

TAQRALIK

SERVING NUNAVIK INUIT SINCE 1974



TUPIQ Arctic Circus Troupe
Internet and the Pandemic
Nunavik Leaders Remembered



LP^{ab}
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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Cover: Wellness workers in Kuujuaq preparing food for delivery while following public health guidelines of wearing masks and physical distancing. Courtesy of Ungava Wellness Program.



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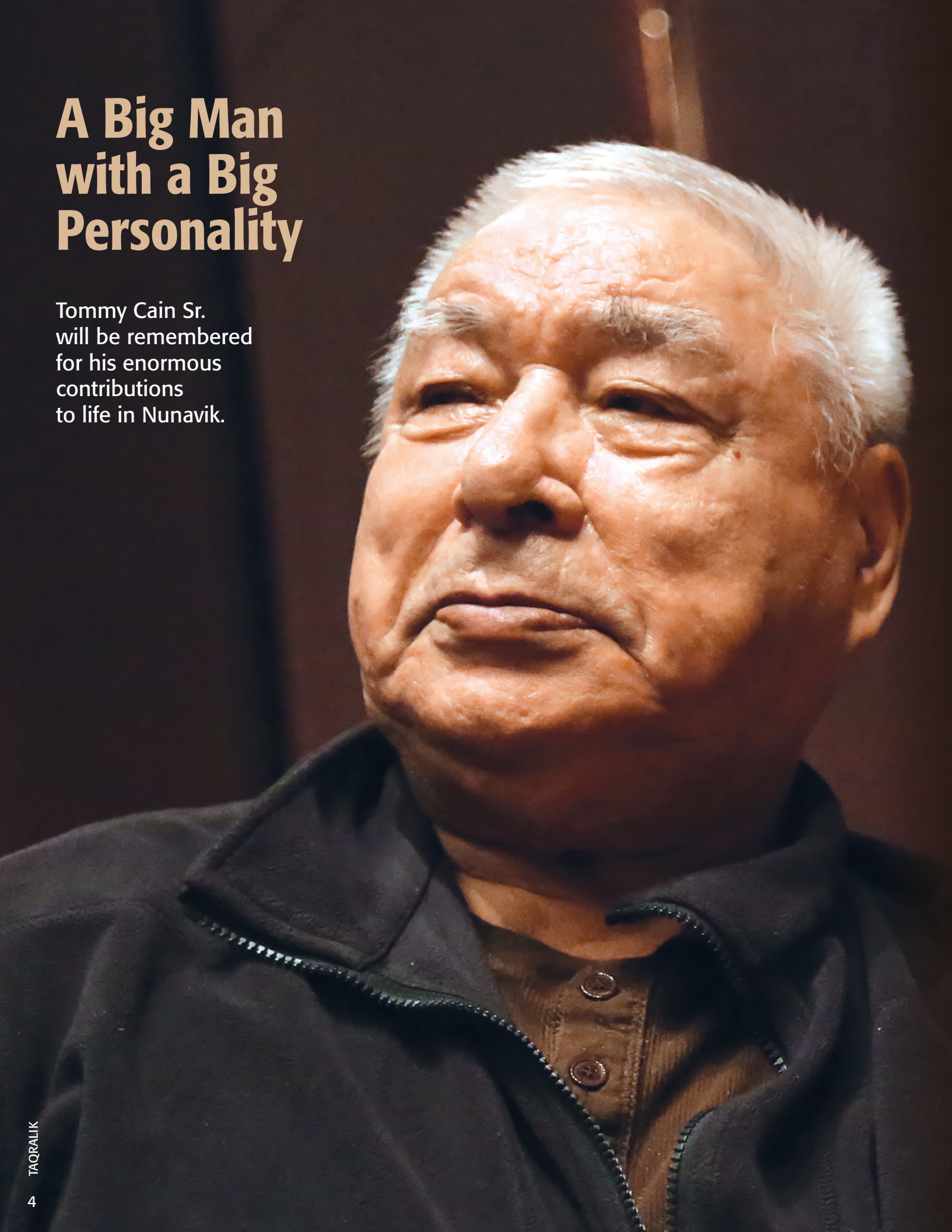
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A Big Man with a Big Personality

Tommy Cain Sr.
will be remembered
for his enormous
contributions
to life in Nunavik.



One of the signatories of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)*, he carried this responsibility throughout his life and was always active in regional and community politics.

Tommy Cain Sr. was instrumental in the creation of the community of Tasiujaq, successfully convincing the Quebec government to help set up the small village in the 1960s. Tommy was very active with the development of its community council, and became its Mayor. His grandson Billy Cain carries on this tradition as the current Mayor of Tasiujaq.

His career at Makivik was marked as a member of Board of Directors from 1979-1985, and First Vice-President from 1985-1988. Later in life he acted as a Nunavik Governor until he reached 75 years of age.





As a signatory to the *JBNQA*, Tommy was involved in Makivik's 2015 film documenting the negotiation and signing of the agreement. He gave the film its title when he said to Nunavimmiut, "So you can have opportunities we worked to make it happen." In English, the documentary is called, *So That You Can Stand*.

He, along with other signatories, was awarded the Order of Nunavik in 2014. The Order is conferred upon Inuit men and women for outstanding achievements in different fields, celebrating the accomplishments of Nunavik Inuit and inspiring Nunavik beneficiaries to strive to reach their goals.

Tommy was also an achiever and pioneer entrepreneur in the tourism industry. He was able to obtain early assistance from the Eskimo and Indian Outfitters Association. With that he was able to acquire and run the Finger Lake Char and Caribou Camp, providing employment to Inuit in Tasiujaq and Kuujuaq. He was a big man with a big personality, perfect for the hospitality industry. He was the longest serving President of the Nunavik Tourism Association, as well as its predecessor -- the Inuit Outfitters Association, formed in 1982.

He put Nunavik on the map by having the Nunavik Tourism Association officially recognized and funded by the Quebec





government in 1997. He also worked to have the highest tides in the world recorded at Tasiujaq, with the assistance of Johnny Adams.

Born May 13, 1937, he was a traditional, unilingual Inuk. As a hunter he could expertly spear char with a kakivak and he excelled at hunting and trapping. Allen Gordon is the Executive Director of the Nunavik Tourism Association. He witnessed Tommy's spear fishing skills firsthand near Tasiujaq.

"I was fishing with him, and it was incredible how good he was with the kakivak," he said. "I was amazed. He had the knack for that, spear fishing... I just watched him."

In his youth, he grew up near Quaqtak and Kangirsuk. Like many Inuit at the time, he experienced starvation, having to eat sled dogs to survive.

"He grew up uneducated in terms of schooling," Gordon said, "but his school basically was the coast, near Quaqtak. He grew up near Kangirsuk, as a youngster before he moved into the Tasiujaq area." And even though his English was limited, he could have a laugh with anyone, Gordon said, including tourists from the south. He was also a great square-dancer.

Tommy was father to Johnny, Kitty, Moses, Uttuqi, Jeannie, Christina, Aquja, Mark, and Willie, and grandfather and great grandfather to many.

He passed away on July 27 in Tasiujaq and was laid to rest July 29, in the presence of many community members, under a white, inscribed cross and a bountiful arrangement of flowers. ●



Internet AND THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19 reveals how Nunavik's internet service is an essential service

By Stephen Hendrie



As the global coronavirus pandemic swept the globe in early 2020 forcing countries and regions within nations to go into lockdown, so did Nunavik. By the middle of March Nunavik was totally closed off to incoming and outgoing travellers.

Offices, businesses, schools, and churches shut down. Everyone was told to stay home, wash hands several times a day, stay six feet away from each other, and as things progressed, wear face masks in public buildings, such as the Co-op.

But while everybody had to stay home, work continued, school continued, people still had to go out to get food, and as for praying, that was done at least six feet away! Arguably the glue that held this together was the Internet, allowing people to work from home, and students to connect with school. The concept of "social media" was never more vital than when the pandemic descended and forced everyone into a "home cocoon."

COVID-19 shined a spotlight on Nunavik's internet service as being an essential service. The main service provider to the Nunavik region is Tamaani, run by the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) since 2003.

KRG is well aware that the internet capacity it currently has simply cannot keep up with demand. Internet download speeds in the south are typically 50 megabytes per second (Mbps), fast enough to stream a movie.

Makivik's Jean Dupuis, a Director in the President's Department, described an app he has on his phone that measures internet speed. From Montreal he said, "Right now I'm getting 50 Megs download, which is great for anything you want to do. In Kuujuaq, the maximum I've ever been able to get is 5 Megs."

Dupuis is Makivik's representative on the federal Inuit Crown Partnership Committee (ICPC), bringing together Inuit leaders across Canada with key federal ministers and the prime minister. He's on the Infrastructure Working Group which is conducting an overview of broadband services across the Arctic.

They will find out that in Nunavik, the speed bottleneck is the expensive and aging satellite network. On top of being slow there's a delay of up to 1.5 seconds in transmission. Unless you're a big fan of "echo," that's not good.

