

Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade

Good Bye 2008

January



Indigenous human rights advocates gather before the Frank Paul Inquiry. Frank Paul is a Mi'kmaq man who was removed from Vancouver lock-up by police and left in a nearby alley where he died of hypothermia. Indigenous advocates are calling on the inquiry to seek social justice for Indigenous peoples living in skid row in Vancouver. The Frank Paul Inquiry report is expected to be issued early in 2009.

February



On my return from southern California I stopped by to visit Debra Harry and Le'a Malia Kanehe from the Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism at Debra's reservation at Pyramid Lake, Nevada. I spoke at a class they organized to pass on their knowledge about decolonization to the next generation. I think this a really beautiful thing that should be done throughout our different nations. You do not learn this stuff in the public school system.

A workshop on the "Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" and the "North American Indigenous Caucus" meeting were hosted in Vancouver. Tonya Gonella Frichner the new North American member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues took over from Wilton Littlechild in 2008. Tonya met with INET members and is one of my fellow board members at the Seventh Generation Fund.



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March



UBC Law – Aboriginal Justice Conference at the Quaaout Lodge. Little Shuswap, BC, Canada



Winona LaDuke, Special Lecturer with Janice Billy in Kelowna, BC, two very fine environmentalists.



APTN Contact: Walter Rudniki and I appeared on Cheryl McKenzie's political talk show Contact on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) on the 1969 White Paper Policy. We basically agreed that the federal government, especially the Department of Indian Affairs is still implementing the 1969 White Paper Policy to terminate Indigenous Peoples through the existing self government policy and other assimilationist policies.

April



United Nations HQ NYC:

Laura Calmwind of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (KI) and me at the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations New York City Headquarters. Laura represented and made statements on behalf of her Chief and Council who were in jail serving a 6 month sentence while the meeting was ongoing for stopping mining exploration in their territory.

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Evo Morales the President of Bolivia opened the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. He also spoke at a special press conference. His basic message was that Bolivia adopted the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples into Bolivia's Constitution and was implementing it on the ground. This is a very bold step to take and he is setting a new track record for treatment of indigenous peoples by state governments.



Laura Calmwind and I are holding the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (KI) flag at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. It is important to think outside the box when you cannot get justice inside Canada.

James Anaya the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People addresses the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Rodolfo Stavenhagen former UN Special Rapporteur sits to his left. Dr. Stavenhagen made both an unofficial and official visit to Canada. James Anaya is an indigenous law professor at the University of Arizona.



May



Chuck Strahl Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs holds a damage control Press Conference at the United Nations in New York City. Canadian Indigenous Peoples were not allowed to attend and need to watch the Press Conference over the UN closed circuit TV.

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Indigenous Peoples protested during the last day of the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues because they are dissatisfied with the how Permanent Forum report did not reflect their concerns on carbon trading. The Permanent Forum had to hear the unscheduled Indigenous complaint.



The traditional chiefs of the Indigenous Peoples of the Lake Babine held a preliminary meeting to talk about the BC Treaty Process in Burns Lake. They invited Chief Mountain (James Robinson) from Kincolith, Nisga'a, Hereditary Chief Qwatsinas (Ed Moody), Nuxalk and me. The supporters of the BC Treaty Process invited Steven Point, the former BC Head Treaty Commissioner and now the British Columbia government Lieutenant Governor to promote BC Treaty Process. Steven Point is the person in the right picture sitting with the buckskin jacket, the person in the blue T shirt is Hereditary Chief Ron West speaking against the Treaty Process. The picture on the left displays the Lake Babine Hereditary Chiefs and James Robinson, Ed Moody and me on the right side of the picture.

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Convention on Biological Diversity, Bonn, Germany: Indigenous Peoples struggle to have their traditional knowledge and values recognized and respected at the international level.

June

	<p>After the CBD COP in Bonn, I traveled to Vienna, Austria, and addressed AKIN, the Austrian Indigenous support group meeting that works on North American indigenous issues. My main focus at this meeting is to promote the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples and oppose indigenous Human Rights violations in Canada. Europeans need to know how dirty Canada is domestically with Indigenous Peoples.</p>
<p>Naomi Klein the author of the <i>The Shock Doctrine</i> joined us in a workshop on the criminalization of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In the picture is of Naomi and her father. We had other very notable speakers like Sam McKay from KI, Oscar Dennis from the Tahltan and my daughter Kanahus from the Secewepemc Peoples. These leaders went to jail or represented peoples who have went to jail to defend Indigenous land and human rights.</p>	

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Former Chief Mike Christian, Chief Wayne Christian and me in Sicamous, British Columbia. Wayne Christian called the meeting in Sicamous because Splatshin has an Indian reserve in the area.

July



Giving a talk at the Aboriginal Free School in Vancouver, BC.

I drove down to Lee, Nevada to speak and attend the Indigenous Environmental Network. It was a very productive meeting with indigenous peoples from around North America. It was a camping meeting where all the participants had to rough it like the grassroots. I figure we need to have similar meetings in Canada so local activists can come to these meetings. Lots of thanks to the Western Shoshone Defense Project who hosted the meetings.



