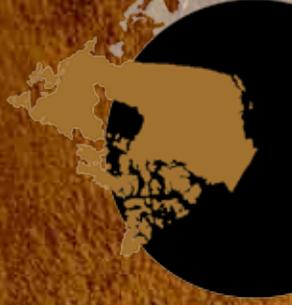


dominion, n. 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. A self-governing nation in the British Commonwealth



The Dominion

news from the grassroots

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Cops Watched, Extractives Ejected, Pride Re-Claimed

In her speech to open the **Winnipeg** International Copwatching Conference, Indigenous leader Leslie Spillett critiqued the adage that police misconduct in cases dealing with First Nations is the result of "a few bad apples," and noted that a "culture of oppression" plaguing police since colonial times has caused a disproportionate use of lethal force against indigenous peoples.

The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC withdrew from the province's **Missing Women inquiry**, due to an inability to cover the associated legal fees. The commission is set to investigate police failings in apprehending serial killer William Pickton. Commission head Wally Oppal has called on the provincial government to provide additional funding to cover the legal costs of several Native and women's groups in order to allow them to participate. The province has steadfastly refused to allocate the funding, which Oppal estimates at less than \$2 million.

Video footage of **Ottawa** police treatment of Roxanne Carr was released at the behest of a number of media outlets. The video is evidence in a suit by Carr against Ottawa police for \$975,000 and shows police pushing her to the floor, tying her up and leaving her in her cell after stripping her naked. Carr claims to have been left naked and suffered injuries, including a broken arm.

Two **Montreal** activist groups filed complaints with the Quebec Human Rights Commission against a police unit they say discriminates against their political beliefs. The GAMMA squad, which roughly translates to "surveilling the activities of marginal and anarchist groups," took credit for arresting four members of these groups in July, on charges related to altercations with police at an anti-capitalist May Day march.

A new study found that the cost

of the federal **prison** system has increased 86 per cent under the Conservative government, rising from \$1.6 billion in 2005-06 to a projected \$2.98 billion in 2012. The rise is attributed to the Conservatives new "Truth in Sentencing" policy and other tough on crime measures, which put more people in jail for longer terms, increasing costs for everything from inmate living conditions to more prison guards.

Health care workers, legal workers and police denounced the lack of mental health facilities in **Ontario**. The calls came after a woman who was arrested on minor charges and found unfit to stand trial due to mental health problems was locked up for two weeks, rather than receiving the psychiatric care ordered by the courts.

The new logo of the **Winnipeg Jets** hockey team was criticised for conflating sport and militarism. Defense Minister Peter McKay loves the new logo and the team's new owners have announced they will be donating \$1 million to military-linked charities.

Mining company Cartier Resources suspended all mining exploration on the territory of the **Algonquins of Barriere Lake**, in Quebec. Community member have campaigned against the company's activities, including a visit to the company's annual general meeting and an occupation of the company's proposed drilling site. The company had not sought 'free, prior and informed consent' before operating on their land. Cartier's mineral claims in the area are suspended until summer 2013, as per the company's request.

Fears of water contamination in **Yellowknife** increased, as a sink hole near a former gold mine continued to grow in size. Environmental officials were worried that water from Baker Creek, which flows into Great Slave Lake, could end up in nearby underground chambers. The chambers contain arsenic, a by-product of gold-min-

ing left behind after the closing of the mine.

A loose band of internet **hackers** ramped up attacks this month. LulzSec claims to have gotten its hands on a cache of emails from embattled news organization News Corp. Anonymous says it has obtained a gigabyte in secret info from NATO. They also got confidential documents from Italy. Police moved in, however, and arrested the alleged founder of LulzSec. It was also revealed that PayPal is helping the FBI catch the hackers, resulting in a call to boycott the online payment service.

Quebec saw the largest ever influx of migrant farm workers to the province: around 7,000, mostly from Mexico, Guatemala and the West Indies. Their work is often hazardous, involving exposure to extreme heat and pesticides, and risk of repetitive strain from picking crops. Minimum wage for migrant workers in Quebec is \$9.65 per hour.

Citizenship and Immigration Minister **Jason Kenney** announced that 1,800 new Canadians will have their citizenship revoked. Only 63 Canadians have had their citizenship revoked since 1977. Thirty of those who lost their citizenship are being sought in connections with "war crimes," yet none of the three dozen on the "most wanted" list have been charged in connection with any crimes.

Bureaucrats in **Ottawa** prevented fisheries scientist Kristi Miller from talking about her new discovery, which could help explain why salmon stocks have been crashing off Canada's West Coast. Her finding has been called one of the most significant discoveries to come out of a federal fisheries lab in years.

A new analysis of **Afghan detainee documents** confirmed that a lack of communication, ineptitude and diplomatic secrecy at the highest levels of Canadian



The Dykes squeaked out a narrow 13-10 victory over the Divas (pictured above) in the first annual Halifax Pride Classic in July. "[Some people still] can't come out in all their wonderfulness and have a Dykes versus Divas ballgame... So we do this until everybody in the world has the right to do this," said Liz McQuaid, match co-organizer and co-chair of Halifax Pride.

Miles Howe

“Cutting funding for bike lanes because there isn't enough demand is like cutting literacy funding because not enough people are reading.”

—Toronto activist Dave Meslin on the suggestion that bike lanes in the city be cut as a cost-saving measure.

(More on page 18)

government played a role in prisoners being tortured after transfer to Afghan custody.

US President Barack Obama formally ended the ban on gays in the military. As of September 20, service members will be allowed to be open about their sexual orientation. Those previously discharged under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy will have the opportunity to

enlist again.

Alykhan Velshi, former communications director for Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, launched an Ethical Oil ad campaign contrasting the "cruel crude" from conflict areas (mostly the Middle East) and "dictatorships" that fuel "terrorism" and even result in "women [being] stoned to death," with the Canadian oil that gener-

ates taxable revenues that are used to help fund "democracy."

CORRECTION:

In the infographic "Threatening Ideologies" in issue 77 of The Dominion, a quote from Harsha Walia was taken out of context and misconstrued her opinions. A version of this infographic that does reflect her views can now be found online.

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Pulp Dreams

Notorious Indonesian forest products conglomerate lands in Nova Scotia

by Miles Howe

HALIFAX—If you thought that the Canadian pulp and paper industry was environmentally irresponsible, you were right. But the new players on the clear-cut block make them look like a bunch of patchouli-scented tree-huggers. This is the story of how Canada hopped into bed with one of Asia's worst environmental criminals, and how for the Pictou Landing Indian Band in Nova Scotia, it's just one more proverbial slap in the face.

Amidst a lack of fanfare from mainstream Canadian media, and encouragement by the federal government, a company known as Paper Excellence Canada Holdings Corporation has lately been buying up Canadian pulp mills at a rapid rate. Paper Excellence is a shell company of global pulp and paper giant Asia Pulp Paper (APP), itself the logging and pulping arm of the massive Indonesian conglomerate known as Sinar Mas.

In 2001, APP defaulted on \$12 billion in bonds, kicking the Indonesian economy, and indeed the entire Southeast Asian economy, into a downward spiral. Three independent audits have never been able to account for between three and four billion dollars, in part because APP simply re-financed itself through the financial arm of Sinar Mas. APP has illegally logged a national park in Cambodia, and makes a regular practice of creating shell companies, illegally logging, and by the time the underpaid forestry authorities figure out who's responsible...POOF! They're gone.

Richard Brooks, Forests Campaign Coordinator for Greenpeace, has spearheaded a global campaign to boycott APP products. Large-scale paper distributors, such as Xerox, Staples, and Target, have heeded Brooks' message, and now refuse to carry APP products. In an interview with *The Dominion*, Brooks says:

(APP) is on this mission to grow themselves into the largest paper company in the world...They're involved with illegal logging and deforestation in Indonesia, and quite a bit of their pulp and paper production is in Indonesia... These are old-growth, tropical, rainforests that are being cut down, and turned into acacia plantations and eucalyptus plantations, or are being turned into palm oil plantations, which is another division of their company.

Brooks continues:

You've got endangered species habitat that's being wiped out...orangutans, Sumatran tigers, rhinos...a lot of logging that happens outside of their legal concessions. There's evidence of them logging in protected areas...Huge amount of conflict with local communities which they are disenfranchising...basically going in, logging the hell out of the forest, putting in these (palm oil) plantations, and not asking for any approval from local communities.

If Paper Excellence/APP/Sinar Mas get their hands on the Northern Pulp-owned mill in Pictou, Nova Scotia, and all signs point to the deal being finalized shortly, it will be their fifth Canadian pulp mill acquisition in as many years. The other mills are located in Howe Sound, British Columbia, MacKenzie, British Columbia, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

The Canadian pulp mills in question haven't seen this much attention in years. The mill in Pictou has been surviving on a steady diet of government loans for almost a generation. The Prince Albert mill was mothballed at the time of sale. But China is entering



If APP purchases the Northern Pulp-owned mill in Pictou, Nova Scotia, it will be their fifth Canadian pulp mill acquisition in as many years. *Calypso Orchid*

a phase of consumerism known as the "paper-culture," and suddenly pulp is again a very hot global commodity. APP simply can't keep up with the Chinese demand for toilet paper, so it has come calling for the mills, and, more importantly, Canada's forests.

We should note that Paper Excellence is not buying any Canadian paper-making facilities. Brooks interprets this to mean that we are in fact witnessing the death of the Canadian, if not North American, paper-making industry, as Canadian pulp will now travel back to Asia, get mixed up with Indonesian hardwood pulp, be made into paper, and then travel back to Canada.

Ed Roste, Vice President of Operations for Paper Excellence, and former VP at Meadow Lake, Paper Excellence's first Canadian pulp mill acquisition in 2006, claims, in an email interview, that while the majority of Canadian pulp will in fact be shipped to China to make paper, there is still a significant North American client base for Canadian pulp. Roste speaks of the "excitement" of the new market opportunities.

The Harper government has opened the public coffers to pay for upgrades to mills all across the country. Canadian taxpayers are on the hook for the 'Pulp

and Paper Green Transformation Program' (PPGTP), in which Canadian mills can access up to \$1 billion in grants. If Canadian pulp and paper mills were nationalized, such a program might make economic sense for Canadians. As it is, taxpayers are to pay for "greening" the mills, only to have many of them sold off to foreign investors, like Sinar Mas, with problematic environmental and financial histories. Paper Excellence's Howe Sound mill received more than \$45 million, and the Meadow Lake mill received \$2.6 million.

