



Aboriginal Action Circle

Summer Edition 2016

Annual General Meeting 2016

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Our Annual General Meeting in January was very well attended. At the meeting, during a round table discussion, many ideas and suggestions were put forward regarding where our committee should focus its efforts. Some of these suggestions included;

Increasing presence in our community, Be more *'Action' oriented*, Greater focus on *Recruitment* and *Networking* with other Aboriginal groups in the community.

Part of this focus discussed at our meeting was also to share information with members and friends of our committee. Toward that end this newsletter

will be a medium to highlight the work of our committee and inform our members, as well as others who may be interested, in upcoming events.

The role of the Aboriginal Action Circle is to represent the needs of Aboriginal PSAC members in the National Capital Region within our union and within our workplace, and to work towards the advancement of our presence at all levels in our union, workplace and community.

We network with organizations that have similar goals and visions

Our goal is to help build and participate in a strong network of Indigenous union members within the PSAC, the Canadian labour movement, community groups and other equity seeking organizations.



Building Solidarity With Indigenous Peoples

Immediately prior to the summer solstice festival I had the opportunity to help develop and co-facilitate a 'Building Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples' course for our union in this region. The course was held over three days with the final day being a half day morning session then a trip to the festival immediately after. I was pleased and impressed with the participation of non-Aboriginal people in this facil-

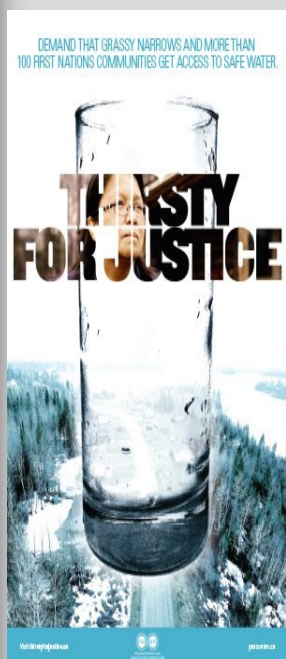
itated discussion around various issues (past and present) that continue to affect our communities.

Many participants were very interested in the subject matter and posed very good and thought-provoking questions. I would say that this was a very open minded and progressive group of individuals, who admittedly stated did not realize the extent of some of the concerns facing Indigenous people today, nor the

history of some these issues.

The most important thing I took away from this course, is that as Indigenous persons we must take part/initiate dialogue with groups and individuals (like minded and otherwise) in order to encourage understanding and awareness of some of the obstacles facing our communities today.

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Thirsty For Justice Video launch

It's a struggle every day for the people of Grassy Narrows because they do not have access to clean drinking water.

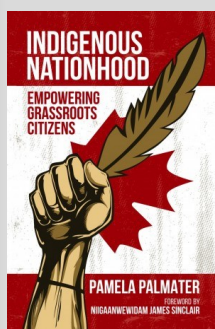
The river water has been contaminated by mercury for over 40 years and the tap water is not safe to drink. Grassy Narrows is only one of more than 100 First Nations communities that do not have access to safe water for drinking, cooking and bathing.

The Public of Service Alliance of Canada has partnered with the community of Grassy Narrows to launch this campaign demanding safe drinking water in First Nations communities.

The #ThirstyforJustice campaign videos were developed in collaboration with award-winning documentary filmmaker François Péloquin.



<http://thirstyforjustice.ca/>



AAC Co-Sponsors Pamela Palmater book launch

On June 20th the Aboriginal Action Circle co-sponsored an event for well-known Indigenous author, lawyer, activist and academic, Pamela Palmater, as she was in Ottawa for a launch of her new book: *Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens*.

In this book, Palmater offers critical legal and political commentary and analysis on legislation, Aboriginal rights, Canadian politics, First Nations politics and social issues such as murdered and missing In-

igenous women, poverty, economics, identity and culture. Palmater's writing tackles myths and stereotypes about Indigenous peoples head-on, discusses Indigenous nationhood and nation building, examines an accessible, critical analysis of laws and government policies being imposed on Indigenous peoples

Pamela Palmater is Mi'kmaq from the Eel River Bar First Nation in northern New Brunswick.

She has been a practicing lawyer for sixteen years, working on treaties, land claims, self-government, economic development, policy development and intergovernmental relations, including at the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission as an investigator of human rights complaints. She is an associate professor and chair in Indigenous governance at Ryerson University.



AAC member John Jewitt with Pam Palmater.

