

TAQRALIK

SERVING NUNAVIK INUIT SINCE 1974



Nunavik Bravery Awards
Pita Aatami: Working Together for Inuit
Mary Simon Governor General Designate



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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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Willie Cain Jr., was the only Nunavik Bravery Award recipient present at Makivik's Annual General Meeting in Akulivik in April. Cain, pictured here with Makivik President Pita Aatami, was recognized for his bravery in saving the life of John-Samuel MacKay last December. Read more on page 12.
 Photo by Saima Mark.



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As part of Operation Life Preserver, Canadian North has sponsored the shipment of over 5,000 lifejackets to more than 25 Northern communities, helping to complement life-saving education on water safety. Read more about the program on page 16.

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Makivik President Pita Aatami – Working Together for Inuit

By Stephen Hendrie

On the evening of February 4, 2021, Pita Aatami was home having supper with his family. It was the night results for the Makivik Presidential Election were rolling in, updated in real time on the Makivik website. He started getting calls. "People were telling me, 'Pita, you're leading in this community, you're leading in that community.' Then I ended up leading in all communities." He won with 66 per cent of the votes.



Pita Aatami speaking at an All Organizations Meeting in April.

He earned a decisive victory over incumbent President Charlie Watt, and newcomer candidate Noah Cain. "Charlie and I go back quite a few years together. He took me under his wing around 1989. He believed in me, so I always thank him for that. We have our differences, but at the end of the day we always agree to stay friends, even though we ran against each other so many times."

Pita returns to Makivik from being the President of Air Inuit for seven years. He remained close and plugged in to what Makivik was doing during his time at the airline. He reported to the Makivik Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year on the progress of Air Inuit. Especially during the pandemic he was heavily involved with many Nunavik group teleconferences to manage the crisis in the Nunavik region. The new president of Air Inuit is Christian Busch, long-time Air Inuit executive, appointed on April 1, 2021.

As he did when he became Makivik President in the late 1990s, Pita shifted Makivik into warp speed. He held extensive briefings with the Makivik executives, working through lunch on many days, going through each active file the corporation is involved in, department by department.

"We came out with 55 priority items that we have to focus on," says Pita. "As an example, we want to focus on language and culture. It's part of Makivik's mandate. Then there's the airstrips. Our Dash-8s are nearing the end of their lifespan. There's not a lot of planes that can land on 3,500 foot airstrips. So we have to ask governments to look at lengthening the airstrips in Nunavik."

Pita Aatami was born in Kuujuaq in 1960. His education includes attending the Federal Day School in Kuujuaq, and Red River College in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1978-1979. His history with Makivik Corporation goes back to 1987 when he was elected Board Member for the community of Kuujuaq. In 1993 he was elected Treasurer of Makivik Corporation, a position he held until becoming president in 1998, a position he held until 2012. He was named to the Order of Quebec in 2009, and the Order of Canada in 2019.



Pita Aatami was sworn in as Makivik President in February.



Pita Aatami in 1999.

Pita Aatami during Makivik's 2021 AGM in Akulivik.





PHOTO COURTESY OF PITA AATAMI X2

In 1995 when he was Makivik Treasurer he gave an interview to *Makivik News* on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)*. He revealed his early interest in the political process, attending public meetings on the ongoing development of the *JBNQA* talks. "I was only 12 when I started asking what was going on? I was like the rest of the Inuit, wondering, 'What are they going to be doing to my area of the land?'" He says he was motivated to enter politics out of a deep concern that Inuit should be controlling development in Nunavik.

Returning to Makivik as president for the second time, in his early 60s, Pita is bringing structure to the organization, with the return of weekly Executive Meetings, and the strong renewal of political relations with the Government of Quebec.

Pita notes that Nunavik was not going to achieve anything without working with Quebec. Swiftly following his election in early February, 2021, Pita hired Jean-François Arteau, a well-known Nunavik bureaucrat, and lawyer, as a Strategic Advisor, working from Makivik's Quebec City office, located on the historic Grande Allée.

Arteau says relations with the Quebec government were zero. Everything had to be built up. By the time of holding Makivik's AGM in late April 2021, meetings had been held with several Quebec ministers and officials. The Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, Ian Lafrenière, presented virtually to the AGM. Federal ministers included Carolyn Bennett (Crown-Indigenous Relations), Dan Vandal (Northern Affairs), and Marc Miller (Indigenous Services).

The AGM was held under pandemic rules in Akulivik. They were allowed 50 people in the room, and there were 39 delegates. Three board members were online virtually for either health or quarantine reasons. Staff listened in via telephone or online, with translation provided.

Pita says there was a lot of joy holding a meeting in person. He says the corporation emerged from the meeting with a more solid mandate for its projects, notably the Nunavik Self-Determination project.

Ahead of the AGM it was announced that Mary Simon has returned as the Chief Negotiator, and Lisa Koperqualuk remains as Deputy Negotiator. There is a new Inuit Advisory Committee added to the project composed of two representatives each from Ungava Bay, Hudson Strait, and Hudson Bay. Also new is the intent to include the Quebec government in this project. Pita had a meeting scheduled with Quebec Premier François Legault in mid-May, principally to open discussions on Nunavik Self-Determination.

Inuit youth will also benefit from Pita's return as Makivik President. They gained a vote at the Makivik Board of Directors' table. This was done by granting a seat to the president of the Qarjuut Youth Council, and a vote. Previously, the youth representative had a solely observatory role.

On the federal front, Pita is a member of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), and the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada (ICC Canada) Boards of Directors. He's plugged in to national and international politics as it affects Inuit. At these tables he brings the Nunavik Inuit point of view. He has brought up the longstanding taxation issue. "Inuit of Nunavik are one of the highest taxpaying citizens of this country. Something has to be done. We're still not equal to our fellow Canadians to the south of us that get all the benefits we don't get."

As part of this political process, he is Nunavik's representative at the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee (ICPC) lead by ITK. Recently he was able to speak directly to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at



Pita Aatami with his great-grandson Fredrick in 2021.



Pita Aatami at Makivik's 40th Anniversary celebration in Kuujuaq in 2018.

|| Everybody has a voice. Everybody has a mind. Their ideas might be better than my ideas, so I'll take on those ideas if it's going to help my fellow Inuit. So that's the message I've been telling my fellow Inuit. ||

the ICPC meeting held in April, 2021. He spoke about two specific issues: the historic dog slaughter in Nunavik, and the Croll Agreement of the early 1990s, which Makivik wants renegotiated.

Asked about the pandemic in Nunavik, Pita says, "It's been good and bad. The good thing is its brought a lot of people closer together,

being with families more, going out fishing. The bad part was not being able to be with people you want to be with face to face." He received his two vaccinations and says Nunavik is fortunate to have received vaccines on a priority basis. "In a lot of cases people live in overcrowded houses, so if one gets it, everybody gets it. So the government recognized this and acted quickly."

One theme was consistent throughout the interview with Pita for this article – working together. "By working together we can accomplish a lot more than working in a silo, or by yourself," he says. "Everybody has a voice. Everybody has a mind. Their ideas might be better than my ideas, so I'll take on those ideas if it's going to help my fellow Inuit. So that's the message I've been telling my fellow Inuit." ●

Mary Simon

Governor General Designate

Historic moment for Inuit and all Indigenous Peoples in Canada

At 10 am on July 6, 2021, Mary Simon joined Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a press conference held at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. After announcing that the Queen had accepted his recommendation for Canada's 30th Governor General, Prime Minister Trudeau introduced Governor General Designate Mary Simon.

Simon first addressed Canadians in Inuktitut, marking a huge moment in history for Inuit across Inuit Nunangat, and for Indigenous Peoples across the country. She acknowledged the importance of the announcement. "I can confidently say that my appointment is a historic and inspirational moment for Canada and an important step forward on the long path towards reconciliation. Indeed, my appointment comes at an especially reflective and dynamic time in our shared history."