Not to be outdone, in January of 2011, two months prior to the sale being made public, Peter MacKay, Canadian Minister of National Defense, whose family handily owns sizable woodlot holdings in the Pictou area, announced that the Pictou mill would be receiving \$28 million under the federal grant. In a telephone interview, Don Breen, Vice-President of Strategic Planning and Government Affairs at Northern Pulp, noted that the \$28 million would be used to "reduce odour at the mill by up to 70 per cent, improve boiler performance, and invest in renewable energy initiatives."

In Nova Scotia, the Pictou mill isn't just a taxpayer-subsi-

dized employer to 230 mill workers, it's the home of a very dirty secret.

Opened in 1966, it is infamous for its continued use of once-idyllic Boat Harbour, a natural lagoon that is located on Pictou Landing Indian Band reserve lands, as an effluent dumping grounds. As documented by the King's College Investigative Journalist Team in 2009, an estimated 1,000,000,000 litres of liquid pulp mill waste has poured into Boat Harbour since then, causing untold environmental destruction.

Indeed, an indemnity agreement was signed in 1995 between Scott Maritimes, original owners of the mill, and the provincial government. The agreement guarantees that the Nova Scotia government (actually, Nova Scotia taxpayers) will swallow the costs of cleaning up Boat Harbour. The agreement is valid in transfers of mill ownership. The current NDP provincial government has no alternative plan on what to do with the mill waste, and the Pictou Landing Band is currently in a two-year-and-counting legal battle with the province to see Boat Harbour closed.

Boat Harbour is now a foul-smelling, foam-encrusted, 142-acre wasteland, largely devoid of life. Don Breen, one of the witnesses to the 1995 indemnity, makes no mention of any of the \$28 million going to clean up the Boat Harbour disaster that he personally has helped whoever owns the Pictou mill wash their hands of.

In an interview with The Dominion, Kevin Christmas, Indigenous Mi'gmaq, band advisor to Pictou Landing and long-time activist against the pollution of Boat Harbour, notes that effluent-capture technology has existed for years, and that the dire straits of the Pictou Landing Band could have been avoided from the start.

"Boat Harbour is at the tail end of a beautiful reserve called Canada," says Christmas. "What happens there is one hundred and ten million gallons of the worst possible effluent is being dumped every day, for the last fifty years,



Companies like Xerox and Staples have complied with a global boycott call against APP for its illegal logging of old-growth forests in Indonesia.
Kris Griffon

in the middle of this beautiful reserve...It's destroying and killing the people. The children...[they] don't know what's wrong with them. But they are not going to live very long lives, and probably will never have children because of base-metal contamination. It's the end of the generation at Pictou Landing."

Charlie Parker, Minister of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, whose riding is located in Pictou West, site of the mill, unveiled the province's Renewable Electricity Plan (REP) in 2010. The REP considers biomass burning, which can involve large-scale, whole-tree harvesting, to be a renewable source of energy.

The repercussions of this definition of "renewable" have already been felt in Northern Pulp-owned land. In the summer of 2009, Northern Pulp made national headlines in Canada by decimating a wide swath of land in the Musquodoboit-Sheet Harbour area through whole-tree harvesting. Katy Didkowsky, of the Save the Caribou Committee, and a local tourism operator, called the scene a "purposeful massacre."

Musquodoboit-Sheet Har-

bour may only be the start. Frank Magazine recently reported that over 28,000 parcels of land in Nova Scotia, almost 250,000 acres, are without an original Crown grant. The archaic, neo-colonial law in Nova Scotia states that without an original grant, which may be over 300 years old, the land belongs to, and can revert back to, the Crown. Nova Scotia has one of the lowest percentages of Crown land available. That the provincial government has found this new source of potentially exploitable land is perhaps more than convenient.

In this light, it is no great stretch of imagination to interpret the \$28 million grant for odour reduction, improved boiler performance, and "green" energy capture as simply implying that emissions from the mill will smell better, while processing more trees, potentially whole trees, and burning more wood as biomass. Anonymous sources in Pictou confirm the mill's preparedness for increased production, and note that boilers "which have not been active for years" are now operational.

The Pictou Chamber of

Commerce has come out in favour of the mill's sale. The Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) has also endorsed the sale of the mill in Pictou, as it has done for the other four Paper Excellence acquisitions. Representatives from the CEP were unavailable for comment on whether they knew, or cared, who the actual new owners of the mill were.

The NDP government of Nova Scotia went so far as to engage in a public meet-and-greet with Paper Excellence's VP Ed Roste, and fully endorsed the sale. When Richard Brooks questioned whether the government knew of the links to APP and Sinar Mas, the province pleaded ignorance.

All groups were mum on addressing the decades-overdue clean-up of Boat Harbour.

For the rest of Nova Scotia, and Canada, it remains to be seen whether we will see the forest for the trees.

Miles Howe is a journalist in Halifax. This article was originally published by the Halifax Media Co-op.

Social Profiling Under Scrutiny

A new report indicates little progress has been made eliminating social profiling in Montreal



by Natascia Lypny

MONTREAL—"We need to do a clean-up," says Bernard St-Jacques of the homelessness problem in Montreal, which affects 25,000 to 30,000 people according to the Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM).

St-Jacques is the community organizer for public space and jurisdiction at RAPSIM and the author of a report on social profiling released in June. *Profilage social et juridiction: portrait de la situation dans l'espace public montréalais* contains the results of a questionnaire asking 40 Montreal organizations about their experiences—and those of the homeless people who use their services—with social profiling.

The report was inspired by a similar one done by the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission in 2009. Its most significant finding: homeless people receive a disproportionate number of fines from the police. The majority of fines were for minor infractions regarding "incivilities." According to the report, Montreal's homeless represent one per cent of the population but they were the subject of 31.6 per cent of the police fines in 2004, 20.3 per cent in 2005. The report concluded social profiling contributed significantly to these statistics, and made a series of recommendations to the Montreal Police Service (SPVM).

Two years later, RAPSIM's report commends the police on a few improvements in this area. SPVM documented a 30 per

cent decrease in the number of fines given to homeless people between 2008 and 2009. It also partnered with the Équipe Mobile de Référence et d'Interventions en Itinérance, whose members go on patrol with police, providing advice on approaching the homeless and suggesting alternatives to fines or arrest. "They (SPVM) have changed their directives: on the level of interventions, police officers are less encouraged to target homeless people," says St-Jacques.

Still, 85 per cent of the respondents to RAPSIM's questionnaire described the relations between homeless people and police as negative: 56 per cent reported being the victims of physical abuse and 46 per cent reported verbal abuse or discrimination. Sixty-one per cent indicated they

still frequently receive fines.

The report denounces police for rarely following procedure when it comes to situations involving homeless people. St-Jacques says nothing has been done since the release of the Commission's recommendations to correct or reprimand this misconduct. Clinique Droits Devant, RAPSIM's legal aid service, dealt with 16 cases last year concerning police misconduct, and sixty-three per cent of respondents described their legal situation as poor.

"The attitude of police toward homeless people hasn't really changed for the best; the mentality hasn't really changed," says Johanne Galipeau of Action Autonomie, a mental health advocacy and legal aid organization that participated in RAPSIM's questionnaire. "Maybe there are less fines, but there is a lack of respect. Abuse, brutality; these situations have not changed — little has changed."

She criticizes police for being quick to use a heavy hand on a person acting outside "societal norms." As a result, the homeless have made a connection between the police and being escorted to the hospital or prison, she says. Losing confidence in the system means the homeless have ceased asking for help.

Galipeau says police tend to receive the brunt of social profiling accusations because they are the first responders.

RAPSIM's report indicates 60 per cent of respondents felt the treatment of homeless people in public spaces in general has improved little or not at all in the past five years — whether that treatment be from residents, business owners, other citizens or the police.

"Police members are not apart from society," says Marie-Eve Sylvestre. "They're part of it and their construction or their perception of homelessness and of some

people who may have characteristics of homeless people are also constructed by society.”

Sylvestre is a civil law professor at the University of Ottawa and was one of two researchers involved in developing RAPSIM's report. She says social profiling by police stems largely from society's narratives of homeless people. For instance, the misconception that all homeless are dangerous is often used as a justification for their arrest. “We believe the police have constructed a perception of the harm caused by homeless people based on the needs and complaints of very few individuals who have some power in the neighborhoods [where the arrests and fines are occurring,]” says Sylvestre.

Making these complaints is possible, she adds, because some municipal bylaws and provincial laws concerning the use of public space discriminate against homeless people. Prohibitions against public drinking, public noise, public gathering and public drunkenness target the homeless in particular. These laws apply to all citizens, but people living on the street are more likely to violate them because they have no private address. “The fact of not having private spaces, that your private space eventually becomes the public space, well, that impedes a protection of your rights,” says St-Jacques.

Between 2000 and 2003, more and more public places were being redefined as “parks” or “squares,” meaning the city had more control over them, the RAPSIM report explains. It became illegal to use public installations, like park benches or low walls, in a manner for which they were not intended (eg. sleeping.) It also became illegal to remain in public areas after their “closing times.” Céline Bellot, a researcher in the Centre International de Criminologie Comparée at the Université de Montréal who worked on RAPSIM's report, documented a four-fold increase in the fines given out to homeless between 1994 and 2003.

St-Jacques also points to the development during this period of downtown Montreal's infrastructure, housing, commercial areas,

tourist attractions and festival spaces as a contributor to the police's targeting of the homeless population. Downtown organizations recorded worse relations with the police during the summer and festival seasons. “It's obvious,” St-Jacques says. “The marginalized population found themselves in the way of these projects.”

The inclusion of homeless people in these projects — and their reinsertion into society as a whole — could greatly deter social profiling, believes Richard Chrétien, director of Sac à Dos. His organization has strived to maintain positive relationships

“Maybe there are less fines, but there is a lack of respect. Abuse, brutality; these situations have not changed.”

—*Johanne Galipeau, Action Autonomie*

with the police officers, residents and business owners surrounding Sac à Dos' Ste-Catherine/René-Lévesque location. Its members have worked in the community in urban development and cleanup projects, as well as with local stores and events like the Festival de Jazz and Francophonies. “It helps in talking about people living on the street a little bit differently; not just seeing homeless people as a problem, but to see homeless peoples' ability to integrate,” Chrétien says. “Plus, it attacks the problem itself.”

By problem, he means homelessness itself. Central to both RAPSIM's and the Commission's reports was the idea that homelessness is a societal failure leading to the denial of basics right to a part of its population. Both groups recommended a steep increase in services for the homeless and improved preventions to homelessness on the municipal and provincial levels.

