

In Brief

- The City of Miramichi voted against flying the **Pride flag** outside Miramichi City Hall in mid February. Councillor Peggy McLean put forward a motion to fly the Pride Flag during the Sochi Winter Olympics. However, Council voted to table the motion. The recently enacted Gay Propaganda Law in Russia is considered to be a grave violation of human rights against LGBTQ+ persons. “Flying the Pride Flag outside of City Hall demonstrates solidarity with, and commitment to the basic human right of individuals in Miramichi, this country and internationally to express their sexuality in the way in which they see fit,” stated a letter posted by Miramichi Magazine on Facebook.
- The **Fredericton Firefighters Association** says that a staffing change on one of its north side tanker trucks will put the public in danger. Mayor Brad Woodside denounced Fredericton firefighters at a City Council meeting on Feb. 10 for using social media to express concern over operational changes that took effect that day. Woodside and Fire Chief Paul Fleming assured those gathered that a tanker truck was not being removed from service. However, a firefighter called the statements by the Mayor, “smoke and mirrors.” Blair Sullivan, President of the Fredericton Firefighters Association, said, “We were notified late the week before that effective some time on Feb. 10 that the city was taking one of two tanker trucks at Two Nations Crossing Station on Fredericton’s north side out of service and replacing it with a rescue truck when staffing was available.” A rescue truck does not have a hose or water and is staffed by a lieutenant and not a captain.
- Biologists, hunting, fishing and outdoors recreation groups and conservationists are uniting in a call to **ban herbicides in the forest**. In a letter sent to New Brunswick Natural Resources Minister Paul Robichaud on Feb. 17, the signatories attempt to set the record straight on the impacts of using herbicides in the forest. The letter was signed by several NB wildlife protection groups.
- Public **health care** in Canada is in danger. Conservative politicians are refusing to negotiate a renewed 10-year federal health accord, one that asserts common standards for public health care. Provincial governments are turning to public-private partnerships for health care services. Stefan Christoff for the *Media Co-op* wrote on Feb. 12, “As the mainstream media approaches a consensus in asserting that the 2014 Conservative budget is not controversial, even calling it comfort food, the reality is that the budget is austerity-driven, shaped by a financial logic of zero deficit, all while failing to meaningfully address the health care crisis, one of the most pressing federal issues facing Canada.”
- Accusations of **forced labour around the Goldcorp mine** in Guatemala arose in early 2014. Five communities in San Miguel Ixtahuacán, Guatemala, where the Canadian-owned gold and silver mine operates, presented a complaint against their Mayor, Ovidio Joel Domingo Bámaca, for the crime of subjecting citizens to forced labour. Citizens complain that they are being forced to work without pay to have access to precautionary measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The measures include guaranteed potable water, water for domestic use and water safe for irrigation, in particular, water not contaminated by the Marlin mine.



The Maya Mam and Maya Sipakapan people of Guatemala, mostly peasant farmers, living near the Goldcorp Marlin gold and silver mine are concerned that the mine is depleting and contaminating their water supplies, deforesting their land and destroying the natural world. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

The forest is not yours to give away, Premier Alward



Photo by Jamie Simpson.

By TRACY GLYNN

Fredericton - Premier David Alward confirmed the fears of many in late January when he spoke of a forest strategy that will guarantee more timber from the province’s public lands to the forest industry in his State of the Province address. The spin was of course that the strategy would create jobs. Again, we are told that giving up more of our forest to J.D. Irving and a handful of other big forestry players is the only option for job creation in our province.

Premier Alward, how exactly do you propose to free up more Crown timber for the forest industry?

Will you redefine a watercourse as you redefined wetlands so the forestry companies can cut in buffer zones that protect our streams and rivers? Do you propose slashing wildlife habitat zones meant to provide critical habitat for our forest species? Will you open up deer yards to cutting with the reason that they are now vacated, a result of forest mismanagement if

Community Calendar

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

Bread & Roses with Alex Bailey Swing Band. An International Women’s Day Event, Workers’ Appreciation Night and Fundraiser for the NB Coalition for Pay Equity. Thurs., March 13, 7:00pm-9:00pm at Connexion ARC, 440 York St., Fredericton. Hear from workers affected by pay inequity--workers in childcare, home support, community residences (group homes) and transition homes. It’s long overdue that they receive Bread and Roses--fair wages and dignified working conditions. Learn about their struggles and celebrate their work with food, drink and a night of swing dancing with Fredericton’s favourite, the Alex Bailey Swing Band. Tickets: \$10. Tickets on sale at Westminster Books and at the door. For more information about pay equity and the NB Coalition for Pay Equity, visit: www.equite-equity.com.

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.

