In Brief...

- The National Day of Mourning, April 28th, is a day to remember workers who lost their lives or were injured on the job. According to the NB Federation of Labour, 11 people died as a result of workplace injuries in New Brunswick and 12,400 were injured on the job in 2012. District Labour Councils organized ceremonies across the province on the Day of Mourning.
- School library workers are calling on the government to properly resource school libraries. The funding allocated to school libraries is inadequate. The basic funding formula for school libraries allocates one full-time employee (at 36.25 hours/week) for every 1,000 students per school district. This means that in small schools, if they have a library, it’s only part-time staff – many are not staffed at all,” says Sandy Harding, President, CUPE Local 2745, the Education Support Staff. “We all know that literacy is a huge problem in this province. More than half of New Brunswick adults (56% of the English-speaking population and 66% of the French-speaking population) don’t have a suitable literacy level to best engage with their communities. The first step to counter our literacy problem is to make books available to the children in their own school. Students should have unlimited access to the school libraries during school hours. Books of all genres should be available. The focus on literacy begins with making sure the book collections are up-to-date, in good repair and available for all who may need them.”
- St. Thomas University Student Union President John Hoben was removed from a committee tasked with giving feedback on the budget to the university’s president. STU’s administration says Hoben was removed from the committee for violating a confidentiality agreement when he shared information about the provincial government’s financial offer with the university’s board of governors on plans to defund a $150 tuition cap put into place by the Alward government in the provincial budget. Hoben was supposed to do this before a town hall meeting with students. Hoben says the university wants to increase tuition to $1,100, a 22% increase, for the fall 2014. Further tuition increases are planned after 2014. Hoben is quoted in The Daily Gleaner on April 12th, saying, “The decision made at this committee impact the lives of more than 2,300 people. These tuition increases are going to mean more debt and more trouble before they even start their studies. We now make these decisions without consulting students is unconscionable.” A final decision on toll will be made by the university’s board of governors in May.
- The Fredericton launch of the exhibition, A Child’s View from Gaza, was delayed. The opening was to have been held at the state of Israel put on the Charlotte Street Arts Centre. The Arts Centre decided to delay the opening of the exhibition View from Gaza, exhibited which launched in Fredericton on April 28th, has been reshuffled with a view to opening with art galleries, museums and libraries, including the Aberdeen Cultural Centre in Moncton and the United Church in Riverview. The exhibition will consist of children’s paintings, drawings, photographs and movies from the Gaza Strip, most of which depict their experience of Israel’s Operation Cast Lead, the military assault of December 2008-January 2009 that killed some 1,400 Palestinians, over 300 of them children. A flyer circulated by Fredericton Palestine Solidarity states: “Exhibits like this one, which portray the lives and perspectives of Palestinians, make it more difficult to justify continuing the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This occupation is because they threaten the dominant narrative that all Palestinians are terrorists.”
- Two Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-op workers are saying that they were fired in late March for trying to unionize. Just Us! specializes in fair trade organic coffee. The Union, the People and the planet before profits. Over 100 people rallied in support of the workers at a rally outside the Halifax Spring Garden Road location on April 14th. Organizers provided free fair-trade coffee to supporters and encouraged donations for the cafe’s current workers. Shay Enuaga, one of the dismissed workers, was quoted in a Halifax Media Co-op story (April 17) at a rally in support of the workers in Halifax. “All we’re asking is for our jobs back and for Just Us! to recognize our right to form a union... We’re not asking Just Us! to live up to its mandate and its social justice values.”
- Anglo American, joint owners of the giant Cerrejon open-pit coal mine in Colombia with BHP Billiton and Xstrata, accused at its annual shareholders meeting on April 31st of neglecting the health of 13,000 people who work and live close to the mine that provides coal for the NB Power plant in New Brunswick as well as for power stations in Europe. The largest mine in Latin America plans to increase production by 25 per cent in the next three years. The mine has been plagued with labour disputes and complaints of the hospital exposed to pollution. The mine was quoted as one of the mine affected peoples are farmers on people of African descent, who live in the slums and established communities along Colombia’s northeast coast.

Salmon farming

(continued from page 1) ...Fundy Baykeeper Matthew Abbott is part of a broad coalition of aquaculture stakeholders who have been lobbying vigorously behind the scenes to get clean Salmon Farming in place. The NB government has paid millions full-page ads in the Halifax Chronicle Herald. A website called ‘Stop the New Brunswick Aquaculture Industry’ is being launched. “Ocean-based salmon farming has been a concern for a long time,” Abbott says. “For a while there was a hope it would stall, but that hasn’t occurred.” Instead there has been a growing concern over the effect farmed fish have on wild ones, including interbreeding and disease transfers.

In 2010, Abbott convened a meeting of some members of what would become the Atlantic Coalition for Aquaculture Reform. Traditional fishing interests, lobster fishermen and community groups opposed to the fish farm all attended. “There was a growing concern over the effect farmed fish have on wild ones, including interbreeding and disease transfers.” Abbott says. “We have reached the point where the government should be pursuing alllay environmental concerns. Oppositions view this as government support for the status quo.”

NEW BRUNSWICK will not see a new clean salmon farming campaign soon, as there are few, if any new, farm permits to be issued. “We have reached the point where New Brunswick is not an attractive salmon farm,” Abbott says. “Passamaquoddy Bay and the Western Isles, in the outer Bay of Fundy, have the densest concentrations of salmon farms of anywhere in the world.”

For its part, industry remains convinced ocean-based salmon farming is the future for New Brunswick’s largest producer, states on its website that “tuna and salmon are expected to gain a stronger role in the local, social, economic and environmental sustainability of the communities where it operates, including Maine, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador.”

Meanwhile, the Atlantic Salmon Federation and its coalition partners defend their belief that closed, land-based containment is not only inevitable, but necessary to make fish farming sustainable, and they are determined to demonstrate this through action and not words. In fact, two new salmon farms have recently been approved, one by the N.B. government, and on Arctic char raised in land-based contained tanks in Nova Scotia’s Mabou, near Truro. It was reportedly delicious, even more so because of its land-locked origins.

About 100 people rally against Harper’s cuts to the Employment Insurance program over the noon hour outside the New Brunswick government building on March 7, 2013. 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 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 get involved, email information to nbmediacoop.org.

March 7, 5:30-7:00 PM, Fredericton, Showtime at the Palace: An Evening of Fredrickton’s Dance & Delicacies. Arts Council of Fredericton, Frederick Street, Fredericton. The Newcomer Scholarship Fund to assist newsmakers to Canada with their post-secondary education. Featuring music with VinyB2Dtls, international hors d’oeuvres and desserts, silent auction and a cash bar. Tickets available at 505-757-5105. Proceeds table for 8 can be reserved for $300. Contact MCAF at 506-454-8292.

A Child’s View from Gaza. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Fredericton Palestine Solidarity, Jews for a Just Peace Fredericton and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers Fredericton/Dromocto are delighted to announce a travelling exhibition, A Child’s View from, on display at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre’s Penny Gallery from April 26 - May 26. Contact: info@frederictonpeace.org.