In 2010, Mayor Gérald Tremblay announced an inter-departmental action plan for homelessness. Despite the plan's acknowledgement of a social profiling problem, St-Jacques finds it insufficient for its lack of pro-

posed changes to discriminatory municipal laws and police training in regards to the treatment of homeless people. He is most critical of the minimal funding provided to programs and community groups working to improve the basic living conditions of the homeless. “We are far from having our demands met, especially on the jurisdiction and social profiling levels,” he says.

RAPSIM plans to continue its research in the area of social profiling. It will be teaming up with other organizations and the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission to create

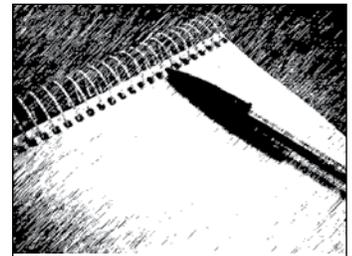
a farther-reaching monitoring system that will include a demographic breakdown of social profiling trends, and statistics specific to Montreal's various neighborhoods. St-Jacques wants to develop a better method of documenting cases of police abuse and misconduct. He hopes the Commission will align this work with its portfolio on racial profiling to form a stronger attack on this issue.

Natascha Lypny is a Montreal native and bilingual freelance journalist currently pursuing a journalism and sociology degree at the University of King's College and Dalhousie University in Halifax.

This article was produced by the Montreal Media Co-op.



For more grassroots coverage out of Montreal check out montreal.mediacoop.ca



CP Sutcliffe

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Student Government Steamrolls Progressive Groups

Community and student spaces under attack at SFU

by Dawn Paley

BURNABY—Midway through the summer, life got turned upside down for campus and community groups on SFU's Burnaby Campus.

On July 7, the members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3338 were given notice that after two years of contract negotiations they would be locked out of their offices. The move by the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) impacts 15 permanent staff and five student employees who work for the society. The lockout took effect Sunday, July 10, and picket lines went up in front of the SFU Women's Centre and Out on Campus (OoC) spaces Monday morning where some of the locked-out employees work. At the time of print, the lock-out was ongoing.

The day after the Student Society walked away from contract talks, its Space Oversight Committee recommended terminating the lease of the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group's (SFPIRG) space in the Rotunda, an area popular with students. SFPIRG has been in the Rotunda for 30 years, but the recommendation, which still needs approval before it goes into force, came as a complete surprise to SFPIRG members.

Following the lock-out, there was a flurry of activity on campus as supporters of the Women's Centre, Out on Campus, and SFPIRG held a demonstration and march against the Student Society's actions. Later, they got to work making buttons, preparing leaflets and exchanging notes on resisting what many are calling a targeted political attack on campus organizations that don't fit the

"old boy's club" mold.

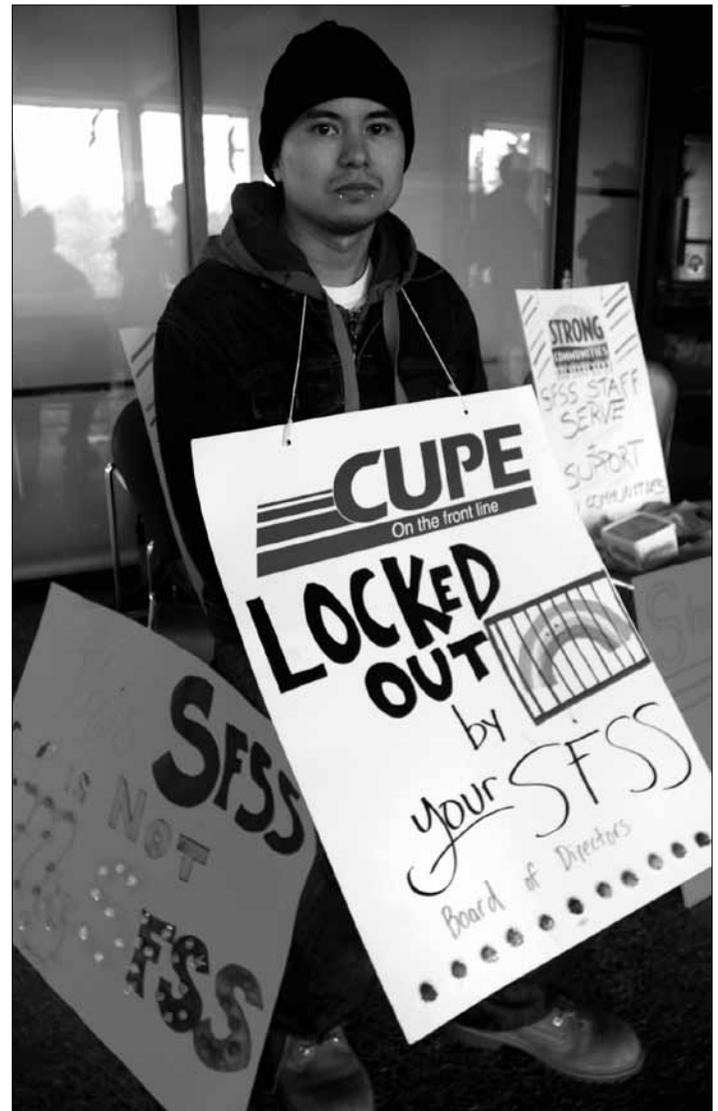
SFSS student board members are currently staffing Out on Campus and the Women's Centre. Posters all over campus put up by the SFSS student board declare, "Funding! Food! Spaces! Come in, we're open!" and claim CUPE workers' wages are too high.

"I'm operating as if I'm at work," said Samonte Cruz, the coordinator of Out on Campus and a CUPE 3338 member. Out on Campus runs a library and a lounge where staff and volunteers work hard to create an inclusive, accessible environment for queer students, faculty, staff and their allies. But in a strange role reversal, since the start of the lock-out Cruz and other OoC volunteers have been asking students not to enter the student lounge. "As far as I'm concerned, the lounge is outside right now," said Cruz, as he bit into a sandwich and tried to make himself comfortable on a hard plastic chair surrounded by picket signs.

"The problem with the SFSS board saying the space is open is that it's not open in the same capacity it was established to be open as," said Darren Ho, a second-year linguistics student and Out on Campus volunteer. Ho was busy pressing buttons in support of SFSS staff. Referring to the SFSS student board members who have been operating the space, he said, "It is a trespass of safe space, in that we don't know if they even know what safe space means."

Ho expressed concern that community members who call or email for advice or referrals might not know that the qualified staff has been replaced by untrained SFSS board members.

The Women's Centre lounge is open 24 hours as a safe space for



Samonte Cruz, coordinator of Out on Campus.

Flux Photo

self-identified women, providing, for example, a place to rest for someone who misses the last bus home, or a shelf to refrigerate breast milk for a new mom rushing between classes. The centre also offers peer support, referrals, a work experience program, a library, and a comfortable environment for folks who might not otherwise find a space on campus where they feel at home.

"Their rhetoric is that it is just a space—that no staff hours are needed," said Nadine Chambers, who serves as the coordinator of the Women's Centre. "But every day we have teaching opportunities around the complexity of gender."

Chambers was walking me through the multitude of ways the Women's Centre supports students

and community members when Jeff McCann, President of the SFSS, walked into the SFPIRG office. With the air of an impatient manager, he interrupted our interview, demanding to know when the Women's Centre collective was to meet.

McCann is a business student and former football player who previously served as SFSS treasurer. He was elected president in March, and began his term in May, promising to "increase efficiencies." He has since led the SFSS into what CUPE 3338 calls an "ideological move against the union" and put the Student Society on a collision course with SFPIRG.

At the afternoon rally, there

continued on next page

Picket Targets Israeli Shipping

Deltaport action responds to Palestinian call for action

by **Canadian Boat to Gaza/
Boycott Israeli Apartheid
Campaign**

VANCOUVER—Activists from throughout the Lower Mainland gathered on the morning of July 19 at Deltaport in Vancouver for an information picket targeting a major Israeli shipping company, ZIM. The action was in solidarity with the aid flotilla to Gaza, which included a Canadian boat and was ultimately prevented from sailing to the occupied and blockaded Palestinian territory.

Returning delegates from the Canadian Boat to Gaza, the Tahrir, were among the participants in the picket. The Tahrir was stopped by the Greek coast guard.

"The Israeli government attacked our humanitarian flotilla with sabotage, threats of violence, and a great deal of political and economic pressure - that's ultimately why the Greek government shamefully agreed to enforce the Israeli blockade," said Irene MacInnes, a Vancouver member of the Canadian Boat to Gaza (CBG) who was among more than 30 Canadians on board the Tahrir.

"Our Canadian Boat and the Freedom Flotilla aimed to highlight the impact of the blockade of Gaza," added MacInnes. "While Gazans cannot travel or ship exports by sea, massive Israeli companies like ZIM are able to freely do business around the

world despite their connection to the unjust policies that bring so much suffering to Palestinians."

ZIM is by far the biggest Israeli shipping company, and one of the 10 largest in the world, with 60 weekly services to 180 ports worldwide, including Deltaport. This year's Freedom Flotilla was a follow-up to a similar effort in May 2010, when Israeli armed forces raided a Turkish ship, the Mavi Marmara, killing nine activists.

Following last year's massacre, a number of Palestinian labour organizations issued a call for international solidarity, which read in part: "During the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the world was inspired by the brave and principled actions of dockworkers unions who refused to handle South African cargo... Today, we call on you, dockworkers unions of the world, to do the same against Israel's occupation and apartheid. This is the most effective form of solidarity to end injustice and uphold universal human rights." Dockworkers in the USA, Sweden, Turkey, India and South Africa have responded with support actions.

"We are calling for a boycott of Zim because Palestinian civil society has asked people of conscience to target Israeli shipping in the wake of the Israel's illegal sea blockade of Gaza and it's vicious and violent attacks on



freexero.com

the humanitarian ships trying to connect Palestinians to the outside world," said Gordon Murray, a member of the Boycott Israeli Apartheid Campaign (BIAC).

"By flotilla and boycott and many other means, the global movement to dismantle Israeli apartheid is growing," said Murray.

A lone French flagged boat, the Dignity, from the Freedom Flotilla managed to get out of

Greek territorial waters and sail towards Gaza. It was boarded and seized by Israeli commandos in international waters on July 19, the same day as the ZIM protest. The passengers and crew, including one delegate from the Canadian Boat to Gaza, Stephan Corriveau, were held by the Israeli military before being deported to their respective countries.

continued from previous page

was no shortage of people whose university experience has been enriched by the resource groups in the Rotunda. "I felt that these spaces, the people here, and the staff in particular, helped me get through my economics degree," said Amber Louie, the Student Convocation Speaker of the class of 2003. Louie made the trip up Burnaby Mountain specifically to show solidarity with the locked-out workers. "They really

supported me in getting to where I am today," she explained.