The current Tamaani network was re-designed in 2015. In 2020 it's already old and was overwhelmed by the pandemic. It was never designed for the level of home use with students trying to connect to the school, parents trying to make Zoom calls for work, and sending files back and forth.

Tamaani did open up some bandwidth during the pandemic to make working and studying from home easier, but a solution that will put Nunavik at the same level as the rest of Canada is a few years away. Nunavik will also leapfrog a few generations of technology when it comes on-stream.

In September 2018, a joint federal-provincial investment of \$125.2-million in high-speed internet was announced. It will bring high-speed fibre optic connectivity to five Nunavik communities on the Hudson Bay coast, and to Kuujuaq on the Ungava Coast. The initial phase would see a subsea cable link up communities from Chisasibi to Puvirnituq. A microwave link, or overland fibre optic cable, would connect Kuujuaq to Shefferville.

Éloi Clément, the KRG Assistant-Director for Tamaani Internet Service, said it's the biggest amount for a telecommunications project in all of Canada.

"It's a very big project, bigger than we ever had." He was happy, but very busy, both from providing essential internet services during COVID-19 and working on this massive new project. They've been preparing for the link by installing fibre optic cables in Nunavik communities – the last mile.

A fibre optic link to Nunavik would certainly go a long way to satisfying the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Universal Service Objective announced in 2016. It states that, "Canadians in urban, rural, and remote areas have access to voice and broadband internet services at 50 Mbps down and 10 Mbps up on both fixed and mobile wireless networks."

Until then, Nunavik is stuck with about 5Mbps download speed. It affects every organization across the region, and literally slows down development in Nunavik. Thomassie Mangiok is a graphic designer and the Centre Director of the Nuvviti School in Ivujivik. "I make videos, and I struggle to upload them. I cannot compete with other people." He said Nunavik doesn't have much to export. "But we can produce cultural products. It's really hard to send them, so we're left behind." He explained a typical five-minute video is about 800 megabytes, very difficult to send.

For his students, he would like to be able to show instructional videos from around the world, just like any school, but this is also not possible. "Another example, there are two students into flight simulator. One was identified by Air Inuit as a potential pilot. It took us a long time to download the program," he said.

At the Nunavik Research Centre in Kuujuaq, Director Ellen Avard said it's common to push "send" on a document overnight to ensure

it's ready for the morning. "Fibre optics would take away all of that stress. We'd be on par with our southern colleagues."

Gregor Gilbert, Director of Makivik's Environment, Wildlife, and Research Department concurred.

"We often deal with large files, such as maps. To send a large file size via any of the normal routes is pretty much impossible because of the slow speeds. So, we've had to resort to things like DropBox."

Imagine what it's like for people who are struggling with addictions. There's only one treatment centre in Nunavik – Isuarsivik – in Kuujuaq. Dave Forest, who is the Chair of the Board said they do a lot of aftercare using Facebook.

"With clients, we provide a platform for them to reach out. The Internet is so slow. If you're in crisis mode, your patience gets rather thin." Forest also operates Tivi Galleries. Like many Nunavik businesses he has internet backup in the form of a grandfathered Xplornet satellite dish. They're no longer sold in Nunavik, but existing units still operate.

Another player is in the wings. Clément, Mangiok, and Forest all spoke about the plans billionaire inventor Elon Musk is planning with his Starlink low orbit satellite venture. The Tesla founder wants to send thousands of small low orbit satellites into space providing cheap high-speed internet to rural and remote communities around the world. Mangiok looks forward to connecting on the land. Forest said, "That's a lot of satellites, but it would be a game changer for us." Clément said Musk's Low-Earth-Orbit (LEO) project is interesting, but it's late. "It won't be available in Nunavik for another two years."

Fortunately, a lot of the social networks and video connection technologies that have sprung up during the pandemic have built-in features that, to a certain extent, cope with slow connections.

Makivik's Director of Communications Carson Tagoona explained how it's done. "A lot of these platforms have encoding options that will vary the bitrate of the video they're delivering." On Zoom for

example, it allows users in Nunavik to be on Zoom calls, though they might appear splotchy.

In the early days of the lockdown, important meetings were cancelled or rescheduled. Among these was the Makivik Annual General Meeting, originally scheduled for March 23-26 in Akulivik. Makivik held a virtual AGM in mid-July using the Webex platform by Cisco, very similar to Zoom. Makivik President Charlie Watt, along with fellow executives, such as Treasurer George Berthe and Adamie Delisle Alaku were in the Makivik board room in Kuujuaq. Other participants joined from Northern Village offices around the region. Interpretation was provided by teleconference and was also available via a YouTube stream.

It's hard to imagine virtual meetings replacing actual AGMs, All Organization Meetings, or other large gatherings critical to the political, social, and economic development in Nunavik. There's so much more than meets the eye in weeklong meetings of this nature. Being together, arguing, laughing, crying, sharing food, and endless stories, it just can't be replaced with laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

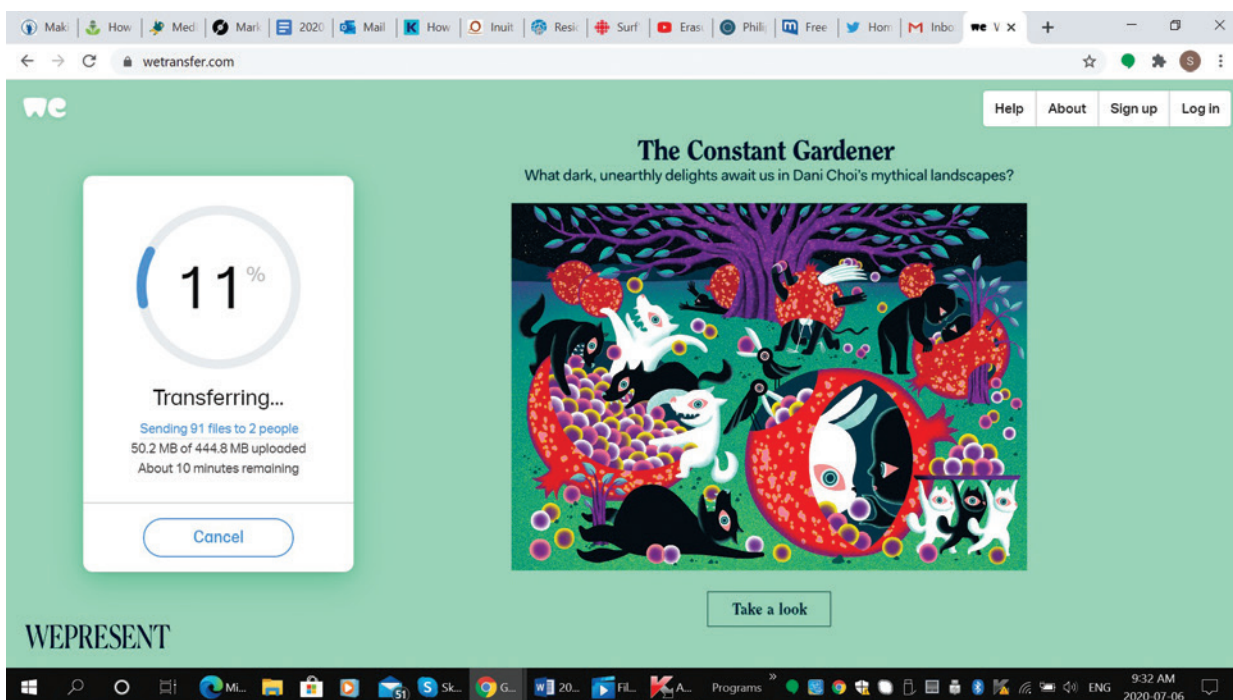
Over in Kangirsuk, CBC Radio Commentator Zebedee Nungak did a series on COVID-19. He admitted he'll need to take a course like "Online Shopping 101" for all the wondrous new products he was being bombarded with on Facebook. He also said life became unnatural for Inuit who are used to visiting each other a lot.

But the final word comes from Zebedee's commentary on the "Stopping Power" of the pandemic -- a power that goes well beyond the wires, cables, and devices that keep us connected.

He said, "COVID-19 has caused human beings to fully stop, and thoroughly reassess their relationship to Earth, nature, and to each other..."

Wise words indeed. ♦

Because of poor internet download speed, people in Nunavik sending or downloading large files often have to resort to DropBox, or programs like WeTransfer, shown here.



Remembering Mark T. Gordon

By Stephen Hendrie

In the mid 1990s Mark T. Gordon was Vice-President of Economic Development for Makivik Corporation. The position fit him like a glove. He was a born entrepreneur, having created his own start-up canteen in Kuujjuaq in his childhood house, which became a popular hangout.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)* Mark T. — as he was universally known to distinguish him from Mark R. Gordon — granted a lengthy interview to *Makivik News*, in his characteristic soft-spoken manner.