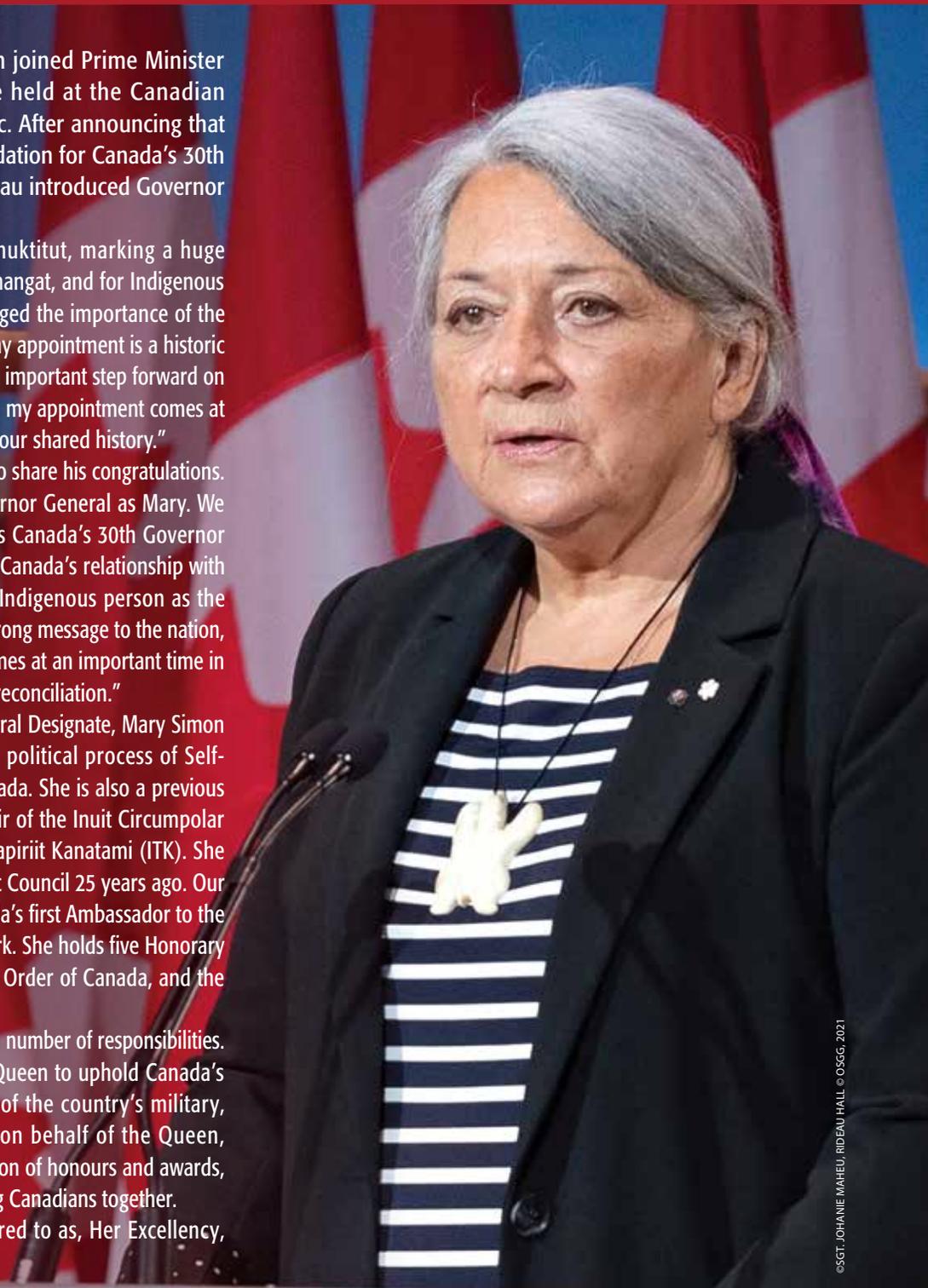
Makivik President Pita Aatami was quick to share his congratulations.

"In Nunavik, we all know our new Governor General as Mary. We are extremely proud of her appointment as Canada's 30th Governor General," he said. "This is a new chapter in Canada's relationship with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis. Having an Indigenous person as the Crown's Representative in Canada sends a strong message to the nation, and to the international community. This comes at an important time in our history as we collectively work towards reconciliation."

Until her appointment as Governor General Designate, Mary Simon was the Senior Negotiator in the Nunavik political process of Self-Determination with the Government of Canada. She is also a previous Makivik Corporation President, former Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), and past President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). She was instrumental in the creation of the Arctic Council 25 years ago. Our Governor General Designate was also Canada's first Ambassador to the Arctic, and Canada's Ambassador to Denmark. She holds five Honorary University Degrees, and is an Officer of the Order of Canada, and the National Order of Quebec.

As Governor General, Simon will take on a number of responsibilities. She will act on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen to uphold Canada's government, act as Commander-in-Chief of the country's military, represent Canada at home and beyond on behalf of the Queen, encourage excellence through the presentation of honours and awards, as well as working to foster unity by bringing Canadians together.

Once she is sworn in, she will be referred to as, Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Mary Simon. ♦



Robbie Watt – A Passion for Language

By Stephen Hendrie



Robbie Watt, shown here in a still captured during the virtual press conference, was named as one of three directors of the Canadian Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages.

Monday, June 14, 2021, was a big day for Robbie Watt. He took part in a virtual press conference announcing the brand new Canadian Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages (OCIL). Robbie was named as one of the three Directors, in addition to Commissioner, Ronald E. Ignace, and fellow Directors Georgina Liberty, and Joan Greyeyes.

Following comments by Heritage Canada Minister Steven Guilbeault, and Commissioner Ignace, Robbie made his comments in Inuktitut only. "All languages on this earth are uniquely precious. Let's mindfully embrace this diversity." A week later, in an interview, he said he knew Inuktitut was the only language available for translation and he took full advantage of that.

Asked about what it says regarding the health of Inuktitut versus other Indigenous languages Robbie laughed and said, "We have other

needs! We're not all the same!" He told a story about developing the standardized writing system — Inuktitut Qaliujaaqpait — Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) was leading, noting it was a difficult process. "ITK was just trying to create a way to be able to share information nationally across regions, to be able to have resources that could circulate. So, you have to compromise. Language is very close to our identity."

He said he sees his role as an OCIL Director to help ITK spread the word about the standardized writing system. "To promote for them, support them, make sure that the population knows, 'Hey, this is what's being done here.'"

The OCIL was created as part of Canada's Indigenous Languages Act. The office will operate independently from the Government of Canada and support efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages. It will also promote public



A screen shot from the virtual press conference announcing the brand new Canadian Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages.

awareness of Indigenous languages, and undertake research on the provision of funding of Indigenous languages in Canada. It will also provide dispute resolution services and review complaints.

Robbie's passion for his new position came through loud and clear. He said it started when he was interviewed for the role in early 2021. "I decided I was going to go big! This is a great opportunity for reconciliation. Let's create a huge pavilion, a language nest of some sort here in Ottawa. This is an opportunity for us to shine, and showcase our languages. Let people hear our languages and see them. A place where translators and interpreters could retreat. Perhaps it would be a public-private partnership, possibly with universities."

Based on Robbie's work history this position fits him like a glove. He was recently the President and Commissioner of Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, where he was able to directly strengthen Inuktitut through the curriculum. He is also the former President of the Avataq Cultural Institute where he launched the famous Inuit tisanes, a project he is very proud of as it was also designed to support Inuit culture and language.

Aside from the strength of Inuktitut, there are also disparities across regions. While the language is healthy in Nunavik, and Nunavut, there is work to be done to revitalize the Inuit language in Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

"I think what I need to do is to map out what's going on," said Robbie. "Who's doing what, do a good inventory, and from there, how else can we help? What way can we ensure you reach your goals and objectives?"

The OCIL will have a healthy budget to achieve its objectives. It receives two streams of funding – up to \$6.6 million per year for its operations, and up to \$30 million per year to support Indigenous

communities, organizations and governments for research, innovation and the use of new technologies. In the current fiscal year, until the end of March 30, 2022, the OCIL will receive \$5.5 million for operations, and \$15 million for supporting Indigenous communities.

In the Nunavik region, for example Robbie said it has been aching for a language authority for years. "Now how do we do this," he said. "How do we approach this?" He has met with the President of Quebec's Office de la Langue française in the past, and said one of the issues is money. "The Office de la langue française doesn't have a lot of money, but it has the support of the Quebec government."

The members of the OCIL represent the Indigenous community across Canada. Commissioner Ronald E. Ignace is a member of the Secwepemc Nation in British Columbia. Director Georgina Liberty has devoted her life to preserving, protecting and cherishing her Métis identity and spirit. Joan Greyeyes is a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation within Treaty 6 Territory in Saskatchewan.

"We celebrate this day where we breathe new life into all of our Indigenous languages for the future," said Commissioner Ignace. "Our languages will no longer stand in the shadow of other languages here in our land. Let us always honour our Indigenous languages."

Robbie said the press conference on June 14 is the first time they connected. "I lived in Winnipeg for four years and I believe that Georgina and I have crossed paths before. We haven't met face to face yet. We are only starting on July 12. I know that Ron has been quite involved in language and culture. All I know is that I'm very passionate. Whatever it takes. It's going to be a fun ride!" ●

Congratulatory Message to ITC/ITK on its 50th Anniversary

Congratulations ITC to 50 years of elevating our rights as Inuit in Canada and Internationally. It only seems like yesterday Nunavimmiut met with fellow Inuit from the Western Arctic, NWT and Labrador in 1971 to establish a great organization called Inuit Tapirisat of Canada later renamed Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

As we look back we can be proud of taking our people from a voiceless society to leaders of our homelands in Canada.

We are also always proud of Nunavik's contribution to the recognition of Aboriginal Rights in the Canadian Constitution in the 1980s. ITC and Makivik lead in the discussions on behalf of Canadian Inuit. We want to congratulate you on the formation of

the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee which has brought Inuit concerns directly to the Prime Minister's Office on an annual basis. What a milestone.

No one ever thought we would go this far in a short 50 years. From that founding conference in Baker Lake in 1971 to annual meetings with Canada's Prime Minister is quite an accomplishment. Bravo my fellow Inuit, Bravo.

Pita Aatami
President
Makivik Corporation





NUNAVIK BRAVERY AWARDS

The Nunavik Bravery Award is given to nominated Nunavimmiut who risk their lives to try to save or protect another. This year, seven individuals were recognized for their efforts. The awards are usually announced at Makivik's Annual General Meeting and brought back to the individuals by community representatives.

