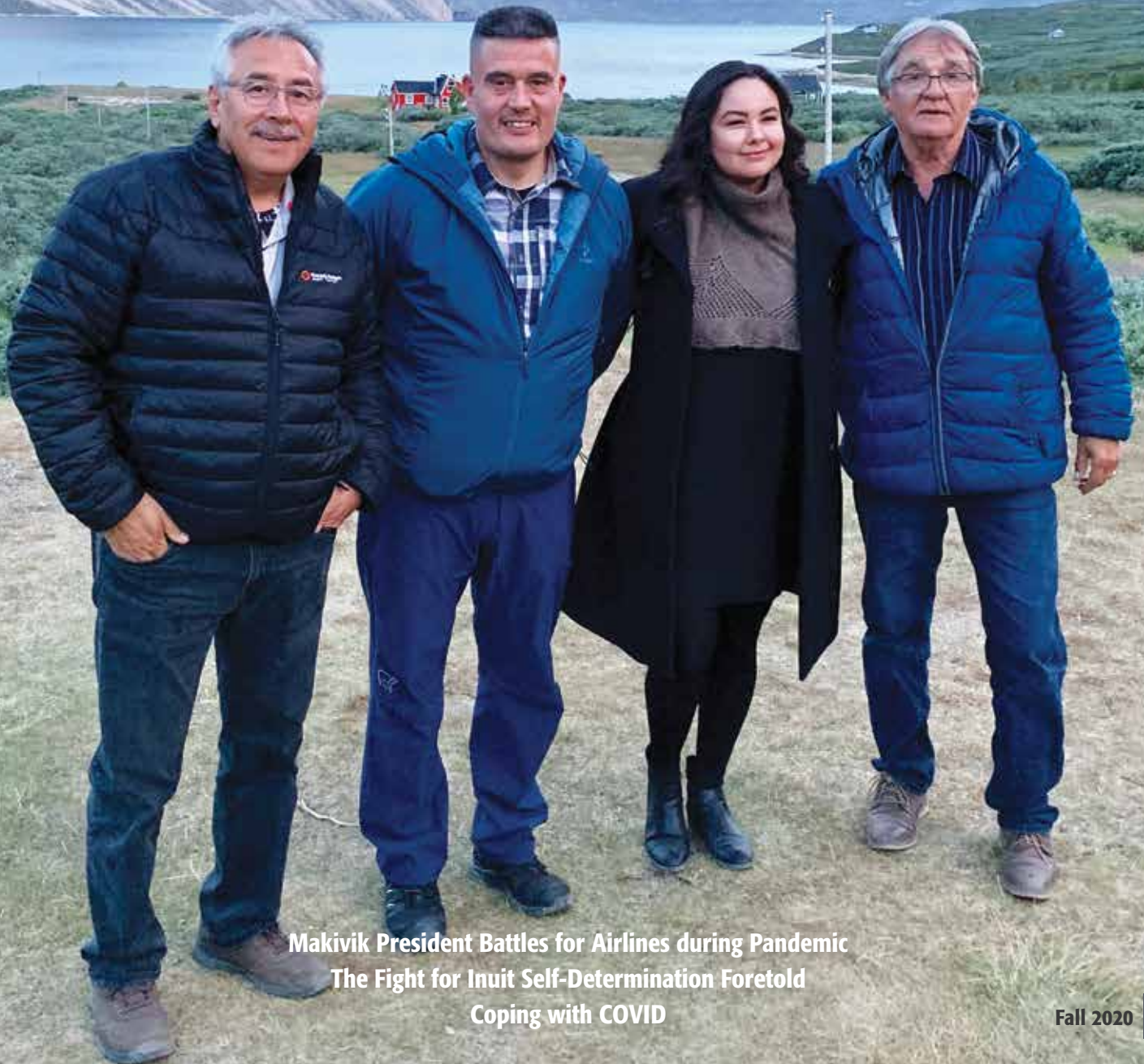


TAQRALIK

SERVING NUNAVIK INUIT SINCE 1974



Makivik President Battles for Airlines during Pandemic
The Fight for Inuit Self-Determination Foretold
Coping with COVID



LP^éAb
Société Makivik
Makivik Corporation

Makivik Corporation

Makivik is the ethnic organization mandated to represent and promote the interests of Nunavik. Its membership is composed of the Inuit beneficiaries of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)*. Makivik's responsibility is to ensure the proper implementation of the political, social, and cultural benefits of the Agreement, and to manage and invest the monetary compensation so as to enable the Inuit to become an integral part of the Northern economy.

Taqralik

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Makivik Corporation Executives

Charlie Watt Sr., President
Maggie Emudluk, Vice President, Economic Development
Adamie Delisle Alaku, Vice President, Environment, Wildlife and Research
George Berthe, Treasurer
Rita Novalinga, Corporate Secretary

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Director of Communications

Carson Tagoona

Editor

Miriam Dewar

Translation/Proofreading

Minnie Amidlak
Eva Aloupa-Pilurtuut
Alasie Kenuajuak Hickey
Maggie Putulik

Published by Makivik Corporation
P.O. Box 179, Kuujuaq, QC
J0M 1C0 Canada
Telephone: 819-964-2925

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TAQRALIK



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and the Pandemic

Cover: Pictured last year in Greenland during a meeting about trade between Greenland and Canada, from left to right: Executive Chairman Canadian North Jaani Aatami, Greenland Prime Minister Kim Kielsen, Maatali Okalik of Canada, and Makivik President Charlie Watt. Photo Courtesy of Jaani Aatami.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIRURSIIVIK PROJECT

This hydroponic growing container arrived In Inukjuak at the end of October, marking a milestone for the Pirursiivik Project. The initiative saw fresh, locally grown produce made available to the community in the summer months. With this new container, the project can evolve into a year-round venture. Over the last three years Makivik has led and managed the Pirursiivik Project in partnership with the One Drop Foundation along with the financial support of the Royal Bank of Canada. For more information about greenhouse projects in Nunavik, see page 24.

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Correction: In the article "Remembering the life of Mark T. Gordon," printed in Taqralik issue 123, incorrect information appeared. To clarify, Mark T. Gordon was predeceased by his wife, Eva. We sincerely apologize for the error.

50 YEARS AGO, A MID-WINTER STANDOFF

The Fight for Inuit Self-Determination Foretold

By Ole Gjerstad

As the COVID-19 pandemic locked down Nunavik last summer, an important date passed almost unnoticed. Fifty years previous, on July 6, 1970, Ottawa and Quebec received the so-called Neville-Robitaille Report. Its 221 pages chronicle the travails of a joint government team as they crisscrossed Nunavik through winter storms, trying to convince Inuit that the looming Quebec takeover of Nunavik administration from Ottawa was a good idea. At the time, Inuit had had little experience with southern governments; they had not yet been captured by “southern” rules and regulations, budgets and politics that were soon to stifle their ambitions. Their message to Mr. Neville and M. Robitaille was simple: “This is our land, for us to run as we decide.”

That is the message to keep in mind today, as Nunavimmiut have renewed their fight for self-determination.

The federal representative on the team was F.J. “Bud” Neville; Quebec’s representative was Bernard Robitaille. Their first stop was Kuujuaarapik. After meeting with the Cree, the visitors sat down with the Eskimo Council, which then organized two days of public meetings. The official record from Kuujuaarapik runs to 26 pages. Here’s a brief extract:

Poste-de-la Baleine (Great Whale River), February 19-21, 1970

Neville: We want to tell you what we are here for, namely 1. to answer questions about the service proposals and the rights of the people, 2. to answer questions from the people, and 3. to consult on the ways to ensure good federal-provincial collaboration.

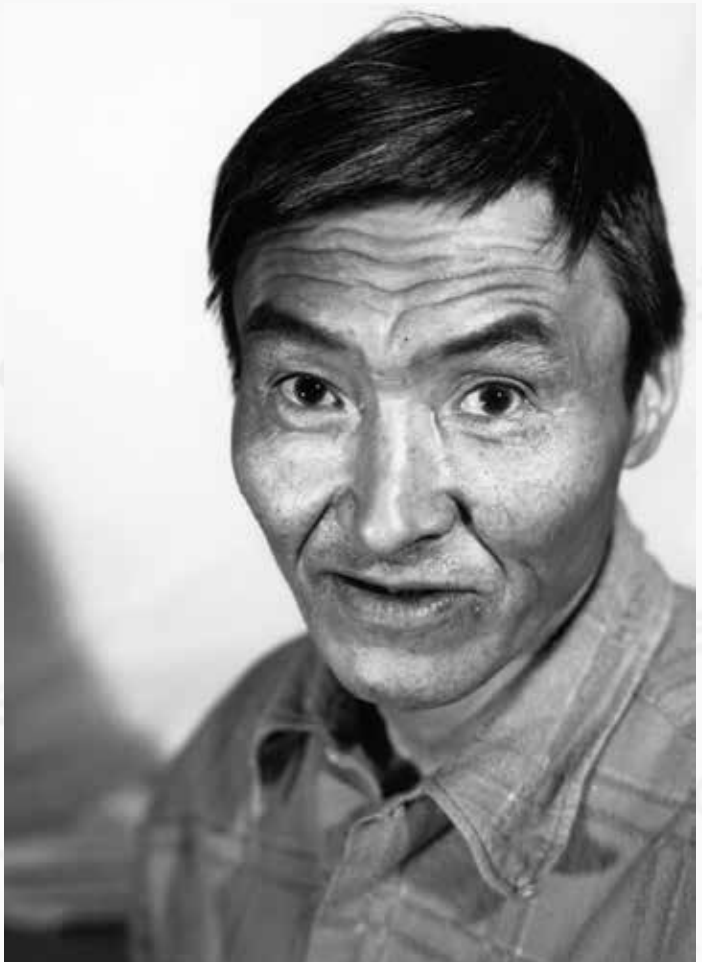
Robitaille: Did you hear about the government agreement?

Joe Kummarluk: Yes, but we never had the occasion to comment. Your people were in too much of a hurry.

Silassie Cookie: Now we hope to settle the matter. These agreements (between Ottawa and Quebec) were made on the assumption that the Eskimos would say yes. Now the people think that they can speak their mind.

Paulussie Napartuk: In 1967 we heard say that Canada was 100 years old. But we have known the government only since 1964. So in three years the government aged 100 years. Now the government knows that we exist; we know the government exists. There is confrontation.