He was young at the time of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA), and the *JBNQA* negotiations. In fact, he was in high school in Winnipeg, with Vallee Saunders and Charlie Gordon. He remembers Charlie Watt coming to visit, telling them about the negotiations, advising them both to stay and finish high school.

After graduation, Mark T. started working for NQIA in recreation with Willie Keatainak. He had fond memories of sending the entire Nunavik Sports Team to the Arctic Winter Games in Shefferville on a chartered 727 jet from Kuujjuaq.

"That was probably the first time a 727 jet landed in Kuujjuaq," he said. He also arranged financial support from the Government of Quebec.

Providing recreation to youth in Kuujjuaq was something Mark T. did previously as a volunteer. His cousin Allen Gordon says Mark T. and others his age were pioneers in the region in terms of recreation.

"They did a lot of fundraising, like bingos, and raised enough money to build a recreation centre for the village, behind the old

Co-op. It was our first town hall." Allen described other exploits, such as organizing the first motorbike races, Canada Day celebrations, snowmobile races to Tasiujaq, and fireworks.

"Mark and Valee Saunders were the first two certified to handle fireworks. They did it for New Year's Eve in 1980!"

Mark T. later worked with Alec Gordon, of CBC Radio fame in Kuujjuaq, in NQIA communications, recording history being made.

"We worked with state-of-the-art technology at the time, using video equipment, which today is antique," said Mark T. "We had a lot of fun travelling around recording meetings and witnessing events unfolding towards the James Bay Agreement"

Fast forward 20 years to his position in 1995 as Makivik VP in charge of Economic Development. He spoke about the *JBNQA* as a development tool for the Nunavik region.

"When you talk about economic development, a lot of people try to describe what it is, but there is no single word that stands out which describes economic development. Is it improving your way of life so that things are better? Or is it creating jobs and training? It is a combination of a lot of things."

He talked about the construction of key infrastructure for the region. New airports were being built, which he described as things



taken for granted in the South, but that Inuit had to fight tooth and nail to get.

"The development that has taken place in northern Quebec has not been a result of the government organizations giving it to you because they are good guys. It is because we had to fight for it in a very difficult way."

At the time he was responsible for the creation of a new Makivik subsidiary company called Nunavik Arctic Foods. It saw the construction of meat processing plants in four Nunavik communities for caribou, seal, ptarmigan, and Arctic charr. The target was Nunavik and the gourmet market in the South. Years of negotiations with the Crees, Naskapis, and the Governments of Quebec and Canada were needed to amend the *JBNAQ* to allow for the sale of caribou and other meats to non-natives.

Bruno Pilozzi was head of the department at the time and says Mark T. was consumed by the project.

"We would have special events with Chef Jean-Paul Grappe. Mark loved talking about the food, and meeting with people." Bruno said he had a smile from ear to ear, and he was a consummate entrepreneur. "It was a joy to work for him."

Mark T. was also fascinated with transportation – it was a key element in developing the region. He spoke at length about the creation of Air Inuit, noting that previous airlines such as Wheeler Airlines, Servair, and Air Gava went out of business.

"We made a decision to get into the business of transportation because it meant so much to us, and we wanted safe reliable transportation." At the time of the interview, in 1995, Air Inuit employed 250 people. In early 2020 Air Inuit had over 700 employees.

Following his career at Makivik, Mark T. invested in a family run store in Kuujuaq called Newviq'vi. Johnny Adams described this as a business challenge.



Mark T. Gordon, circa 1995, with Chef Jean-Paul Grappe who worked his culinary magic to turn the caribou produced by the processing centres into gourmet delights.

"For sure, especially competing against Northwest Company, as a start-up, and the Co-op. So it was not easy for the original shareholders." But today it's a thriving business.

For close to a decade, up until the time of his death, Mark T. was involved in search and rescue, said Johnny Adams.

"He was involved in CASARA, the civil aviation search and rescue association. He helped start it. They were training with Hercules and Twin Otters. He was training coast guard auxiliaries in the communities with his brother Sandy, as volunteers."

Mark T. Gordon was born April 8, 1953, and died July 20, 2020, in an accident at his camp near Kuujuaq. He was buried on July 28. The service was held outside under sunny skies, at the grave site, due to COVID-19. He leaves behind his wife Eva, nine children, several grandchildren, great-grand-children, and a legacy of volunteerism, entrepreneurship, and community service to Nunavik. ♦



Mark T. Gordon speaking to a delegation of government officials and media at an event related to Nunavik Arctic Foods in 1995.

The Aqpik Road Show:

Proving not all fun has to end during a pandemic

All photos by Carson Tagoona



With events across the globe being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual summer activities and festivals seen during the summer in Nunavik weren't spared. But the municipality of Kuujuaq wasn't going to let the pandemic take away all the fun!

Aqpik Jam, Nunavik's largest music festival, is usually held to coincide with the ripening and harvesting of aqpik during the second week of August. As with many events in 2020, Aqpik Jam wasn't able to proceed as in previous years.

In lieu of the usual festival, the idea for The Aqpik Road Show was hatched, born from an Initiative by Liam Callaghan, the Theatre/Technical Director at the Katittavik Town Hall, along with the support from the municipality and Mayor Sammy Koneak.

Callaghan explained that in previous years he's brought some artists in for Canada Day performances, using a truck parked outside. With the pandemic interrupting planned events at the town hall, the town was eligible for some financial assistance from Heritage Canada. Callaghan said he's always wanted to put on an outdoor festival and 2020 presented the perfect opportunity.

This year, propped in front of the town hall was a stage built on top of a flat bed truck, a platform to host Kuujuaq's local talent.

"It was like a drive-in rock show!" Callaghan said.

With vehicles lined up in front of the stage and onlookers standing in the buckets of their pickups, the local performers went to town

Niivi Snowball debuted her original song, "Broken Mirror," which she wrote and composed for her Road Show performance. Snowball has been performing since the age of 4, appearing on stage at the Aqqik Jam Music Festival in previous years. She can be followed on Instagram @niivi.snowball.



Liam Callaghan not only hatched the idea for the Aqqik Road Show, he also entertained the crowd, playing a mix of covers and original material.



From left, Derek Tagoona, Peter Nassak, and Adamie Delisle Alaku, referred to during their Road Show performance as, "The Boyz."

performing hits from many well-known bands along with originals that left the audience in awe.

The first Aqqik Road Show was held August 19, featuring performances by Etua Snowball (Sinuupa) and The Three Wheelers. September 1 marked the second edition of the Road Show. The evening brought performances from a group that Liam Callaghan jokingly referred to as "The Boyz." For their performance that evening, the group consisted of Peter Nassak, Derek Tagoona, Adamie Delisle Alaku and Willis Tagoona. Liam himself performed shortly after, playing a mix of his favourite covers and originals for the crowd.

Niivi Snowball debuted her first original song titled, "Broken Mirror," which was followed by cheers and honks of approval from the approximately 60 trucks in the parking lot.

With a few more songs from The Boyz to end the night, and with smiles all around, the Aqqik Road Show proved that despite the unusual times, some creative thinking can allow get-togethers to happen while still honouring safety measures. People can assemble while keeping two metres apart and still have a great time.

Callaghan said regardless of COVID-19, the Road Show is something he would like to continue in future years, with the goal of actually changing venues to different communities. ♦

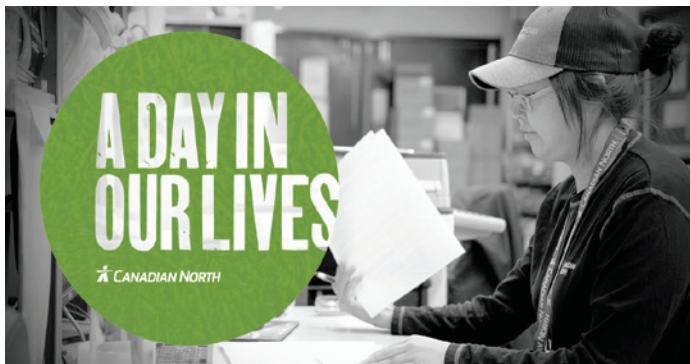
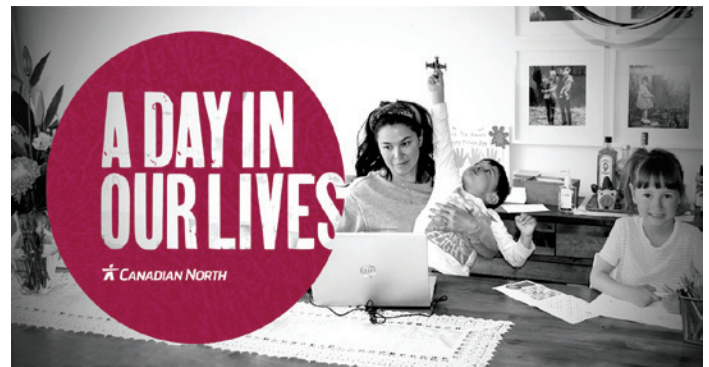
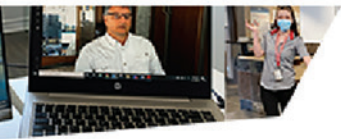
Nunavimmiut and all other northerners have seen unprecedented changes in their lives as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Airlines are vital lifeline for everyone North of 60, so Canadian North's team members have worked hard to maintain the uninterrupted flow of critical workers,





medical travel, food, municipal materials and other essential services. This has required incredible teamwork and close coordination with Inuit organizations, federal, regional, territorial and municipal governments and its customers and partners. It has also meant taking difficult but necessary steps such as temporary schedule revisions, staff reductions and changes to inflight services. While this will be remembered as a challenging time, it will be an important chapter in northern history that has highlighted the determination, adaptability, concern for others and strong sense of community that defines the North.