Following are the 2021 recipients of the Nunavik Bravery Award:

Willie Cain Jr., from Tasiujaq, was nominated for saving the life of John-Samuel MacKay. Last December, John-Samuel joined Willie and his eight-year-old son Robbie Kulula Cain to help set nets under the ice on Finger Lake. They were returning home by snowmobile across the large lake at night when they encountered blizzard conditions. John-Samuel was separated from the Cains and ended up running into a large area of open water. He managed to pull himself from the water, but his clothes were soaked, and he was at risk of hypothermia. Unknown to him at the time, 10 kilometres away, Willie and Robbie were low on gasoline, and had to make a decision. They could either ride into town to gas up and get help, losing valuable time, or turn back immediately and risk running out of gas and/or getting lost in the blizzard, putting three people's lives in danger rather than one. In the end, Willie listened to his gut, and to his son's advice, and turned back, knowing that something very serious had happened. After reaching John-Samuel the trio struggled in the blizzard to find the trail again and rode a further five kilometres to Willie's cabin at Qamanieluk Lake, about 12 kilometres south of Tasiujaq. Willie went into town to get firewood, hot beverages, and helpers to haul the snowmobile from the water, while Robbie stayed with John-Samuel who was wrapped up in blankets and slowly beginning to warm up.

|| ...Willie listened to his gut, and to his son's advice, and turned back, knowing that something very serious had happened. ||

Tamusi Mina, 11, and **Anne Maria Mina**, 8, from Inukjuak, were nominated for saving the lives of their parents, who were ejected from their canoe after hitting a rock. A group of 12 canoes were travelling to Qikirtaaluk, and all arrived safely except for

Rhoda Kokiapik accepts two Nunavik Bravery Awards from Makivik's Maggie Emudluk at the Corporation's Annual General Meeting in Akulivik in April. Kokiapik accepted five awards in total on behalf of individuals nominated from her community of Inukjuak.

Eric Kasudluak, his spouse Lucy Mina, and their children Juanasi Mina, 10, Janice Mina, 5, Anne Maria Mina, 8, and Tamusi Mina, 11. They had gone to Quurngukutaak first, near Qikirtaaluk, to pick up their belongings. While travelling in their large freighter canoe, they hit a rock and Eric and Lucy were thrown out of their canoe and into the water. The canoe kept moving and Tamusi took control of the wheel while Anne Maria adjusted the throttle. Together they managed to turn around from afar and return to Eric and Lucy who were close to exhaustion in the water.

Markusi Uqaituk, 45, from Inukjuak, was nominated for saving his 12-year-old son who had fallen from a boat. Markusi saw his son, Jusipi Iqaluk, slip into the water from the moving boat and jumped in to rescue him. He kept him afloat while others tried to get to them by canoe, but the motor wouldn't start, so they paddled to them and brought them to safety.

Tommy Kudluk Saunders, from Kuujjuaq, was nominated for saving the late Pasha Makiuk and Mary Makiuk Whitely, who was a baby in Pasha's amautik at the time, after they broke through the ice and almost drowned. In the late 1950s, Tommy and his new wife Pasha were fishing at False River soon after freeze up, when the ice was still very thin. The tide coming in at that time was extremely powerful and a wave of water flowed up stream on top of the new ice. It rose so rapidly that Pasha and Mary were unable to get to the shore. Tommy was able to quickly cut some trees to use as stabilizing posts and got close enough to pull Pasha and Mary to safety. Tommy then built a big fire to dry off before hypothermia could set in, and eventually used his brother's dog team to bring Pasha and Mary to the tent camp further upstream to fully dry out.

Lizzie Lisa Echalook and **Lucassie Echalook**, from Inukjuak, were nominated for saving Lizzie Lisa's grandmother Martha, after she fell through the ice and into the water while fishing in the spring. Lizzie Lisa couldn't pull Martha from the water as she was a small child at the time, and although exhausted, she managed to cling on to Martha's hand. Martha was halfway in the water and was beginning to get covered by the *ilaujait* (crystalized ice), when she was eventually pulled out by Lucassie Echalook (Martha's husband), who using his expert hunting skills, managed to reach both Lizzie Lisa and Martha without breaking through the ice. ●

IVAKKAK 2021 – The Return of the Inuit Dogs

Proud partner of the Ivakkak annual Inuit dogsled race, Air Inuit was there once again this year to help the organization make this tradition another successful event. While we all know aircraft and snowmobiles are now the most common way of transport in Nunavik, this race reminds us that Inuit dogs used to be an essential part of every Nunavimmiut family, allowing them to travel, especially during the winter, to remote areas such as fishing and hunting camps.

Supporting Ivakkak with the logistics, Air Inuit and its teams were very active during the weekend of February 21, working on transporting the racing teams, their equipment and of course, our favourite furry passengers. Although these brave allies are not so fond of the air transportation, our crews always have a great time helping the mushers care for their comfort.

This year, Air Inuit flew across Nunavik, from Kuujjuaq to Puvirnituk, Kangiqsujuaq and Tasiujaq to bring the teams together in Salluit, the community hosting the opening ceremony and obviously, the great departure of the journey set to end in Puvirnituk.



©MARC LAJEUNESE



©SIMON LOOTZAK

The winning team and the rookie of the year were awarded passes redeemable on any flight operated on our network.



SCHOOL Perseverance Days

Being a major employer in the region and a strong believer in youth, Air Inuit has taken its partnership with ESUMA to a new level this year by proudly exhibiting their promotional poster directly on the aircraft hoping to reach a larger network of young students and motivate them to persevere towards their success.

ESUMA's mandate to help increase the graduation rate among students is a great introduction for young Inuit to qualify for Air Inuit's Sparrow initiative. Each year, it gives the opportunity to five post-secondary students to enter the pilot-training program entirely funded



**Δεξιότητες και γνώσεις
για την επιτυχία
Αντιμετώπιση των
επιπέδων εκπαίδευσης
και μάθησης**

**Learning is my journey.
Your support helps
light my way.**

**Au cœur de mon parcours,
l'apprentissage.
Votre aide en illumine
chaque étape.**

2021/02/15-19

by KRG and Air Inuit and allows the graduates to join the company's ranks once they have successfully completed the program.

To discover Air Inuit's many employment benefits or to view all active work opportunities, visit the Career section of our freshly updated website at the following address:

<https://www.airinuit.com/en/about-air-inuit/careers>

Don't forget to subscribe to our different social media platforms to get daily Air Inuit updates! ◆





©STEPHANIE RANKINE X3

In 2017, Stephanie Rankine and Cheryl Gallagher made a call to then First Air, (now Canadian North), that significantly expanded their project, Operation Life Preserver.

Operation Life Preserver, a Canadian Safe Boating Council project, came from an idea to educate youth on cold water safety and the importance of wearing a lifejacket. Stephanie and Cheryl recognized that the education wasn't enough. They wanted to get kids excited about water safety, and being able to purchase and provide these same kids with their own lifejacket to take home helped do just that.

"The goal was to change the behaviour and create advocates for water safety," Stephanie Rankine mentioned, inspiring a commitment

to "empower youth in their leadership while at the same time ensuring all Canadians have access to these lifesaving devices."

Federally funded by Public Safety and supported by various organizations, including the Canadian Rangers, Coast Guard Auxiliary, RCMP, Kativik Regional Government, local Search and Rescue groups, to name a few, Stephanie and Cheryl set out to expand this life-saving project across Canada. Starting with the Lifejacket Owner Program in six Ontario Communities, they started marrying the lifejackets with their educational program which included topics like:

1. The importance of a wearing a properly fitted lifejacket
2. The effects of a cold water immersion - and that you may have longer than you think if wearing a lifejacket
3. Making a simple rope ladder to keep tied on your boat for self-rescue should you fall overboard.



Working with various groups, they expanded this program to Nunavik and then across the Territories. While they had money budgeted to purchase lifejackets, they knew that with shipping support from Northern airlines, that budget could stretch much further, so Stephanie “made a call and a bold request,” which put her on the phone with Shelly De Caria, Senior Director of Sales and Community Investments at First Air (now Canadian North).

Since that call four years ago, Canadian North has sponsored the shipment for over 5,000 lifejackets to more than 25 Northern communities, helping to complement the life-saving education on water safety. Stephanie emphasized that, “without the whole-hearted YES from Canadian North and their commitment to supporting northern communities, the Operation Life Preserver Owner Program would not have been able to reach as many Canadians living in the north as it has.”

Getting Cargo to Communities During a Workforce Shortage

This year we have been able to persevere through many challenges. When COVID hit our Iqaluit Cargo team in April, we were faced with a significant labour shortage that could have impacted our ability to deliver essential items, like food and medical supplies, to the communities that depend on us. We mobilized quickly and were able to send a 737 freighter from Ottawa to Kuujuaq, with that cargo then sent by ATR to Baffin communities, including Kinngait, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, and Clyde River.



This routing enabled us to continue providing cargo service while we brought in replacement team members to support our Iqaluit operations.

We would not have been able to accomplish this route change without the cooperation, support and partnership with Air Inuit, the Government of Nunavut, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG). Their partnership and support helped us to maintain safe and reliable cargo service to our communities during this uncertain time and is deeply appreciated. Nakurmiik!

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Annual Bike Rally sponsored by Kativik Regional Police Force

The Kativik Regional Police Force has been hosting an annual Bike Rally to promote bicycle safety for the youth of Nunavik. This year, they will be hosting for Kuujuaq,

Tasiujaq, Kangirsuk and Akulivik.

