Jennifer Brant, pictured here with her co-edited book, *Voices from Residential Schools: Indigenous women in her lecture, “Forever Loving, Forever Resisting: Recent Research on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women” as part of the NB Media Co-op's 7th annual general meeting on Sept. 29. The event is presented by St. Thomas University’s Women’s and Gender Studies program, UNB History and the NB Media Co-op. The talk will occur at 7:00 pm at Kinsella Auditorium, McCail Hall, St. Thomas University in Fredericton. Photo from Brock University.

TRIGGER WARNING: This article contains information about sexual assault and/or violence, which may be triggering to survivors.

A chapter I wrote in Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada (Demeter 2018) examines the homicide of New Brunswick teenager Hilary Bonnell. While writing, I worked to find something beyond a story of tragedy.

Many readers will know that Hilary disappeared in September 2009 while walking on a road on the Esgenoôpetitj (Bunty Church) First Nation one early morning. She was 16 and had spent the evening celebrating the end of summer with friends. After weeks of frantic searching, an adult relation, Curtis Bonnell, admitted to hiding Hilary against her will, sexually assaulting her, suffocating her on the lawn in his backyard and disposing of her body. Hilary’s remains were found deep in the woods of the Acadian Peninsula after Curtis revealed the location. Accompanied by an Elder and by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Curtis led the investigative team to the burial site.

In the face of the terrible, heartbreaking facts, the temptation to see only Hilary’s victimization is clear. Admittedly, it was a sad task to track Hilary’s agency while researching the case. It also seemed especially important when conveying a story about an Indigenous woman who loved many things, including lilacs.

Hilary’s legacy of resistance has the potential to benefit future generations. In response to her death, her friends and family dreamed of building a youth centre they planned to name “Hilary’s House” in Esgenoôpetitj. While they were not able to realize this goal, their efforts to remember her, honor her life, and support her grieving family and community. The impact of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is as “unexplainable, unviable bodies,” which possess no “hope or” capacity “as victim bodies, disenfranchised,</p>
Postal workers pitching solutions to climate change

By TRACY GLYNN

The NB Media Co-op interviewed Kristin MacEachen with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers’ Atlantic office about the union’s proposal, “Delivering Community Power,” that aims to tackle some big challenges such as climate change and local economies.

NMBC: One of the most interesting things mentioned in the proposal is postal banking. How is the current banking system hurting people and how does this proposal attempt to make banking better?

KM: A postal bank would provide services to communities that are currently underserved, or not served at all. It would also provide an alternative to payday lenders and the exorbitant fees they charge. It is not hard to go into many small communities across the country and not be able to find a bank, but there is almost always a post office. We have many more post offices than Tim Hortons in this country. We should be utilizing this existing infrastructure. All we have to do to prove postal banking would work is look at any of the countries that have it: Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, Italy and France just to name a few. We all deserve the same services, and this is one way we could close the gap in many of the smaller communities that have long since been forgotten. A study completed showed that postal members working on this proposal is inspiring! The amount of participation we are seeing is the reason this movement is here and today and why support continues to grow.

NMBC: Postal workers in Canada have been behind other changes that have made lives better for working people. What are some of those achievements?

KM: Postal workers continue to fight for all, whether here in Canada or internationally. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world for a better life and society. Changing the working lives for the better for everyone is one of the things CUPW prides itself on. There are many achievements, such as the pay equity at work thing. Help of CUPW such as maternity and parental leave and protections against sexual harassment. The equalization of some wages within our bargaining units is still a battle. Pay equity is still and will continue to be a major issue we need to tackle. We have the right to collective bargaining for all public sector workers and defending that right today.

For CUPW, our history encourages us to continue to fight for social activism because it is who we are. We have policies within our constitution that define social action and ensure that it is an integral part of what we stand for. People’s struggles and their struggles with us to defend our collective bargaining rights. We are not going to get everything we want. We are still going to be worried about “us,” a collective group who are always stronger together.

“The forest management proposal is a clear example of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers engaging in important social unionism at a time when the postal workers are also facing struggles of their own. What are some of those struggles and why should all workers support community banking?”

KM: We are sharing the information and materials far and wide in hopes that the public will also ask for this vision to become reality. We will continue to support our allies such as the Friends of Public Services as they promote these initiatives and provide opportunities for the public to meet and discuss these ideas. We will also continue to promote and meet with Members of Parliament and provincial government, rural communities and all our allies to ask for and demand, more imagine more, for our public postal service.

NMBC: What do you plan to do next on “Delivering Community Power?” How can people support this proposal?

KM: We are looking forward to working with community groups to discuss the type of post office we are proposing. The response to these public meetings has been overwhelming and the support from people and organizations is inspiring! The amount of participation we are seeing is the reason this movement is here and today and why support continues to grow.

Community Calendar

Cinema Politica believes in the power of art not only to entertain but to engage, inform, inspire, and provoke social change. Cinema Politica Fredericton screens films on Fridays nights at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. at 7:00pm. Check out the films and venues at: cinematicapoli.ca. Cinema Politica Fredericton is back on Sept. 9 with Flin Flon Film Flan, a film that examines HudBay’s mining operations and for future generations.

Syrian refugees in Fredericton are growing food this summer at a farm in Keswick Ridge. Ten families with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, a garden that will produce food for the families this year. The project aims to give the workers a sense of work on farms or become farmers. Photo by Angela Bosse.