

In Brief

• **Canadian Blood Services workers**, members of CUPE Local 1655, have rejected their employer's latest offer and voted on March 16 in favour of a strike action. "The workers rejected the latest contract offer since it did not adequately address the rates of pay and the issue of the hours of work," said CUPE's Mike Davidson, "The Canadian Blood Services employ workers all over the country and we believe that the workers in New Brunswick should be paid at the same rate as their counterparts in the Atlantic Provinces who have regular hours of work." Canadian Blood Services employees travel all over NB, work up to 72 hours away from home, setting up blood donor clinics, ensuring the safety of the donor and the safety of the patients who rely upon it. CUPE Local 1655 members, which include almost 40 phlebotomists, clinic assistants and drivers, have been without a collective agreement since Jan. 1, 2012.

• Irving has extended its **media monopoly** in New Brunswick. Rogers Communications has sold its Moncton-based News 91.9 radio station, also known as CKNI-FM, to Irving-owned Acadia Broadcasting. Acadia says they plan to change from the station's current news/talk format to music. Acadia owns twelve stations in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario. Irving owns most of the English newspapers, the French newspaper, *L'Étoile*, and several radio stations.

• The **Alward government's forest plan** is a grand giveaway of public forest to J.D. Irving and must go, says the Conservation Council of New Brunswick (CCNB). "The Alward government says this new forest plan is about jobs and more 'boots on the ground' but it's not. It's about more profits filling J.D. Irving's pockets by giving them access to what's left in our forest. There are no guarantees that J.D. Irving will create the number of jobs that they say they will in exchange for a guaranteed access to Crown timber," says Tracy Glynn, CCNB's Forest Campaign Director.

• Toronto-based journalist and activist **Ali Mustafa**, 29, was killed alongside seven others by one of Assad's barrel bomb attacks on the city of Aleppo, Syria on March 9. Tim Groves of the *Toronto Media Co-op* met Ali Mustafa in the lead up to the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto. They were both part of the Alternative Media Centre, a hub for independent reporters, photojournalists, designers, filmmakers, and radio producers. "We were doing something important with our lives. But once the summit was over, that sense of meaning faded. Most of us had to seek out meaning in smaller things in life. But for Ali, that wasn't enough. He wanted to bring his camera to events in the world that were more significant than the G20 Summit. At first this was to the revolution taking place in Egypt, and later it was to the war in Syria, where he was killed in an air strike," said Groves.



One of Ali Mustafa’s photos of burning buildings and the effects of war on the people of Syria. Here, Aleppo residents look on as a building erupts in flames after a government air strike on Feb. 26, 2014. Photo by Ali Mustafa.

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Loretta Saunders was examining structural violence against Indigenous women

(continued from page 1) ...plunder it for our gain? All the while, through trickery and deceit, we convince our children that Indigenous peoples are to blame for their condition, that through no fault of our own, they simply don't understand how to live well in society.

When I discuss these issues with my non-indigenous students in an open, honest, and non-judgmental manner, I am continuously disappointed, though no longer surprised by their lack of knowledge.

Less than half of my second-year students have heard of residential schools, and among those who have, only a handful can imagine and articulate the impacts such a system would have had in their own communities. We are for the most part incapable of empathy.

I ask my students, who are you meant to care about in society? The answer is always clear to them—I have been taught in such a way that I'm mostly incapable of caring about Indigenous peoples. It's not that they don't want to, it's that it takes years of hard work. And who has that much time or is willing to be vulnerable in the face of the seemingly unending gulf that lies before them?

And so we continue to look to Indigenous peoples like the savages we imagine them to be. Meanwhile, Loretta is dumped in a ditch in a province that once paid European invaders for the scalps of Mi'kmaq women, children, and men, repeating a centuries-old pattern in ways that are much too familiar to be a coincidence, to be irony, to be senseless. But these are the most common qualifiers I read about Loretta's life and death. Loretta herself expressed the patterned, structured ways of colonial violence very clearly in her work, which I reread last night before falling asleep.

It is an organized terror of the everyday. And it must stop.

Darryl Leroux spent many hours speaking with, advising, and reading Loretta Saunders' undergraduate honours thesis research at St. Mary's University in Halifax. He wrote this the day after learning that Loretta's body had been found. Originally published by the Halifax Media Co-op.

Planned pay increases not enough

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Pay equity legislation adopted in 2009 covers New Brunswick public sector employees in the civil service, hospitals, school districts and Crown Corporations. However, there is no pay equity legislation for the private sector, where 65 % of women in the labour market in New Brunswick work. The private sector includes businesses and factories as well as sectors that offer government-mandated services, universities and municipalities.

The Group Home Unions Executive and CUPE staff plan to meet with the Women's Equality Branch soon to to discuss how pay equity adjustments will be paid out. In the meantime, they want to let group home workers know the results as the Minister Responsible for Women's Equality will not be putting out a media release. The report with the results and the explanation of the process is posted on the department's website under Community Residence Sector.