This isn't the first time the SFSS has tried to undermine the work of progressive groups on campus.

"In 2006, the rhetorical justification was fiduciary responsibility to the society," wrote Joel Block, chief steward of SFU's Teaching Support Staff Union. "This summer, it's financial responsibility to the student members."

The other poster posted by the SFSS student board this week

claims that \$748,911 paid out to SFSS staff is inflated compared to the \$115,908 transferred to clubs and student union funding. The SFSS directors' Twitter account is replete with claims of how much the Student Union is saving by locking out its staff. Not mentioned is the \$831,000 the SFSS spent last year renovating the pub. Then again, that is where the old boys are more likely to hang out.

Dawn Paley is a Vancouver-based journalist.

These articles were produced by the Vancouver Media Co-op.



For more grassroots coverage out of Vancouver check out vancouver.mediacoop.ca

A Town Without Poverty?

Canada's only experiment in guaranteed income finally gets reckoning

by Vivian Belik

WHITEHORSE, YK—Try to imagine a town where the government paid each of the residents a living income, regardless of who they were and what they did, and a Soviet hamlet may come to mind.

But this experiment happened much closer to home. For a four-year period in the '70s, the poorest families in Dauphin, Manitoba were granted a guaranteed minimum income by the federal and provincial governments. Thirty-five years later all that remains of the experiment are 2000 boxes of documents that have gathered dust in the Canadian archives building in Winnipeg.

Until now little has been known about what unfolded over those four years in the small rural town, since the government locked away the data that had been collected and prevented it from being analyzed.

But after a five year struggle, Evelyn Forget, a professor of health sciences at the University of Manitoba, secured access to those boxes in 2009. Until the data is computerized, any systematic analysis is impossible. Undeterred, Forget has begun to piece together the story by using the census, health records, and the testimony of the program's participants. What is now emerging reveals that the program could have counted many successes.

Beginning in 1974, Pierre Trudeau's Liberals and Manitoba's first elected New Democratic Party government gave money to every person and family in Dauphin who fell below the poverty line. Under the program—called "Mincome"—about 1,000 families received monthly cheques.

Unlike welfare, which only certain individuals qualified for, the guaranteed minimum income project was open to everyone. It was the first—and to this day, only—time that Canada has ever experimented with such an open-

door social assistance program. was a welcome supplement, in a time when the poverty line was \$2,100 a year.

"The extra money meant that I was also able to give my kids something I wouldn't ordinarily be able to, like taking them to a

show or some small luxury like that," said Richardson, now 84, who spoke to The Dominion by phone from Dauphin.

As part of the experiment, an army of researchers were sent to Dauphin to interview the Mincome families. Residents in nearby rural towns who didn't receive Mincome were also surveyed so their statistics could be compared against those from Dauphin. But after the government cut the program in 1978, they simply warehoused the data and never bothered to analyze it.

"When the government introduced the program they really thought it would be a pilot project and that by the end of the decade they would roll this out and everybody would participate," said Forget. "They thought it would become a universal program. But of course, the idea eventually just died off."

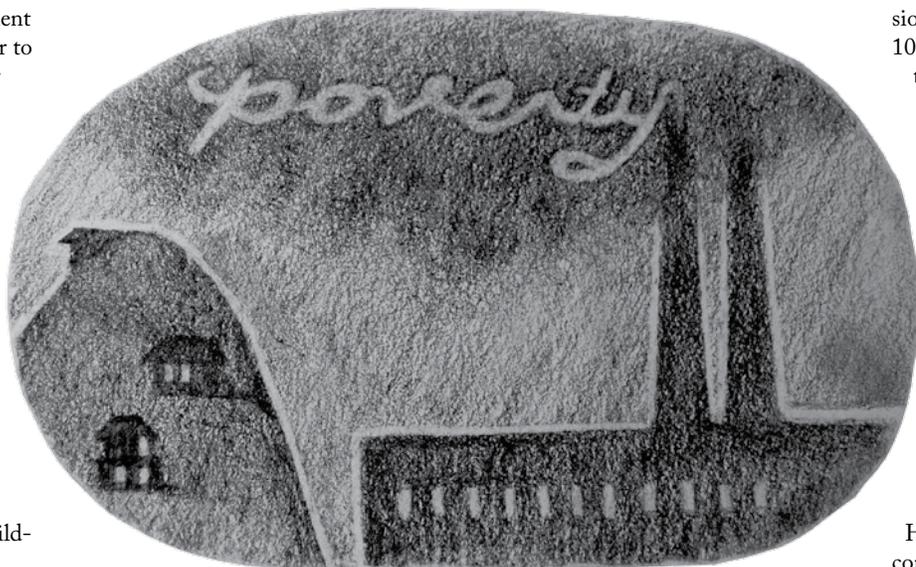
During the Mincome program, the federal and provincial governments collectively spent \$17 million, though it was initially supposed to have cost only a few million. Meant to last several more years, the program came to a quick halt in 1978 when an economic recession hit Canada. The recession had caused prices to increase 10 per cent each year, so payouts to families under Mincome had increased accordingly.

Trudeau's Liberals, already on the defensive for an overhaul of Canada's employment insurance system, killed the program and withheld any additional money to analyze the data that had been amassed. "It's hugely unfortunate and typical of the strange ways in which government works that the data was never analyzed," says Ron Hikel who coordinated the Mincome program. Hikel now works in the United States to promote universal healthcare reform.

"Government officials opposed [to Mincome] didn't want to spend more money to analyze the data and show what they already thought: that it didn't work," says Hikel, who remains a strong proponent of guaranteed income programs.

"And the people who were in favour of Mincome were worried because if the analysis was done and the data wasn't favourable then they would have just spent another million dollars on analysis and be even more embarrassed."

But Forget has culled some useful info from Manitoba labour data. Her research confirms numerous positive consequences of the program. Initially, the Mincome program was conceived as a labour market experiment. The government wanted to know what would happen if everybody in town received a guaranteed income, and specifically, they wanted to know whether people would still work.



Dave Ron

In today's conservative political climate, with constant government and media rhetoric about the inefficiency and wastefulness of the welfare state, the Mincome project sounds like nothing short of a fairy tale.

For four years Dauphin was a place where anyone living below the poverty line could receive monthly cheques to boost their income, no questions asked. Single mothers could afford to put their kids through school and low-income families weren't scrambling to pay the rent each month.

For Amy Richardson, it meant she could afford to buy her children books for school. Richardson joined the program in 1977, just after her husband had gone on disability leave from his job. At the time, she was struggling to raise her three youngest children on \$1.50 haircuts she gave in her living room beauty parlour.

The \$1,200 a year she received in monthly increments

received in monthly increments

It turns out they did.

Only two segments of Dauphin's labour force worked less as a result of Mincome—new mothers and teenagers. Mothers with newborns stopped working because they wanted to stay at home longer with their babies. And teenagers worked less because they weren't under as much pressure to support their families.

The end result was that they spent more time at school and more teenagers graduated. Those who continued to work were given more opportunities to choose what type of work they did.

"People didn't have to take the first job that came along," says Hikel. "They could wait for something better that suited them."

For some, it meant the opportunity to land a job to help them get by.

When Doreen and Hugh Henderson arrived in Dauphin in 1970 with their two young children they were broke. Doreen suggested moving from Vancouver to her hometown because she thought her husband would have an easier time finding work there. But when they arrived, things weren't any better.

"My husband didn't have a very good job and I couldn't find work," she told The Dominion by phone from Dauphin.

It wasn't until 1978, after receiving Mincome payments for two years, that her husband finally landed janitorial work at the local school, a job he kept for 28 years.

"I don't know how we would have lived without [Mincome]," said Doreen. "I don't know if we would have stayed in Dauphin."

Although the Mincome experiment was intended to provide a body of information to study labour market trends, Forget discovered that Mincome had a significant effect on people's well being. Two years ago, the professor started studying the health records of Dauphin residents to assess the impacts of the program.

In the period that Mincome was administered, hospital visits dropped 8.5 per cent. Fewer people went to the hospital with work-related injuries and there were fewer emergency room visits from car accidents and domestic abuse.

There were also far fewer mental health visits.

It's not hard to see why, says Forget.

"When you walk around a hospital, it's pretty clear that a lot of the time what we're treating are the consequences of poverty," she says.

Give people financial

For four years Dauphin was a place where anyone living below the poverty line could receive monthly cheques to boost their income, no questions asked.

independence and control over their lives and these accidents and illnesses tend to dissipate, says Forget. In today's terms, an 8.5 per cent decrease in hospital visits across Canada would save the government \$4 billion annually, by her calculations. And \$4 billion is the amount that the federal government is currently trying to save by slashing social programming and arts funding.

Having analyzed the health

Guaranteed minimum income projects exist around the world in countries such as Malawi, France, Austria and Brazil to a great deal of success.

data, Forget is now working on a cost-benefit analysis to see what a guaranteed income program might save the federal government if it were implemented today. She's already worked with a Senate committee investigating a guaranteed income program for all low-income Canadians.

The Canadian government's sudden interest in guaranteed income programs doesn't surprise Forget.

Every 10 or 15 years there seems to be a renewed interest in getting Guaranteed Income (GI) programs off the ground, according to Saskatchewan social work

professor James Mulvale. He's researched and written extensively about guaranteed income programs and is also part the Canadian chapter of the Basic Income Earth Network, a worldwide organization that advocates for guaranteed income.

GI programs exist in countries like Brazil, Mexico, France

and even the state of Alaska.

Although people may not recognize it, subtle forms of guaranteed income already exist in Canada, says Mulvale, pointing to the child benefit tax, guaranteed income for seniors and the modest GST/HST rebate program for low-income earners.

However, a wider reaching guaranteed income program would go a long way in decreasing poverty, he says.

Mulvale is in favour of a "demo-grant" model of GI that would give automatic cash-transfers to everybody in Canada. This kind of plan would also provide the option of taxing higher-income earners at the end of the year so poorer people receive benefits.

A model such as this has a higher chance of broad support because it goes out to everybody, according to Mulvale. GI can also be administered as a negative-income tax to the poor, meaning they'd receive an amount of money back directly in proportion to what they make each year.

"GI by itself wouldn't

eliminate poverty but it would go a heck of a long way to decrease the extent of poverty in this country," says Mulvale.

Conservative senator Hugh Segal has been the biggest supporter of this kind of GI, claiming it would eliminate the social assistance programs now administered by the provinces and territories. Rather than having a separate office to administer child tax benefits, welfare, unemployment insurance and income supplement for seniors, they could all be rolled into one GI scheme.