Canadian North team members captured and submitted over 1,000 photos and video clips of what their day looked like on May 13. A small sampling of these submissions were compiled into a video - *'A Day in the Life of Canadian North'* - that can be viewed at www.canadiannorth.com/day-in-the-life. While it only captures a small sampling of what was seen, heard and experienced on that ordinary day, it sums up Canadian North's deep appreciation to its customers, communities and friends for their patience, understanding, kindness and support while everyone works together to stay safe, healthy and well. Nakurmiik. •



HOLIDAYS IN THE SUN¹... SOON?

Before rejoicing at the prospect of embarking on a cruise ship to the Bahamas, it looks like more efficient responses and long-term solutions may be required so that this COVID-19 pandemic can be fully behind us. But, do you know what your rights are when it comes to vacation and days off in the workplace?

Workforce: Same, Same but Different

The status of your employment will first have to be considered before assessing what may be applicable to you when it comes to vacation and days off. If you are working as a consultant, are self-employed, or are working for a company under federal labour laws (e.g. for banks, television or radio stations, etc.), then you would not be covered under the *Act respecting labour standards*, which is a law of general application that establishes minimum standards and protection for the majority of the workers in Quebec. An entity - the CNESST², or the *Labour standards, pay equity and workplace health and safety board* - is overseeing the rightful implementation of the Act for workers and employers alike, and could be contacted in case of conflicts, complaints or basic request for information about workplace rules. When it comes to holidays and vacation, the law will define the minimum conditions to be applied to your employment contract, and the board may be called upon to ensure that eligible working relationships are respecting them. Of course, since the Act is a law of "public order" - which means that it acts as a mandatory baseline to any contract of employment in Quebec - any employer can go beyond the basic protections or benefits given under the Act but can never offer less. If employers do not respect these minimum standards, they can be fined or sued by the board on behalf of the employee, to whom it may offer compensation. Clarifying your working status under the *Act respecting labour standards* is thus the first step you need to take in assessing what are the baseline conditions applicable to your working condition.

Seven Fully Paid Quebec Public Holidays, and More

For workers who meet the definition of employee under an *Act respecting Labour Standards*, they shall enjoy many public holidays a year, which are days when you shall get paid, even if you do not work on said days. For most people who work full-time, this just means a day's worth of pay; for someone who works part-time, the amount is usually prorated to equal a little less than a full day's pay.

The compensation is equal to 1/20 of the wages you earned during the four complete work weeks leading up to the week of the holiday. Tips are included in your wage but overtime pay is not. For

workers paid in full or in part by commission, the amount is 1/60 of the wages earned during the 12 previous weeks. The CNESST has a tool available on its website to help calculate this amount. But, beware! To be entitled to compensation during public holidays, you must have worked the day before or the day after the holiday, unless you had your employer's permission or a valid reason to be absent these days. For example, if you work only from Tuesdays to Thursdays, you will have to work on the Thursday before Labour Day, or on the Tuesday before Labour Day, to be entitled to compensation on a Labour Day.

If you are working on a public holiday, you shall be paid your regular wages and, furthermore, depending on your working contract and/or your agreement with your employer, you shall receive:

- An additional compensation paid for as additional pay, or
- A time off with pay as a paid replacement holiday, which, in this case, must be used during the three weeks before or after the public holiday in question.

To be entitled to the additional compensation or paid time off, you must have worked on your usual workday before or after the public holiday, unless you had your employer's permission or a valid reason to be absent. This is true, whether you are a full-time or part-time employee.

Quebec's public holidays are:

1. January 1 (New Year's Day)
2. Good Friday or Easter Monday (at employer's choice)
3. The Monday before May 25 (Journée des Patriotes)
4. July 1, or July 2 if July 1 is a Sunday (Canada Day)
5. The first Monday in September (Labour Day)
6. The second Monday of October (Thanksgiving)
7. December 25 (Christmas)

In addition to which, specifically in Nunavik, **November 11 (JBNQA)** and **June 21 (National Indigenous Peoples Day)** have to be accounted for as special holidays, alongside **June 24 (Saint-Jean-Baptiste)**, which in Quebec is recognized under the *National Holiday Act* as a special public holiday under special rules and conditions. The compensation rule for June 24 will apply to almost all workers, even for those not covered under the *Labour Standards Act*. For federal employees working in Quebec, their right to the June 24 holiday will depend on their union or employment contracts.

¹ Sex Pistols, 1977

² CNESST, for, in French, the Commission des Normes, de l'Équité, de la Santé et de la Sécurité du Travail.

Specifically for said holiday, it will be pushed to June 25 in case it occurs on a Sunday, and, differently than for Quebec's other national holidays, the paid replacement holiday, given by the employer for workers who had to work on June 24, will not suffer the three week timeframe requirement. Employers who do not give workers a paid replacement holiday for June 24 will have to give them an additional compensation. The compensation will be equal to 1/20 of the wages earned during the four complete work weeks leading up to the week of June 24. For workers paid in full or in part by commission, the amount will be 1/60 of the wages earned during the 12 previous weeks. Tips will be included in the calculation, but overtime pay will not.

Vacation Time and Pay: How it Works

The amount of annual vacation and vacation pay is determined according to the following two factors:

1. The reference year, which is a period of 12 consecutive months that runs from May 1 to April 30, and;
2. the number of years that you have worked for your employer, these referred to as your years of "service" and being accounted as uninterrupted, even if certain events did in fact interrupt your work, such as sick leave, maternity/paternity leave or temporary layoff.

For one year of reference, this as of April 30, you should be entitled to an amount of annual vacation minimally defined by the law:

- For less than one year of uninterrupted service:
You will be entitled to one day computed for each month of service, up to a maximum of two weeks of vacation.
- For more than one year but less than three years of uninterrupted service:
You will be entitled to two weeks paid vacation and could ask for an additional week off without pay.
- For three years or more of uninterrupted service:
You will be entitled to three weeks paid vacation.
- These are the minimum times defined under the **Act respecting labour standards**. You could always negotiate for more paid vacation with your employer, or the latter could offer more as part of its employment policy or based on your union's collective agreement or your collective agreement decree.

The calculation of your vacation pay will be based on your gross earnings during the year of reference:

- 4% of your gross earnings if you have less than three years of uninterrupted service; or
- 6% of your gross earnings if you have three years or more of uninterrupted service.

Still, your employer has to authorize your annual vacation days, which should be asked for at least four weeks in advance. You have the right to take all your vacation at the same time, or, if you are entitled to more than one week of vacation, you can ask your employer if you could divide such at your discretion.

When "normal times" are back upon us, we hope this legal tip will have helped you in planning your vacations and time off, so they truly are stress-free moments away from your workplace. Your return to work would just be so much easier, notwithstanding the fact that the sun, the geese or the mild winds may have in the end decided to play hide-and-seek with you throughout your holidays!

Legal tips aim at explaining to the Nunavik Inuit clientele in a general and broad manner some elements of the law applicable in Quebec and are not legal opinions nor legal advice. For a legal opinion and advice, do not hesitate to consult a private practitioner (lawyer or notary). Makivik Legal is generally thanking www.educaloi.qc.ca for its input in preparing Legal Tips. •



NUNAVIK NOTES

Watt-Cloutier Honoured

Sheila Watt-Cloutier has been selected to receive an honorary degree from Laval University in Quebec City.

The recipient of numerous awards and honours, including a UN Environment Programme Champions of the Earth award, and a 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nomination for her advocacy work in showing the impact of global climate change on human rights, Laval states in its press release that Watt-Cloutier is a great source of pride and inspiration. She embodies the mission and objectives of the university with courage and sensitivity, highlighting the interdisciplinarity that underpins sustainable development, nordicity, education, and the recognition of Indigenous peoples.

In 1995 Watt-Cloutier was elected to Makivik Corporation and the Inuit Circumpolar Council. She went on to help spearhead the United Nations global work to ban the production of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), playing an instrumental role in the negotiations leading to the 2001 Stockholm Convention on POPs.

Watt-Cloutier has actively collaborated on research and consultations on climate change in the Arctic. In 2005 she joined with 62 other Inuit to file a legal petition to the Washington D.C.-based Inter-American Commission on Human Rights detailing the harm Inuit are experiencing as a result of climate change caused by increasing greenhouse gas emissions. It was the first international legal action on climate change. In 2015 she published *The Right to be Cold*, in which she makes the case that climate change should be recognized as a human rights issue.