The rally begins with the participating children playing games and a BBQ, where prizes can be won. The day will end with a

parade around the community accompanied by the police and fire department

Every year to help make this rally possible, Canadian North makes a donation so that this event can continue and help to keep the children on bikes safe. This year Canadian North will be providing cargo shipments of the bikes going to Kuujuaq and fun promotional items for the children. ●





Nunavik Residual Materials Management Plan, 2021-2027

The Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee would like to highlight a recent environmental initiative undertaken by the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) to improve waste management practices in Nunavik. The *Nunavik Residual Materials Management Plan (NRMMP), 2021-2027* considers Nunavik's unique regional and municipal realities when it comes to waste management strategies and planning. It is also meant to spread awareness about the importance of environmental protection and promotes the four R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Reclaim materials that would otherwise end up in municipal landfills.

The NRMMP sets out three main orientations that hope to effect real change in the current waste management practices in Nunavik. These are:

- 1- To build interest among all waste generators about the importance of effective and responsible waste management practices.
- 2- To develop management methods for Nunavik based on the concepts of sustainable development.
- 3- To monitor implementation of the action plan and global innovations in waste management.

As part of NRMMP's development, the KRG held public consultations in November and December 2020 for regional organizations and the general public. The opinions expressed helped tailor the plan to the Nunavik context before it underwent a compliance analysis by RECYC-QUÉBEC. Once this is complete, it will then be presented to the KRG Regional Council for adoption.

The high level of participation at the consultations demonstrates a strong interest in improving waste management practices by residents and the organizations of Nunavik who described the NRMMP as well-structured and ambitious, but necessary. Here are some of the main issues raised during the consultations:

- To improve awareness among the region's population regarding waste management issues, especially among the younger generation
- Finding alternatives to open-air burning
- Develop community green houses and composting programs
- Collect recyclable materials
- Improve management of municipal landfill sites
- Improve upon existing or develop new landfill sites
- Local repair of household appliances to extend their use
- Develop circular economy projects
- Reduce at source
- Ban single-use plastic shopping bags

You can consult the draft plan and consultation reports on the KRG's website at <https://krg.ca/en-CA/publications/environment> and should you want more information on waste management, you can contact the KRG's Department of Renewable Resources, Lands, Environment and Parks. ●



YOUTH PROTECTION IN NUNAVIK

Youth protection is an important issue for people in Nunavik. The Ungava Tulattavik Health Center submitted a document explaining the purpose of the Ungava Bay Youth Protection Services and how it helps vulnerable children, which is printed here. In an effort to further inform Nunavimmiut about what is happening and available, Makivik's legal team has provided a briefing note on Sukait, prepared in collaboration with Nunavimmi Ilagiit Papatauvinga (NIP), which presented it to the All Organizations Meeting this past winter, as well as an information sheet about the state of things surrounding the contestation of Bill C-92.

Portrait: the Ungava Bay Youth Protection Services

The Youth Protection Act (YPA) of Quebec presides over the Direction of Youth Protection. It is therefore a provincial law that governs the actions of all of the 18 Directors of Youth Protection throughout Quebec.

The Ungava Bay's Youth Protection Direction is composed of five 5 major services:

- 1) Retaining and Processing of Reports (RTS) and Evaluation Orientation Service (EO)
- 2) Services of the Application of Measures (AM)
- 3) Revision services
- 4) Resource Department (Foster Home and others)
- 5) Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) / YCJA Law Department

1) Retaining and Processing of Reports (RTS) and Evaluation Orientation Service (EO)

a) **The Retaining and Processing of Reports Service (RTS)** receives and processes the reports received from the general public, health care professionals, schools, police services or anyone that is concerned and/or worried about a child's situation.

Each report is processed and analyzed in accordance with Article 38 of the YPA. Before retaining a report, the Director of Youth Protections can authorize verification within the environment of the child. If the situation does not compromise the safety and development of the child, the DYP can refer to Social Services and Community Organizations.

The clinical activity specialist and the Head of Program (RTS/EO) discuss every report received. The Head of Program then decides whether to retain a report or not.

b) **The Evaluation-Orientation Service (EO)** evaluates the retained reports received from the RTS Service following the guidelines of the Youth Protection Act. This team has the mandate of meeting with the child, the parents, the family if necessary and/or the various actors who play an important role in the life of the child and his/her family.

After evaluation, it is possible that the report is unfounded and does not require the intervention of the Director of Youth Protection (DYP). The file is then closed. If the intervention of the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) is necessary and the security and the development of the child are compromised, two options are possible:

- i) If there is a recognition of facts and a desire to improve the situation, the parents can sign an agreement on voluntary measure by naming the facts, which validate the compromised situation. Also, note that a child over 14 years old must also sign the agreement;

or,

- ii) If there is no acknowledgment of the facts nor the will to improve the situation, the case then will be referred to the Youth Court. At any time during the process, the youth and his parents, assisted by a lawyer, can address the court.

At this stage, the Head of Program and the Clinical Activity Specialist of RTS/EO Department will discuss and guide every situation. The RTS is therefore the entranceway for all interventions of the Director of Youth Protection. Which means, without a report, the Director of Youth Protection does not intervene.

2) The Service of Application of Measures (AM)

When a child's situation is the subject of a voluntary or court-ordered measure, this team will work with the child and his family to put an end to the compromised situation.

The Application of Measures Team is present in the seven communities of the Ungava Bay and generally consists of a social worker and a social assistant worker in each village.

After six months of working with the family or three months before the end of measures, the Director of Youth Protection, has the obligation to review the situation of each child and their parents in order to determine if the objectives were met or not and/or if the compromised situation still exists.

3) The Revision Services

It is the reviser at this stage, mandated by the DYP, to revise each situation of the children and their family followed by the DYP. This step is mandatory, since the reviewer after consulting the parents, youth involved and the various collaborators will redirect each situation either towards a closure or towards a continuation of the measures. Other measures can also be discussed with the family if necessary. At this point, the parents and the child can also petition the court if they do not agree with the proposed path of the situation.

4) Resource Department (Foster Home / FH)

This service is responsible for recruiting, evaluating, and supporting all Foster Families of the Ungava Bay. When a placement is necessary and the extended family cannot welcome the child, the use of an accredited Foster Family may be necessary. The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) has the mandate to accredit all foster families following the recommendations of Foster Home workers, also approved by the Director of Youth Protection.

Once per year, the Foster Home workers are also responsible for re-evaluating all foster families by submitting the assessment and its recommendations to the Director of Youth Protection and the NRBHSS, who has the authority for the final accreditation and yearly renewal.

5) Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)

This service is responsible for applying the Criminal Justice System Law for adolescents aged from 12-18 years old throughout the seven communities of the Ungava Bay.

The YCJA Team must assess and evaluate youth who have committed infractions under this Act. Depending on the infractions, workers may need to assess these youth by looking at the possibility of using alternative measures and actions to improve their situation (minor infractions).

Concerning major infractions, workers may be required to produce a pre-decision report (PDR) and present the recommendations to a Judge of the Criminal Court following the YCJA's criteria. It is only by a Court Order from the judge that the infraction committed by the youth that leads to a sentence to probation with or without follow-ups of the recommended conditions (curfew, active on the work field etc.) which are dictated by the judge.

The Judge, depending on the high severity of the infraction committed, can sentence an open or a closed rehabilitation as a retribution.

It is also important to highlight the close collaboration of the seven communities in the empowerment of these youth by providing places to accomplish their community work and make them accountable towards their victims.

The rehabilitation of young offenders and their empowerment are at the heart of all interventions with the YCJA clientele.

*Executive Management Department
Ungava Tulattavik Health Center*

Briefing Note on Sukait To All Organizations Meeting

BACKGROUND:

The NRBHSS initiated in 2013 a review of the protection services provided to youth in Nunavik, and how this clientele could benefit from special cultural and regional adaptations. It created a special committee to oversee such proposal for changes, the “Regional Advisory Committee on Youth Services” (RACYS). It hired in 2017 a professional to assist with this task in the person of **Mina Beaulne** as its *Integrated Youth and Family Advisor*. In the Fall of 2017, the NRBHSS outreached to all local and regional organizations to obtain their support toward the project. It mobilized northern villages, landholding corporations, Qarjuit, KI, KRG, Makivik and others, by way of resolutions. Following, the NRBHSS created the **Sukait Working Group**, composed of representatives from:

NRBHSS	Family Houses	Makivik
Qarjuit	Wellness Workers	DYPs
Elder Committees	Social Services	Qajaq Men Association
Saturviit Women Association	KRG	KI

ABOUT SUKAIT:

The Sukait Working Group (WG) was mandated to:

- Analyze the current state of the youth and family services in Nunavik, to review the different models applied in other Native communities across Quebec and to propose recommendations to develop youth and family services and Youth Protection services culturally adapted to the specific needs of the Inuit, and more specifically;
- Overview the current portraits of the services offered to youth and their families in Nunavik;
- Analyze the current portrait of the Youth Protection Services in Nunavik;
- Define the foundations, the conception of Youth Protection for Nunavimmiut;
- Examine the various alternative programs and adaptations made by other Aboriginal communities;
- Recommend best culturally adapted practices and approaches in order to gain parental and community involvement within the Youth Protection Services;
- Recommend, if deemed appropriate, culturally adapted modalities and/or possible modifications to the YPA under 37.5;
- Propose special measures for beneficiaries living outside the region;
- Recommend, if deemed appropriate, the structure for the services to youth and their families;
- Recommend implementation, timeline and training mechanisms of the program;
- Evaluate the program after its implementation.

