In Brief...

The Common Front for Social Justice reports that food prices in New Brunswick have increased by 5.34% from July to October.

Three Fredericton doctors have quit in protest of the Albert government’s cuts to sexual health clinics in the province that reduce access to medical services for women and youth at a time when chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease, is on the rise.

According to StatCan 2010 data, 863 women were admitted to a transition house in New Brunswick in 2009-2010. New Brunswick has 13 transition houses for women who are seeking shelter from relationship violence.

This year’s week-long Blair Doucet Youth Summer Camp, organized by the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, imparted knowledge of union organizing to youth in grades 9 to 12. Youth negotiated with their counsellors the terms and conditions for the following year’s camp.

Sex work activist, feminist and law student Wendy Babcock died of an apparent suicide in her home in Toronto on August 9th. The 31-year-old was a prominent public Health Champion award in 2008 for her efforts to implement harm reduction strategies for sex workers.

Before becoming a law student, Babcock was a homeless, transgender sex worker. For several years she advocated on behalf of sex workers and was a prominent voice for trans rights for trans rights across Canada and fought for the return of her son, who was put into custody when she was a sex worker.

The National Assessment of First Nations Water and Wastewater Systems revealed in July that 1,800 reserve homes are without water or sewage service and nearly 40 per cent of all water systems on native reserves possess high levels of risk.

Law groups are drawing attention to the largest ever influx of migrant farm workers to Quebec. About 7,000 migrant workers from mostly Mexico, Guatemala and the West Indies face hazardous work that, although exposure to extreme heat and pesticides and lead are becoming more common.

The minimum wage for migrant workers in Quebec is $9.65 per hour.

Freedom Flotilla II, boats carrying people from around the world willing to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza were sabotaged and threatened by the state of Israel. The mission was grounded in Greece at the request of the Israeli government.

A group of U.S. lawmakers launched a lawsuit against President Obama, saying that the bombing of Libya is illegal. Canada-led NATO forces have carried out at least 47,000 bombings in Libya over the past three months.

Police in New York are planning to stage a protest against America on a trade tour in August. The Washington Times reported that Harper was accused of being in a sandwich in a bathroom in Brazil after not getting his way during trade negotiations.

Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez announced that Venezuela had been shot and that he was in intensive care.

Minimum wage earners in New Brunswick have to wait again for an increase in their pay at a time when taxes for New Brunswickers are set to increase by another 1% and the small business tax is set to drop by 1%.

Minimum wage workers will not get the additional 50 cents per hour they promised would start in September. President Obama said that he hoped the Senate would pass the minimum wage increase and hopefully it will finally reach $10 per hour, the average in the US. New Brunswick’s provincial minimum wage is currently $7.00 and is expected to drop to $6.90 in September and $6.80 until April, each full-time worker will hand over $20 to their employer every week.

Employers asked the government to raise the minimum wage and the government complied. With a straight face, the minister of Labour, said the Government of New Brunswick asserted that, “Minimum wage is not an effective tool to redress poverty.”

It’s a statement that would be almost comical were it not so sad. How is paying someone less than minimum wage effective in remedying the poverty that affects 3 out of 10 New Brunswickers who work as food and beverage servers or bartenders – more than 1,000,000 people living on less than $10,000 per year (the average income for the past 10 years) were paid less than $13,000 (the men). Are we really going to say that is too much? Is that really the best idea we can come up with to cut costs and address the very real poverty rate?

Keeping minimum wages low is justified through many arguments that mean increases in wages lead to job losses, but no evidence exists to support such a claim. The bottom line is our interest to fight for a minimum wage that ensures a dignified life for all workers.

Community Calendar

Shale Gas Blockade (continued from page 1)

...energy, i.e. shale gas, to the U.S. Companies have also used Chapter 11 of NAFTA to sue jurisdictions for losses in profits. Melanson was left wondering whether SWN Resources from the U.S. could sue New Brunswick of the province chiefly because of their behavior or the regulation it. She said, “It is better to cut our losses now.”