In her letter congratulating Watt-Cloutier on the announcement of this Honorary Doctorate, ICC President Monica El-Kanayuk recalls Watt-Cloutier's meeting with South-African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela in 2000.

"Your personal diplomacy successfully won an important ally in the fight against global pollutants. Significantly, you also conveyed a message to Mr. Mandela that Inuit supported his personal fight for freedom, and the struggle for social justice for all people," El-Kanayuk wrote.

Watt-Cloutier's is one of 11 honorary degrees announced by Laval. Because of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the dates for their presentation have not yet been decided. ♦

*Sheila Watt-Cloutier speaks at a 2015 event for her book, **The Right to be Cold**. Watt-Cloutier was selected in June to receive an Honorary Doctorate from Laval University.*





New BOD Sworn in Virtually

Elections were held in four communities on March 5 to elect local representatives to the Board of Directors of Makivik Corporation. The candidates in Kangirsuk and Killiniq were acclaimed as representatives.

Elena Berthe was elected in Tasiujaq. Elijah Ningiuruvik was re-elected in Kangirsujuaq and Aliva Tookalook was elected in Umiujaq. Since no candidate obtained a majority (50%+1) of the votes in Ivujivik, a runoff election between candidate Matusi Iyaituk and incumbent Charlie Paningajak will be held when the Government of Quebec allows elections to be held again. The current pandemic situation does not allow elections at this time.

The candidates in Kangirsuk, Etua Kauki, and Killiniq, Sammy Unatweenak, were acclaimed as representatives.

New board members are traditionally sworn in at Makivik's AGM in March, but because of the pandemic the AGM was postponed until mid-July. The virtual meeting used the Webex platform by Cisco, very similar to Zoom. Makivik President Charlie Watt, along with some fellow executives, were in the Makivik board room in Kuujuaq, while other participants joined online from around the region. The swearing in of the board members was done at the end of the AGM. ♦



Elijah Ningiuruvik is sworn in by Minnie Etidloie during Makivik's virtual AGM in July.

NUNAVIK NOTES



COURTESY OF VICTORIA OKPIK

OKPIK Remembered

Courtesy of KRG

David Okpik, a well-known community leader and long-time defender of environmental issues in Nunavik died peacefully on July 23 at the Tusaajiapik Elders Home in Kuujuaq. He was 86.

David was born on the land on November 13, 1933 near the current location of Quaqtuq. He was a prolific hunter, but also developed a keen interest for geology.

He was nicknamed locally as “David the Hunter” for his expertise and success in harvesting country food. After he broke his arm in a fishing accident David turned his attention to prospecting. “My arm still aches but I can use it, and my family still needs (country food) to eat. But I don’t do as much of that now,” he said in a 1998 interview published in *Makivik Magazine*.

He was self-educated and learned to speak English partially by listening to whatever music the operators at the weather station at nearby Cape Hopes Advance had around.

From 1956 to 57, he worked as a labourer for a mining company at the Oceanic Payne Bay site across the river from Kangirsuk. “In those days, Inuit were like slaves,” he recalled in the interview, describing the heavy tasks and patronizing attitudes of his superiors. Today, he added, everyone respects each other in the field, and it is especially gratifying when the younger Inuit and the elderly can work side-by-side out on the land.

In 1985 his keen interest in geology drove him to discover a unique archeological site that had been an important quarry and habitation site for early Inuit populations in the region near Quaqtuq.

As an elder, David was a mentor for the younger generations and remained very involved in local and regional issues. He was one of Quaqtuq’s first mayors after the community was officially founded in 1978 and was also a key representative of the KRG in defending the environment.

David was a member of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC) from 1979 to 2009 and was a member of the Environmental and Social Impact Review Panel for the territory north of the 55th parallel from 1997 to 2000. He was then appointed to the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee in October 2000.



© SAPUTJIQATIGIILLUTA

The Saputjiqatigiilluta group that was set up in Salluit when the pandemic began saw much success with their programming, including the Distance Walking Club.

David Okpik and his daughter, Victoria. The well-known community leader and long-time defender of environmental issues was laid to rest on July 24 in Quaqtaq.

But perhaps his most famous claim to fame was his role in the 1992 adventure feature film entitled *Shadow of the Wolf*, where David played the character Pualuna in a movie portraying Inuit life in the 1930's.

His son Jaaji Okpik, wrote a tribute on Facebook, sharing that his father had been battling dementia and Parkinson's disease for close to a decade.

"He taught me what it means to survive and where there is will there is always a way!" he wrote. "I know now at least that he is finally with my mother singing her her favourite song and he is no longer suffering."

A funeral service was held on July 24 in Quaqtaq with a private burial. He is survived by his daughters Elizabeth, Annie, and Victoria, his sons Harry, Jimmy and Jaaji, as well as several grandchildren and close family members. David is pre-deceased by his wife Maggie and his daughter Joanna. ♦

COURTESY OF JAAJI OKPIK



Salluit Keeps Moving

When the pandemic hit the north, people in Nunavik were advised to stay 2 metres from one another to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. But that didn't stop communities from coming up with alternate activities and supports to help keep residents healthy, both mentally and physically.

In Salluit, *Saputjiqatigiilluta*, a COVID-19 prevention and support group was formed and a Facebook page was set up. One of the more successful of their endeavours was the Distance Walking Club.

Coordinated by Peta Tayara with assistance from SIPPE House workers Susie Sakiagak and Lizzie S. Tayara, Peta explained they wanted to do something that would keep people active and healthy, while still following public health guidelines. Youth and elders were involved, and while they wanted to have more people involved on each walk, because of physical distancing they had to cap the number at 10 people.

Prevention and Promotion, Addiction Social Worker Flore Deshayes was sent by the Inuulitsivik Health Center to Salluit in April near the beginning of the pandemic. She helped facilitate the activities and the formation of the *Saputjiqatigiilluta* group. She said she learned much from the community. Peta and others showed her how to work with few resources to make positive things happen. Community workers really wanted a walking club because they noticed people eating too much and not doing enough physical activity during quarantine, which can lead to depression. The solidarity and collaboration that Deshayes witnessed inspired her. She said she was impressed with how the workers were able to motivate the younger generations, as well as showing workers from the south how to adapt their professional practises to support communities.

In addition to the Distance Walking Club, *Saputjiqatigiilluta* offered a variety of other activities, including: FM games, Tik Tok groups, a make your own mask contest, recipe sharing, elders' embroidery project, and the distribution of ingredients with recipes to the community. ♦

Wellness Program Pivots





The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many organizations to rethink how and what services they deliver in Nunavik. The Community Liaison Wellness Program, led by the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre CLSC, is one such organization.

For example, when the school in Kuujjuaq closed, several youth who depended on getting nutrition at school no longer had guaranteed access to a healthy breakfast and lunch. Anita Gordon, the head of the Wellness Program in Kuujjuaq, and her team decided to do something for these children and their families. Through a partnership with Newwiq'vi, the Northern Store, local schools, CLSC and volunteers, they brought the Food Basket initiative to life, supplying food to low-income families with children. Donated breakfast and lunch items were collected and delivered to the doors of those in need of assistance.

The Community Liaison Wellness Program has two coordinators under each health centre to support local wellness workers with the goal of improving the well-being of Nunavimmiut through a variety of means, including offering educational and prevention and promotional activities, making sure there is a link between community members and services and that the services are adapted to Inuit culture. Each Nunavik community has a Local Wellness Worker, Kuujjuaq and Tasiujaq have Suicide Prevention Liaison Workers, and there are two Street Worker positions in Kuujjuaq.

The wellness program continues to support grieving families in every community as well, by supplying them groceries. If the wellness worker is absent, the social worker takes over the task.

The Ungava Wellness Program has had to pivot the way it does its work, yet thanks to its community workers, local businesses, and volunteers it has continued to help those in need. Anyone wishing to join the program's team is encouraged to contact them. ♦

Wellness workers and volunteers in Kuujjuaq brought the Food Basket initiative to life.



©UNGAVA WELLNESS PROGRAM X2

NUNAVIK NOTES



Sister airlines, Canadian North and Air Inuit, pictured here at the Iqaluit airport, have resumed their regular reservations and booking services for commercial flights to Nunavik. Passengers from the south require authorization to travel and further preventive hygiene measures have been put in place.