Joe Kummarluk: The white man came as if he was the boss. The Quebec people do not have to come here and tell us what they want us to do.



Paulussie Napartuk, Kuujuaarapik, late 1960s.

©PETER MURDOCH AND AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE, INO-PMUR-0293

Robitaille: You had representatives at the previous meetings about this.

Joe Kummarluk: I am still not satisfied. The question stands as to who should have command in this land. The Indians and Eskimos should take control over their own land. When we control the land, we can decide what to do with it.

Robitaille: The question of the land is for us white men a difficult one to deal with. ... The southern people see on the map a territory; it's called the Province of Quebec.

Silassie Cookie: We want to take our own country into our own hands. It seems that when the white man comes in to the Eskimo land, all he feels is the cold.

Alec Niviassie: While we are gathered here, there are some things I would like to say. The Indian and Eskimo in their own land should have their own government. ... The land question is the foundation on which we'll be able to talk about anything else.

The official recorder of the proceedings was Jean-Jacques Simard, then a young Quebec government employee. He wrote everything down longhand. Simard had worked with the James Bay Cree, and had visited Kuujuaarapik and Puvurnituq. "Robitaille and Neville were not prepared for the brutal exchanges at this first stop," he says. "They were taken aback. Me, I was taking detailed notes, smiling."

The plan for Quebec to assume the administration of Nunavik had been discussed at several meetings in the south, with Inuit participation. But Inuit participants complained that their contributions were never included in the minutes. Ottawa was mostly concerned with keeping good relations with Quebec, where separatism was gaining strength. So Quebec and Ottawa had finalized their plan, which Robitaille and Neville presented to the Inuit.

Inoucdjouaq (Port Harrison), February 22-24, 1970

Neville: Our ministers asked you, and we ask you, what you would like us to do.

Robitaille: We are here to hear what the Eskimos have to say.

Jacob Oweetaltuk: What I would like to say is that these things have been agreed upon by the two governments without us knowing about it. We have a feeling it was done behind our backs.

Lazaroosie Epoo: We have a feeling that the two governments talk as if that land belongs to them. They should say instead that this land is Eskimo land.

Robitaille: Both governments consider this territory to be part of Quebec territory. This land was ceded to Quebec in 1912.



Portrait of Johnny Inukpak, Inukjuak, 1956(?).

Johnny Inukpak: Just the same, the Ottawa people did it without bothering to ask what the Eskimo thought. But I know we can't fix it right here.

Lazaroosie Epoo: (goes to a map of Quebec pinned to the wall) The Eskimos want to feel that this is their land. Here it shows no difference between the north and the south. It is a joke to talk about Eskimo land under these circumstances.

"This map was put on the wall and debated in every community meeting," says Simard. "The Inuit wanted a clear line drawn to show what they considered their land."

In Puvurnituq, the government delegates heard what would be a common message in the months and years to follow:



FREDERICA KNIGHT © AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE, IND-PK-035

Inukpaq Qumaaluk, Puvirnituk, 1960.



MARGARET REA © ALKEMA, AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE, IND-ALK-M-078

Noah Qumaq, Summer, 1955.

Inukpa Kumarluk: We do not believe in these documents because we do not know much about those who signed them without the advice of Eskimos. We don't give them much value. I will have more to say later.

Peter Naujark: We don't despise anybody on earth. But we have a feeling that we are being treated like animals, which we have some opposition to you.

Elijahassie: In the past we talked to the government people, but they didn't seem to understand. So we will now talk until you understand.

The agreement between Ottawa and Quebec had been made in 1964, but little happened until 1969. By the time Neville and Robitaille came calling, Inuit feared the changes to come.

Ivujivik, March 1, 1970

Mattiusi Ijaituk: I often hear that if Quebec becomes the sole administrator, the Eskimos will not be well looked after. In the beginning, everything will be fine, but after a while, things will start to go badly. ... We have had no experience with Quebec as sole administrator, so nobody knows what will happen. This is one of the reasons for our fear of the future.

In Salluit, a full day was spent on the introduction of the Quebec education system.

Saglouc, February 27-March 1

Neville: Why is it they don't want Quebec?

Noah Kumak: Because they didn't find us first. We want to have our own government. Schooling will stop in both schools (federal and provincial) if Quebec takes over.

|| *Elijahassie: In the past we talked to the government people, but they didn't seem to understand. So we will now talk until you understand.* **||**



Paulusie Alaku from Salluit, in Kangiqsujuaq in the 1950s.

PERE JULES DION, OMI. © ARCHIVES DESCHÂTELETS-NDC. AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE, IND-DIO-969.

Payne Bay, March 5-7, 1970

Arnatuk Nassak: *The Eskimos were the first people here. How come we were not told before 1964 that the governments were trying to fix things among themselves?*

Robitaille: *In 1962, Quebec started to want to administer the North. In 1964, Quebec had to say to the Government of Canada that they were ready (to provide all services). They had to meet to tell them that.*

Arnatuk: *They should have told the Eskimos.*

Robitaille: *Maybe. The governments thought differently.*

Arnatuk: *Maybe you thought the Eskimos didn't have enough brains.*

Robitaille: *No, the first people who came here told the people they wanted to replace the federal government.*

Arnatuk: *When we are separated from Canada, we are afraid that we will be trampled upon.*

|| Along with Kuujjuaarapik, Kuujjuaq was the community that had the most experience with the Quebec government. The public meetings began with critical, detailed, at times technical examinations of Quebec's education system, governance, language and social assistance programs. ||

Paulusie Alaku: *I will ask the people here what they think of our discussions. Does everybody agree about stopping the schools if Quebec takes over? Raise your hands. (A clear majority does.) We are fed up being the servants of the whiteman.*

People complained about newly arrived Quebec health workers and administrators, about the QPP shooting dogs. Elders recalled the starvation that followed when the French fur trading company Révillon Frères closed its trading posts in 1936. The great majority of Inuit felt they were being sacrificed to southern politics.

Jean-Jacques Simard, the recorder, says there was, above everything else, the influence of "the old Northern Hands" in the federal government. "The federal government, in general, had a good reputation with the Inuit, and Ottawa's prejudice towards Quebec was passed on to the Inuit," he says. "Why change from 'the big government that we know' to 'the little government that we don't know?'"

Sometimes the meetings took on a high-noon feeling, with sharp questions and biting retorts, and the spectre of Quebec separatism moving to the foreground. Robitaille and Neville often felt obliged to give lengthy detailed answers, which then had to be translated into the other two languages. Inuit became impatient and cut to the chase.

Fort Chimo, March 7-9 and 13-16, 1970

Johnny Peters: *When the meetings are on, will everybody who has something to say be allowed to talk, even if it is unpleasant?*

Robitaille: *Yes, the Eskimos are free to say what they want. We are not here to convince but to inform.*

Neville: *Would it be possible to begin tonight?*

Johnny Peters: *No, there will be plenty of time; you could be here even for two weeks.*

Along with Kuujjuaarapik, Kuujjuaq was the community that had the most experience with the Quebec government. The public meetings began with critical, detailed, at times technical examinations of Quebec's education system, governance, language and social assistance programs.

People became impatient.

Neville: *(after a lengthy explanation) I hope I didn't sound too much like a school teacher.*

Charlie Watt: *You did sound a bit like a school teacher, because you spoke for a long time during which we couldn't ask questions. Now, why are there some teachers who are not fully qualified?*

Later, the questions turned to how the two governments would actually implement the change.

Neville: *I wish you to understand what the two governments have in mind. We are looking at ways to work more closely together. ... We feel the Eskimos have not achieved as much*

WHO OWNS THE LAND?

■ Archeologists have found that **continuous human habitation in Nunavik goes back more than 4,000 years. Inuit have continued to use and occupy their territories to the present day.**

■ **1670: The Hudson's Bay Company obtains its Charter** from the King of England, giving it trading monopoly and land title, including mineral exploration rights over the entire Hudson Bay drainage basin, referred to as Rupert's Land. Rights of Indigenous people are nowhere mentioned. The territory was later expanded to all of Canada's north and north-west and became known as Rupert's Land.

■ **1763: A later English king issues a Royal Proclamation, which includes instructions regarding the settling of North America by Europeans.** Specifically, no settlement could occur until the Indigenous peoples agreed to cede their rights in the land through treaties to the Crown.

■ **1869: The Hudson's Bay Company sells Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada** for \$1.5 million and large plots of real estate. The United States offers a much better price, but the British government pressures the Company to let Canada have the North. The sale makes no mention of Indigenous rights, as Prime Minister John A. Macdonald points out: *All that these poor people know is that Canada has bought the country from the Hudson's Bay Company and that they are handed over to us like a flock of sheep.*

■ **1912: The Quebec Boundaries Extension Act transfers today's Nunavik Inuit land from the federally-controlled Northwest Territories to the province of Quebec** on the condition that "Quebec will recognize the rights of the Indian inhabitants in the territory" and "will obtain surrenders of such rights." Despite the transfer of territory, Canada retained its trusteeship over the Indigenous peoples. The court decides that Inuit be considered "Indians."



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Charlie Watt speaking during the JBNQA ratification vote which was conducted in each of the communities. Also present, from left to right: Josepie Padlayat, Johnny Peters, and Putulik Papigatuk. Salluit, February, 1976.

as they might have if both governments had worked closely together.

Charlie Watt: You say the two governments will work together. How long will this collaboration last?

Robitaille: It will be as mentioned in the Minister's letter, ... until Quebec becomes the sole administrator.

Charlie Watt: For how long?

Robitaille: The decision has not been made yet.

Charlie Watt: ... It seems to be one year.

Robitaille: The reply is that the governments don't know.

Charlie Watt: Will the Eskimos be told when you do know?

Robitaille: The answer is yes. The two governments are thinking about how to work more closely together and not about a target date.

Robitaille did not tell the truth. Ottawa and Quebec had planned the final handover to Quebec to take place on April 1, 1970, just a few weeks after this tour. So what's the purpose of this exercise, Inuit were asking Robitaille and Neville.

Port-Nouveau-Québec (Kangiqsualujjuaq), March 9-13, 1970

Stanley Annanack: Are the Eskimos in the other settlements waiting for your report?

Neville: I can't answer that very well. ... I presume the people are waiting to see what the bosses have to say about the land.