"If you know of anyone who worked at group homes during the period since April 1, 2013, but who have left the field, tell them that they may be eligible for retroactive pay equity adjustments," says Johnston.

Group home workers are encouraged to call the Women's Equality Branch toll-free phone line, 1-877-253-0266, to ask questions and find out when they will see pay equity adjustments on their pay cheques.

Tracy Glynn is the chair of the Fredericton Committee of the NB Coalition for Pay Equity.

Community Calendar

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

Dance & Delicacies. Fri., May 9, 7:30-11:30pm. UNB Student Union Building, Fredericton. A fundraiser for the Multicultural Association of Fredericton's Newcomer Scholarship Fund to assist newcomers to Canada with post-secondary education. Music by Vinyl2Bits, international hors d'oeuvres and desserts, silent auction and a cash bar. Tickets: \$40 each, \$75 for 2 or a table for 8 for \$300. Tickets on sale at MCAF, 28 Saunders St. For more information, contact MCAF at 506 454-8292.

Private blueberry patch on public land irks northern New Brunswickers



The government of New Brunswick and Oxford Frozen Foods announced a deal to develop wild blueberry fields and a processing plant in northern New Brunswick on October 31. From left to right: Nepisiguit MLA Ryan Riordon; Tracadie-Sheila MLA Claude Landry; Premier David Alward; John Bragg, founder, chair, co-chief executive officer and president of Oxford Frozen Foods; Natural Resources Minister Paul Robichaud; Tracadie-Sheila Mayor Aldeoda Losier; and Miramichi Bay-Neguac MLA Serge Robichaud. Photo from the Government of New Brunswick.

By RANDY LeBOUTHILLIER

Tracadie - InvestNB and Oxford Frozen Foods, a multinational corporation based in Nova Scotia, have forged a deal that is not sitting well with blueberry growers and locals in New Brunswick's northeast peninsula.

Oxford Frozen Foods, the world's largest supplier of wild blueberries, plans to develop a crop of wild blueberries in between the Tabusintac and Tracadie Rivers near St-Sauveur in Gloucester County after receiving government approval to swap their private land for 15,712 acres of Crown forest land.

Invest NB, a provincial Crown corporation, has agreed to provide Oxford Frozen Foods a \$37.5 million interest-bearing repayable loan to construct a blueberry processing plant. The company is promising to create 300 jobs and invest \$184 million in the plant. Construction of the plant is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2014.

Jean Maurice Landry, president of the Northeast Association of Wild Blueberry Growers, is concerned that wild berry growers like himself are being kept in the dark about the development.

Representatives from different community organizations and municipalities across Gloucester County are trying to find out basic information about the project like the exact location of the planned development and the name of the company that is logging the area and clearing the land for the crops.

A heavy air of frustration was felt at a public meeting, organized by Danny Comeau, Chair of the Local Services District, in St-Sauver on February 17. Truck loads of logs are going through the communities of Pont-Lafrance, St-Isidore, Alderwood and St-Sauveur, but no one knows who is cutting the logs and where they are going.

"We know little about the nature and working conditions of these 300 jobs and what the company will gain versus what it will invest here," says Landry.

Premier David Alward, Natural Resources Minister Paul Robichaud and Oxford Frozen Foods founder and CEO John Bragg announced the deal on October 31 in Tracadie-Sheila. "Our government is committed to working with strong partners like Oxford Frozen Foods Ltd. to grow the blueberry sector throughout our province and achieve the vision outlined in the recently announced New Brunswick Wild Blueberry Sector Strategy," said Premier Alward.

Oxford Frozen Foods is the world's largest grower and processor of wild blueberries with manufacturing facilities in the Maritimes and the U.S. The company has been present in the wild blueberry industry in the Acadian Peninsula since 1968.

According to Landry, "If Oxford can control the production of blueberries on an additional 15,712 acres of land, they will be able to control the price of blueberries and eventually they will shut out local competitors."

Oxford Frozen Foods' two main CEOs, John L. Bragg and David Hoffman, hold corporate executive positions with other companies in the province. Bragg owns Bragg Lumber Company and Hoffman is CEO of Shaw Group. Shaw Group has a division that produces wood material.

Landry is concerned about the lack of oversight from different government departments with this new deal.

"It not clear to us how Oxford will manage the land or maintain preservation zones to protect rivers or wildlife habitat. Diverse users are being shut out with this plan and rules and regulations that used to protect our public lands will no longer apply on what could become Oxford's private blueberry patch," says Landry.

Deforestation, lack of transparency on the part of the provincial government, and fewer opportunities for local economic initiatives and employment are only some of the concerns raised by people in the Acadian Peninsula with this deal.

The imposed blueberry plan in northern New Brunswick is being likened to the foisted forestry and shale gas plans of the Alward government that involve public land being developed and privatized without any public consultation or local consent.

Randy LeBouthillier lives in Tracadie where he is a musician and grassroots activist. He studied International Development and Environmental Studies at the University of Ottawa.