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August



Deloris Charters from the Friends of the Coquihalla organized Coquihalla Camp to raise awareness about the fact that the province is planning to build an large tourist resort along the Coquihalla Highway in the Aboriginal Title and Rights of the Nlaka'pamux Peoples. Deloris was very brave in taking this action.



Nicole Schabus and I walked half of the West Coast Trail. This was a real mile stone for the year. The trip was very physically hazardous and weather wise very uncomfortable. We are looking forward to the challenge of hiking the other half this year, a good reason to have a new year's resolution to get in better shape.

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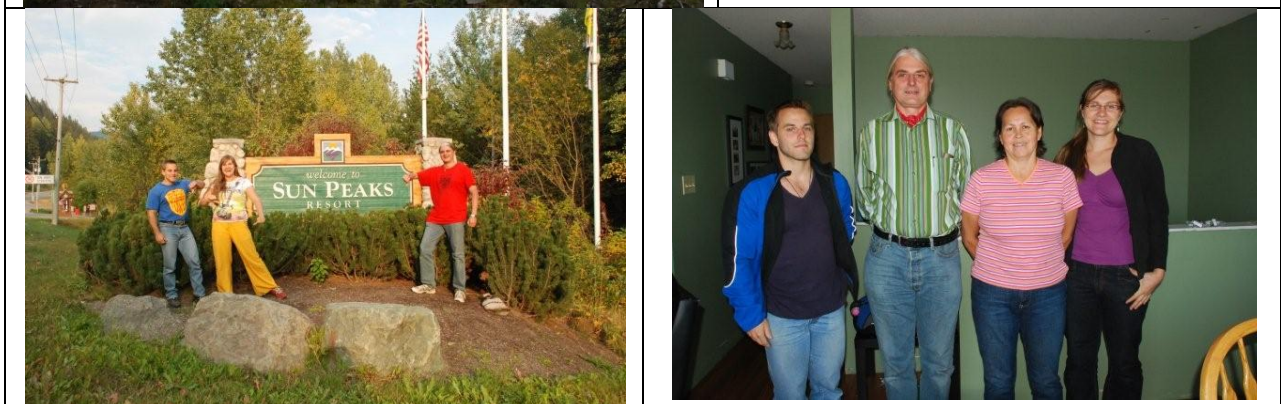
September



This year I was invited to sit on the Board of Directors of the 7th Generation Fund Board and I accepted their offer. In the picture from left to right is Dr. Luis Macas, Chris Peters, Rosalie Little Thunder, Tupac Enrique Acosta, Ray Williams and me. We met in Santa Barbara and then took boat ride across the Santa Barbara Channel to witness the Chumash Peoples row across the 25 mile channel.



This is the camp that Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) set up to stop Platinex from exploring to develop mines in their area. Sam McKay is educating Russell Diabo about areas of impact. The Ontario Court of Appeal released the KI Chief and Council after serving a little more than 2 months. The Court of Appeal admonished the Ontario government for resorting seeking prison terms instead of talking to the KI Chief and Council.



Gawan Maringer, Michi Mayer and Peter Schwarzbauer from AKIN make a thumbs down on Sun Peaks Resort.

AKIN meets with Bertha Williams at the Tsawwassen Indian Reserve. Bertha opposed the Tsawwassen Final Agreement. AKIN also visited Vancouver Island.

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November

I had the opportunity to address issues in Montreal at the “Canada, A Pariah State? Indigenous Rights in Domestic and International Law, McGill University Faculty of Law, Moot Court” and “Defenders of the Land: The Barriere Lake struggle continues”. These events were sponsored by the McGill Center for Human Rights and legal Pluralism and the Barriere Lake Solidarity Collective.



National Defenders of the Land Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. It was good to get together with indigenous human rights advocates from across Canada. This was the most powerful group that I ever met with in Canada. They all had real track records of standing up and fighting for their land.

Indigenous and other groups opposed to the 2010 Winter Olympics held a Press Conference because the international media was in town. It was good to come together on this very important human rights matter and oppose the 2010 Winter Olympics. Things will pick up this year in 2009. Looking forward to your support!



Mike Mercredi from Fort Chipewyan, Alberta speaks about the Tar Sands in Kamloops, British Columbia. The tour was sponsored by the Council of Canadians and he is pictured here with local Indigenous supporters. Mike said he had to quit driving those big trucks at the Tar Sands once he found out that the pollution he was letting loose was giving his people cancer. Mike is 3rd from the left in the black shirt.

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December

Cheam Band: Cheam Chief and Council invited Nicole Schabus and me to talk about the British Columbia Treaty Process, especially in view of the fact that Yale Indian Band has initialled the Final Agreement with the provincial government. It is good to share our international level perspective and fit it into what is happening at the community level.



Julie Bill (formerly Fishel) of the Western Shoshone Defence Project giving her thumbs Down Sun Peaks Resort.



Julie Bill gives a special presentation to the Splatshin Council.



Hubie our Lone Warrior from Sutikalh of the St'at'imc giving Julie a support T-shirt. Julie was really pleased to visit Hubie. Hubie is the rock of the defenders of the land.



June McCue, Nicole Schabus & Julie Bill after meeting on making reports to the Organization of American States and the United Nations at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Hello 2009