Willie Emudluk: We will be expecting an answer once the Governments have read your report.

Neville: It may take several months.



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Willie Emudluk with a dog, Kangisualujuaq, 1943.

Mark Annanack: *The opportunity to fix things is not here as you act as messengers.*

Stanley Annanack: *Yes, you are just like the boy who's asked to carry caribou meat to his father.*

Once their report had been delivered to their governments, Robitaille and Neville were tasked with revising the plan. Jean-Jacques Simard was set to organize meetings to discuss greater Inuit decision-making powers. But nine months later, in April 1971, Premier Robert Bourassa launched the James Bay hydro-electric project, and the Neville-Robitaille Report disappeared into the deepest of government drawers.

Four years later, in 1975, the **James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)** was signed, giving the southern governments control over most of Nunavik land. The infamous “cede and surrender” clause was a colonial sword which deeply wounded and divided Nunavimmiut. Today, they are negotiating to have it removed from the Agreement.

Looking back at the Neville-Robitaille tour, Charlie Watt has a smile on his face. “To those elders, the answer was simple: ‘You never consulted us, so whatever decision you make about us is not valid.’ For them, the land belongs to the Inuit, pure and simple, and that’s what we say when we face those governments today. Colonialism has had its day in Canada.” ●

■ 1962: After 50 years of doing nothing, **the Quebec government decides to move ahead with assuming administration over the Inuit homeland.** But nothing happens until 1964, when René Lévesque, then Minister of Natural Resources, makes a first visit.

■ 1975: The Northern Quebec Inuit Association and the James Bay Cree sign the **James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)**. This was the product of an out of court settlement, negotiated under great pressure in the face of Hydro Quebec’s plans to dam the North. It was the first of the Modern Treaties, and a significant achievement by the Inuit and Cree. This achievement was all the more remarkable because it was signed before the **Constitution Act, 1982**, when the government had the power to extinguish Aboriginal title through legislation without the consent of the Indigenous inhabitants. Despite the many important rights secured in this Agreement, there is still a sense of bitterness and loss at the governments’ insistence that Inuit lands be surrendered. This sentiment is shared by all treaty peoples in Canada who were forced to surrender their Aboriginal title in exchange for treaty rights.

■ 1978: The Nunavik Landholding Corporations finalize their land selections, amongst which Category I titled land administered and controlled by Inuit under the JBNQA. To this day, every community has its LHC, with the exception of Puvirnituq that has not recognized the JBNQA.

■ 1982: Inuit play a central role when the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed in **Section 35 of the new Canadian Constitution**, meaning those rights are constitutionally protected and cannot be unilaterally extinguished by Canada.

■ 1978-2019: The JBNQA is amended many times, making adjustments to local land issues or resolving pending implementation issues. In June 2019, Makivik Corporation and the Government of Canada sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to review the JBNQA. These negotiations are part of the Self-Determination negotiations to work towards Inuit self-government. ●

Kuujuaq Veterinary Pilot Project

A solution for a community-identified issue

Submitted by the Kuujuaq Veterinary Pilot Project

Dogs are an important issue in Nunavik and a concern in every northern community.

The Kuujuaq Facebook Page, for example, is a page where Kuujuaq can read information on the community but is also a page where people can express their concerns. One of the recurring subjects is dogs: dog bites, loose dogs, if there is a veterinarian in town, etc. This problem has been real for many, many years. Although attempts at resolving different aspects of the dog situation are still being made, the issue remains.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Université de Montréal has been present in the North for several years working on different issues related to dogs. They helped with vaccination clinics, rabies, basic care and information. They also conducted several studies in

Kuujuaq, interviewing people to assess what the population consider the main problems.

Overall, more than 30 specific problems were raised, based on interviews of 67 participants. A small committee composed of members of local organizations (Northern Village of Kuujuaq, Landholding, Makivik, KRG, Kuujuaq, Health Board), mushers, local vaccinators, and Université de Montréal, sat down together to discuss solutions. There was one that seemed to address many issues at the same time: having a local veterinarian in Kuujuaq. Unfortunately, having a clinic and a permanent vet in Kuujuaq would be expensive and was almost unimaginable at the time. Other solutions, complementary to the veterinary services idea, were the sharing of information and education.



A patient from Kuujuaq rests after treatment from a veterinarian.

From this seed meeting grew the Kuujjuaq Veterinary Pilot Project. From January to July, a small group of passionate volunteers worked on finding funding. Société Plan Nord agreed to fund part of the project (mainly to buy all equipment to start a clinic) and all local organizations mentioned above, plus KMHB, contributed to the project with the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq overseeing it. The dream became reality.

During this trial period, Dr. Caroline Fortin was hired. It was a huge challenge to set something up from scratch, as needs had to be determined and everything created from very little. Nonetheless, the results of this six-month period were tremendous, surpassing all expectations. It was proof that there is a real need for a veterinarian in Kuujjuaq.

Dr. Fortin delivered services to more than 130 animals, including five hospitalizations. She also treated and healed sled dogs from many mushers in Kuujjuaq, and a few from other communities participating in Ivakkak. Vaccinations against rabies were done diligently, which contributed significantly to public health and safety.

The Kuujjuaq Veterinary Pilot Project funding came to an end in July 2020. However, because of all the realizations made, the local organizations agreed to continue supporting the project with Makivik as an important contributor, and the Université de Montréal as an additional partner. Dr. Nadeige Giguère was hired in August 2020.

Now that the basics of the veterinary services are in place, new objectives are being planned for the rest of this year and the next.

A vet delivers health services to animals, but their job goes beyond that. This year, more effort is going to be directed into sharing information and education. There is a serious need to better understand dog behaviour, diseases transmitted to humans, and how to prevent them. Prevention is the key to avoiding incidents, and one of the vet's tasks will be to communicate relevant information about dogs.

In association with the Health Board and Université de Montréal, the risks of dogs associated to human health will be discussed. Rabies is a disease present in the North, and it must be taken seriously. It can be prevented by vaccinating animals, and rabies transmission can be limited by learning to read dogs' behaviour in order to avoid bites. A lot of information will be transmitted via the Kuujjuaq Vet Facebook Page, and hopefully on Kuujjuaq and the radio.

Another important aspect of the educational program will be oriented towards kids' education. Fun activities will be developed for children to better understand dogs and the traditional way of living with them.

In the meantime, vet services are offered in Kuujjuaq at a low cost (about 60 per cent less than in the South). There is a mobile clinic where the vet goes from house to house.

KMHB has offered a trailer that will eventually be renovated and serve as a clinic, and equipment was acquired with Plan Nord funding. Hopefully within the next year the clinic will be ready to do certain surgeries (including spaying and neutering).

One important contribution by Université de Montréal is to provide evidence for the success of this program in reducing the health issues related to dogs, while promoting the positives about having one. Such proof will help in securing funding for the program to continue.

There is still much to do for the Kuujjuaq project to become a full-service vet clinic and answer all concerns related to dogs. However, it is a good example of the success of perseverance and teamwork.

People in Kuujjuaq determined the needs in terms of dog issues, and local organizations gave generous amounts of time for the project to become a reality.

For now, all the project volunteers are really proud of the outcome and hopefully the project can grow larger and include training of Nunavimmiut that would perhaps be interested careers in veterinary medicine.



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©CAROLINE FORTIN

The lead dog from a Kangiqsujaq team received treatment in Kuujjuaq before the 2020 Ivakaak Dog Sled Race. The dog managed to do the race.

Kuujjuaq can make a vet appointment by leaving a message on the Kuujjuaq Vet Facebook page, or by calling the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq (819-964-2943).

Hopefully, this project can be extended to other communities in the future. Until this happens, the Emergency Line of the Université de Montréal is still valid. •



REMEMBERING **Daniel Epoo**



Former Makivik Executive and Nunavik leader Daniel Epoo passed away in early September. He was 58.

Daniel served as Makivik's Corporate Secretary in the 1980's and 1990s, serving three consecutive terms, totalling nine years. It was under his leadership in this role that Makivik's elections became universal, with all **JBNQA** beneficiaries being able to vote for the corporation's executives. He was also responsible for communications, including the **Makivik News** magazine, operations of Makivik offices and other buildings, and the smooth running of its Annual General Meetings. Daniel was also a delegate to the sixth ICC General Assembly held in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Interviewed for **Makivik News** in the Fall of 1992, Daniel said one of the highlights of the conference for him was the Russian Inuit attending for the first time. "Now we have a full circle of Inuit Circumpolar People," he said. "It's good to have them as part of our team because we all have common problems, and common goals." He continued to serve the Inuit of Nunavik in other capacities following his years as Makivik Corporate Secretary. An advocate of Adult Education, Daniel was the director of the Nunavimmi Pigiursavik Vocational and Training Centre in Inukjuak from 1998 to 1999.

Kativik Ilisarniliring and the Department of Adult Education wrote that during his time with the school board, he actively contributed to the life of the centre and saw several students graduate from the many programs offered at the time. After leaving that position, Daniel remained deeply committed to the cause of adult education.

In 1999, Daniel became the first president of the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund, serving until 2009.



Daniel Epoo with his grandchildren, Emily Jane (named after Daniel's mother) and Edward.

One of the current NMEF directors, Jean-Marc Séguin, said Daniel was instrumental in renewing successive NMEF funding agreements with Quebec government during his mandate. Daniel participated in several mining development congresses and symposiums (regional, provincial and national), advocating for Nunavik mineral resources potential and Inuit participation in the mining development process.

Daniel also served as General Manager at Nayumivik Landholding Corporation in Kuujuaq for five and a half years, from September 2013 to March 2019.

He was also appointed Chairman of the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board in March 2019 but had to resign shortly after.