It would also mean that anybody could apply for support. Many people fall through the cracks under the current welfare system, says Forget. Not everybody can access welfare and those who can are penalized for going to school or for working a job since the money they receive from welfare is then clawed back.

If a guaranteed income program can target more people and is more efficient than other social assistance programs, then why doesn't Canada have such a program in place already? Perhaps the biggest barrier is the prevalence of negative stereotypes about poor people.

"There's very strong feelings out there that we shouldn't give people money for nothing," Mulvale says.

Guaranteed income proponents aren't holding their breaths that they'll see such a program here anytime soon, but they are hopeful that one day Canada will consider the merits of guaranteed income.

The cost would be "not nearly as prohibitive to do as people imagine it is," says Forget. "A guaranteed minimum income program is a superior way of delivering social assistance. The only thing is that it's of course politically difficult to implement."

Vivian Belik is a freelance journalist based in the frozen northlands of Whitehorse, Yukon. She was, however, raised in Manitoba where she has spotted many of the provinces small-town statues including the giant beaver in Dauphin.

Montreal's Garden Cities

The anatomy of a movement

by Omri Haiven

*"Mobility and privacy have increasingly displaced the traditional commons, which once provided the connected quality of our towns and cities... As our private world grows in breadth, our public world becomes more remote and impersonal. As a result, our public space lacks identity and is largely anonymous, while our private space strains toward a narcissistic autonomy."
—Roseland, 1992*

1. ROOTS:

After the Second World War, immigrants, mostly Italian and Portuguese, began to "guerrilla" garden—to grow food without permission on land owned by someone else—in unused lots next to railways and power lines. These illegal acts eventually spurred City Hall to offer public gardening plots to communities without access to arable land. In the program's first **seven** years, more than **40** gardens sprouted. Since then the program has branched out to more than **100** gardens.

2. ELEMENTS:

Montreal has some of the most productive agricultural lands in Quebec. But twenty-five per cent of Montrealers have no access at all to land that can be used for gardening.

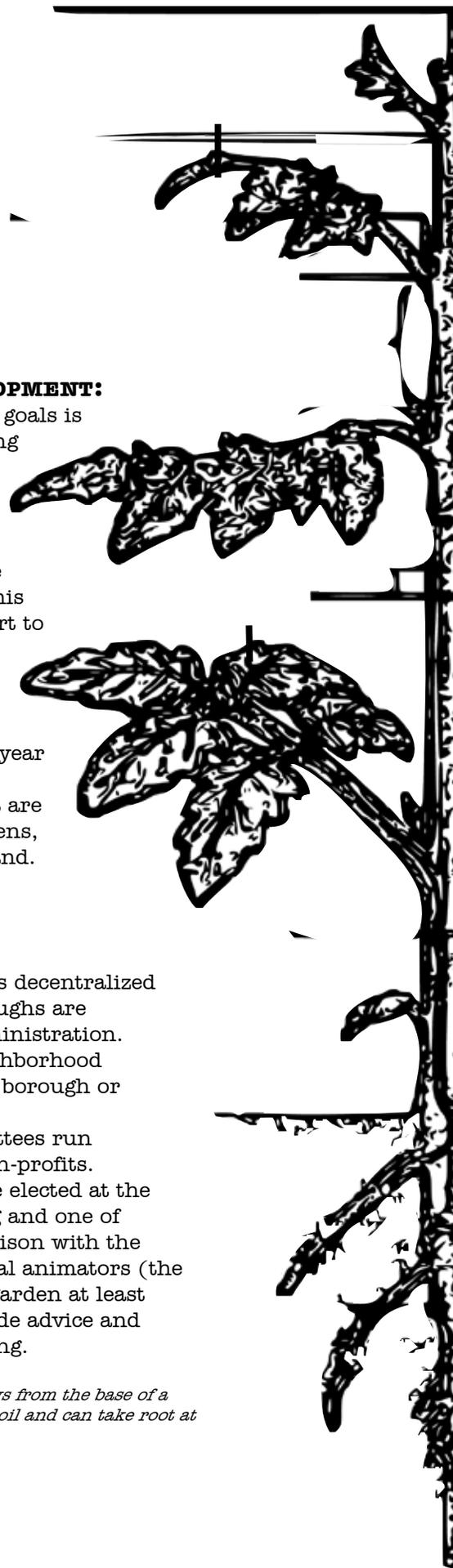
3. BUDDING DEVELOPMENT:

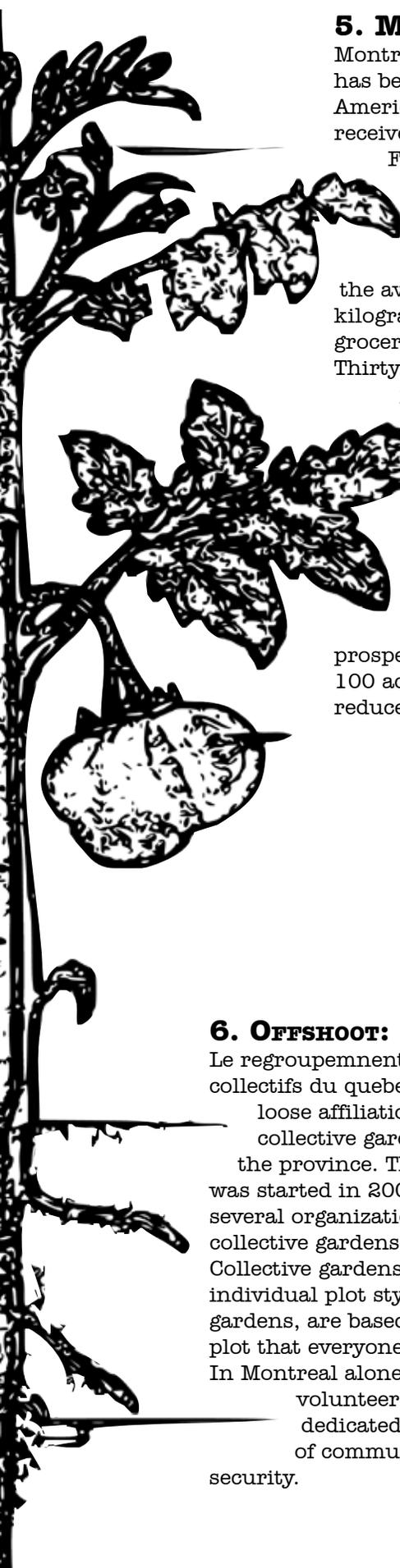
One of the city's primary goals is to "strengthen the existing garden network by creating park zones on as many sites as possible." Currently two-thirds of gardens are protected as parkland. This achievement is due in part to policies set by the city: giving tax breaks to developers who allow community gardens on their land for five- or 10-year leases; and buying from developers the lands that are used by community gardens, turning them into parkland.

4. RUNNERS*:

In **2002** the program was decentralized and now individual boroughs are responsible for most administration. To start up a garden neighborhood residents approach their borough or elected rep for approval. Volunteer garden committees run individual gardens as non-profits. Committee executives are elected at the annual gardener meeting and one of the three is appointed liaison with the government. Horticultural animators (the city has six) visits each garden at least every two weeks to provide advice and ensure smooth functioning.

** A runner is a shoot that grows from the base of a plant along the surface of the soil and can take root at points along its length.*





5. MAIN STEM:

Montreal's urban community garden program has been named one of the three best in North America because of the continued support it receives from the municipal government.

Fifty-to-sixty per cent of participants in the community gardens are low-income.

The general cost per year for each three-by-six-metre plot is \$10 but for welfare recipients this fee is waved. In addition, the average plot produces between 27 and 87 kilograms of food each year, enough to reduce grocery bills considerably.

Thirty-eight per cent of gardeners are over 55 years old, but the city is attempting to lower the average age by creating 440 plots exclusively for children. The city's goal of impartial access to all residents is marred by the fact that people need proof of residency, and that plots are assigned by each household and not by number of residents to be fed by the garden.

There is enough of an overflow of prospective gardeners to fill 12 extra gardens. 100 accessible lots are available for those with reduced mobility.

6. OFFSHOOT:

Le regroupement des jardins collectifs du quebec (RJCQ) is a loose affiliation of more than 62 collective gardens from around the province. The organization was started in 2009 and consolidates several organizations committed to collective gardens. Collective gardens, as opposed to the individual plot style of community gardens, are based around one large plot that everyone gardens together. In Montreal alone more than 2000 volunteers work in gardens dedicated to the strengthening of community and food security.

7. REPRODUCTION:

Urban agriculture is increasingly being seen as a route towards the reclamation of common property within a city.

"We now realize that the gardens are the seeds of another economy, independent of the market. Not only do they fulfill an economic function by providing cheaper, fresher food that many could not otherwise afford, but they create a new sociality; they are places of gathering, co-operation, reciprocal education between people of different ages and cultures."
—Silvia Federici, 2009

Garden Cities: A growing trend in North America

30,000: pounds of produce grown by and for low-income population each year in Seattle

10: percent of urban gardening program participants in Portland, Oregon who are immigrants

6-10: number of new community gardens established in Toronto every year

1.5: percent of Montrealers currently involved in the community gardens program

40: hectares of land reserved for student-run model farm at the University of British Columbia

Prospecting the Terrain of Struggle

Fight against Guatemalan Goldcorp enters halls of power, leaves disappointed

by Andrew MacPherson

MONTREAL—New developments in Guatemala have continued to put pressure on Canada's Goldcorp, a mining company whose controversial Marlin mine has kept churning out the gold. As some continue in land-based struggles, others are channeling resources into courts and official proceedings—with mixed results.

On May 3, Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) released its final statement on the case brought before them by the San Miguel Defense Front (FREDEMI) in November 2009. An interdepartmental committee, the NCP's mandate is to ensure that Canadian enterprises abroad are operating in compliance with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multi-National Enterprises. The NCP is also one of the few venues at which residents of less-developed countries where Canadian mining companies operate can pursue legal complaints. The FREDEMI case was a request for review, charging that Goldcorp's activities were causing ongoing human rights abuses around the mine. The case was closed without any investigation or resolution by the NCP.

In a joint press release, MiningWatch Canada and the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) called the NCP ruling "the end of a process that was both procedurally and substantively deficient, and provides yet another example of Canada's failure to ensure that its mining industry respects human rights around the world."

When the NCP closed its file on the Marlin mine in May, the problems on the ground were no closer to resolution. An article from Oxfam America on June 13, 2011, reiterated that surrounding communities face "problems with access to drinking water and pol-

lution, displacement from farming land, and threats and intimidation directed at people who openly criticize the mine."

