

In Brief...

- The Mayor of Fredericton sent a letter to **Occupy Fredericton** on November 20 requesting they vacate Phoenix Square in front of Fredericton City Hall for the official Christmas Tree lighting. Occupy Fredericton has reduced their area, from a community gathering place to an outpost. Members plan to stay there throughout the winter, making Fredericton one of the few remaining cities in the country continuing the occupation. Other occupations, also known as tent cities, in cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax have been evicted by the police.

- The Harper government wishes to pass **Bill C-10, the federal omnibus crime bill**. Critics of the Bill say that crime rates are going down and there is no need for more prisons. Instead, they want the public dollars directed to social programs to heal people and give them opportunities.

- Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced Canada would spend \$10 million disarming rebel groups on his second visit to **Libya** in October. Canada's Ambassador to Libya revealed that the Canadian Embassy plans to assist oil company Suncor and SNC Lavalin, which is building a jail in Libya. There were 145 NATO drone strikes on Libya between April 21 and October 20.

- **Afghans** protested the tenth anniversary of the NATO occupation of their country. "After a decade, Afghanistan still remains the most uncivil, most corrupt, and most war torn country in the world. The consequences of the so-called war on terror has only been more bloodshed, crimes, barbarism, human rights, and women's rights violations, which has doubled the miseries and sorrows of our people," wrote Afghan activist Malalai Joya.

- The first of the annual **shipments of nuclear waste** from France to Germany since Japan's Fukushima disaster was met with larger protests than ever on November 27th. In France, anti-nuclear activists damaged train tracks in an effort to halt the shipment of 150 tonnes of nuclear waste, while in Germany, massive protests blocked the train for 15 hours. The train met numerous obstacles and barriers along its route, and violent clashes occurred between police and protesters. 1,300 anti-nuclear activists were detained by German police.

- The 17th session of the parties to the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) took place in Durban, South Africa from November 28th to December 9th. While developing countries continued to ask the developed world to do their fair share in the fight against climate change, Canada's Conservative government refused to commit to further greenhouse gas reductions citing the U.S. and China's unwillingness to sign on.

- A **Bahraini court** has adjourned the retrial of 20 medics charged with incitement to overthrow the government (among other charges) until January. Original sentences of 5-15 years were overturned when it was determined that the confessions of the defendants had been obtained under duress. The medics had treated wounded protesters at the Salmaniya Medical Complex during the Bahraini regime's brutal crackdown on anti-government protests this year. Guns and swords found in the Medical Complex as "proof" of the doctors' crimes by the public prosecutor.

- **Egypt** began to hold its first elections since the ousting of Hosni Mubarak on November 28th. While many have termed these Egypt's first "free and fair" elections, many are wondering how elections can be free and fair while the country remains under military rule and over 12,000 political prisoners languish in jails.

- **Over 4,000 Syrians have been killed and tens of thousands imprisoned** since the uprising and subsequent crackdown in March. President Bashar al-Assad denies that the violent crackdown was undertaken at his order despite the fact that he is officially the commander of Syria's army. Assad maintains that most Syrians are not against him and blames the unrest on "foreign plotters."

- After many years of struggle, Canadian citizen, **Aboufian Abdelrazik**, has been removed from the UN terrorist blacklist. The former Sudanese refugee's problems began in 2003 when he was detained by the Sudanese authorities at Canada's request while visiting his mother. No charges have ever been laid against Abdelrazik. During his 5 years on the list, Abdelrazik was prohibited from finding work and had his assets frozen. Abdelrazik is suing the Canadian government for \$27 million for breach of his charter rights.

visit nbmediacoop.org!

Membership Options

☐ \$3/month ☐ \$10/month ☐ \$25/month☐ \$10/year ☐ \$25/year ☐ _____☐ Other _____

☐ I would like to be a member, but I cannot be a sustainer at this time.

Payment Options

☐ cash ☐ Please send me an application form to establish monthly pre-authorized payments from my bank account.

☐ cheque

Please mail application forms and cheques to the NB Media Co-op at 180 St. John Street, Fredericton, NB E3B 4A9. Thank you!

Do not pass GO, do not get the facts: the true cost of the media monopoly

By ROY MACMULLIN

On Monday morning, October 31st, I woke up with a desire to do something entirely out of character for me. By noon, I was standing in front of the *Times & Transcript* building on Moncton's Main Street with a sign in my hand--denouncing a lie.

Just a day before, I had read the Moncton *Times & Transcript* by happenstance, and a clear example of mendacity catalyzed me into action. Rod Allen's column, which purports to be lighthearted and comical in nature, was anything but funny. Allen took issue with a promotion by *L'Acadie-Nouvelle*, which allows on-line subscribers to pay a higher monthly fee for 36 months and receive an iPad 2. Allen called this "a giveaway" and "the biggest, bestest treat of all." At best, this was a serious journalistic lapse of misinforming the public or possibly a deliberate act.

The underlying message of the article was that since *L'Acadie-Nouvelle* is doing a "giveaway" (a lie), it is therefore a poor manager of its money and deserves to go bankrupt. He then congratulated the newspaper "wishing them the best of luck with their plea to the provincial government for an injection of taxpayer money to shore them up in these hard times." Nice hatchet job, Rod; you might take a look at an ethics code.