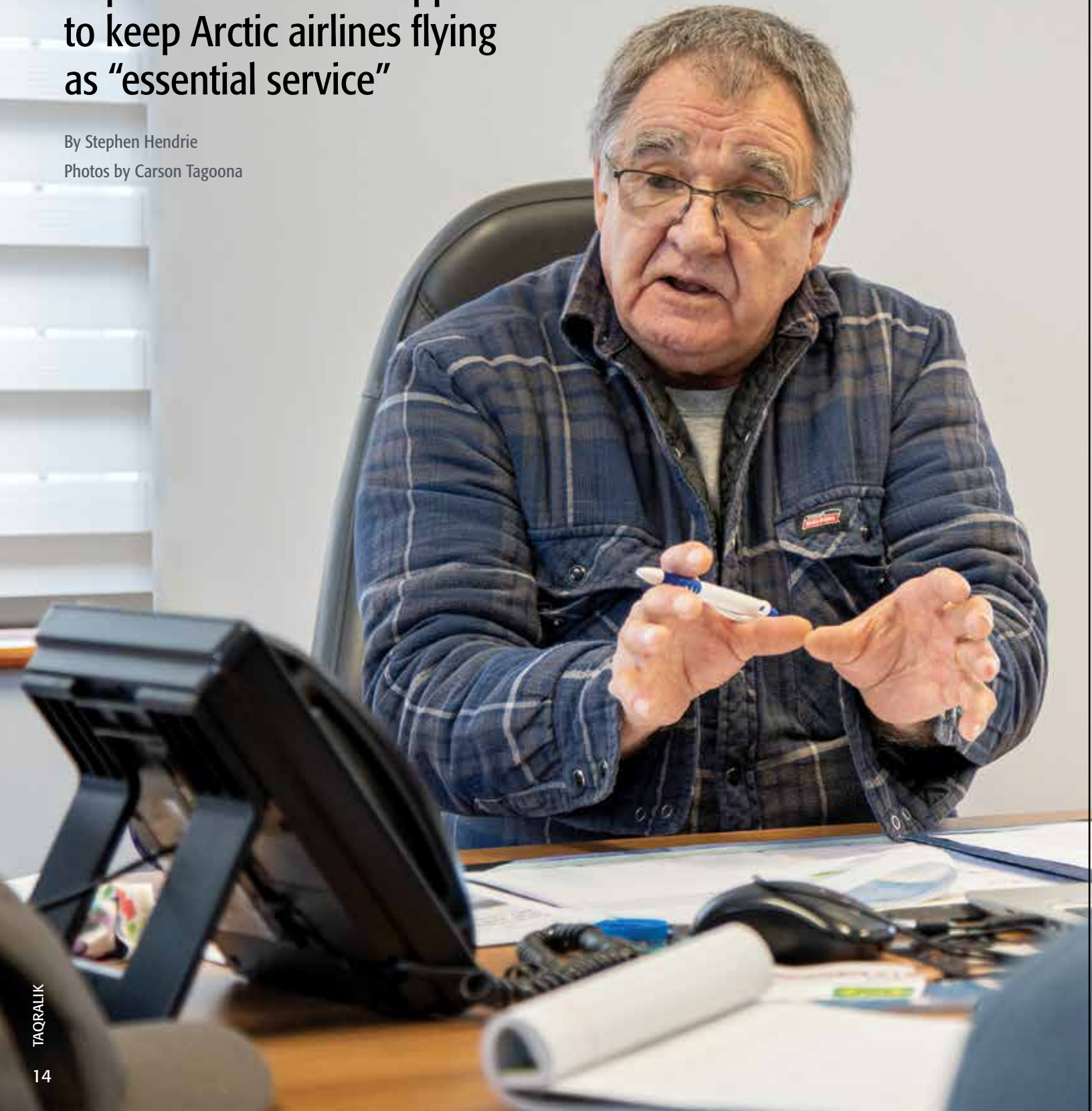
Daniel had been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) in 2018 and passed on September 7 at the Montreal Neurological Hospital. A viewing was held in Montreal on September 14, and a funeral service was held later that week in Inukjuak on September 16. ♦

Makivik President Fights for Airlines During Pandemic

Inuit political forces convince governments to provide financial support needed to keep Arctic airlines flying as “essential service”

By Stephen Hendrie

Photos by Carson Tagoona





Makivik President Charlie Watt in his Kuujuaq office. Watt spearheaded the movement to have Arctic airlines deemed an essential service during the pandemic.

This pandemic has graphically revealed how essential aviation is to the Arctic. It is absolutely an essential service, much like the highway network in the South, which is paid for by federal and provincial governments. Inuit have owned arctic airlines since the signing of the **James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)** in 1975, with the creation of Air Inuit, owned 100 per cent by Makivik. First Air was purchased in 1991, and merged with Canadian North in 2019, owned by the Inuvialuit Development Corporation (IDC). Amazingly, these two airlines service 1 per cent of the Canadian population, but cover 40 per cent of the Canadian landmass.

The coronavirus pandemic, as we know, started in China and moved to Europe early in 2020. Italy was in its first two-month lockdown starting in early March 2020. North America followed in mid-March. The Arctic was essentially closed off to the rest of the world. But what of the northern airlines? They could not shut down as other carriers could. They brought critical medical supplies, food, essential goods and workers to the remote Inuit communities in Nunavik, Nunavut, and the NWT.

“It was not an easy task,” says Charlie Watt. “We were using Inuit money, not government money, to provide the essential service. We had to fight like hell, tooth and nail to get the money out of the government.”

They had to continue to operate, with virtually no passengers, and revenue cut by over 90 per cent. They faced disaster. So, the Inuit political forces went to work to convince governments in Quebec and the rest of Canada to provide the financial support needed to keep the airlines flying as an “essential service.” Makivik President Charlie Watt, with 34 years of experience in Ottawa as a senator, played a vital role in the months long effort to solidify funding commitments to Canadian North, from the Governments of Canada, Nunavut, and the NWT, as well as Quebec for Air Inuit, and Canadian North.

“It was not an easy task,” says Charlie Watt. “We were using Inuit money, not government money, to provide the essential service. We had to fight like hell, tooth and nail to get the money out of the government.”

The tooth and nail fighting was done by executives in the Makivik President’s office, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), and airline officials at Canadian North and Air Inuit. Together they spent countless hours on daily teleconferences, dealing not only with the lobbying effort, but also with the health issues related to the pandemic itself in order to keep flying safely.

William Tagoona, Political Advisor to Charlie Watt, says it was all consuming. “We worked continually on it, meeting with just about every minister there is, activating senators, such as Dennis Patterson, writing to the Prime Minister on several occasions, having them hand delivered in Ottawa.” Lisa Smith in Makivik’s Ottawa office focussed on Canada, while Jean Dupuis in the President’s Department in Montreal focussed on Quebec, as part of the lobbying team.



From left: Current Executive Chairman of Canadian North, then Executive Chairman of First Air, Jaani Aatami, Chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Duane Smith, Makivik President Charlie Watt, and Vice-Chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Patrick Gruben, gathered in Montreal to sign the agreement to move forward with the merging of First Air and Canadian North into one Pan-Arctic airline in the fall of 2018.

Letters were written early in the crisis, in March, to Quebec Premier François Legault, Canadian Minister of Transport Marc Garneau, and a joint letter from Makivik President Charlie Watt and IRC Chair and CEO Duane Smith to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The tone of the letters was blunt and direct. The northern airlines provide an essential service. Governments must fund them during the pandemic, otherwise they will go under.

Adding to the pandemic crisis, Canadian North was in the first six months of operations as a newly merged airline. It already had a series of strict regulations it had to meet from Transport Canada that prevented it from altering routes, frequency, or staffing levels. These were concerns the government of Nunavut had prior to the merger, and were included in the “undertakings” by the new Canadian North in order for the merger to happen. So, it was already tough enough to operate under strict conditions, but the pandemic made it even more difficult. William Tagoona says, “No other airline had those chains on them. They had to fly empty airplanes because of the government conditions.”

Johnny Adams is the Executive CEO at Canadian North. He described it this way. “Other airlines completely shut their operations – Porter, Sunwing, Air Transat. We could not make any changes to our schedule without approval from Transport Canada. The passenger capacity was drying up in front of our eyes. We couldn’t cut our schedule because of our ‘undertakings’ without Transport Canada’s approval.”

With the letters, and direct lobbying by phone, after a few weeks of discussions and negotiations Johnny says they were able to get some relief on the ‘undertakings’, but no commitment on funding. “It took a lot of educating to get them to understand our operations. One official asked, ‘Why don’t you only fly once a week?’”

Johnny and other airline officials explained how the Arctic works, how the airlines are basically the roads to the Arctic, roads that bring in most goods, and essential workers. If a sewage, water, or garbage truck breaks down and needs an essential part, you can’t wait for a week. The community has to operate. Hospitals and nursing stations need their staff, and patients have to go south for emergency treatment. Eventually the message was understood. Eventually the concept of northern airlines providing “essential service” hit home.

The ace card was always shutting down the airlines and telling the government, “OK, we’re out of cash now to operate the airlines, you provide the essential service to all the Arctic communities!” Charlie Watt said at one point, “it won’t be too long before I pull the plug – ground all the airplanes! One of the things that held me back, I kept telling myself, ‘your people are up there, your people are the ones you are providing essential services to’, and I could not pull the plug.”

Eventually there were financial commitments made by governments to keep the airlines operating. For Air Inuit, President Pita Aatami was constantly involved in negotiating an agreement between the Government of Quebec and the health board to enter

into a direct charter arrangement with Air Inuit. This ensured the airline would remain solvent during the pandemic and have its costs covered.

For Canadian North, it was a combination of funding from federal, provincial, and territorial governments to ensure “essential services” continued to be provided to the remote Arctic communities in Nunavik, Nunavut, and the NWT.

In early August, Makivik issued a press release commending the federal announcement made on August 6 for \$75 million in funding for northern airlines retroactive to July 1, 2020, for six months. An additional \$174 million was announced for the next 18 months if needed.

Charlie Watt said after the commitment was made, “I’m quite happy with that. Hopefully down the road we will be pushing for every expenditure paid for by the Government of Canada, because we did not create this problem, and we did what we could, operating with our own money, not the government money, and I think the Government of Canada was thankful for what we did.”

Looking beyond this crisis, Johnny Adams stated, “The government has to acknowledge that the Arctic has to be looked at from a different lens. Across Canada we’re able to subsidise the road network, the rail network, and the marine network. But when it comes to the Arctic, none of these privileges are

available. Everything we do, we have to do ourselves. So, without any help from the government, the costs are naturally high, because that’s what it takes to operate and to have infrastructure in the Arctic.” •



Makivik’s fall Board meeting was held in Kuujuaq, with others joining virtually.



The airlines gave updates at Makivik’s fall Board Meeting, using technology as travel during the pandemic is difficult and dangerous.