Air Service Resumes

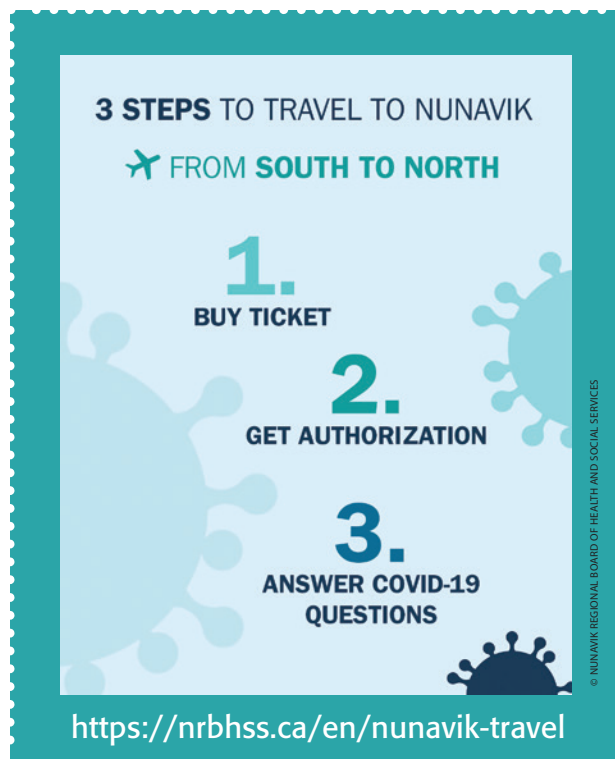
Regular reservations and booking services for commercial flights to Nunavik on sister airlines Canadian North and Air Inuit resumed August 25 for travel dates on or after August 31. The announcement was made in collaboration with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS).

Travellers from the South will have to request authorization through the Nunavik Travel Access Authorization Program, accessible through the NRBHSS website. The document must be presented at the airport on the date of travel to board flights to Nunavik.

Further preventive hygiene measures are also in place. Passengers must wash or disinfect their hands in the boarding area, before boarding. Handmade masks and face coverings will not be allowed. Only the procedural mask (blue with 3-ply) will be authorized on board for all passengers 12 years and older and must be worn throughout the flight. These masks will be provided by the two airlines at the gate.

NRBHSS Executive Director Minnie Grey said the resumption of the airlines' reservations and booking systems on commercial flights shows that the gradual reopening of Nunavik is going well despite the pandemic. "We appreciate the great collaboration of our airlines in ensuring the safety of Nunavimmiut," she said.

Canadian North Executive Chair Johnny Adams said the airline has collaborated with the NRBHSS and KRG prioritizing the safety of Nunavimmiut. "We are pleased to support the ongoing, essential transportation requirements of the Nunavik region by resuming our normal reservation channels while continuing to support ongoing health and safety protocols," he said. •



*** As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, protocols may change at any time. For the most up to date information on airline services, please visit the website of the airline on which you plan to travel, and the NRBHSS website.**

Money Available for Artists

Aumaaggiivik, the Nunavik Arts Secretariat of the Avataq Cultural Institute, thanks to the financial contribution of KRG, has created the Takuminartuliurnimut Grant Program, which awards financial support for artistic production, research, and creation.

The program supports talented artists and writers in the development of their careers, bringing Nunavik communities and artists together, and by providing an opportunity for artists and writers to broaden their horizons through an artist residency program.

Grants are offered in awards up to \$2,500 for individual projects, \$5,000 for collective projects and \$10,000 for career projects.

To be eligible for the program, you have to be an Inuk artist or writer, or group of Inuit artists, a JBNQA beneficiary (exceptions are possible), be dedicated to the success of your art, and be in charge of the project.

As with any grant program, there is an application process and a jury of three to five Inuit artists or Inuit cultural representatives, and Avataq's Program Agent (non-voting) decide where the money is awarded. There is no deadline to apply, but please allow up to three months for a response.

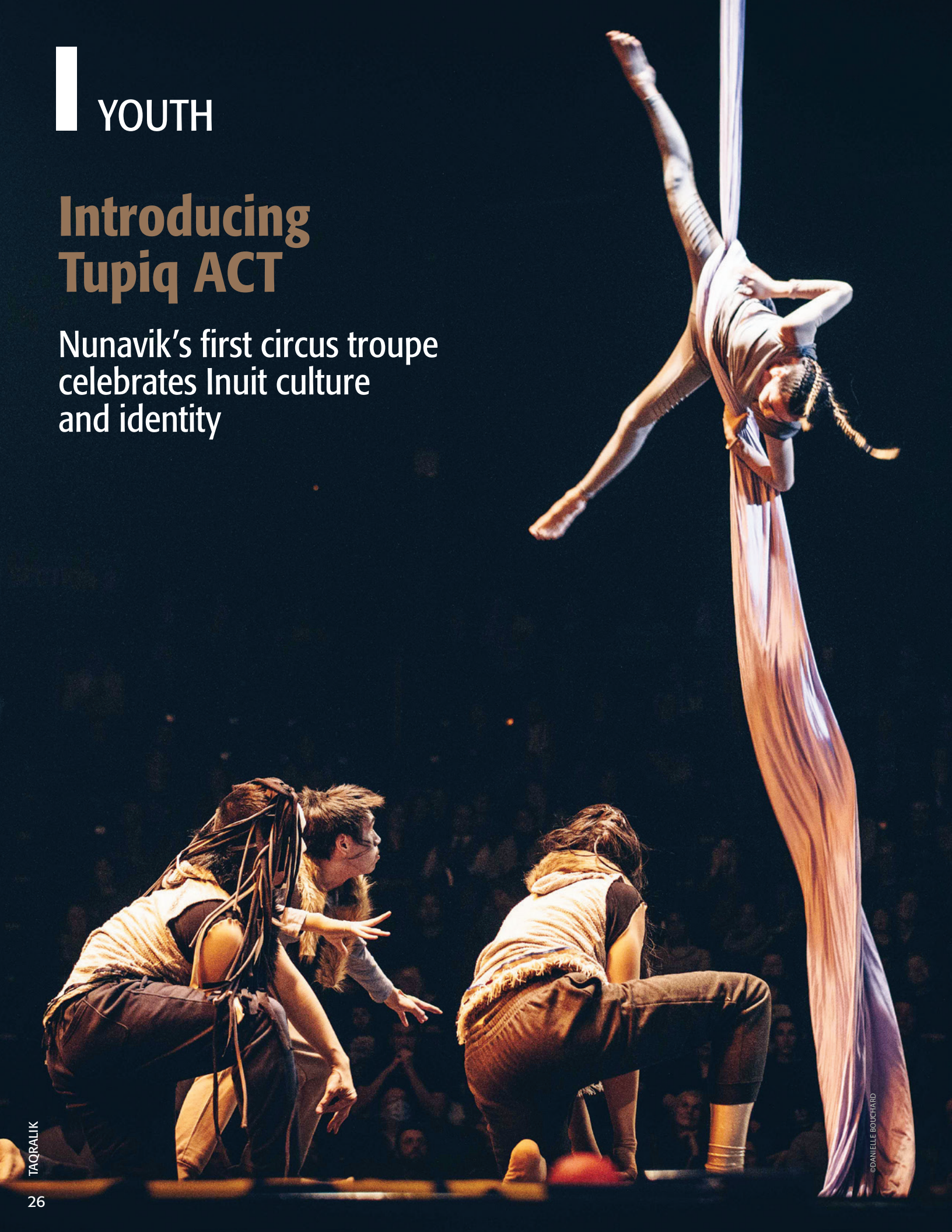
To apply or ask questions contact program agent Olivia Lya Thomassie at olivialyat@avataq.qc.ca, 514-864-8885 ext. 241, or toll-free at 1-800-361-5029.

Information can also be found at www.tarqitamaat.ca/?page_id=1784. •

YOUTH

Introducing Tupiq ACT

Nunavik's first circus troupe
celebrates Inuit culture
and identity



Saali Kuata's passion for circus comes through even when speaking on the phone. Back in April, after COVID-19 effectively shut down most of the country, the Kuujuaq native was in Montreal where he has been living for about four years.

"This past year I've been training and trying to be a professional circus artist, trying to do this full-time, training by myself to get to a level of technique that I really want to achieve," the soft-spoken 23-year-old explained. He trains in aerial ropes and other circus disciplines like acrobatics, juggling, and even stilt walking.

Kuata is a founding member of Tupiq ACT (Arctic Circus Troupe), a crew of circus performers that was born from Cirqiniq, a Nunavik social circus program, which planted the seeds for youth to become accomplished performing artists.

"Cirqiniq is a summer camp that brings Inuit youth together," he said. "Every time we did circus, every time we performed and trained, every time we learn new things in circus, we always crave more." But it was very hard for them to progress because they didn't have coaches available in the North, nor the equipment or knowledge necessary.

Each year the participants would joke about how amazing it would be if they could create their own circus troupe, and about two years ago former Makivik Socio-Economic Development Officer, Nathan Cohen-Fournier, dropped in to observe the summer camp and suggested the corporation could aid in its development.

"A bunch of us that were junior instructors, we just kind of looked at each other like, 'Yeah, we want to do this,'" Kuata said.

Cohen-Fournier recalls that meeting and that he told the group there could be possibilities to assist them in launching.

"For us, it was about providing a step further and giving young Nunavimmiut artists the opportunity to fulfil their collective potential, to unleash their creativity, and give it a shot for the first Nunavik circus troupe."