In order to make recommendations, a consultation process was elaborated involving a wide and thorough series of community visits, group discussions and individual interviews. Supported by the University of Montreal’s Pitutsimajut research team, conclusions were developed under this root-based approach, which are forming part of the Report: *“Strengthening Families of Nunavik: An exploration of the current youth and family services to consolidate services for youth, families and communities”* (2017-2019, NRBHSS).

This report laid the foundation for the projects and initiatives which are developed by the **Nunavimmi Ilagiit**

Papatauvinga in accordance with the six principles defined out of the consultations. The main objective being so, at the pace of the communities, Inuit rebuild a continuum of services based on Inuit knowledge and ways, so that the Youth Protection Act be used as the law of exception it is.

PRINCIPLE 1	Children and families are at the center. They are supported by extended family, by the community, by workers within services. Everyone is working together to protect and support the family. Families receive support no matter who they are and no matter whether the children are in their care or not.
PRINCIPLE 2	Inuit are guides and decision makers making sure that all services are grounded in Inuit Knowledge and practices.
PRINCIPLE 3	Services are integrated into a complete continuum.
PRINCIPLE 4	Services are delivered according to Inuit ways, needs and knowledge.
PRINCIPLE 5	Sukait members are the Pillars that are in charge of creating and supervising the implementation of the action plans of youth and family services of Nunavik.
PRINCIPLE 6	Respecting the rhythm and realities of Nunavik, all the meanwhile supporting the steps towards transformation ad self-determination.

ABOUT THE NUNAVIMMI ILAGIIT PAPATAUVINGA (NIP):

That NIP instrument was soon created to operationalize the needs and objectives contained at the Sukait Report, which are revolving around the imperative for an integrated and adapted continuum of services for youth and families in Nunavik. Under the guidance and leadership of **Mina Beaulne** and her colleague **Vanessa Legault**, the NIP proposed a 2 phase approach based on discussions with a subcommittee on governance composed of members of the Sukait WG.

Phase 1 shall see tackled the most pressing challenges involving Youth Protection, all the meanwhile enabling the planning of the NIP structure, foundation and financing. It will involve developing and implementing training for all workers as well as organizational policies for all new services contemplated. These refer to family councils and wisdom

councils, supportive bodies that are to be embedded in the continuum of services in order to provide support to youth and their families so to avoid youth protection in their life as much as possible. **Teresa Etok** has been hired to coordinate the implantation of family councils in Nunavik, and pilot projects are unfolding. She will be supported by two agents for the Ungava region: **Anna Kristensen** and **Ellasie Annanack**.

Phase 2 will target implementing structures and services, improved as new ones, with a prevention and community mobilization angles. Working committees should at this stage be formed to develop guides and recommendations. Collaboration paths are also to be further explored, notably with the family house network. The idea is to build a continuum of services that will allow stronger first line services that are culturally safe, provided by Inuit workforce, and delivered in and outside of the health and social services network. The actualization of better working conditions for Inuit workers are hence supported by the NIP.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on a circular model of shared responsibility and support, with children and families at its core, the NIP is leading a transformation of the services to youth and families, as they have been formerly thought, provided and experienced. While thinking realistically of the challenges to putting this vision in action, a call for an agreement with the Government of Quebec under section 37.5 of the Youth Protection Act is further contemplated, as part of this vision for Inuit ownership over culturally and contextually appropriate services. The Sukait Consultation Report in closing frames how next steps shall be envisioned:

“Creating an Inuk system requires many strong Inuit leaders in all communities that feel competent in the field of youth and family services including youth protection. The leaders need to have the time, the support, and life context necessary to take on these tasks.

Without strengthening front line and without transforming the interventions and work environments, turnover of Inuit and non-Inuit workers will remain high, and families will still lack trust in services. The desired transformations require increased and well-trained human resources that are all working under a common vision and approach led by Inuit.

Sukait is committed to working through the challenges to find optimal solutions based on the current capacities within the objective of developing a strong foundation for children, families and communities of Nunavik.” ♦

Information Sheet

MAY 2021

REGARDING MAKIVIK'S INTERVENTION TO THE COURT OF APPEAL IN THE CHALLENGE REGARDING AN "ACT RESPECTING FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES" (FORMERLY KNOWN AS BILL C-92)

The present note summarizes the context in which Makivik Corporation (Makivik) sought intervention status in a Reference to the Court of Appeal proceedings. This case, brought by the Attorney General of Quebec, argues that the federal Parliament's 2019 *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, is unconstitutional because it is outside the federal government's powers.

This Act (called C-92 when it was a Bill) recognizes that "*Indigenous peoples have an inherent right to make laws regarding the child and family services,*" including youth protection. It affirms that the inherent right of self-government includes jurisdiction over child and family services by Indigenous groups or governments. The Act also sets out principles concerning youth protection for Indigenous children that apply

across Canada. The Act foresees these principles applying to Quebec and all provinces, even if a province does not agree with them.

Quebec is contesting this law for two reasons: **1)** It believes that provinces should always be in charge of child and family services, and that Indigenous peoples may only assert control over this matter if they have an agreement with (i.e. they are authorized by) the provincial government; **2)** It does not believe that the federal government should be able to unilaterally recognize the existence of section 35 rights – in other words, it believes that the province should always have to give its permission before Aboriginal rights can be recognized or asserted.

The main party responding to Quebec’s challenge to the legislation is the Attorney General of Canada, who is arguing in favour of the Act. However, because of the importance of the questions for Indigenous peoples in Quebec and across Canada, many groups representing Indigenous interests have intervened to argue in favour of the constitutionality of the Act. These groups are:

- The Assembly of First Nations
- The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador
- The First Nations Health and Social Services Commission of Quebec
- Makivik Corporation
- The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada
- Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada

Makivik remains a strong proponent of the Act, essentially because it recognizes Indigenous peoples’ inherent right to make laws and exercise jurisdiction in the area of child and family services. It has great interest in the possibilities this Act provides, in relation to the future Nunavik Assembly and Inuit Government. It was considered important from a Nunavik point of view that this tool, newly made available to Indigenous peoples in Canada, remains in place. This to give Nunavimmiut the opportunity, when the time comes, to assess all options before deciding on a governing course of action.

The case itself will not address whether the avenues made available under the provincial system, including art. 37.5 of the Youth Protection Act, are good or adequate. The focus will be whether the federal government had the jurisdiction to recognize the right of Indigenous groups to adopt their own laws on child and family services. Makivik’s intervention is about trying to keep the option provided by this Act open. Having been granted intervenor status on February 25, 2020, Makivik submitted early December evidence in which Makivik informs the court about the Nunavik Inuit own realities and challenges, in a debate which may otherwise be too focused on constitutional details or First Nations’ perspectives. Hearings will be held in September 2021.

FOR ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: please contact the Makivik Legal Department.



Kuujjuaq Parka Workshop

Winifred Nungak always tells her parka-making students that it's better to learn to make one yourself instead of waiting for someone make it for you.

"One day they will be mothers or wives and they will be able to make clothing for their family," she said.

Nungak is a talented seamstress, but she's also a successful businesswoman. Born in Kangirsuk, she moved to Montreal to study fashion design, and eventually launched her own label, Winifred Designs. She was invited to Kuujjuaq by Community Liaison Wellness Worker Attasie Saunders to hold a parka-making workshop this past April for youth between the ages of 16-25.

Saunders asked Nungak to come because she felt it was important for youth to learn how to make their own parkas.

"I only started learning late," Saunders said. "It was hard to find people to teach me, so I taught myself, and just watched how the material was sewed. But I wanted Winifred to come so our youth can know our tradition of sewing our traditional clothing." Eventually, when they have kids, she said, they can sew for their own families.

Nungak had a great time hosting the workshop and said the students were a joy to teach, even though COVID restrictions limited

the participants to 10. "My workshop was more quiet than before," she said, "because in the past I used to have 15-20 students."

The event was funded by the Wellness Program under the Ungava Tulattavik Health Center. The lining (*iluppiak*) and the commander (*silapaak*) were provided, while participants had to buy the bias, zipper, and anything else they wanted for their parka. Some brought their own sewing machines to use, and some were provided by the sewing centre in Kuujjuaq.

Nungak started teaching in March 2014, when Mary Arngak from Kangiqsujuaq invited her to instruct a parka-making workshop during a Youth Empowerment Conference. Since then, many other communities have been inviting her as well.

"I started sewing parkas at the age of 16 and I know the feeling of wanting to learn at that age, especially how to make a parka," she said.

Saunders said that the youth really enjoyed the workshop. "It was fun to be around them. They were determined to learn." There were older people in the community who were also interested in learning, Saunders said, so perhaps other organizations will be able to pitch in and bring Nungak back to teach again. •



Winifred Nungak, the seamstress behind Winifred Designs, gave a parka-making workshop this April in Kuujjuaq. "I've learned that we need to pass down our skills and knowledge of anything to our youth and hopefully spark their talents," she said.

Board Members SWORN IN

Five Makivik board members were sworn in at the recent 2021 AGM in Akulivik.