Nunavik Trichinosis Prevention Program

Always Test Before Consumption

All photos ©Robert Ladouceur

Since 1992, the Nunavik Trichinosis Prevention Program (NTPP) has been run by Makivik's Nunavik Research Centre.

Trichinosis in Nunavik is usually associated with eating uncooked walrus meat and can cause severe health effects including fever, abdominal discomfort, potentially diarrhea and vomiting, skin rash, face swelling and muscle pain. These symptoms can appear 10-14 days after being infected but can also present from as early as three days to as long as 30 days after eating infected meat.

The NTPP requires the captain of the hunting boat and the municipality's Coordinator of the TPP properly tag the butchered meat

and collect samples for testing, including removing the entire tongue of the animal (including the base). The samples have to be sent in a cooler with icepacks on the first flight to Kuujuaq, where the NRC has its testing lab.

Proper tagging and quarantining of walrus meat until after testing are essential to keep Nunavimmiut safe from the parasitic disease. Here are the technical guidelines for the program.

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES

Summary

These guidelines were prepared jointly by the Hunter Support Program of the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), the Nunavik Research Centre (NRC) of Makivik Corporation and the Public Health Department of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS). They are intended to help the municipalities of Nunavik ensure access to *Trichinella*-free walrus meat when the meat is to be eaten uncooked.

A) Tagging

Why? To make it possible to trace and deal with all pieces of an infected walrus in case the test for *Trichinella* (parasite) turns out positive. If the animals are not correctly tagged, they cannot be tested.

How? Use a meat skewer to attach a tag (provided by the NRC) to every piece of the butchered carcass, including the heart and liver (ie. if the carcass is cut up into 25 pieces, you will need 25 tags). Each bag contains sufficient tags for ONE walrus. The tags are labelled with the name of the community, the walrus number, the piece number and the harvesting date (year/month). Fill the walrus hunting record sheet to report and document the number of harvested animals, their sex and age (pup, juvenile or adults) and the number of butchered pieces.

Do not use the tags for one animal on another carcass. Unused tags should be thrown out to avoid confusion.

Who? The captain of the boat and the co-ordinator of the Trichinosis Prevention Program are responsible for making sure that all the pieces from the carcass are correctly tagged. The CTPP is a

hunter designated by the municipality to co-ordinate and implement the program. The NRC provides training to the CTPP in how to implement the program.





B) Collecting samples

Why? There are specific muscles that are known to show high levels of the parasite in an infected animal. In walrus, the tongue is the best muscle which concentrates the parasite. The tongue must be tested in order to certify the whole carcass free of the parasite.

How? TAKE THE ENTIRE TONGUE (INCLUDING THE BASE).

Place the tongue in an individually labelled bag. Each bag is labelled with the name of the community, the walrus number and the harvesting date of the kill (year/month).

Who? The CTPP or a hunter trained by the CTPP.

C) Preserving samples

Samples should be kept cool (2-4° C) on board. In the community, samples should be stored in a cooler, with icepacks, until they are shipped out for testing.

D) Shipping

The CTPP make sure that the samples will be sent in a cooler with icepacks on the **FIRST FLIGHT** to Kuujuaq, to the Nunavik Research Centre at the address below:

Nunavik Research Centre
P.O. Box 179
Kuujuaq, Quebec.
JOM 1C0

Advise NRC staff of the arrival of the samples, by fax (819-964-2230) or by telephone (819-964-2951), giving the flight number and the waybill number.



E) Quarantine

Why? This is a necessary precaution to prevent the public from eating potentially infected walrus meat. Distribution of the meat before knowing the test results could lead to the loss of infected meat.

How? Do not distribute any meat to anyone anywhere until you receive instruction from the mayor or the CTPP.

The meat should be safely stored in a cool place until the CTPP is informed of the test results. These results will be communicated to the CTPP within 48 hours of the samples arriving at the NRC.

The NRC will communicate the results directly to the Public Health Department, which will immediately inform the mayor and the CTPP. Based on these results, the Public Health Department will provide recommendations on how the meat can be safely consumed. •

Weather challenges during Northern flights

The weather is an important factor to consider when flying to Northern Quebec. Current climate changes mean higher temperatures, both during the summer and winter months.

Higher temperatures in Nunavik mean more storms in the summer. Storm cells can currently be observed all the way to Iqaluit, whereas they used to be limited to Kuujuaq and Kuujuaq. Fall conditions also last longer, with temperatures hovering around zero, often leading to freezing rain and wet snow. Sudden changes in temperature from one day to the next increase the risk of strong winds and turbulence.

Air Inuit relies on teamwork and dedication to ensure the safety of all flights. Our pilots stay abreast of all pertinent weather information

prior to take-off; they frequently contact controllers, destination airports for runway condition updates, and other pilots who have recently flown the region. When conditions are bad, flights may be pushed back or cancelled altogether. Air Inuit's guidelines are very specific and have been established in order to ensure our flight teams and passengers remain safe at all times.

Air Inuit's Safety Management System (SMS) allows our pilots to radio in any new or problematic weather situation, thus ensuring a series of reactive or proactive actions are put in place.

The weather may change, but Air Inuit's commitment to safety never wavers. ♦

New, longer customer service hours for Montreal Cargo

We were recently pleased to announce extended hours for our Montreal Cargo facility. Our new hours are:

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS	ACCEPTING TRUCK DELIVERIES
Monday to Friday - 8:00 am - 8:00 pm	Monday to Friday - 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sat-Sun: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm	Sat-Sun: 8:00 am to 2:00 pm

You can find us at:

Canadian North Cargo – Montréal
800 Stuart Graham, Suite 110
Dorval (QC) H4Y 1J6
Phone: 1-514-631-8560

Whether you have a drop-off, pick-up, or question, we hope we will have the opportunity to serve you again very soon.

Updated COVID policies for Aurora Rewards and Aurora Concierge members

Canadian North customers can earn valuable Aurora Rewards points each time they book and fly with us. Our most frequent fliers are also recognized with exclusive Aurora Concierge perks and privileges.

We have introduced several COVID-19 goodwill policies to ensure that our members will continue to have access to these programs when they are able to begin flying again.

- Aurora Rewards points normally expire after two years if there has been no new earning activity in the member's account. We have now extended this expiry date for all Aurora Rewards points that are due to expire between March 31, 2020 and December 31, 2021. These points



©COLIN GIBSON



©ALEXANDRE MARIN

Tim Atanasiadis, Duty Supervisor for Canadian North Cargo and Ramp in Montreal.



will continue to be valid until at least January 1, 2022, even with no new earning activity in the account during this period. This will ensure that members continue to have access to the points they have earned when they can begin travelling again.

- Our current 2021 Aurora Concierge benefits year will be extended for one full year, until March 31, 2022. We are also continuing to monitor ongoing flight activity so that any members who meet Aurora Concierge Silver, Gold or Diamond qualification levels during the current earning period will also receive those benefits during the next benefits period (that will be in effect from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022).

It's always free to join Aurora Rewards and takes just moments to do. Simply visit www.aurorarewards.com/join to sign up and begin earning points towards free flights and exclusive Aurora Concierge benefits.



Introducing our Canadian North Care program

The safety and well-being of our passengers, customers, employees and all other lives we touch is always our highest priority. As part of our strong safety culture, we have created our Canadian North Care program, which includes the many COVID-19 precautions we have implemented to help keep everyone well at every step of their journey or interaction with us. This includes:

- Maintaining physical distancing whenever possible through floor markings, boarding procedures, seating assignments and building capacity limits.
- Frequent, thorough wipe-downs of our airport and cargo counters, baggage stations and equipment throughout the day.
- The use of face coverings by all of our employees who serve customers, with face coverings also used by our 'behind-the-scenes' employees when they are not able to physically distance themselves from others.
- Placement of plexi-glass shields and hand sanitizer dispensers at our counters.
- Enhanced grooming of our aircraft and all passenger surfaces with disinfectant wipes and continuous cleaning of our galleys, lavatories, flight decks and equipment throughout the day.
- Fogging of our aircraft at the end of every day with a disinfectant mist.

You can learn more about these precautions and many others we have implemented at canadiannorth.com/cn-care •

GREEN CORNER

Greenhouses in Nunavik

There are many benefits to community gardens and greenhouses. Local production allows better access to, and therefore more consumption of fresh produce, and these green spaces provide a place for communal activities, socializing, and contribute to community pride and engagement. Greenhouses are also a good way to teach children about gardening and where food comes from.

Economically, local production saves on transportation costs and can generate local employment if greenhouses are managed and maintained by paid employees. From an environmental standpoint, selling or consuming local produce reduces the carbon footprint associated with the transportation of these goods to the north. Furthermore, composting projects, usually associated with greenhouses, contributes to food waste reduction.

As you may already know, growing food in the north is not without its challenges. The most significant is the much shorter growing season than down south. There are also issues with poor soil quality, temperature fluctuations, and seasonal duration of sunlight that makes growing plants in both indoor and especially outdoor settings difficult.

The *Siqiniq* (which means “sun” in Inuktitut) project was developed to gain a better understanding of thermal behaviour in northern environments and its effect on greenhouses. This project was realized in Kuujuaq in 2016 by the OHMI Nunavik, which is a research program interested in the relationship between humans and their ecosystem. This was done in collaboration with the Northern Village of Kuujuaq and the KRG and was funded by the Société du Plan Nord (SPN).

This study led to the development and installation of a heat re-uptake and storage system that takes the thermal energy created by the sun during the day, stores it and then emits it at night to keep the greenhouse temperature stable.

The two community greenhouses in Kuujuaq, one of which has been in operation since 1999, continue to thrive. Individual plots are offered to residents of Kuujuaq by lottery for one season. Some people



Pirursiivik in Inuktitut means “a place to grow.” Grade 3 Innalik School student Jeannie Inukpuk examines a plant growing in a hydroponic tower in Inukjuak’s greenhouse.



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Comité consultatif de l’environnement Kativik
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

team up and form collective gardens which can be more productive and less labour intensive because the work is shared among members.

The Makivik Corporation is committed to improving food security in the region. With financial support from the SPN, Makivik acquired a hydroponic system developed by the company Growcer Inc. which uses waste oil as a heat source. The project has been in operation since December 2018 and its goal is to set a precedent by being the first year-round commercial gardening initiative in Nunavik while providing access to fresh produce to Kuujuaq residents.



The Pirursiivik Project, located in Inukjuak, is working toward implementing a year-round greenhouse.