It worked. The troupe performed their first show in the North, in Inukjuak, mid-March.

"It was pretty swell," Kuata said. He is the secretary-treasurer of the group and explained they applied for a grant and started making the show back in November. They brought five of their artists together just to dedicate themselves to creating a performance that they could continue to sell for weeks and maybe years to come and they did it.

"Our long show has many circus disciplines in it, with many Inuit stories being told. It felt very nice because when we finished creating that show in Inukjuak, and the day we started performing it, we had light effects, sounds, and costumes. We were really able to go full out."



Minnie Ningiuruvik on the shoulders of Saali Kuata.

The troupe tries to represent Inuit culture and identity by using circus techniques to tell myths and legends on stage from traditional oral stories.

"When we're on stage we speak only Inuktitut," he said. "We just kind of tell an Inuit story on stage or take characters from these stories and kind of create an actual character -- a character that has feelings, or motives. Or we just expand the idea of who these people were, or what these creatures were, or what these myths were."

Having circus as an outlet has had a positive effect on Kuata.

"Emotionally, where I am, it's a very good place," he said. "When I perform on stage and train in circus, I'm very free." In the past, he admitted, he was unsure of himself, but circus training has shown him what he is able to accomplish.

"It's very surprising to myself when I look back now, and it's like, 'Wow, this is amazing.' I work with the best people. I've made great friends and memories along the way and I can look in the mirror and be happy."

However, the group does face some challenges. People's availabilities vary. They may have school, work, or just be busy with life. Also, the troupe members are geographically separated. Some are

◀ **Wrapped in fabric, Minnie Ningiuruvik hovers over (left to right) Michael Nappatuk, Charlie Makiuk and Saali Kuata.**



© GISELE HENRIET



Charlie Makiuk drives while Ape Idlout stands, Saali Kuata “flies,” and Minnie Ningiuruvik is dragged.
Right: Charlie Makiuk and Saali Kuata do an acrobatic move with Minnie Ningiuruvik while Ape Idlout crouches on the ground.

in communities in Nunavik and some are living in Montreal but, Kuata said, it miraculously still works.

“If we have a gig here in Montreal, then I’ll make myself available because circus is the only thing I do. Then I call my colleagues, ‘Hey are you available on this date?’ and we train together and try to create something for this gig.”

Once travel and group projects can return to normal, Tupiq ACT has plans to continue creating performances to showcase in Nunavik, Nunavut, and throughout the Circumpolar world.

Cohen-Fournier doesn’t doubt that the future is bright for the troupe.

“So far, they have done incredibly well. It’s a long journey, full of ups and downs but they are passionate, and they are having fun at the same time.”

Kuata said he also hopes the troupe can continue collaborate on new shows and bring them to an Inuit audience in the South.

“I really enjoy working with my gang and I believe we can do it, for sure.” ●



Minnie Ningiuruvik hangs on the silk as Christopher Angatookalook does a backflip

© SEBASTIEN GIRARD

Top row: Saali Kuata, Michael Nappatuk, Charlie Makiuk. Sitting: Minnie Ningiuruvik and Sarah Ainalik





**SUNSHINE,
KIDS AND BOOKS,
THAT'S ALL IT TAKES!**

How summer literacy activities remained a priority in Nunavik during the pandemic

All photos courtesy of Frontier College

It was March 2020 and, for the seventh year in a row, Frontier College had partnered with Makivik Corporation and Kativik Ilisarniliriniq to set up and deliver literacy camps across Nunavik. Then it happened: the COVID pandemic hit and everything came to a halt.

Children were about to face several months of being out of school and reading loss was clearly going to be a challenge. However, this virus was not going to stop Nunavimmiut from organizing literacy activities! Frontier College and its partners quickly mobilized to rethink the offer of summer learning in the region. It became apparent that one thing and one thing only could save the day: dedicated, passionate, and creative Summer Literacy Workers!

From Kuujuaq to Kuujuaapik, along the two coasts, Frontier College hired eight 'Literacy Superheroes', many of whom had worked as Literacy Camp Counsellors before, to offer fun and engaging literacy activities to the children through social media, radio, and in person when social distancing guidelines could be respected.

After group training, the Summer Literacy Workers were ready to use their creativity to bring literacy fun to their communities. It often started with a book and a structured activity that was easy to implement for parents and families. The overall goal remained simple: create and sustain interest in reading for children and families while allowing kids to learn about their culture and language and help them to develop their vocabulary and imagination.

Given the exceptional circumstances this summer, the Summer Literacy Workers did wonders. They distributed books and activity booklets to the children at their local store, hosted story times at playgrounds and on the radio, organized literacy games on social media, and made sure that the children of Nunavik had continuous access to learning opportunities. Here is what Tiivimasu Qisiq, from Kangiqsuaq, had to say about his experience this summer:

"Someone I know sent me the job posting because they thought I am a good person for this. It really gave me motivation to work with Frontier College! I am proud that I got to read to the children at our local summer camp."

George Qavavau, from Salluit, shared the same feeling, "It has made me feel awesome! I enjoy reading and playing games with the



George Qavavau distributes books in Salluit.



A teen from Kuujjuaq interviewing her aunt on the radio to share traditional stories.

children and I am proud of reading books with the kids because I can see that they are enjoying the stories that I read."

Some of the literacy workers also helped share stories from elders within their community. Naina Blake, a 13-year-old student in Kuujjuaq did exactly that. "Doing this job is heartwarming, I get to interview people I don't know and get to know them and their past. Interviewing my aunt was amazing. The old stories she told were so interesting and fun to hear, especially the one with her wanting to know how to drive her father's canoe."

It is difficult to foresee what the future holds but one thing is certain: there is a strong culture of literacy in Nunavik that will keep on shining and flourishing during future school years and summers, pandemic or not. ♦

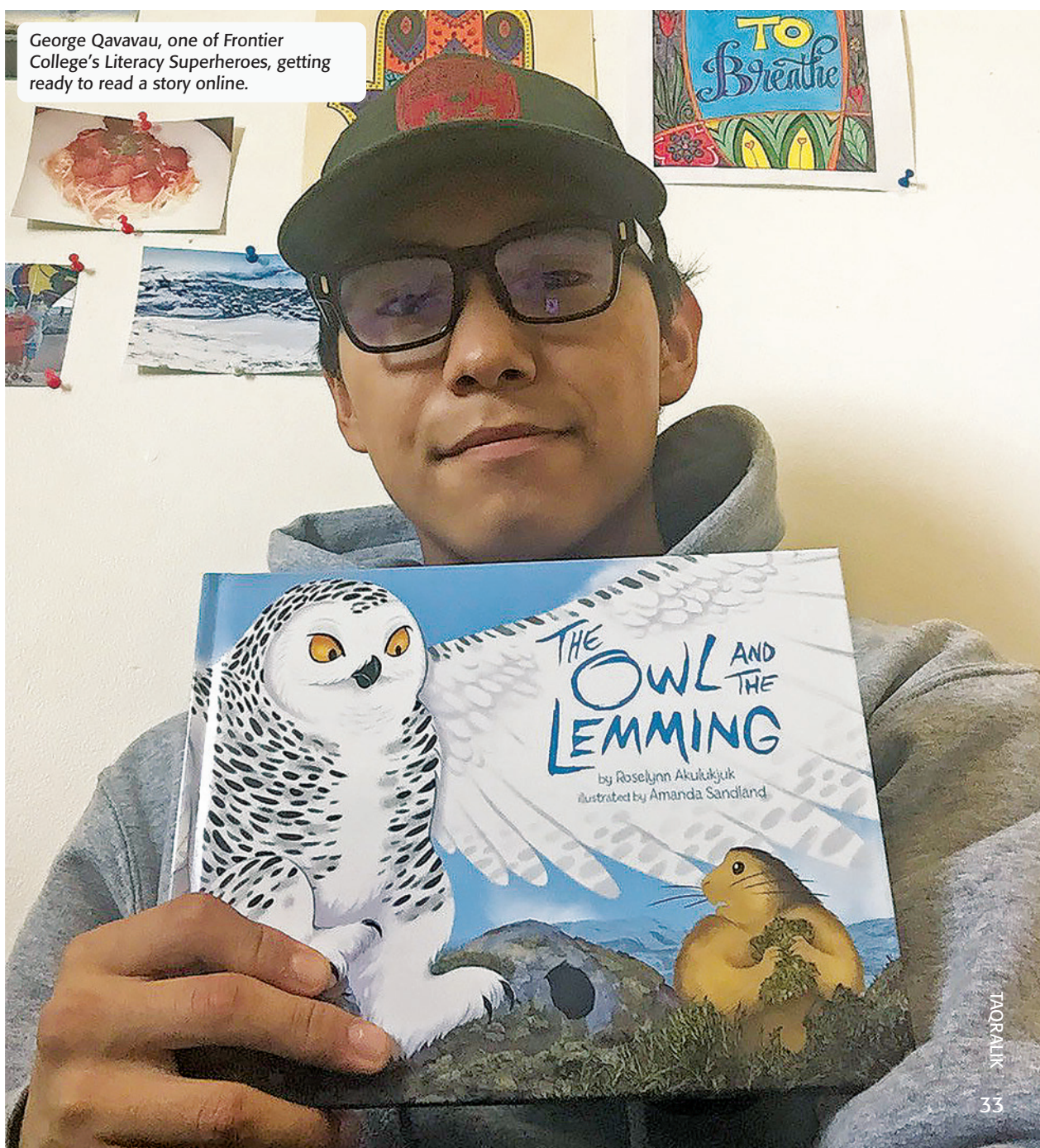


Tiivimasiu Qisiiq reads to children at the camp in Kangiqsujuaq.