Vinnie Baron was elected March 18 as the Board of Director Member for the community of Kangiqsualujjuaq and Joseph Snowball was elected as the member for Kuujjuaq in a run-off election held March 23. The second Kuujjuaq vote was necessary as no candidate had obtained a majority (50% + 1) of the votes in the earlier community election. Snowball joined the AGM and was sworn in virtually from Kuujjuaq.

Three other directors were elected by acclamation, meaning they had no other candidates running against them. These were:

Muncy Novalinga in Puvirnituuq, Nowya Quissa in Akulivik, and Raymond Mickpegak in Kuujjuaaraapik.

Up until the 2021 AGM, when the director position of Nunavik Youth Representative was created, there were 21 members of the Board of Directors of Makivik, comprised of 16 Community Board Members and five Executive Directors. With the inclusion of the Nunavik Youth Representative there will now be 22 members of the Board of Directors of Makivik.

Community Board Members serve for a three-year term. The communities are split into groups of three, ensuring a board election each year. ♦



Raymond Mickpegak was sworn in at the AGM as Kuujjuaaraapik's board member by Nunavik Governors Solomonie Alayco and Minnie Etidloie, after being elected by acclamation.



Nowya Quissa, centre, attending the AGM in his home community of Akulivik, was sworn in as a board member after election by acclamation in March.



Board member Muncy Novalinga stands between Nunavik Governors Solomonie Alayco and Minnie Etidloie at his swearing in at Akulivik. He was elected in Puvirnituuq by acclamation.

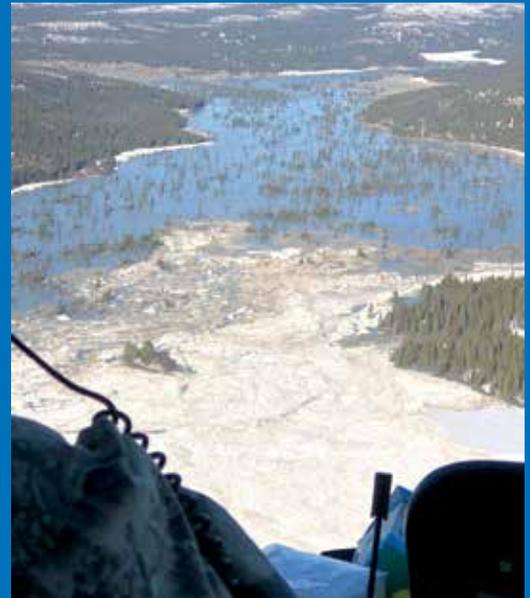


Vinnie Baron, re-elected as board member for Kangiqsualujjuaq, with Nunavik Governors Solomonie Alayco and Minnie Etidloie.

Massive Landslide Near Kuujjuaraapik

Event will impact both the environment
and the community

The landslide that occurred near Kuujjuaraapik this spring was the second largest in the last 150 years. Occurring on the morning of April 22, about eight kilometres upstream from the villages of Kuujjuaraapik and Whapmagoostui, the landslide covered a span of 1.8 kilometres in length and 500 metres in width along the riverbank. It triggered the dumping of about 40 million cubic metres of debris into the Great Whale River.



© DOREEN GEORGE



© KATVIK REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Doreen George used her phone to capture images of the landslide by helicopter shortly after it occurred. George, a certified fire fighter, also works as the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief in Whapmagoostui. She was sent, along with some of her colleagues, by her community's Public Safety Officer to get a better view of where the trees in the river were coming from. "We were all in shock when we saw the landslide that had happened. We were not expecting to see that," she said.

© DOREEN GEORGE



Kuujuaaraapik Mayor Anthony Ittoshat went to see the affected area by air shortly after it happened. "I was in complete awe. Just flabbergasted," he said. "I was just not used to seeing something like that, it was unusual."

Unusual, but not without precedent. Michel Allard, a geomorphologist at Laval University, was one of the members of a response team, made up of representatives from the community and government officials, organized by KRG's Civil Security Department, who met after the event. Allard has been conducting research for more than 40 years in northern Quebec, studying landforms and processes like erosion, sedimentation, and the effect of permafrost. He said while climate change and permafrost did not play a role in this event, there have been other landslides in the lower region of the Great Whale River in the past, some of which have been studied and radiocarbon dated from the 19th century, and one from more than 2,200 years ago.

He explained the land surface in the area is only about 8,000 years old. Back then a body of water called the Tyrrell Sea covered part of the land. When the glaciers melted over Hudson Bay, many thick layers of "sensitive" clay were deposited. The clay is made of microscopic plates that are assembled together, with empty spaces between them.

"The clay being sensitive, means that it is solid, but if you look at it with a microscope you can see that the structure is like a house of cards," he said, and they are easy to knock apart if the clay becomes saturated with water. It turns into fluid mud.

While the presence of clay in the soil was the main factor causing the landslide, it was triggered by something else, he said, suggesting the erosion of the bluff by the river, which made the clay face of the bluff steeper until it fell in on itself. If a cliff face falls off, the water would saturate the soil underneath, liquifying the clay, causing it to flow out.

Whatever the cause of the landslide, its effects are visible in the river. Not only mud was deposited, but millions of cubic metres of debris, including sand, boulders, organic matter in the soil, and trees, all of which ended up in the Great Whale River. A mud plume now extends into Hudson Bay.

Mayor Ittoshat recently returned from two weeks of goose hunting and went to the river to assess the situation. "The water did look murky, so I put my hand in it and it disappeared completely in less than an inch of water," he said. But more importantly, at this time of the year the community would have nets out in the river catching fish and selling them to the hunter support program.

"But we put a stop to that because I understood there could be a release of some gases that may be harmful to the environment," he said. As a result, the local Hunters Trappers and Fisherman's Association has been asked to get samples of the fish normally caught this time of year to send to Makivik's Research Centre, to see if they should continue to be harvested from the murky water.

Allard said the provincial government's Ministry of Transportation believes the water will stay murky for this year at least, and maybe longer. This will cause a change in both water temperature and the sedimentation at the bottom of the river. Also, the thousands of trees that were uprooted when the landslide occurred will stay on the riverbed, or piled on the shore, decaying.

"The water quality will be affected for sure," he said.

While the various government departments continue to monitor the area, taking specialized topographical imagery and measurements to assess the possibility of other such landslides occurring, the risk does not seem high. "We don't see another high bluff right on the river shore like the one that just ruptured," Allard said, adding that the two communities are situated on a thick sand delta, about 30 metres above the river, so they are not at risk of being affected by a landslide themselves.

But there are safety concerns for boaters. Mayor Ittoshat has gone on the radio to remind people to be extra careful going along the river, as there is visible debris, even large pieces of wood sticking out of the water, which are not moving.

"What we were used to in the past has completely changed forever, so it's a new learning curve for all of the boaters here," he warned. "We will ask them to proceed with extreme caution for the next few months at least."

MTQ and public safety officials have also warned locals not to go within 100 metres of the site of the slide, as the edges may still be unstable. ●



NEW SPACE FOR YOUTH COUNCIL

All photos ©Tumiit Media

On May 4, 2021, Qarjuit Youth Council held a Grand Opening Ceremony in Kuujjuaq for its brand new office, which will serve as our main head office across the region for the next few years. It was a memorable ceremony where funders, partners, building owners and the QYC team, along with youth from the community gathered and celebrated the success of the youth organization.

There were a few speakers who participated, including Vice-President Sevim Ilgun, who welcomed the people who came, and President Aleashia Echalook who spoke about the history of Qarjuit. There was a presentation on the funders and partners from General Manager Caroline Martel, as well as a lovely presentation by Project Manager Daniel Gadbois. We were also honoured to have Martha Greg, a respected elder, who did the lighting of the Qulliq. Snacks

and drinks were provided at the event. This grand opening ceremony happened respecting the guidelines and measures that were given by public health and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services to prevent COVID-19 from spreading across our region. It is such a milestone in our young history to have a safe place for a long term where we can advocate and give a voice to the youth of Nunavik and Chisasibi.

Many thanks for all the support QYC receives from Nunavik and beyond on behalf of all the youth of the region. ●





SALLUIT TEENS BRING BOOKS TO COMMUNITY

Last August, in response to COVID-related school closures, a group of teens came together in Salluit to see how they could provide their community with access to books. In just a few weeks, their determination and creativity resulted in a wonderful initiative: The Salluit Mobile Library Project.

The goal was simply to offer books and literacy programming such as storytelling sessions, reading activities for preschoolers, and other fun activities that allowed participants to play with letters and words.

The three team members—local high school students Martha Keatainak, Victoria Padlayat, and George Qavavau—handled every aspect of the setup and deployment of the project: fundraising, program planning, and delivery. It only took the group a few weeks

to get organized and enable the new Mobile Library service. ESUMA, Frontier College, Qarjuit, and KRG partnered together to bring support to the initiative.

The team believes that making books available to everyone is a way to help the community and benefit younger generations. They work a maximum of eight hours a week to maintain focus on their studies. Some say that it helped them in learning new words and expanding their vocabularies. The team also feels it was easier



|| We are always amazed by how much the kids participate in our reading circles and activities. ||

than anticipated to lead fun small literacy activities, such as reading circles at the local daycare.

“We are always amazed by how much the kids participate in our reading circles and activities,” said the team. “Even late in the afternoon, the kids are always motivated to play with words, practice the alphabet and counting, and make up stories.”