On Surviving Storms: Albert Dumont

Storms, they come and go!
Who among us lives a life
without occasionally know-
ing what it is like to feel
alone and unsupported
while society's dysfunctions
rage around us.

The storms which confront
us, sometimes striking with-
out warning, test our
strengths and measure the
density of our willpower.
Some storms are fury-filled
and the weak among us find
them too much to bear.

They collapse under the

stress of a storm they are
not emotionally and spiritu-
ally equipped to deal with. It
is a sad reality. Life's path-
way is such for human be-
ings. The storm which
struck the trail leading to
my sanctuary, to my place
of solitude and healing,
claimed the poplar trees in
its path. The maples and
oaks who are neighbours to
the poplars which fell are
standing yet.

They are strong and it is the
depth of their strength
which assured their surviv-

al. We must do all we can to
assure that our young peo-
ple will grow to have the
strength of the oaks and
maples mixing into the
blood of their hearts, for if
we do not, they will collapse
like the poplars and in doing
so, reveal to Creator that
the human beings have
rejected the wisdom and
power of the forest.



Albert Dumont,
"South Wind", is a
Poet, Storyteller,
Speaker, and an Al-
gonquin Traditional
Teacher

ZIBI Project Chaudière Falls

Delegates to the Annual General Meeting of the Public Service Alliance of Canada's National Capital Region (PSAC NCR) Council voted on 7 May 2016 to oppose Windmill Development's so-called 'Zibi' condo, office and retail development project on the Chaudières Islands in Ottawa.

"Asinabka, the sacred heartland that includes the falls and islands, is a place where human beings go to better understand their duties and responsibilities to all other life around them," said Albert Dumont, PSAC NCR's Aboriginal Elder. "Where water spills, life begins! The fish, birds, animals and plantations are already aware of their sacred instructions. Only we, the human beings, have lost our way. This is why we must defend Asinabka, our most sacred site."

Nine of ten Algonquin First Nations remain opposed to Windmill's project, and voted in favour of the aforementioned AFN resolution

"It would be a welcome change if the Government of Canada were to recognize the cultural importance of our heritage and history by giving it the space and prominence it deserves," added Les Maiczan, co-chair of PSAC NCR's Aboriginal Action Circle. "This is about Canadian history, not only Aboriginal history, and the Falls and Islands should be used to commemorate that relationship, rather than turned over to a corporation for profit."

The resolution, which was brought forward by PSAC NCR's Aboriginal Action Circle, passed with overwhelming support. It endorses the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador resolution 27/2015 and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) resolution 49/2015, both of which oppose Windmill's project in the absence of consent from Algonquin First Nations. Indeed, nine of ten Algonquin First Nations remain opposed to Windmill's project, and voted in favour of the aforementioned AFN resolution.

The PSAC NCR Council is the highest collective decision-making body of the PSAC in the National Capital Region, and is the political forum for representatives from all 118 of PSAC's locals in the region.

Become A Member



Next Issue: - National Human Rights Conference

[http://psacunion.ca/
topics/aboriginal-issues](http://psacunion.ca/topics/aboriginal-issues)

Are you a self-identified Aboriginal Employee in the Federal Public Service and a member of the Public Service Alliance of Canada?

Consider becoming a member or a friend of the Aboriginal Action Circle of the Public Service Alliance of Canada in the National Capital Region

We meet monthly (except July and August) at the Ottawa Regional Office located at 11 Holland Avenue, Seventh floor on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

A light meal is served at 5:00 p.m. followed by a smudging ceremony at 5:30 p.m. and then some guiding words from our resident **Elder** before the meeting

To become a member or for more information contact;

Lester Maiczan, AAC Chair
bear.maiczan@gmail.com

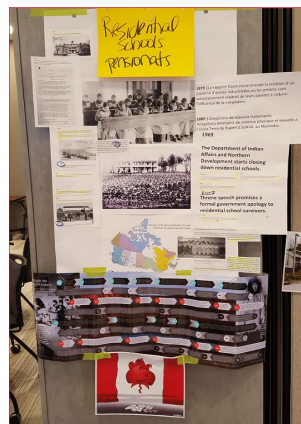
or
Stephanie Penwarden, Regional Representative for AAC
613-560-2567
PenwarS@psac-afpc.com

Building Solidarity With Indigenous People cont'd: Feedback

This course is necessary learning which traditional academic sources have failed to provide.

Following this course, I want to establish real relationships with Indigenous brothers and sisters.

I have a better understanding of our past and the series of injustices which were committed.



Course portion on the legacy of Residential Schools



AAC members and course participants attend Spirit Walk June 17.

