Climate justice conference looks at environmental racism

(continued from page 1) ...Lickers while showing a picture of the living log, Lickers, who works with Reclalm Turtle Island, shared how colonialism, deforestation, and environmental racism are intertwined.

She drew attention to how agreements such as the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement signed between the Canadian government and the 23 environmental organizations and the forestry industries lays the responsibility on the forests and mining companies and indigenous governments to ignore and affect indigenous resistance.

Franklin Sean Devlin, of ShitHarpersDid.com who made national headlines in January for getting close to Prime Minister Stephen Harper at a Vancouver Board of Trade meeting to protest the Canadian government’s climate policies, had a startling message for the final keynote talk: “To do this work is to figure out how to fight while we grow.”

He opened his talk with a wallpaper of images of only some of the estimated 800 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. He ended his talk by sharing pictures of his mother’s homeland, the Philippines devastated by a typhoon, the country’s first PowerShift gathering and the relationships being built between activists in Canada and the Philippines.

PowerShift participants had the opportunity to take part in 101 workshops on combatting oppression, fracking, shale gas and food commodification, hear about environmental racism from Vanessa Grey and local politician Eli Jones, get skills on non-violent direct action by long-time labour organizer Tony Fracy and learn how to be an effective storyteller by PowerShift organizer Amara Possian.

The resistance building got creative with Beehive Collective members presenting their giant narrative murals, “Messamerica Resist!” and “The True Cost of Coal.”

Dave Bailey led a workshop where participants built model wind farms and worked on letters and messages with against the Energy East pipeline. Both props were used two days later, on Monday, March 31, at a powerful demonstration against the Energy East pipeline held in Halifax, where two Mi’kmaq women interrupted the Nova Scotia Energy Minister’s address to the oil and gas industry association.

According to PowerShift organizers, “We’ve felt the energy and growth of our membership to the tar sands fracking and pipelines, led by First Nations across Canada, that have grown like an invasive plant in the U.S., and a global movement taking force on the world stage. Under reflected light, their numbers are growing, standing up against the oil and gas pipeline industry and demanding environmental justice.”

The first PowerShift gathering occurred at the University of New Mexico near Washington, D.C. in 2007. Over 6,000 people from 50 states gathered there to demand environmental justice, PowerShift came to Canada last year where 1,200PowerShifters gathered in Ottawa to demand climate action. Between October 2015 and October 2016, PowerShift gatherings are planned across Canada to grow the movement for climate justice and build skills and strategies for collective action.

The next PowerShift is planned in Ontario in the fall.

Who’s afraid of the public postal service? Workers respond as Canada Post begins conversion from door-to-door delivery

Canada Post has a requirement under the Canadian Broadcasting Act to inform the public of any changes to Canada Post services.

“Where Canada Post plans to change delivery methods Canada Post will communicate, either in person or in writing, with affected customers and communities at least one month in advance to explain decisions and explore options that address customer concerns,” the federal government and Conservative MPs are ignoring the needs and interests of their own constituents rather than holding Canada Post accountable for its actions. Instead of being the party that sells off the public service, the PM should realize that they are elected by the people in their ridings, not by Stephen Harper, ignoring the desires of their constituents will come with a price.

As Canada Post moves forward with their plans, resistance continues to mount as pressure to reverse the cuts grows from all levels of government. Large and small, municipalities across the country are passing resolutions opposed to the cuts. Over 20 city councils have adopted resolutions and many more are examining ways of diminishing the negative impacts of these plans on their constituents. Cities such as Charlotteetown, Angus, Moreland, Dartmouth, Sault Ste Marie, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver have all adopted resolutions opposing the cuts.

The louder and more sustained the opposition, the better it will be for the federal government to ignore. Make sure your voice is heard by doing one or all of the following:

• Call, write or visit your MP, MLA, city council, Mayor and let them know you oppose the cuts.
• Contact the CUPW Local in your community and offer to assist in the campaign.
• Post a sign in your window or a lawn sign in your yard.
• Join a local PowerShifter support group.
• Stay up to date on upcoming events in your community that you can participate and lend your voice to the growing opposition.