The group even started the Ikusik Sign Language Club, a weekly club where participants learn and practice American Sign Language (ASL), in support of their 11-year-old peer, Annie. Together with Annie’s education assistant, Amama, they are working to become fluent in ASL and make literacy opportunities more accessible for everybody.

In its mission to encourage literary, cultural, and artistic programming, the Salluit Mobile Library Project has also received generous book donations, which they will give to the local Youth House. They have already begun setting up a permanent reading room, with the support of the Inuit Youth Committee. This space is dedicated to offering an alternative, accessible, and safe environment for youth to relax, enjoy books, and share stories.

In the future, the team wishes to embark on other initiatives, including a journalism program and collaborations with the local Greenhouse Project. Some of these team members are motivated to lead this year’s summer literacy activities and to continue working with local organizations in offering expanded educational resources for their community. People from other communities in Nunavik who are interested in the Mobile Library Project should contact Frontier College or ESUMA to find out how they can get started.

Frontier College: lsitkowiecki@collegefrontiere.ca or
1 (866) 528-1001 ext. 3
ESUMA: info@esuma

Good News for Youth at AGM

Makivik's Annual General Meeting, held this year from April 26-30 in Akulivik, was an important one for Nunavik's Youth.

A resolution was passed that gives them a voting seat on the Makivik Board of Directors. Prior to this, the Qarjuit Youth Council President sat on the board as an observer. Qarjuit President Aleashia Echalook will remain on the board with voting powers and will maintain her position until the next Makivik AGM, when it will be determined if a new Youth Representative is to be named.

"It is so exciting and so great to have a voting seat at Makivik. Our voice is not only heard but considered in the decision-making process at the BOD level and I am so glad that Makivik remains supportive to QYC and very hopeful that this is just the beginning and that other organizations may start offering voting seats to the youth as well," Echalook said.

Another notable resolution passed was the reinstatement of the exception that allows Chisasibi Inuit who are not fluent Inuktitut speakers to be nominated for the Makivik Director position of Chisasibi. This exception is effective for the period between 2021 and 2027.

Despite the AGM being an in-person meeting, capacity inside the Akulivik gym was limited to 50 participants. To minimize the risk of bringing COVID-19 into the region, the decision was also made to have Makivik's southern staff join via teleconference.

For further information on resolutions that were passed and more detailed departmental reports, please visit Makivik's website at: <https://www.makivik.org/2021-makivik-agm/>. ♦

Qarjuit President Aleashia Echalook, third from left, stands with the Makivik Executive at this year's AGM in Akulivik.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Mosquito research helps to detect and mitigate impacts of climate change on vector-borne diseases

By Carol-Anne Villeneuve, Kayla Buhler, Emily Jenkins and Patrick Leighton

Vector-borne diseases (diseases transmitted to humans or other animals by blood-feeding insects) are of increasing significance for both human and animal health in northern Canada. The Arctic is warming at two to three times the rate of other regions around the world, and this increase in temperature provides the perfect scenario for insects to thrive and transmit diseases that they carry. Along with increasing annual temperatures, many regions of the Arctic have experienced more precipitation. This potent combination of rising temperatures and stagnant water provides the optimal habitat for mosquitoes and other biting insects. Although the Arctic experiences surges in mosquito activity every summer, many of which are annoying but harmless, more work is needed to identify the disease-causing organisms that they carry. Under the Canadian Arctic One Health Network (CAOHN), a team of scientists from the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Montreal, along with the Nunavik Research Centre (Makivik Corporation) and

communities across northern Canada, are collecting and testing mosquitoes and surveying Arctic wildlife for exposure to these diseases. This work is crucial in a warming Arctic, as the information creates a baseline that can be used in the future to measure changes in the distribution of both mosquitoes and their diseases as the climate continues to warm.

One particular group, called the California serogroup viruses, are of interest due to evidence of high levels of human exposure in Alaska and sporadic cases in people in northern Canada. People can become infected when they are bitten by a mosquito and usually experience only mild flu-like symptoms for a few days. However, for some unlucky individuals, the infection progresses to the brain causing more serious health issues. These viruses are transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes, the most common type of mosquito in the north. Along with an abundance of suitable mosquito species in tundra ecosystems, there may also be several species of native wildlife that



Caribou migrating through mainland Nunavut.

Identifying mosquitoes by using morphological traits.



©CAROL-ANNE VILLENEUVE

can serve as reservoirs for these viruses. Reservoir animals amplify the viruses to high levels in their bloodstream, providing infected blood meals for lots of mosquitoes. These mosquitoes can then transmit the viruses to people and animals that they bite. Specifically, hares, rodents and caribou may be important players in transmission of these viruses in the Canadian Arctic.

For the past three years, southern and northern scientists at the Nunavik Research Centre in Kuujuaq have sampled mosquitoes using a sweep net during daily surveys carried out in the summer. Captured mosquitoes are identified using a morphological key and tested for California serogroup viruses, among other diseases. In 2019, scientists were able to confirm (for the first time ever) that California serogroup viruses were indeed present in Kuujuaq mosquitoes. Hunter-harvested caribou from Nunavik have also tested positive for exposure to these viruses. It's important to note that people do not get these viruses directly from harvesting or handling wildlife, only from the bite of an infected mosquito. Furthermore, infection by California serogroup viruses causes, in most cases, only mild flu-like symptoms.

There are still a lot of questions that remain unanswered. For example, how do these viruses survive in Arctic and Subarctic environments? Which mosquito species are able to transmit California Serogroup viruses, and are these species only present in Nunavik or in more northern latitudes as well? There's still a lot of work that needs to be done to better understand the ecology of these viruses in northern Canada and the impacts that they may have on wildlife and public health. It has often been said that knowledge is power, and by better understanding the ecology of these viruses in Arctic environments, we will better equip northern residents to detect and mitigate the impacts of climate change on vector-borne diseases. ●



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Arctic mosquitoes taking a blood meal.

Collecting samples from snap-trapped rodents to look for California serogroup viruses.



TAQRALK

©KAYLA BUHLER

NUNAVIK PLAYERS



ANDREA BRAZEAU



MICHAEL PETAGUMSKUM

Full name: Andrea Brazeau
Birthday: March 5, 1997
Place of birth: Kangiqsualujuaq
Home community: Kangiqsualujuaq
Role model: Clara Hughes
Favourite food: Tuttuviniq (caribou meat)
Occupation: Elementary School Teacher
Proudest moment: Hunting my first seal and graduating university.
Future goal: One of my future goals includes working in a leadership role for one of the major Nunavik organizations.
Best advice you can offer youth: Get involved and use your voice. It can be difficult or intimidating to get involved in local or regional organizations. Vocalize what is on your mind. It is absolutely necessary to use your voice if you want to see change within our region. Young people can make a difference!

Full name: Michael Petagumskum
Birthday: December 29, 1994
Place of birth: Kuujuaq, Quebec
Home community: Kuujuaq, Quebec
Role model: My grandfather, Sandy Gordon
Favourite food: General Tso's chicken
Occupation: Twin Otter Pilot
Proudest moment: My first solo flight over my home community
Future goal: Starting my own business
Best advice you can offer youth: Stay in school, have fun, and travel as much as you can!

MYSTERY PHOTO CONTEST

Congratulations to Minnie Kasudluak who won the Mystery Photo Contest in issue 125 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 in July, 2021.

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



WHAT IS THIS ?