The mine itself has been in production since 2005, and has been a source of conflict from the very beginning. However, with the company expecting to produce an

Canadians reap the benefits of their investments in companies like Goldcorp, often unaware of the underlying problems that are making these investments so lucrative.

estimated 400,000 ounces of gold in 2011 with a market value of over \$640 million at today's gold prices, there are strong incentives for Goldcorp to keep the mine in operation.

The May 2010 ruling by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) calling on the government of Guatemala to suspend operations at the mine has also gone unheeded. The IACHR is a body of the Organization of American States responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights among its member states. Local communities succeeded in getting a petition heard before the Commission that granted them precautionary measures. These measures ordered the temporary suspension of activities at the Marlin mine while the IACHR completed an investigation into the alleged abuses.

However, after more than a year of inaction, the government of Guatemala announced in June that it had completed its own investigation and found no cause to suspend operations. "After all the studies, analyses and participation of various (governmental) actors involved, we conclude that there are no grounds for the suspension

of the mine," said Ricardo Pennington, vice-minister of Energy and Mines, summarizing the Guatemalan government's response to the IACHR. Their statement was followed by a formal resolution on July 8 from the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM).

In what Magali Rey Rosa of

the concentration of pollutants in the water are below permitted levels," according to the Pastoral Commission for Peace and Ecology (COPAE) in San Marcos.

Such discharges at the mine are relatively common and have been cause for concern in the past. Last September, a similar discharge prompted Minister of the Environment Luis Ferrate to file legal action against the company for failure to advise the Ministry. Goldcorp has denied any wrongdoing.

"On June 6, 2011, the Environmental Attorney issued a final dismissal of the claim stating that the discharge was in compliance with the permit issued to the Marlin mine, was not a violation of the law, and that there was no environmental contamination as a result of the discharge," the company wrote in an email to interested stakeholders.

It is not explained, however, why legal action was initially filed by MARN if the the discharge was in compliance with the law. Nor is it explained how anyone could know whether or not there was environmental contamination since MARN was not present at the time and no other data has been made public. And it seems that local residents' concern over these discharges is justified. A study released in August 2010 by E-Tech International, a New Mexico-based non-profit, found that levels of copper, cyanide and mercury in the tailings pond were respectively three, 10 and 20 times greater than international guideline levels.

While the company claims that tailings water is further processed before being discharged, the lack of publicly-available data or water studies from the company or the government on this (or any other) discharge leaves many observers skeptical.

Concerns linked to water at Goldcorp mine sites have arisen elsewhere as well. In 2007,

Savia Guatemala called "a sign of the government's cynicism," the government's announcement obscured the fact that it was never the state's role to investigate the ruling, but instead to suspend operations while the IACHR itself investigates.

"The IACHR ruling is clear in ordering the temporary closure of operations while the complaint is investigated," said Yuri Melini of the Guatemala City based Center for Legal Environmental and Social Action (CALAS).

Just days after the government's announcement that mine operations would not be suspended, the company discharged from its tailings pond into a local river. While the release was supervised by MEM as well as the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), local residents from the Agel and Caserio Siete Platos communities who were present when the tailings were released expressed concern.

"As the population is not informed of the results of monitoring done by the attending institutions such as MARN or AMAC, there is no guarantee that the discharge is actually made so that



Goldcorp's Marlin mine in San Marcos, Guatemala, has been a motor for conflict since land acquisition started in 2000. Photo taken in early 2008, three years into the mine's 10 year life.

Andrea Boccalini

Goldcorp and the Honduran government measured levels of heavy metals found in the blood and urine of villagers living close to the company's (now-closed) San Martin gold mine. The results were withheld until April of this year but revealed "dangerously high levels of heavy metals poisoning in their blood that would have required immediate and sustained medical treatment back in 2007, let alone today," according to Grahame Russell and Karen Spring of Rights Action.

The San Martin mine was in operation between 2000 and 2008, though only acquired by Goldcorp in 2006. While not as rich as the Marlin mine, the San Martin gold mine produced over 185,000 ounces of gold between 2005 and 2007.

Those making money from the illness and controversy surrounding Goldcorp's operations in Guatemala and Honduras include

such institutions as the Canadian Pension Plan, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, and the BC Investment Management Corporation (responsible for public

Even under pressure, the Canadian Pension Plan has shown indifference when it comes to asking hard questions about Goldcorp's Marlin mine.

sector investments in BC). As of March 31, 2011, the CPP was holding 3.665 million shares worth \$198 million at Goldcorp's current stock price. But even under pressure, the CPP has shown the same level of indifference as others when it comes to asking hard questions about Goldcorp's operations and the situation on the ground at the Marlin mine.

In response to a letter calling on it to support a resolution

at Goldcorp's Annual General Meeting in May—which asked the company to voluntarily close the Marlin mine—the CPP stated that its "engagement objectives [do]

include improved standards and disclosure related to operations in high-risk countries, including human rights practices." But its commitment to responsible investment ended there, and it fell in line with the majority of Goldcorp shareholders in voting against the resolution.

Recently, some communities have even turned to the Canadian judicial system to seek redress. Two cases were filed in a Toronto

court by communities in El Estor, Guatemala charging Canadian HudBay Minerals with accountability in a murder and a series of gang rapes during evictions around their planned nickel mine. While the plaintiffs hope their case will be precedent-setting, the Canadian courts system remains a largely untried venue when seeking justice for crimes committed in other countries.

As struggles against these mining projects drag on without justice or closure, Canadian and other solidarity activists have the responsibility to ask ourselves how best we can support grassroots activists: in courts, AGMs, or in the fields and the streets?

Andrew MacPherson has been involved in international accompaniment work in Guatemala and currently lives in Montreal.

Descartes Without Debt

Course teaches great books free of charge

by Lamont Dobbin

HALIFAX—The Halifax Humanities 101 program graduated its sixth class at King's College Chapel on June 4, reigniting the debate regarding the value of a humanities course for low-income people.

Over eight months, students of Halifax Humanities attended classes twice a week and read Plato, Homer, Dante, St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche, Alice Munro, and Virginia Woolf—to name a few—in between lectures. The program is free, and books and reading materials are provided for students to keep. University professors, who volunteer their time, teach all the classes. Raising funds for a course that does not bill itself as "employment training" for people on low incomes is not always easy, says Mary Lu Redden, the Director of Halifax Humanities. But according to the program's participants, the opportunity to study classic works of literature, philosophy and art has a value that's impossible to quantify.

"It opens up your mind and your heart," says Bonnie Shepherd, one of the program's first students six years ago. "You have more compassion and empathy when you realize what humans throughout the ages have gone through." "When the curriculum was first devised, I wondered if it might be better to be more practical and better suited to the students' experience," says Dr. Henry Roper, a volunteer professor from King's University who has been with the program since its creation. That didn't seem to be what the participants were looking for, explains Roper. He says the curriculum gets shaped by the needs and wants of the participants each year. "The opportunity to learn from so many excellent and learned minds has been a remarkable, precious experience," says Jan G., one of this year's graduates. "Learning

about the journey of humanity through the ages brings a better sense of understanding the world we live in. This experience has given me more confidence in my approach to life."

"The great works of the West should be available to anyone who wants to take up and read], to bum a phrase from Augustine," says Dr. Laura Penny, another volunteer professor with Halifax Humanities. "It's a real joy to be part of a program that makes it clear that reading, thinking, and writing are not elitist or superfluous hobbies, but a way to understand the world and the self."

"There's something about the core of Marxism that poor people get right away," says Dr. Sarah Clift who teaches Nietzsche, Marx and others as part of the course. "There's nothing theoretical about it. [The students] understand the alienation of labour immediately."

It wasn't Marx who first touched Kathleen Higney, but Socrates. Higney remembers her first class in September 2007 on the Socratic method. "I remember wondering, 'What the heck is [the professor] talking about?' But I was hooked and carried on...listening, questioning, thinking, and writing." Higney has continued studying through the Seminar for Graduates, offered to people who complete the first course. "I highly recommend Halifax Humanities 101 to adults who love to learn but cannot afford the cost of university tuition and books," she says. The course is also an invitation to participate in the broader community—an invitation that is desperately needed and rarely extended, says Clift.

"The barrier is real and it has social, spiritual and financial implications."

Lauri Noye, one of this year's graduates, brightened up her class by bringing her seizure-alert dog to every session. She has felt that isolation in her own life. "I had become housebound a while ago and this [course] helped



"Learning about the journey of humanity... brings a better sense of understanding the world we live in. This experience has given me more confidence in my approach to life."

—Jan G., graduate of Halifax Humanities 101

me to get out," says Noye. "I learned a lot about myself and the community and I made new friends. My relationship to the community at large has changed. I found out about things going on that I can participate in and I'm more involved."

Heather D., who was co-valedictorian of this year's class, had a similar experience. She noticed the change when she found herself attending several New Year's Leves for the very first time in her life.

"I would never have done that before. I have a wider sense of community. Not in a million years would I have come into contact with this group. It's so outside your known world," she says. Heather feels the benefits are not limited to those attending the course. "All the people around me have also been affected. It was a ripple effect. It's not always a

dollars-and-cents payoff." Halifax Humanities 101 will begin classes again in the fall.

Lamont Dobbin is a recent graduate of the Halifax Humanities course. He lives below the poverty line on a disability pension.

This article was produced by the Halifax Media Co-op.



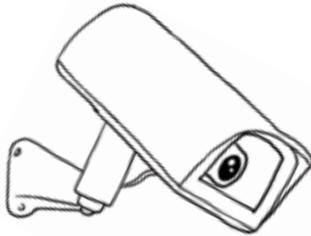
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Cameras, Cops and Crime

Police, business and the city of Peterborough collude for more closed-circuit television cameras

by Matthew Davidson

PETERBOROUGH—Even though surveillance cameras seem to be everywhere these days, their effectiveness in ensuring safety and lowering crime rates is still contested. That debate is heating up in Peterborough, Ontario, where city council recently considered joining the ranks of other medium-sized cities in Ontario that have installed closed-circuit television cameras.



Ryan James Terry

On Monday, June 20, the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Service made a presentation to the Peterborough city council, requesting support for a plan to install 12 closed-circuit television security cameras in the downtown core. The following week, council debated the request, which would see the initial cost of the cameras be provided by a Civil Remedies Grant Program from the Ontario Attorney General's office.

On top of the initial \$150,000 grant, the proposal would require the city to shell out an additional \$5000 each year for continued operation of a system that opponents and even some of its backers admit may not prevent crime.

A number of other medium-sized municipalities, such as Cornwall, Belleville, and Barrie have already installed CCTV cameras with funds from the same grant, and other towns and cities are expected to follow suit. The city of Barrie, which only has six cameras, spends double what Peterborough proposes to spend on the operation and maintenance of its cameras.