“How close can seismic work come to our rivers, streams and wetlands?” asked Lawford of Nashwauk River Valley. MacDonald responded, “Every home owner and every well owner will be protected by a 200 metre set back.” MacDonald said he is committed to the administration’s success in getting the Department of Natural Resources to regulate well owners and to work with the New Brunswick Association of Municipalities (NBAM) to set up a representative monitor each test site as they are installed. He said the work will also be videotaped.

MacDonald and MacDonald’s colleagues demanded a position from MacDonald-yes or no to shale gas. MacDonald said he supports shale gas and shale oil in the province and that he is working on the impacts of the industry but refused to say that he will oppose it.

In a rare move, the companies ended the meeting by thanking the community of Stanely for donating food for their gathering. Billy’s Restaurant was one of the few that did.

MacDonald added, “We share this food, and it will make us stronger,” said Brooks. After inviting MacDonald to join their supper, Brooks turned to his colleagues and summed it up: “We are not prepared.”

On August 11th, the day after the blockade, shale gas opponents met at the Mill Road building in Fredericton. Natural Resources Minister Bruce Northrup met briefly with the demonstrators in the afternoon including Alma Brooks who was very upset. She said that MacDonald and the administration have not consulted on shale gas and of the provinces obligations to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The meeting ended with calls of shame when he cut the meeting short and refused to meet with St. Mary’s Chief.

Minimum wage increase delayed again

By JODY DALLAIRE

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Alma Brooks, a Maliseet elder from St. Mary’s Reserve, died of natural causes on August 10th. ‘To me New Brunswick is just a government, nothing more. You see the flag blowing in the wind and you think, would Mohawk warrior that flag had replaced the provincial flag at the Legislative Assembly during the anti-shale gas demonstration August 1st. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

CANDICE PAUL

Shale gas opponents are calling the August 19th announcement that SWN Resources will be suspending operations until next year as one victory in a larger battle to stop shale gas exploration and permanent extraction in the province of New Brunswick.

Craig Mazerolle, VP Education for the St. Thomas University Students’ Union, said that post-secondary education is less accessible with rising tuition and the New Brunswick government’s changes to student loans. “Our students are taking on account parental contributions,” Photo by Shane Magee.

Shale Gas Sidewalk Protest. Shale gas opponents will gather outside the government offices at Centennial Building on 670 George Street in Fredericton at 11:30 this morning to show their public opposition and demand a change in the government’s stance on shale gas. For full story, please see page 1.

Falls Brook Centre Fall Fair. Sept. 10-11, 9:00am-5:00pm.

Falls Brook Centre, Grantsville Dr. in Fredericton.

For further information: For Further Information, please contact Falls Brook Centre.

March Against Shale Gas in Moncton. March to Moncton City Hall, beginning at the intersection of Main St. and Vaughan Harvey Blvd. Contact: 1-800-712-0125.

Take Back the Night. Take Back The Night is an international movement that seeks to end sexual violence in all of its forms including sexual assault, sexual abuse, dating violence, and domestic violence. A public protest organized by women, for women. In St. Stephen on Fri, Sept. 16, 7:00pm. Canada/US border at St. Stephen Host: Charlotte County Abuse Prevention Network. Visit: takebackthenight.org.


Cinema Politica and student activists are screening political documentaries that take us to places like Afghanistan, Iraq and Gaza, where UN soldiers and civilians pay the price. A documentary on the war, a documentary on territories and prisons where dehumanization and destruction wreaked by capitalism and colonialism warrants our support. Documentary screening on Friday evening 7:00pm. Films will be screened the last Thursday of the month (Sept-Nov) at 701 Main St. in Sackville. Films will be screened Mondays and Wednesdays this fall at UWI Centre, Dunn Building at Mt. Allison University, Cinema Politica chapter also exist in Bathurst, Moncton, Taymouth and Saint John. Check out film schedules here: www.cinemapolitica.org

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