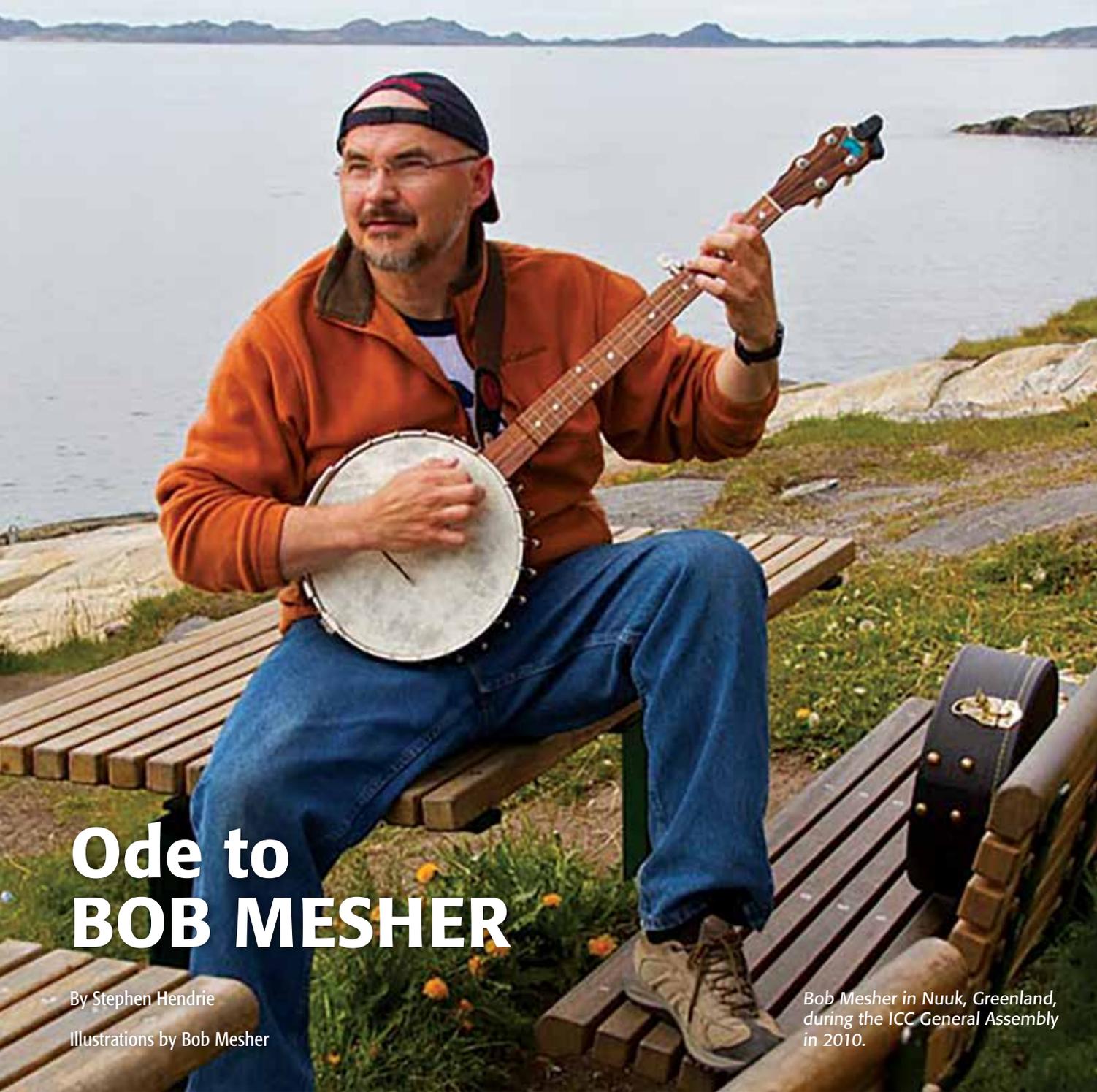


PHOTO BY HANS BLOHM, COURTESY ICC CANADA

Ode to BOB MESHER

By Stephen Hendrie
Illustrations by Bob Mesher

Bob Mesher in Nuuk, Greenland, during the ICC General Assembly in 2010.

At 4:10 pm on Tuesday, May 11, I received a text from Taqralik Partridge letting me know Bob Mesher had died the previous day. She apologized for texting the news so bluntly. It was a total shock. He was a very special person, sensitive, with incredible talent. She texted, "*aalummi*," a term of endearment said to loved ones, as a way to console, to express kind sadness.

Later that evening Lisa Watt sent messages on LinkedIn, expressing grief at Bob's passing, noting she was glad she went to visit him a few summers ago in Goose Bay. Lorraine Brooke sent an email commiserating about the tragedy. And that's how it is in the North. News spreads quickly. Bob worked at this magazine for over 20 years.

He was first hired at Makivik in 1993 as an Associate Editor of *Makivik News*. In 1995 Bob was promoted to the position of Editor,

and also produced Makivik's Annual Report and calendars until he left Makivik in 2017.

Bob published over 80 editions of the magazine during that time. The job was very much a labour of love. He would talk about what it was like to write articles for the magazine. "I've got the story in my head, I just have to transfer it to the computer," he would joke.

As editor, he would write many of the articles, commission texts from freelancers, take most of the photos, and source others, track down countless facts, names, places, and dates. In the early years he would do the layout on Apple desktop computers, sending English texts to translators via dial-up modem for translation. He put in endless hours beyond the call of duty.

Bob was from a large family, one of 11 brothers and three sisters. The listing on the Fillatre's Funeral Home's website in Goose

Bay noted that he will be sadly missed by family and friends, which include his son; Robert (Rocky), mother; Dorothy Sarah, his siblings, as well as a very large circle of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. He was predeceased by his father Victor Grenfell Mesher, his brother Stewart, and daughter Hollie.

His younger brother, Harvey Mesher, works as General Manager at Makivik's Kuujuaq office and spoke to me on the morning of May 19. "He wrote a book. I was so impressed by that." The book is a photo essay on Labrador published in 2014 by the University of Quebec Press.

"He was quite a guy. He really liked working at Makivik, the travels involved, seeing different places, and especially working with George Berthe," said Harvey. "Bob had people around him a lot, but at the same time he was a bit of a loner. He kept to himself. He was a very humble guy, didn't toot his own horn. Most of us are just finding out now that he published that book of photographs about Labrador."

Harvey also conceded that Bob had an eccentric side to him. "There were silhouettes being painted around Kuujuaq of Elisapie, and Beatrice, and Inuit faces, anywhere, on a piece of wood on the beach, or on an electrical box on the side of the road. There has to be about 10-20 of these things around town. And I'm sure it was Bob. It was one of those things that he did at six in the morning, or four in the morning, and nobody knew about it!" Harvey asked Bob about it, and said he never confirmed nor denied he had made the art. "I am sure it was him as I know he studied art in some of his educational journey and was very secretive in his own way."

Harvey says the family grew up in Goose Bay, Labrador. Bob and Harvey moved to Kuujuaq in the '70s. Bob was about 20 and became a cook at the airport restaurant, which is now the Air Inuit staff house.

One thing about Bob, was that he set many personal goals for himself. This included education. Lisa Mesher, Bob's niece, is Director of the Department of Post Secondary Services at Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (KI). She confirmed Bob's degrees. He completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1992, a Master's Degree in Education Technology in 2003, and a Graduate Diploma in Journalism in 2017, all from Concordia University. In 1993 he obtained a Diploma in Education from McGill University.

Jason Annahatak is a Business Development Associate at Makivik. I spoke to him about his relationship with Bob, both professionally, and personally. "I helped him get enrolled at university when I was at the Kativik School Board managing university sponsorships," he said.

Jason was completing a Master's Degree in Psychological Counselling at Columbia University in New York. Bob travelled down



to write a story for *Makivik Magazine*, published in 2009 (Issue 88). Jason remembers it well. "Before he travelled to New York, he went to my home town of Kangirsuk and met with a few high school students. He asked them what questions they would ask me. He included the answers in the story, which was a combination photo essay and article."

The Director of Communications for Makivik, Carson Tagoona, hired Bob as a photographer for the Ivakkak dogsled race in 2018. He spoke about Bob's photography. "It was very refined. We had a lot of candid photos of Inuit experiencing the event as it happened. He also called me from the trail to give me updates for our website."

Bob's intellectual legacy and contribution to documenting Nunavik history is established. Makivik's magazine and annual reports are part of Quebec's online archives, known as BANQ (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec). They are at www.banq.qc.ca where Bob's stories, photographs, and illustrations can be found, spanning close to three decades of publishing.

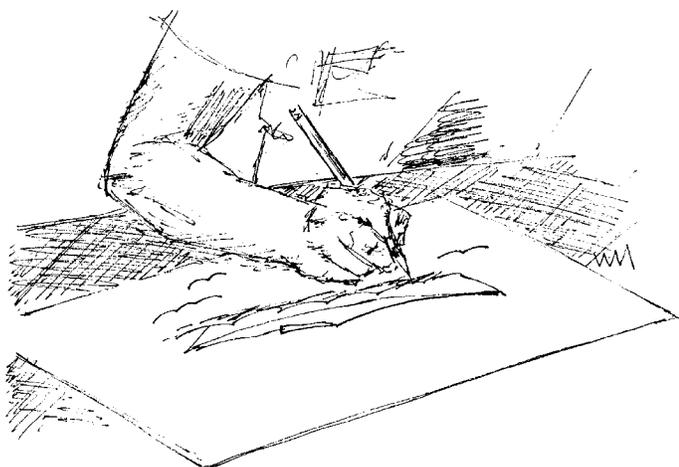
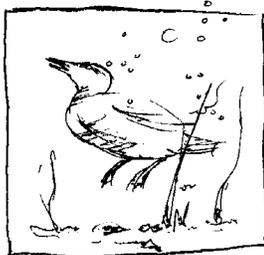
Many of his articles were also included in a series of books published by the International Polar Institute Press, called *Voices and Images of Nunavimmiut*. The 10-volume series was edited by Minnie Grey and Marianne A. Stenbaek. Bob is thanked, along with George Berthe and Pita Aatami, for enthusiastic support of the project.

In 1998, Bob also co-wrote the film script for *Capturing Spirit – The Inuit Journey*, with Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who was then Corporate Secretary at Makivik, Taqralik Partridge, and Gail Richardson. The 70-minute Makivik production was shot in Kuujuaq, with local actors. Bob was also the creative director.

Shelia Watt-Cloutier came to know Bob when he was a post-secondary student in Montreal and she was Coordinator of Student Services. She recalled that he was an exceptional mature student and tackled everything he focused on with commitment and a commendable work ethic. She also remembered that he travelled to Bowdoin College in Maine, while she was there, to do a story on her work for *Makivik News*, to be shared with all Nunavimmiut.

"That's how Bob was, always finding ways to elevate what Nunavimmiut were doing and ensuring the stories were shared to the region. He will be missed by many with his quiet, calm and reflective demeanor. He contributed much to Nunavik and its people," she said.

Bob was cremated and brought back to Kuujuaq for burial on June 2. •



The landslide that occurred near Kuujjuaraapik on April 22 was the second largest in the last 150 years. It occurred about eight kilometres upstream from the villages of Kuujjuaraapik and Whapmagoostui. Covering a span of 1.8 kilometres in length and 500 metres in width along the riverbank, it triggered the dumping of about 40 million cubic metres of debris into the Great Whale River.