Canada Post and the Conservative government need to be held accountable for putting our public postal service at risk. They cannot ignore the real owners of our postal service, the Canadian public, and the country that they are elected to serve. Canada Post and the Conservative government are opposed to the cuts announced by Canada Post and the Conservative government seem to have forgotten that our postal public service belong to Canadians. How can Canada Post operates and what services it provides should be determined by its shareholders, the public. The fate of this successful public institution should not be left to Canada Post or the federal government to mismanage and plunder.

As part of its “plan,” Canada Post says it will hold public consultations in the communities slated for services cuts. For PowerShifters, we know all too well what “consultation” means to Canada Post; for Canada Post, consultation is anything but meaningful or productive. If they actually wanted to consult with Canadians, they ought to proceed with their own, a robust Post Service Charter Review which was scheduled to happen this year.

The reality is that neither Canada Post nor the Conservative government want to hear from Canadians about these cuts in service because they know they are neither supported nor feel they are necessary.

The “public consultation” Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra claims occurred in 46 communities prior to their December 11 announcement was by invitation only. We have learned since then that in many of these communities, local levels of government and even some Members of Parliament were not included in these “public consultations.”

Artist, Sarah Mangle, has created two postcards featuring statements in support of home delivery service. The postcard featuring the image above as well as a second design can be ordered at www.etsy.com/shop/SarahMangle

By TONI MacAfee

Halifax - On February 20, Canada Post announced the 11 communities as the last cities to be converted from door- to-door delivery to community mailboxes.

Two Atlantic Canada communities are included on the list: Bedford and Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. Both communities are part of the Halifax Regional Municipality. According to the list, the goal is to lose the 8,000 traditional door-to-door delivery, including over 500 business points of call. And while Canada Post appears to be proceeding full-steam ahead, opposition to their ill-conceived plans continues to grow.

Postal workers in communities across the country are holding public town hall meetings and hosting information tables in malls, farmers markets, and other community events where the cutbacks have been openly discussed. Judging from the feedback we have received, it’s clear that the Canadian public is opposed to the cuts announced by Canada Post.

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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. Must show ID. No one under 18. $30 at the door or a table for 8 for $300. Tickets on sale at MACF, 28 Saunders St. For more information, contact MACF at 506-454-8292.

Ring in the Year. Fredericton. Fredericton N.B. government’s new Forestry Strategy proposes to slash the proportion of public forest set aside to protect nature. The proposed Forest Management Agreement set to be signed by July 1 would effectively implement the Memorandum of Agreements signed with J.D. Irving and the forestry industry. The new strategy is not that public and industry rights must be respected. Organized by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick and the NB Federation of Woodlot Owners. For more information, call 506-874-8761.

NB Media Co-op Story Meetings. Join us at our monthly story meetings in Fredericton where we discuss politics and current events 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. To that end, they network with other underground filmmakers around the world. Cinema Politica Fredericton and Sackville take a break in the summer but watch out for any special screenings. Check out film schedules and venues, or start your own chapter at: cinemapolitica.org.

Join the NB Media Co-op today!

The NB Media Co-op relies on the financial support of its members to fund high-quality, independent journalism by and for New Brunswickers. Sign up here!

Name: __________________________
Address: _______________________
City/Province/Postal Code: ______
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Email: _________________________

Annual membership fee: $30.00
☐ Other: _________________________

Send to NB Media Co-op, 180 St. John St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 4A9. info@nbmediacoop.org

A large crowd gathered in Guatemala on April 15 to mourn the death of Meridiana Topacio Reynoso. A group of people gathered at Goldcorp’s Toronto office on April 15 to lay flowers at the base of the statue of Topacio. At her funeral, Topacio’s mother promised, “The resistance doesn’t end here. my mother never died.”

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