” says Ericson.

Roy says that no one asked for his opinion on where resources for the poor should be put, namely the money from the kindness meters. Roy, like many other panhandlers, see themselves as misunderstood. “I’m not a bum, just a panhandler,” says Roy.

Two days after the NB Media Co-op interviewed Roy, he said he was told by police to put his panhandling cup away.

Asaf Rashid is a writer for the NB Media Co-op and host of From the Margins, a campus radio show that airs on Monday nights at 8pm on CHSR 97.9.

An online petition is asking New Brunswick Health Minister Victor Boudreau to follow the actions of PEI and fund **gender-confirming surgeries** now. New Brunswick is the only province in Canada to not fund gender-confirming surgeries.

Kyla Jamieson, a student in the Explore program at the Université du Trois Rivières campus in Québec is denouncing **rape culture** embedded in the French language program. Jamieson left the program when staff performed a date rape drug skit that was inappropriate because a would-be rapist deemed one girl too unattractive to try to rape her. Jamieson opposes the lack of will by administration to address her objections to the skit. She says they have also been inactive on a series of sexual harassment and assault incidents against prior Explore participants.

The combined costs of Harper’s enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) plan and income splitting policy, about \$7 billion, is only benefiting wealthy households while not creating **child care** spaces, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Accessible child care advocates say that \$7 billion should rather be spent on providing Canadians with a \$7/day childcare program. Quebec already has a \$7/day childcare program.



“You have taken our gold and now you give us your garbage!” stated Sister Stella Matutina (seen here) in reference to Canadian-owned mines and Canada’s waste dumping in the Philippines at the International Peoples’ Mining Conference in Manila in late July. Canada has been dumping its garbage in the ports of the Philippines as early as June 2013. Critics charge that Canada is violating the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. Sister Matutina is from the natural resource-rich island of Mindanao that has attracted multinational mining companies like Canadian-based TVI. The City of Weimar in Germany awarded Sister Matutina with its 2015 Human Rights Award for continuing her environmental activism despite threats on her life. About 100 activists have been killed on her island in the past two years. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org. To list your event, email: community@nbmediacoop.org.

NB Media Co-op 6th Annual General Meeting. Tues., Sept. 29 at 6:00pm at St. Thomas University. Join us in electing our new board and reviewing last year’s highlights and planning for next year. All are welcome but you must be a member to vote. With special guest speaker, author Alain Deneault, on tax havens and the Irving’s. Opening remarks by the NB Prosperity and Not Austerity Coalition. Contact: info@nbmediacoop.org.

World March of Women in Fredericton. Sat., Oct. 17. Featuring a march and inspiring speakers. “We are not free, until we are all free!” Contact worldmarchwomenfredericton@gmail.com.

Canada in Africa. Join author Yves Engler for the launch of his book on Sun., Oct. 18 at 5:30pm at Three Sisters Cafe, 289 Regent St., Fredericton. Contact: info@nbmediacoop.org.

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 community and campus-based documentary-screening network in the world. Cinema Politica Fredericton screens films on Friday nights. Check out the films and venues at: cinemapolitica.org.

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The NB Media Co-op relies on the financial support of its members to fund high-quality, independent journalism by and for New Brunswickers. **Sign up here!**

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