©STEVE GRASSER

Steve Grasser advocates for backyard gardening. His 300ft², solar heated gardens produce vegetables well into the fall.



©JIM STEWART

With the increasing popularity of this greenhouse in Kangiqsualujuaq, the facility may have to expand.



©NANCY DEA

Kuujuaq's greenhouse has been operating since December 2018 in a 40-foot shipping container.

The hydroponic system itself is housed in a 40-foot converted shipping container in which different leafy greens and fresh herbs are fed by a continuous cycle of nutrient-rich water. Another section of the container houses a large used oil furnace. The heat generated by burning the used oil is recirculated throughout the system.

A locally owned grocery store, Dépanneur Newviq'vi Inc., is responsible for the operation of the hydroponic system and the distribution of the produce it grows. Around 70 per cent of the produce is sold through their store, while the remainder is distributed among community organizations, such as elders' homes and daycares.

As part of the Makivik Economic Development Department and funded by the One Drop Foundation, the Pirursiivik Project, located in Inukjuak, has a goal to implement a year-round greenhouse in partnership with the Sirivik Food Centre and the Pituvik Land Holding Corporation. The project will use local cultural traditions and social activities to gather community members and spread awareness about adopting healthy practices, water conservation and nutrition.

Pirursiivik in Inuktitut means "a place to grow." It combines soil-based and hydroponic horticulture, as well as community-led and commercial operations, to meet its objectives. In conjunction with Pirursiivik, various community activities have already begun, including greenhouse training, cold frames and indoor gardening,

a cloudberry plant transplantation project, and the installation of hydroponic towers.

In the community of Salluit, Steve Grasser is an advocate for backyard gardening. His own 300ft², solar heated gardens produce vegetables well into the fall. He grows his produce in old bathtubs and drums from washers and dryers. Although access to soil can be difficult, he considers this method an easy option for all Nunavimmiut who are looking to grow their own food at home.

A new non-profit corporation in Salluit is also hoping to secure funding to develop a community-based greenhouse which should be operational by 2022. Half of the greenhouse's growing space will be allocated to local families who wish to grow their own produce and who in exchange, will also grow produce in the remaining space for community organizations serving people at risk.

The greenhouse in Kangiqsualujuaq began operation in 2019 with a view of introducing the concept of local food production to the community, to reduce dependency of transporting produce from the south, and to promote healthier food choices.

A composting system and an improved ventilation system are presently in development as well as the installation of a heat re-uptake and distribution system like the one used in Kuujuaq. With the increasing popularity of the greenhouse in Kangiqsualujuaq the community may have to expand in the coming years. •

WHAT TO KNOW Before Changing Employers

IS ESCAPE AT HAND FOR THE TRAVELLIN' MAN?¹

You have been a strong working asset for your employer throughout your many years of employment, yet mermaids' songs are tempting you to board another commercial ship? Do you know what your employee-employer duties are before you'll be free to embark into any new professional adventure?

WHEN BOARDING TO COMPETITION...

You may have been approached by a company working in the same field of activity as your current employer. You may then be leaving that specific type of business or industry to work for what is to be considered as a "competitor." In this case, the law provides protections respecting confidential information and business reputation you may incidentally transfer through your move to the competition. Your current employer can further restrict your freedom to work for a competitor in detailing obligations in your employment contract or in a separate document.

(1) The Duty of Loyalty in Employment

Generally speaking, all employee-employer relationships are marked by a loyalty duty which is outlined in the Quebec law. It requires an employee to be loyal towards her/his employer while employed, and to a certain extent, after job termination, for a reasonable period of time according to the nature of job or employment. It implies correlative obligations of honesty, good judgement in the employee's roles, avoiding conflicts of interest, and, protection of confidential information. After job termination, being at the employee or employer's request, this duty remains, despite specific mentions made or not, in the employment contract. It would however be appreciated based on the type of employment or position formerly held in the company and based on the nature and position now held under your new employment contract. Were you employed at a senior managerial position, with access to trade secrets, or company financial information? Are you now hired for the same type of activities, whereby your former expertise

was precisely sought by your new employer? Your duty to be loyal towards your former employer will be stronger if you are combining these appreciative elements. Still, the confidential information you had access to, or enjoyed in your old job, cannot be used in your new position. Period. That type of information belongs to your former employer and using it in your new post would give your new company an unfair advantage. Yet, confidential information will have to be differentiated from the skills you have learned, developed, or expanded in your old job in conjunction with the holding or management of said information. Skills are yours and can be fully offered as part of your new employment.

(2) The So-called Non-compete Agreement

Aside from the general duty of loyalty defined by law, your employer, because of the nature of your employment and position, may add restrictions in your employment contract or in a separate document. In both cases, you will have to agree on the terms and content of such limitations under which competing employment could be possible once you leave your job. It could relate to an agreement to:

- Not carrying certain tasks or occupy certain jobs;
- This in a specific region;
- And for a certain period of time.

All in all, to be considered valid, a non-competing clause and document shall:

- Be written down and signed by you:** envisioning to enter into a non-concurrent agreement is not sufficient. Even if emails were exchanged to the effect that such an agreement would, or is in the making, limitations would not be considered validly made since they are not forming part of a written document to which your signature acts as full consent.
- Be expressly formulated:** content and terms need to be clear and precise. They cannot be implied. How limitations should be read and interpreted shall form part of the document. Guessed intents or outside elements (emails, witnesses) would not be considered if ever the agreement is contested: it needs to stand clear, narrow and complete. It requires a fine knowledge of the company, of the nature of the job or employment, and of the

¹ "Escape is at hand for the Travellin Man", *Phantom Power* (1998), The Tragically Hip

competitors. A court ruling over a contestation would not rewrite the agreement: it will either confirm it is valid or cancel it.

- C. **Be necessary, and reasonable:** your employer cannot prevent you from working ever again! You have a right to earn an income! Thus, only specific tasks or jobs, and not all your working skills and expertise can be limited in a non-concurrence agreement, and only those which will put you in direct competition with your former employer. Your former employer has hence to evidence its valid interest in limiting your freedom to work, in necessity and reasonability.
- D. **Be limited in time and location:** Limitations on tasks and jobs shall be attached to a specific geographical region, and that region must be reasonable considering the nature of your former job. It shall be valid for a specific time period, which needs to be reasonable according still to the nature of your former employment. One-year durations have in some cases been considered reasonable.

WHAT NOW, WHAT'S NEXT?

You are more and more inclined to make a move and preparing yourself to soon embark on a brand-new working adventure! Before taking this final leap, maybe you should scan these various scenarios which may have an impact on your future endeavours, and ultimate decision:

- You did not sign a non-competition agreement with your former employer:
You are free to go, whether to begin employment with a competitor or not. Yet, you will still have to act fairly and reasonably, and remain loyal to your former employer, by not intentionally damaging its reputation or sharing confidential information to which you had access in your former position.
- You signed a non-competition agreement with your former employer:

- **And you quit or were fired for a serious reason:** hence you will have to respect the terms of a valid non-competition agreement or signed document.
- **Or you were fired without a serious reason:** hence, even with a valid non-competition agreement at file, your former employer cannot force you to respect it. You will be free to go and obtain employment even with a competitor. However, the general duty of loyalty will be applied.
- **If your former employer sues you for violating the non-competition agreement,** it will be up to him/her/it to prove to the court that the agreement is valid, i.e. that it respects all mandatory guidelines and conditions, and that it is of application under the end-of-employment circumstances (i.e. fired with or without serious reasons).

Employers should not just blindly insert into their employment contracts a non-compete clause for each and every employee. And employees should not just blindly agree to a non-compete clause as presented by employers. When considered necessary to protect legitimate business concerns, these should be negotiated fairly, or else flaws in the employee-employer relationship could be observed from inception. And like in any relationship, inequity is never a guarantee of longevity and can make for painful separation! •

Legal tips aims at explaining to the Nunavik Inuit clientele in a general and broad manner some elements of the law applicable in Quebec, and are not legal opinions nor legal advice which can be obtained by contacting private practitioners (lawyer or notary). Makivik Legal thanks www.educaloi.qc.ca for its general input in the preparation of these Legal tips. •



NON-COMPETE AGREEMENT

BRAZEAU WINS Environmental Education Award



Kangiqsualujjuaq's Andrea Brazeau has been named Outstanding Youth Action Leader at the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) 2020 Awards of Excellence.

The award is given to a youth leader or youth-led organization that has taken leadership or action with an environmental education or communication initiative.

Brazeau is currently in her fourth and final year at McGill University in Montreal, studying kindergarten and elementary education. She has worked in the north as a substitute teacher when necessary and has completed a student teaching placement in Montreal. She says she will also do her final placement in her home community.

Brazeau credits Kangiqsualujjuaq as the inspiration behind her love of teaching environmental education.

"The environment I grew up in – both consisting of the land and people – contributed to who I am as an individual. I grew up going out on the land – nature was literally on my doorstep – so connection to the land was and still is automatic for me, as it is for any Inuk who grows up in the rich environment of Nunavik." She says she also appreciates the people around her who inspire her to be the best and most authentic version of herself.

The written EECOM announcement states that Brazeau brings her culture into all that she does, most notably into her work as an educator. Inuit legends, throat singing and drum dancing, conversations with elders, stories of hunting and her favourite foods, and land-based programming are some elements of her teaching practice. It is through her pride and openness that she creates platforms for her students to demonstrate these same characteristics. When she's not teaching in a classroom, she uses social media to teach people about Inuit culture and Canada's history, according to the release.

Brazeau was both surprised and proud when she received the email telling her she had been chosen for this award.

"It is an honour to win an award like this, especially as an Inuk woman who is passionate about education and culture," she says. "This recognition gives me even more pride in who I am as an Inuk woman, and furthers my desire connect and learn with the people and environment around me."

Brazeau plans to return to teach at Ulluriaq school as an elementary school teacher in Kangiqsualujjuaq.

"As a teacher, my philosophy strongly lies in connecting with people and the environment. My goal will be to connect my students to the environment they live in. This means connecting to the land and the people in the community, like the elders," she explains. "There is so much wealth and knowledge to be gained by these connections. To me, connecting with the people and environment is environmental education in and of itself."



COURTESY OF ANDREA BRAZEAU

Andrea Brazeau hosting APTN's Indigenous Day Live event in 2018.