Despite the increasingly widespread use of this surveillance technology in Ontario, Peterborough residents are questioning the value of being watched around the clock. Some of these opponents are concerned about the general privacy implications of such cameras, making reference to the dystopian police-state vision of author George Orwell.

Other concerns are much more immediate, like those of one Peterborough homeowner who asked to remain anonymous. She noted that in her experience working at a women's clinic in another city, cameras near the clinic became a barrier to women accessing important services. Simi-

lar services, such as the Kawartha Sexual Assault Center, are in the Peterborough downtown core, and she is concerned that such services may be forced to move to more inaccessible locations if the cameras are installed.

Some backers of the plan appear to be banking on the cameras' ability to simply displace crime and other "antisocial behaviour" to other less-visible areas of town. Councillor Bill Juby stated that pushing crime out of the downtown core and over to the next street would be a good start.

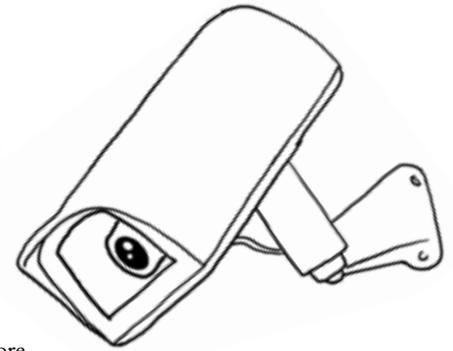
This seemed to spark some outrage in the packed council hall, with one attendee shouting that he lived on that next street. The approval came despite 13 presentations opposed to the cameras, and only two in favour.

The two people who spoke in favour of more cameras downtown were both board members of the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA). In A Report on Camera Surveillance in Canada, prepared by the Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University, it was found that local Business Improvement Associations are largely responsible for the proliferation of cameras, with the political impetus and funding often coming from them.

The same report found "camera surveillance has never been extensively debated as a national policy issue." What isn't debated nationally, however, is unfolding on the local level, as illustrated by events in Peterborough.

In an interview, Paul Raino of the Peterborough DBIA stated that "people shouldn't be overly concerned" about being watched by cameras, noting the "international dangers out there."

While noting that the cam-



eras will likely not act as a deterrent to crime, Raino thinks that they are a good idea, saying that the DBIA stands behind the idea in order to "support the police."

According to Peterborough Police Chief Murray Rodd, the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Service made the request to city council on behalf of the DBIA, though he denied that the police were doing the bidding of business at the expense of other communities. Rodd maintained that regardless of the concerns expressed about the system, "New tools will always help the police do their job."

Redge Smith, who works in the Peterborough downtown core and attended the meeting at city hall, disagrees, arguing that these tools will be disproportionately used against marginalized communities. When interviewed a few weeks after the council debate, he also spoke of the lack of consultation with people who may be impacted, including downtown residents and workers, the homeless, and others who shop and visit the downtown area.

The report given to city council is endorsed only by the police and the DBIA, and indicates no other consultation.

"There is a shockingly transparent partnership between political power in the city, businesses, and the police," said Smith. The money could be much better spent to address underlying causes of crime, says Smith, such as poverty and marginalization. "Instead, it is being used to watch us."

Matthew Davidson is a community organizer based in Peterborough, Ontario.

Torontonians Smash Ford's Anti-Tax Agenda

Progressive rehab program phased out to save “pocket change,” feds invest \$9B in prisons

by Enid Godtree

TORONTO—The results of a public consultation with Torontonians released in mid-July has dealt a blow to Mayor Rob Ford's agenda.

The Core Service Review - Public Consultation released by the city shows that public opinion of the city's budget deficit is in direct opposition to the Mayor's agenda. Over 13,000 Torontonians completed the consultation.

Ford, who campaigned heavily on reducing city “waste” and freezing tax increases, has faced a dilemma partly of his own creation. While Ford inherited a large surplus from his predecessor,

Ford, who campaigned heavily on reducing City “waste” and freezing tax increases, has faced a dilemma partly of his own creation.

his decision to freeze taxes in 2011 and eliminate a number of revenue streams has the city facing a deficit of over \$700 million for 2012.

The mayor has commissioned audit firm KPMG to find savings in various departments. Meanwhile, the size of the deficit has forced Ford to recently backtrack on one of his 2010 campaign promises. He initially claimed that a property tax increase would not go over 1.8 per cent. But he recently said, “At the very most, I've said you can raise property taxes, at the most, 2.5, maybe 3 per cent.”

Ford had urged his support-

ers (dubbed “Ford Nation”) to overwhelm the public consultations to promote an anti-tax, cutting-spending agenda. However the results of the consultation have turned out quite differently.

The results of the consultation conclude that:

Torontonians' number one priority is “Transparent and accountable government.” The third highest priority is “Meeting the needs of vulnerable people” while “Fair and affordable taxes” was ranked dead-last out of nine available options.

Public Transit, Fire Services and Water Treatment were deemed to be the most necessary services for the City. The management of Exhibition Place and the Toronto Zoo by the City were considered to be least important.

Survey participants overwhelmingly supported increasing “property taxes to keep the same level of City services.” Not increasing “user fees or taxes even if this means reducing the level of service” had the least support.

According to the report the mean recommended “property tax increase for all participants was 5.15 per cent.” Over 20 per cent of participants recommended a 5 per cent tax increase. A 10 per cent increase was recommended by 19 per cent of participants.

With the publication of the results, some of Ford's allies on city council have stated that they will not follow the recommendations of the consultation. Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong stated, “It's not statistically valid, those people



Edward Wong

As anger over Toronto Mayor Rob Ford's proposed cuts to social services increases, so does the proliferation of caricatures of the city's new head honcho. Images like the one above (taken at the Hands Off Parkdale protest on July 29) and top left corner on the facing page (taken at a protest outside KPMG's office on July 21), are appearing at protests, on lampoles and on walls across the city. For a gallery of images, visit: <http://bit.ly/graffitvford>.

self-selected, they decided to fill that form out as opposed to if you were to take a representative sample and have a pollster do it.”

Statistically, participation in the consultations was over-represented—compared to other consultations in the downtown core—by computer users (higher income, higher education, youth), parents and low-income Torontonians.

Enid Godtree is a journalist with the Toronto Media Co-op. This article was first published with the Toronto Media Co-op.

This article was produced by the Toronto Media Co-op



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Eric Parker



Edward Wong



Mike Barber



Residents of Toronto took to the streets and council chambers in July and August to speak out against proposed cuts to social services. **Top:** residents participate in Hands Off Parkdale march. A main part of their demands was to keep the Parkdale library open and public. The Ford administration has proposed privatising the city's public library system as a cost-cutting measure. **Directly above:** One of 300 people who signed up to speak to Rob Ford and the executive committee about the proposed cuts to services. All but three of the people heard in the 22-hour-long council meeting spoke against the city's proposed cuts.



Left: Martin Reis

Above: Ryan Raz / photography.rraz.ca

Another proposed cost-cutting measure is halting new and eliminating existing bike lanes in the city. Above and left: over 500 people participated in the Ride for Jarvis to preserve the street's bikelane.

The "River Horse" Rides Again

Hippos keep on hippoing

by **Tim McSorley**

MONTREAL—For such a large and immovable animal, the hippopotamus plays a constantly shifting role in our popular imagination. A symbol of the god of virility in ancient Egypt, it was also brought to the Colosseum of Rome to fight gladiators. The hippo has inspired names for everything from children's games, to polkas and chess openings.

The fourth largest creature in the world, the hippopotamus naturally inhabits parts of north-eastern Africa, but populations extend west to Ghana and south into central and southern Africa. Once known to Greeks and Romans as the "Beast of the Nile," it no longer inhabits its historic habitat.

Weighing up to 4,000 pounds, the "river horse" is often considered to be a relative of the pig, but is actually part of the porpoise family.

While the hippo is reputed to have a temper, it is only territorial over small parts of the areas in which it resides. Most of a hippo's life will be spent in a small tract

of water, but in the evening it will wander as far as eight kilometres inland to graze on grass. Natural herbivores, hippos have only been known to eat meat in times of nutritional distress. And while they give off the appearance of lazy immobility, hippos can run at a speed of up to 30 kilometres per hour. Their girth also allows them to sink to the bottom of rivers and walk or run along the river bed.

Not very social animals, hippos will still live in pod groupings. Social attachment only seems to develop between mothers and daughters, if at all. At the same time, hippos will lay close together when on land, although the reason for this is unclear.

Like their disappearance from the shores of the Nile in Egypt, the hippopotamus' population in general is diminishing. The largest decrease has been in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, since the 1970s, populations have dropped from some 29,000 to a maximum of 800. Worldwide, the population is placed at a maximum of 150,000 as of 2006, a decrease of up to 20 per cent from the last count in



The hippopotamus has been known at the "Beast of the Nile", and has traversed popular imaginations, from virility symbols to chess openings, from polkas to the Behemoth in the *Book of Job*.
Belgian Chocolate

1996, prompting the UN to place it on its vulnerable species list.

But there may be hope for re-population: Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar kept hippos at an estate east of Medellin in Colombia. When he died, the hippos were left on the estate, too difficult to seize. As of 2007, they have reproduced, from the existing four to 16. It is still unknown

what impact they may have on the Colombian ecosystem.

Baby animals. Because a serious world needs serious cuteness.

Tim McSorley is an editor with The Dominion.

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tips our hats to

Moira Peters



Coordinating editor from 2008 to 2011

Many of our readers, contributors, and editors know first-hand the enormous contribution she made to the growth of the Media Co-op.

Passionately committed to the possibilities of grassroots media, a stickler for style, and a fastidious copy editor, she knew when to give marching orders and we knew that it was always good to listen.

Moi, you will be missed.

Working for You: The Media Co-op's Board of Directors

On August 3rd, Media Co-op members elected four representatives to the Board of directors - some returning, some new. They'll be joining board member **Hillary Lindsay**, Dominion editor and Halifax Media Co-op member, in guiding the co-op over their coming terms. The board is there to represent you - to contact your board member, email info@mediacoop.ca

Sharmeen Khan, reader member

Sharmeen is a Toronto-based organizer and media activist. She's spent the last few months as the interim Reader Board member for The Dominion. She's currently a staff person at OPIRG York and programs at CHRY 105.5FM at York University while at the same time being an editor with Upping the Anti. She hopes to connect the Dominion with community radio stations in a stronger way. Her interests also lie in board and organization development as well as equity and anti-oppression policies.