When a journalist writes a story and especially when it is about a competitor, they should explore all of the facts that are pertinent. For example, the Irving media group has a weekly paper, *L'Étoile*, that is given away for free. He doesn't mention that one of the typical Irving tactics in destroying other newspapers has been to dramatically reduce advertising rates and lower the price of their newspaper. Given the depths of Irving's pocket, most of the competitor gone. Ken Langdon, who had the temerity to Irving in Woodstock called the *Carleton* about a year.

When Allen mentions getting subsidies, he forgets to mention the Irving propensity to be at the front of the trough for gifts or loans: \$14 million to the NB Southern Railway, \$500,000 to Kent Homes, \$4.5 million per year tax cut to Irving LNG, \$15 million to Cavendish Farms, \$17 million to Master Packaging, abnormally low forestry stumpage rates and other related subsidies, \$60 million to shut down the Saint John shipyard, \$20 million to Irving Halifax Shipyard and recent subsidies announced for biomass electrical power to name a few.

The Irving philosophy of free enterprise exists only on the editorial page when lecturing others about the virtue of government getting out of the way of business. The Irving Empire, worth over \$10 billion dollars, is ironically the largest recipient of corporate welfare in New Brunswick. Some might argue that Atcon – having received \$50 million in loan guarantees from the province in 2009 – came close one year.

How does Irving benefit from the domination of the New Brunswick print media over recent decades? Irving owns three English language daily newspapers and 21 weeklies in New Brunswick. Shaping the limits of public debate brings political control, with the ability to avoid appropriate coverage of issues facing the environment or workers. Laws and regulations that aid the Empire's business interest are passed, and subsidies are protected. Unfortunately, many citizens with differing viewpoints are portrayed as emotional and lacking an acceptable intelligence to debate.

The search for lower power rates for Irving industry was no



On the morning of October 31st, Roy MacMullin (pictured at right) had had enough. After reading an article that characterised as a "giveaway" a promotion in which readers of *L'Acadie Nouvelle* could receive an iPad 2 if they paid a higher monthly subscription rate, MacMullin decided to call the *Times & Transcript* on its journalistic integrity. Photo courtesy of Roy MacMullin.

doubt at the heart of the NB Power sale proposed in 2010. The permanent 30% rate decrease would have meant a roughly \$50 million decrease in the Empire's power bill at the expense of residential and smaller commercial rate classes. The entire chain of newspapers became cheerleaders for the deal.

And now that Irving has a \$25 billion contract to build military ships, can one imagine the newspapers publishing articles critical of the Harper government?

The federal government and the Competition Bureau have been remarkably silent on the subject of media concentration in New Brunswick. Despite a number of reports and commissions making recommendations over the years, there has been no substantial action to curb what some analysts have called the worst example of media concentration in the world.

During my protest interlude, one of the pleasant surprises was the number of people who told me that the Irving newspapers are letting us down. If *L'Acadie-Nouvelle* is crushed by the Irvings, then both Anglophone and Francophone citizens in New Brunswick will feel the democracy deficit even more than they do today. It's no surprise that in the current media climate, those in the Occupy movement who have decried the corporate control of government are ridiculed by the corporate media. It remains to be seen whether our governments will actually do their job and separate the media-industrial complex that preys on the citizens of New Brunswick.

Roy MacMullin is a Moncton-based writer on energy and politics. He is a retired employee at NB Power.



Standing up to Fracking Bullies

(continued from page 1) ...you look at what economists are saying about this upcoming Christmas they are really worried. They think we will maintain last year's level of consumption or perhaps show growth on the order of 1%. This has a lot of people worried. For the environment it's actually a good thing but for the economists it's a real problem that has to be addressed. So yes, Peter Kent is correct, the government does have the authority to ban fracking, but it is highly unlikely they would ever take such steps.

CW: So what do you recommend to concerned citizens?

SM: I think they are doing the right things already. They are organizing, they are talking, and they are trying to tell people about the risks fracking poses. They are resisting and we need to support them in their efforts.

- union printed on 30% recycled paper -

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email: community@nbmediacoop.org.

Pay Equity Info Session. Do you work in childcare? Homecare? In a group home or in a transition house? A few years ago, the government committed to pay equity in these sectors but has to this day failed to make the wage adjustments. If you belong to one of these sectors or if you want to take part in making pay equity a reality in this province, join us in Fredericton on Wed., Jan. 18 and in Saint John on Jan. 19th. To find out the location, contact Jessica Haché at 506 855-0002 or jessica.hache@nb.aibn.com.

Cinema Politica's documentaries take us to places like Afghanistan, Palestine, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, indigenous territories and prisons where dehumanization and destruction wreaked by capitalism and colonialism warrants our examination, analysis and action. In Fredericton, films are screened on Fridays starting in early Jan. - Apr. 2012 at 7pm at Conserver House, 180 Saint John Street. In Sackville, films are screened Mondays and Wednesdays at Wu Centre, Dunn Building at Mt. Allison University. CP Chapters also exist in Sussex, Bathurst, Moncton, Taymouth and Saint John. Check out film schedules at www.cinemapolitica.org.