NB Media Co-op Story Meetings. Join us at our monthly story meetings in Fredericton where we discuss politics and current events and decide what to put in this paper every month. To find out the meeting time and venue, email 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 volunteer-run, community and campus-based documentary-screening network in the world. In Fredericton, films are screened on Fridays during the fall and winter at 7:00 pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. In Sackville, films are screened monthly at Mt. Allison University. Check out film schedules and venues, or start your own chapter at: cinemapolitica.org.

there ever was one?

Must your government be reminded of its treaty obligations to consult with lindigenous peoples of this province on forest management? How can you give away something that is not yours to give away?

You and your ministers do not have a mandate to give away more of our forest. Some of your MLAs were around a decade ago when it became known to the public what the forest industry was demanding: a double in the rate of cut on public lands. Surely they must recall the overflowing town hall meetings when New Brunswickers one after another took the microphone to voice their dismay with a forest managed for timber objectives as the priority.

If rallies, petitions and letters were not a sufficient weather vane to gauge how New Brunswickers felt about forest conservation, a survey on public attitudes on forest management commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources and published in 2007 should have guided the provincial government in its future forest strategy. The survey found that New Brunswickers, rural and urban, wanted water and biodiversity protected first and foremost in forest management: this is your mandate for forest management.

It’s not a secret that your government is under intense pressure from J.D. Irving and other forestry companies to allow them to clearcut in conservation forest, which are our deer yards, buffer zones along streams and rivers, wildlife habitat zones and old forest. Department of Natural Resources staff have cautioned against reducing conservation forest below 28%, anything less would not be sustainable, according to the wildlife biologists and forest ecologists.

Our forest management is stuck in the twentieth century when clearcutting and herbicide spraying were permitted but were never really socially acceptable or ecologically responsible. We must move towards a management scenario that would mean a more resilient forest in a future of climate change and one that offers a suite of options for communities to be stewards of their forest resources and generate sources of revenue and jobs. However, we hear that the provincial government is poised to allow forestry companies access to previous no-go zones to clearcut. If we do not abandon the recklessness and lack of imagination shown by previous governments on forest management, we will deny ourselves resilient communities, meaningful employment and the awe that comes from a healthy and diverse forest in our backyards.

For a decade now, we have seen a doubling in the area of allowable clearcuts from 100 ha to 200 ha, more herbicide-sprayed plantations and smaller stream buffers. For what? According to annual reports from the Department of Natural Resources, the way that we use our forests is generating net losses.

Take a moment to recall what it’s like to stand in an old forest of evergreens, maples, ashes, birches and beech where you may be fortunate enough to see a northern flying squirrel, hear the song of a yellow warbler or catch a brook trout in a sheltered stream? This is why we fight for our conservation forest and why your government should too.

Tracy Glynn is the Forest Campaign Director with the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Indigenous inmates need spiritual advisors

(continued from page 1) ...that Elders/Spiritual Advisors are afforded the same status as Chaplains... [and] ensure offenders are provided with the services of an Elder/ Spiritual Advisor, in consultation with the Regional Administrator, Aboriginal Initiatives.” The same does not apply to provincially-run penitentiaries.

Noel Milliea, from Elsipogtog First Nation, has seen the inside of both federal and provincial prisons within New Brunswick, providing spiritual guidance to indigenous inmates in both milieus. To Milliea, the spiritual services he offers are clearly differentiated from those offered by a chaplain and provide a definite benefit to those who receive it.

“Most of the time what I’d typically do with Aboriginal offenders is have a smudge and a prayer with them,” says Milliea. “I’d take the group, usually a unit at a time, and we’d have a smudge and a prayer and usually have a little bit of a talk about how things are, what are some of the main concerns that they’re having, what are some of the things that they’re worried about. Some of them are there for the first time and are scared shitless over what’s happening. We have an opportunity to share a little bit, and bring a bit of peace to them.”

New Brunswick’s refusal to provide its indigenous inmates with access to spiritual services is not only a potential infraction of the Canadian Charter. On an individual level, Patles says it risks making inmates such as Breau into angrier individuals than they need be.

“It seems as though they’re denying them the ability to pray this way so that they could have them angered, so that they can justify these men being dangerous or violent or angry,” says Patles. “If you think about what this is doing to them psychologically, they need an avenue to heal themselves. If the prison system and the correctional system is set up for healing people who have done wrong, why are they continually abrogating and negating these peoples’ rights and denying them the right to heal?”

Breau’s dishonoured requests likely represent many, many more dishonoured requests among other Indigenous inmates. A social media campaign is urging people to call for the provision of spiritual services for Indigenous inmates by calling the SRCC (506-532-7885) and the New Brunswick Ombudsman (506-453-2789).

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