In future years, Brazeau says she would like to work for the school board at an administrative level and is also interested in working for Makivik Corporation.

"If we want to see change in our region, Inuit representation is highly important and necessary in these higher-ranking positions. We must start taking these positions because we know what's best for ourselves and our environment." ♦

Andrea Brazeau, named 2020 Outstanding Youth Action Leader by the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication, ice fishing at Tasikallak.



COPING With COVID

By Stephen Hendrie

The dictionary defines coping as, "to face and deal with responsibilities, problems, or difficulties, especially successfully or in a calm or adequate manner." Since the coronavirus pandemic descended on the Nunavik region in March 2020, immediate action was taken by Nunavik organizations to protect the region from the virus, and the population to cope with the public health crisis. This story is about coping.

In a previous article in *Taqralik*, the Internet became the glue that assisted coping to take place. It helped share vital information about what the coronavirus is, how to take basic measures every day to protect yourself from it, and safely “self-isolate.”

As a health crisis, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), based in Kuujuaq, developed online resources in Inuktitut, English, and French to help Nunavik cope. Executive Director Minnie Grey praised her team for their professionalism. “Even before the pandemic was officially announced, internally we really got organized. We put in our civil security cell, as per our mandate.”

Online, the NRBHSS website covered everything about COVID-19 applicable to the Nunavik region. An area of the site critical to coping was called “Psychosocial Resources.” A very thoughtful six-page PDF document called “Psychosocial Support – COVID-19” was developed. It had many sections, with help for youth, women, men, income support, food assistance, and emergency safe houses.

Minnie Grey spoke about this document. “Our team developed very good tools in order to assist anyone in all walks of life. COVID made it even more difficult to access services, even the local ones, because they were shut down. So, it was really important for us to make sure that people knew that they were not alone, and that support was still available.”

The document included a reference to ‘Natural Helpers’ who had to transform the way they worked, like most people, during the pandemic. Minnie Grey explained what they did.

“We maintain an Inuit Values and Practices Department here at the health board and we have people who we call Natural Helpers. They are the ones who deal with families in crisis. During COVID when travel was shut down, they were not able to do community visits, so they were key in being available by phone. They are all Inuit and most are women, but there are also a few men who assist them.”

The coronavirus affects the elderly and people with underlying health conditions, such as asthma, more gravely. Thus, some people were essentially closed off from contact, and truly isolated. The NRBHSS also had a “Friendly Call” service to ensure people who fell into this category were taken care of.

“Friendly calls were done mainly by the Natural Helpers, and staff from social services,” said Minnie Grey. “We would follow up from referrals, and also from relatives who were concerned, who felt that the people at home needed a discussion, or a distraction.”

On the other side of Nunavik, in Puvirnituq, Mina Beaulne helped her community get through the heavy lockdown phase of the pandemic, from the end of March to June. Mina’s day job is Advisor for Integrated Youth and Family services. She went on the local FM-Radio during the COVID lockdown to distract and entertain the community of Puvirnituq (POV).

In Salluit, many activities and events were organized and documented on the Saputjiqatigilluta Facebook page where people shared their experiences. Pictured here is food waiting to be packaged and delivered to community members.



Minnie Grey, Executive Director Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services. The NRBHSS website covered everything about COVID-19 and included a six-page document called “Psychosocial Support – COVID-19.”

“We were in confinement. We were told not to visit anymore. We had cases, and everybody got scared. Our local radio station is a main resource in the community. Everybody goes through radio. I called my bosses saying we need to take care of the mental health of the community. All we heard was COVID, COVID, COVID. So, I got approval from my boss, and a small budget, to do a radio project”

Mina said she started by telling stories about how people survived in the past. “So many elders started calling in,” said Mina. “How bad it was, how many people passed away, from measles. Callers were in their 60s, and 70s.”

“My rule on the radio was, ‘don’t talk about COVID!’ We had a theme every night. One night we told supernatural stories. We did guessing games. We had a family night when people had to sing a song. We had a talent night too. It wasn’t a big competition. We were just playing and entertaining each other,” said Mina.

The ‘no COVID’ rule was broken because there were many calls from people who were afraid they had the disease. So, Mina had a nurse come on the radio to take calls, with interpretation.

Down south in the Montreal area, Vickie Okpik does double duty as a Corrections Coordinator for the Justice Department by day, and fashion designer by night. She oversees the transfer of Inuit inmates back to the Nunavik region. They quarantine for 14 days before heading back to Nunavik, in hotels.

Vickie is well known as a fashion designer, and naturally, during the pandemic she was making masks. Inuit organizations such as Avataq, and ITK ordered some. She also sent some to Quebec Premier Legault so he could wear them during his daily press conferences on TV. She received a nice letter back from the premier thanking her.

Her masks are made out of cotton, with layers. They have an opening on the side if you want to put a filter inside. But are they fashion masks to walk down the catwalk in? “Hahaha,” she laughed. “No, they’re just regular masks. I try to make them with a bit of style in them. Some have flowers, and trim, no sealskin masks!”



A collection of masks made by Vickie Okpik during the pandemic.

Salluit was the first community in Nunavik to have a case of COVID-19 at the end of March. It was dealt with carefully by the health board, but people were scared.

Susie Sakiagak works at Integrated Pre-Natal and Early Childhood Services in Salluit. Like Mina Beaulne in POV, her work slowed down, and she asked her boss if she could help the community. She built up a team made up of coworkers, other health workers, Kativik Regional Government workers, and a permanent part-time person to help. Together they created a project called *Saputjiqatigilluta*, which means "support each other" in Inuktitut.

She went from being bored to super busy very quickly. They developed a wide range of projects, and the glue was the

Saputjiqatigilluta Facebook page where people shared their experiences.

"We started with a weekly radio show about COVID," said Susie. "We always had nurses and doctors to answer questions for an hour. We changed the topic every week."

Because elders were asked to stay at home, they brought food baskets to their houses. They also thought of children and youth. "We did a lot for children, for example we held a TikTok contest, and a painting contest, where they could post it on our Facebook page. We had youth volunteers provide radio shows, playing favourite songs."

Baking was very popular too. "We were baking for pregnant mothers, providing the recipes so they can do it at home. We asked people who were baking a lot at home to share their recipes with everyone. We also asked parents to share pictures of how to prepare country foods, such as plucking geese, or how to cook fish," she said.

Outside, they had a fishing derby, and got together in groups of 10 for distance walking or running. Susie explained, "We had a project with father and son, or uncle and nephew, for example make a snowmobile or qamotik out of wood. People did do-it-yourself projects and posted what they made on our Facebook page."

The efforts by Mina Beaulne in Puvirnituq, Vickie Okpik in the Montreal area, and Susie Sakiagak and her team in Salluit demonstrate the creativity Minnie Grey spoke about. She said, "People shared what they are doing, using social media, showing how to keep busy, baking, sewing, hunting, being out there, reminding people that things are OK. Being busy and being safe mattered!"

Speaking with Minnie, Vickie, Susie, and Mina brought out the positive in a very difficult situation for everyone. It was the great unknown, and there was genuine fear, and people did get sick, but recovered. Mina Beaulne in POV found another silver lining. "We had a beautiful summer. It was +29C, with no mosquitos. We picked berries. We went to the beach. It was like a reward!" ♦



This beautiful embroidery was created by people in Salluit and shared on the *Saputjiqatigilluta* Facebook Page.

AIP Finalists Selected

Two Nunavik organizations are in the running for this year's prestigious Arctic Inspiration Prize (AIP).

Ilagitiigut anngiangijaqatigiinnirq ilurqusivuttigut is one of three finalists in the \$1-million category, headed by team leader, Jessica Tooma, Coordinator of the Inuit Values and Practices Department, at the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre. The project proposes to address substance abuse by focusing on intergenerational trauma, the reclamation of Inuit identity and culture, and connection to the land. The project would bring together elders, addiction counsellors, hunters, scholars and community members to create a marriage of best practices in the field of addiction and Inuit traditional knowledge regarding individual and collective wellness.

In the up to \$500,000 category, *Tusaajuit*, headed by team leader, Tunu Napartuk, Director, Complementary and Compassionate Services, at Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, was one of five finalists selected.

This project aims to bridge the gap between educational and health care services by giving community members access to educational resources about hearing loss and facilitating access to hearing care. It also hopes to address the root causes of hearing loss by focusing on hearing loss prevention.

As the largest annual prize in Canada with a focus on the Arctic, the AIP encourages, enables and celebrates the inspiring achievements of the people of the North. It is owned and governed by the northern-led AIP Charitable Trust and supported by Indigenous organizations, governments, industry, philanthropy, and many other partners from the North and South, with management support provided by the Rideau Hall Foundation.

The prize winners will be announced at the AIP's ninth annual awards ceremony, to be broadcast across Canada in February 2021. •

SAFE FUEL RESUPPLY Funding Awarded

Ilagiisaq-FCNQ has secured \$10.5 million in federal funding from Transport Canada to prevent environmental risks associated with petroleum management in Northern communities.

According to a mid-November press release on the website of La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ), with the support of the Kativik Regional Government, the Nunavik Co-op federation was able to qualify for the federal program and submit various project proposals that would increase the safety and efficiency of petroleum resupply operations. Project proposals were developed with the knowledge and expertise of Petro-Nav.

Each community will see an upgrade to their existing shore operations, which will include installation of proper lighting to

increase the safety of the operations, which run 24-hours a day, as well as securing the manifold site with a concrete structure. New infrastructure will include the installation of bollards for ship mooring in Umiujaq, Salluit, and Kangiqsujuaq. The new bollard installations will allow ships to use a method of mooring that will increase ship stability, leading to fewer disruptions to operations and the need for emergency maneuvers.

Mary Johannes, Ilagiisaq-FCNQ President, said the responsibility for the sustainable development of Nunavik is taken very seriously. The new infrastructures developed as part of this program will benefit all maritime carriers, she said, and each of the communities will gain directly as the safety of the operations is increased. •

NEW APPOINTMENTS MADE

The Minister of Northern Affairs has announced new appointments to the Board of Directors of Polar Knowledge Canada.

On November 10, Minister Daniel Vandal reported the appointment of new President and CEO, Jennifer C. Hubbard, and four appointments to the organization's Board of Directors, including Joe Kunuk as Chairperson, as well as Dr. Karen Barnes, Kimberly Fairman, and Jacqueline Pepper-Journal as board members. All appointments are for a period of five years.