Dru Oja Jay, editor member

Dru has been with The Dominion since the beginning and is currently starting his second term on the board. Dru's work at the Dominion centers around developing the website, creating funding and organizing models and ensuring quality in coverage. He looks forward to the challenges of the coming three years, such as finding a balance between the locals' autonomy and network-wide cooperation.

Nat Gray, contributor member

Nat is a former member of The Dominion editorial collective and contributor to the Montreal and Vancouver Media Co-ops. She's also a poet and an anti-police-brutality enviro-queer. She's looking forward to working on the co-operative's long-term sustainability. She's particularly interested in the creation of structures to more fully engage co-op members as active participants.

Tim McSorley, editor member

Tim has been an editorial collective member with The Dominion for the past year and a half, and a contributor and volunteer since 2007. He is one of the founding members of the Montreal Media Co-op and hopes to work to ensure strong links between the board, national Media Co-op staff and local membership. A Montrealer, he is also a housing rights activist and a former contributor to CKUT 90.3FM radio and other community media initiatives.

BACK TALK

Fracking bandwagon misdirected?

In April 2010, in response to interest from the industry, Nova Scotia's department of Energy issued calls for proposals for coal gas exploration and development in the coalfields of Inverness and in the Tompkinsville Block in Cape Breton stretching from downtown Sydney to Glace Bay. There is nothing new about Petroworth's exploration and plan to drill a conventional oil well at Lake Ainslie, and in fact the only connection to fracking shale gas is that the company uses that method of extraction in New Brunswick.

Thanks to all the people who watched Gasland and jumped on the fracking shale gas bandwagon, the good people trying to protect Lake Ainslie are left with no credibility about what is actually going on in the area, where in addition to a conventional oil well there's a company with the rights to strip mine barite and a call for proposals for coal gasification, and old coal mine sites filling with toxic mine water, but no plan for fracking shale gas and there never was ("Nova Scotia's Tar Sands" by Hillary Bain Lindsay, Issue 77: July/August 2011).

No wonder Nova Scotia's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is happy to oblige environmentalists' attention on a

shale gas review while he finalizes the province's new minerals strategy without fear of any informed public discussion about what's actually going on at Lake Ainslie and other communities across the province that threaten our water supply.

—Jean Sawyer

Bounty of big

Big boondoggles are big business because of big bribes ("It's Not Easy Being Green! Unravelling the myths of sustainable power" by Sandra Cuffe and Justin Saunders, Issue 76: April 2011). They may be a big mess and cause big health problems, but big kickbacks keep them coming. Small is beautiful, but big is where the bounty is.

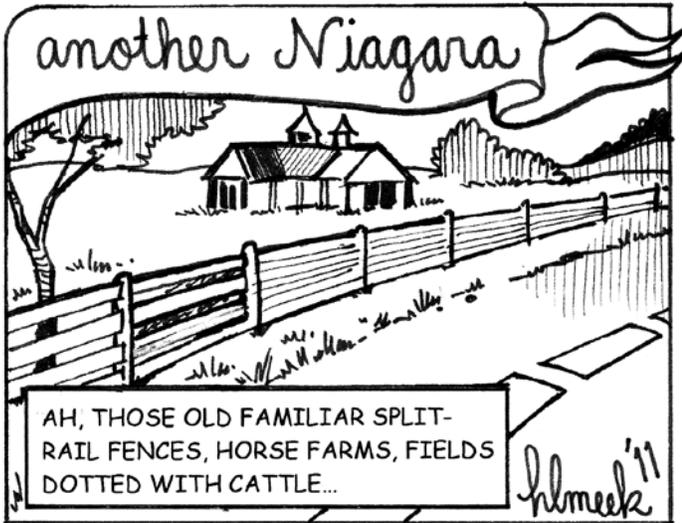
—Jay Taber

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Heather Meek



AH, THOSE OLD FAMILIAR SPLIT-RAIL FENCES, HORSE FARMS, FIELDS DOTTED WITH CATTLE...

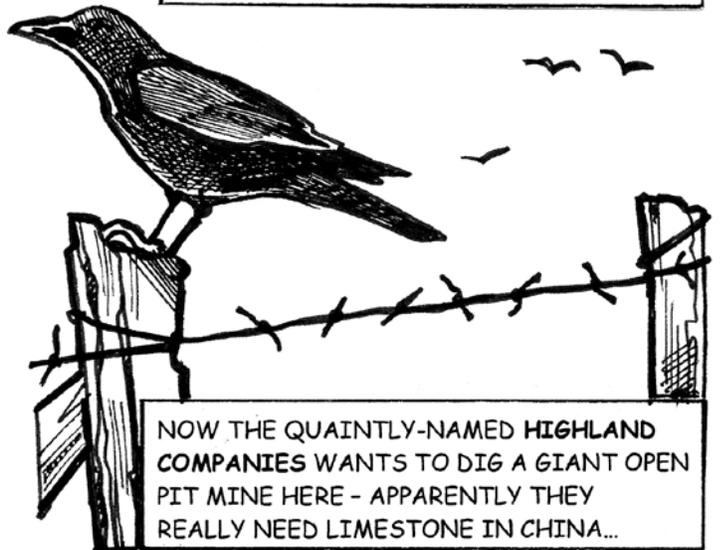
ON MY DESK ON BAY STREET IS A STONE AXE HEAD GRANDAD DUG UP FROM SOIL OF HIS VEGETABLE GARDEN... IT REMINDS ME OF THE THOUSANDS OF YEARS ONTARIO HAS SUPPORTED HUMAN HABITATION.



HIS OLD HOUSE IS GONE NOW, TORN DOWN AND REPLACED BY SOMEONE'S GRANDER WEEKEND PLACE. I LIVE IN THE CITY AND DON'T GET BACK TO DUFFERIN COUNTY MUCH ANYMORE...



HE KNEW THIS AREA LIKE THE BACK OF HIS HAND, LIKE WHICH STREAMS RAN FAST AND COLD ENOUGH FOR WATERCRESS TO GROW...



NOW THE QUINTLY-NAMED **HIGHLAND COMPANIES** WANTS TO DIG A GIANT OPEN PIT MINE HERE - APPARENTLY THEY REALLY NEED LIMESTONE IN CHINA...



THEY SAY THE STONE BENEATH THIS RICH, AGRICULTURAL SOIL IS WORTH BILLIONS. HUMAN INGENUITY KNOWS NO BOUNDS...

THESE GREEN HILLS WILL BE GONE AND THE HEADWATERS OF FIVE RIVERS THREATENED - FOR A FEW MINING JOBS AND A QUARRY THE DEPTH OF NIAGARA FALLS. SHOULD I BE IMPRESSED?



HERMAN MELVILLE ASKED: "IF NIAGARA WERE BUT A CATARACT OF SAND, WOULD YOU TRAVEL YOUR THOUSAND MILES TO SEE IT?"

Dispatches from the *Tahrir*

Journey with the Canadian Boat to Gaza

by Miles Howe

In preparation for sailing aboard the Canadian Boat to Gaza (CBG), I realized that I had a unique opportunity to develop a trade mission between Nova Scotia and Gaza. In Halifax, I registered Peaceful Waters Trading Company, inviting small businesses in Nova Scotia to be part of this initiative by donating sample goods that I would bring to Gaza, goods that represented their desire to trade with the Palestinian people. The journey took me from Halifax to Toronto to Athens to Aigos Nikolaos to Cairo to Rafah...and back home. These photos, part of an exhibit running from August through September in Halifax, help to chronicle the CBG's mission, and my own.



We were bogged down by an endless sea of red tape, so we hatched a last-ditch plan to get free of the Greek coastguard. On July 4, at approximately 6:30 pm, the *Tahrir* revved her engines. The coastguard, prepared to simply pull forward to block her, was blocked at the last moment by two kayakers, paddled by Michael Coleman of Australia and Soha Kneen of Ottawa. The *Tahrir* made her way towards the open seas.



Once out of the harbour, the Greek cutter was the faster of the two ships. The kayaktivists, Coleman and Kneen, were taken out, and the cutter made great speed on the *Tahrir*. Greek special forces flashed M-16s, and attempted to operate a water cannon against us. Undaunted, the *Tahrir* sailed on. Greek zodiacs joined the fray, and eventually an armed party boarded the *Tahrir* by her bow. I was struck by the power of peaceful activism. In an extremely tense situation, not a hand was raised against our captors. Barely an oath was uttered, even though a year of work, for some, was ending eight nautical miles from shore. Palestine was on the mind, and the general mood was of anger, but a slow-burn anger, tempered by peace and calm, which will not extinguish itself with one simple act of piracy.



Stopped at the Gaza border in Rafah, I took out the last of the Nova Scotia honey, preserves and soaps, from my satchel. I'd carried these goods halfway around the world for almost a month, and I couldn't do it any longer. In the beating sun, the logic of it all escaped me. What is this trade mission? I offered honey bears to the family sitting beside me, but they've never seen honey in a plastic bear. A group of four travelers in desert khakis sat down at the table next to me. I grabbed a small glazed tile, which fits in the palm of your hand, given to me by Scott Barber, of Coracle Pottery, in Nova Scotia. On the back of the tile it says "To Gaza With Love. Scott Barber, Nova Scotia, Canada." One of the travellers pocketed the tile. I made a note to email her later. And then they were gone. I was alone in Rafah at the coffee shop at the end of the road.



In Aigos Nikolaos, our protests quickly became a daily occurrence. We wanted out. The Greeks wouldn't let us sail. The local population is very much attached to the tourist dollar, and certainly wasn't used to activists chanting and dancing in the streets for a free Gaza. But the kids are alright.



Any and every reason for finding the *Tahrir* unable to sail was unearthed, from inadequate bench length to lack of warm water to an improper radio signal. The Greek government crumbled in the face of Israeli pressure, and issued an edict banning the sailing of all boats to Gaza, including those of the Freedom Flotilla II. The legality of this action by the Greeks, who are the EU's main importer-exporter, is in question, and brings doubt to Greece's safety and sovereignty as a place to do shipping business of any kind.



"As I studied [the situation in Palestine]...I came to understand that colonialism is a worldwide phenomenon that started maybe 500 years ago in a big way," said Bob Lovelace, former chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. "When anyone is confronted with the devastation of colonialism, then it's everybody's problem. I do hope that other Indian people in Canada, through this example, will see that we...need to get involved with people in Latin America...in India, in Pakistan, in China, who are struggling with colonialism."

Miles Howe is a journalist and activist with the Halifax Media Co-op. To read more on the Canadian Boat to Gaza, visit halifax.mediacoop.ca/boat_to_gaza. Inquiries about purchasing photos can be sent to hmc@mediacoop.ca.