The minister said the members of the board will continue their important work in ensuring that scientific research and Indigenous knowledge inform decision making in the North, while also supporting environmental stewardship, sustainable development, the health of Indigenous and northern communities, and job creation.

Polar Knowledge Canada is responsible for advancing Canada's knowledge of the Arctic, strengthening Canadian leadership in polar science and technology, and promoting the development and distribution of knowledge of other circumpolar regions, including Antarctica. •

Makivik Executive Election Changes

The deadline for the nominations for the upcoming Makivik Presidential election will be on January 7, 2021 (previously December 1, 2020). The new date for the Presidential election is February 4, 2021 (previously January 21, 2021).

The changes were made in October during the Makivik Board of Directors meeting, when amendments to the corporation's by-laws were approved.

The changes were made to ensure a continuous campaigning period for all candidates, including any incumbent Makivik executive seeking re-election.

Another change is that an incumbent executive seeking re-election shall have all responsibilities, rights and powers, except for title and salary, transferred to another executive during the campaign period. •

MONEY for Cultural Security Announced

The Quebec government announced \$15 million will be injected into the healthcare network of the province to increase cultural security among Inuit and First Nations communities. This came on the heels of the tragic death in September of Joyce Echaquan, a member of the Atikamekw Nation of Manawan, Quebec, who was hospitalized in Joliette. She livestreamed some of her last hours on Facebook, recording two nurses who spewed racist slurs at her as she was dying. The incident triggered a coroner's inquest and sparked outrage both nationally and internationally.

During the announcement in early November, Quebec Indigenous Affairs Minister Ian Lafreniere said the money will go towards training hospital and other healthcare staff about cultural safety, and this training will be developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Liaison officers will also be hired to help Indigenous people navigate the hospital system.

When news of Echaquan's ordeal was made public, Makivik President Charlie Watt issued a statement in early October noting

that her death came exactly one year after the Viens Commission tabled a scathing report on racism against Indigenous people in Quebec. Echaquan's experience unfortunately echoes those of some Inuit who seek health care in Quebec, resulting in fear of harassment if they go to the hospital.

Makivik is negotiating with the federal Government to create a Nation-to-Nation self-determination regime for Nunavik and has similar plans with Quebec to negotiate an Inuit Legislative Assembly in Nunavik.

In his statement, Watt also called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to end colonialism in this country.

"We need to get to the core of systemic racism and the colonialist rule that has dominated Canada for hundreds of years. Our governments are not dealing with the poison that is still killing Indigenous citizens." •

Nunavik Sentinels Montreal Space for Life Insectarium program

Project Manager: Maxim Larrivée, Ph.D., Director,
Montreal Space for Life Insectarium

Project Coordinator: Amélie Grégoire-Taillefer, Ph.D.



The diversity of insects and other arthropods (e.g. spiders and millipedes) in the North is essential to the balance of the ecosystem. Insects fulfill many ecological roles. Although black flies and mosquitoes are certainly the first insects that spring to mind when we think of Northern Quebec, there are many other groups of insects that go incognito, such as hundreds of beautiful butterfly species, colourful flower flies, essential bumblebees and many more. Some are food for birds and other animals, while others ensure pollination, regulate pest species or recycle organic matter. Recent studies reveal that the terrestrial diversity of Northern Quebec is populated by a rich and unique insect fauna.

This diversity is mostly undocumented and fragile. It is also invaluable to humans ecologically. Owing to the effects of climate change, living creatures are likewise changing, as are the bonds that connect them. These changes are happening even more quickly in the North. To date, the insects and spiders of Northern Canada have not been studied much and there is an urgent need for data on them. Collecting specimens and monitoring their diversity in the

region will help us learn more about their habits and distribution, discover new species, and gain a better understanding of how to protect them. For example, by monitoring pollinator species especially, it will allow to indirectly follow the impact of climate change on berry abundance. These data will allow scientists, in collaboration with Nunavik communities, to assess the consequences of climate change on insect fauna and to better define the actions to be taken to help communities prepare for these shifts.

Since 2014, Elise Rioux-Paquette (Kativik Regional Government) and Dr. Maxim Larrivée (Director of the Montreal Space for Life Insectarium) have been introducing young people from various Nunavik communities to entomology by leading expeditions in Nunavik's national parks. These excursions are a means of inventorying insect biodiversity in these protected areas. By sharing these experiences with young Inuit and Cree, it became clear to Dr. Larrivée that many young people have a predisposition for and

*Summer 2018, young Inuit and Cree
in Kuururjuaq National Park.*





© MAXIM LARRIVÉE / SPACE FOR LIFE X2

Flower fly spotted during a hike in Qurlutuarjuq.

have a keen interest in entomology: "Their ability to differentiate one species from another and their attention to detail will greatly benefit future research endeavours in Nunavik." However, these youngsters have little or no knowledge of insects and other arthropods and how to monitor their diversity. Resources to stimulate their curiosity and develop their entomological skills are also very limited. Furthermore, the territory to be inventoried is huge and the period of insect activity is very short. The challenge of training and supervising the youngsters is both crucial and pressing.

For all these reasons, the Nunavik Sentinels, a program that is at once practical and theoretical, has been designed to reach out to youth in all Nunavik communities. Developed by the Montreal Space for Life Insectarium, it will be offered to groups of a dozen youngsters per community every year. It is out in the field, in the

summer, that they are taught methods of capturing and observing insects, with the help of reference tools (a series of guides about the basics of entomology and insect identification) and the proper equipment that allow the participants to develop their interests and skills in entomology. With scientific rigour and a language adapted as much as possible to Inuktitut, the youngsters will also learn about the morphology of various insect groups as well as the ecological roles they play within ecosystems.

Interested participants have the opportunity to get a paid job in the Nunavik insect monitoring program the following year. The training and monitoring program acts as a socio-economic driving force for the communities and provides an opportunity to prepare Nunavik youth to take part in working life. It also gives them a chance to make a significant contribution to expanding entomological knowledge of their ancestral land. The data collected by participants are analyzed at the Montreal Space for Life Insectarium and results are returned back to the communities for the use by its people. Communities also have the opportunity to build an insect collection of their own with the proper tools. In addition to collecting baseline information and monitoring insects and spiders in Nunavik, the project also provides scientific tools to Nunavimmiut to monitor wildlife, as well as ice safety, language preservation and weather through the SIKU application (siku.org). Together, we will be able to better define the actions to be taken to prepare the territory of Northern Quebec for future climate change. ●

Facebook: [@NunavikSentinels](https://www.facebook.com/NunavikSentinels)

Web site: <https://m.espacepoulavie.ca/en/nunavik-sentinels>
nunaviksentinels@gmail.com



Purplish Fritillary observed in Kuururjuaq National Park.



OLIVIA IKEY



GEORGE IKSUTUK JOHNNY KULLULA QAVAVAU

Full name: Olivia Ikey

Birthday: February 19, 1989

Place of birth: Montreal

Home community: Kuujuaq

Role model: I can't name a specific person. Many people have had different affects on my life and have helped me grow as a person. I look up to people who stand behind their values, who are not afraid to speak up, people who are different and try new things.

Favourite food: pretty much anything with bacon and an extremely well-done steak with fried mushrooms and white rice!

Occupation: Coordinator of the Nunavik Sivunitsavut Post-Secondary Program.

Proudest moment: I have many proud moments that I thought I'd never get to experience. I'm happy I stayed alive to try so much and to push myself. I stayed alive to get my high school diploma, to speak up for the underdog, represent my family, make my own family and buy a home.

Future goal: To stay alive, to speak out against injustices, to help my family heal and to be happy and content with my life.

Best advice you can offer youth: TRY, TRY NEW THINGS! Get out of your community, get out of your head and get out of your routine. Open up your world and take what you think is best for you!

Full name: George Iksutuk Johnny Kullula Qavavau

Birthday: July 9, 2004

Place of birth: Salluit

Home community: Salluit

Role model: I don't have one

Favourite food: Tuttuk & spaghetti with meatballs

Occupation: I'm a student and I'm working at New Co-op in the kitchen, cooking

Proudest moment: Giving my friends and family food

Future goal: Accepting my own self

Best advice you can offer youth: Stay true to yourself, be thankful for someone who stays beside you.

MYSTERY PHOTO CONTEST

Congratulations to Mary Weeltuk who won the Mystery Photo Contest in issue 123 of Taqralik!

You could win \$100 if you correctly guess what this mystery photo is. Mail your answer to the address below, or you can email your answer to mdewar@makivik.org. The winner of this Mystery Photo Contest will be chosen on January 17, 2021.

Mystery Photo Contest
Makivik Corporation
P.O. Box 179
Kuujuaq, QC
J0M 1C0



WHAT IS THIS ?

NRRA PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

November 2020

It is a pleasure to announce the development of the Nunavik Regional Research Authority project.

Increasing amounts of various types of research have been, are being and continue to be conducted in Nunavik, which puts growing pressure on Nunavik communities and organizations. Well-conducted research that is aligned with Nunavik's research priorities can play a central role in the region's sustainable development and the well-being of Nunavimmiut. The Nunavik Regional Research Authority (NRRA) project has been jointly initiated by Makivik Corporation, the Kativik Regional Government, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board.

The NRRA is envisioned as an Inuit regional research organization whose goals include guiding and reviewing research project proposals in Nunavik and the Nunavik Marine Region to ensure that they respect Nunavimmiut's priorities, values and ethics in research; documenting all research projects in the region; and providing the financial, human and technical aid necessary to support Inuit communities and organizations working with external researchers or leading their own research projects.

Together with the Inuit Research Advisor for the region of Nunavik, our six organizations have begun coordinating the extensive assessment and planning that is necessary prior to launching the NRRA. As part of such work, we will be reaching out to Nunavimmiut, to the local and regional organizations of Nunavik and to researchers between now and next summer, seeking your views and interest regarding this project. Public communications and targeted invitations to that effect can be expected in the coming months.

We look forward to getting in touch with you, your community and/or organizational representatives to advance the work on the NRRA project. Should you have any questions until we do so, please contact Camille Fréchette at cfréchette@makivik.org or at 1 (800) 361-7052 #2248.

Nakurmiik,

Makivik Corporation
Kativik Regional Government
Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
Kativik Ilisarniliriniq
Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