Photos from
a doll-making
activity in
Kuujjuarapik.



George Qavavau, one of Frontier
College's Literacy Superheroes, getting
ready to read a story online.



Expansion of Uumajuit Wardens Program in Nunavik



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Comité consultatif de l'environnement Kativik
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

Everything that moves – mammals, birds, fish, insects, other invertebrates – is referred to as *uumajuit* in Inuktitut.

Since 2004, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) has managed the multi-disciplinary Uumajuit Warden Program that combines the conservation and management of marine species which are under federal jurisdiction as well as terrestrial and freshwater species under provincial jurisdiction. The program appoints/employs an Uumajuit Warden in each Nunavik community whose job it is to maintain regular contact with local harvesters and community members. They are also responsible for monitoring the sport fishing and hunting of non-beneficiaries.

In 2019, the Makivik Corporation and the KRG secured \$1.2 million in federal funding from two different programs; the Indigenous Guardians Pilot Program and the Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program to expand the scope of the Uumajuit Warden Program to include regional level environmental and ecological monitoring. A pilot project will be developed and implemented over a three-year period in 14 communities. The objective is to develop a program that will be customizable and tailored to reflect the requirements of individual communities while promoting the integration of traditional knowledge and cultural

continuity. The Nunavik Indigenous Guardians Pilot Program will be evaluated in 2021 to better develop a long-term program that will help support Nunavik communities in protecting and conserving their neighbouring ecosystems.

As part of this pilot project, in February 2019 the Uumajuit Wardens were given training in monitoring seasonal ice conditions, a priority for ensuring the selection of the best routes to make travel on ice safer for community members. The wardens also received training regarding sampling methods for water, plants and wildlife. Depending on a community's specific interests and needs, they will be able to implement programs to study and monitor local ecosystems.

As the project develops, the Makivik Corporation and the KRG will continue to provide necessary training and resources while promoting the transmission of knowledge between community elders and youth. Collaboration with the research community can assist with data analysis and reporting. ◆

Harry Okpik from Quaqtaq, left, and Willie Cain from Tasiujaq are both Uumajuit Wardens.



RABIES STILL PRESENT in Nunavik

By Sarah Mediouni^{1,2}, Mario Brisson³ and André Ravel²

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² Groupe de recherche en épidémiologie des zoonoses et santé publique, Faculté de médecine vétérinaire, Université de Montréal

³ Direction de la santé publique du Nunavik

While some microbes trigger local, regional, national or even worldwide outbreaks (or epidemics) from time to time (like the current coronavirus pandemic), most microbes settle in humans, in animals, or in the environment and cause some cases of disease now and then. Such infectious diseases, called endemic, are less spectacular than the epidemic ones but represent a regular threat to our health.

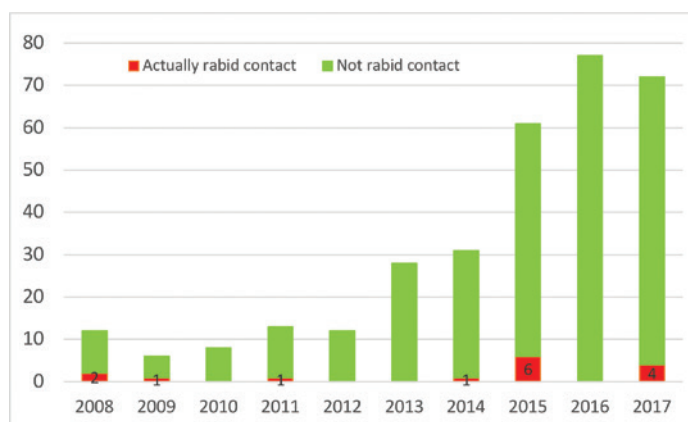
Rabies is one of these endemic diseases. It is caused by a Lyssavirus, different from the current pandemic coronavirus. It affects all species of terrestrial mammals, including human beings, and has been known worldwide for centuries, even across Nunavik and Nunatsiavut. Actually, rabies is at the core of the first ever novel written by an Inuk: *Harpoon of the Hunter* by Markoosie Patsauq, born in Inukjuak. The story, published in 1969, tells the dangerous and sad-ending adventures of an Inuk and his community who hunt a rabid bear before it destroys everything.

The rabies virus attacks the brain of the mammal and concentrates in great numbers in the saliva. The virus passes to another host (animal or human) during an exposure, that is whenever there is contact between the saliva of the rabid animal and the skin of the host, something that usually occurs by a bite, but not necessarily (for example by an animal scratch, or if someone opens the mouth or touches the inside of the mouth of a recently dead animal). Once into the host's body, the virus slowly moves along the nerves to reach the brain. This takes a few weeks to a several months, depending on the animal species and on how far the virus entry is located from the brain. Until this moment, the infected host had been normal, showing no sign of rabies. Once the virus attacks the brain, the host starts showing various symptoms due to its impaired brain. Signs include unusual behaviour, like a wild animal approaching humans instead of running away, furious aggressiveness, unusual gait, abundant saliva, and paralysis, the animal lying down, unable to move. Signs of rabies last for 7 to 10 days and death is the only outcome because there is no treatment at this stage. However, the relatively long delay between the contamination and the virus reaching the brain allows in humans an effective treatment prior to the signs' onset by vaccinating, or providing antibodies specifically against the rabies virus. This works well as long as this treatment starts shortly after the contamination and all shots are received.

In Nunavik, endemic rabies is maintained by the regular transmission of the virus in Arctic foxes with spillover to other wildlife species like wolves, red foxes, and bears and even dogs as well. Because the disease is fatal, the Nunavik health service and public health board take any human case of potential exposure to rabies very seriously. The health staff carefully treats the wounds and investigates the circumstances of the potential exposure to decide whether specific treatment against rabies should be given.

The research we undertook aims at describing the exposures of Nunavimmiut to rabid animals. We extracted and analyzed data (not names) from the record of cases managed by the health services between 2008 and 2017. Overall, there were 320 Nunavimmiut treated and investigated for potential rabies exposure. For 92 per cent of them, dog bite was the reason to seek medical advice. The number of people concerned increases over time; this is not explainable and therefore is of concern (Figure 1). The animal involved turned out to be rabid for 15 out of the 320 cases, meaning these people were actually exposed to the deadly virus. Gratefully, all were adequately treated by the health staff and all survived. Nine of the 15 rabid animals involved were dogs, while the others were four

Figure 1: Number of Nunavimmiut potentially exposed to rabies by year distinguishing whether the animal was rabid (after testing) or not, 2008-2017



Arctic foxes and two wolves. The number of exposures to potential and actually rabid animals vary from one village to the other, with a tendency for the villages of the Hudson Bay to have more often rabid animals, the reason being still unknown (Table 1). We identified two groups of Nunavimmiut more at risk of potential exposure to rabies

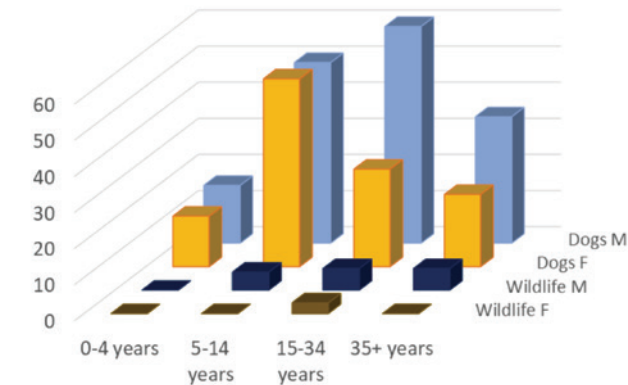
based on age, gender, and contact with animals (Figure 2). The first group is children, male or female, below 15 years old, which tend to be potentially exposed when playing with dogs. The second group is young male adults (especially 15-34 years old) being in contact with wildlife due to their outdoor activities, including trapping and

Table 1: Number of Nunavimmiut potentially exposed to rabies by village, 2008-2017

Village (from south-west to north-east)	Number of Nunavimmiut potentially exposed to rabies	Number of them who actually were in contact with a truly rabid animal	Average number of Nunavimmiut potentially exposed to rabies per year if the village had 1000 inhabitants (this allows fair comparison between villages)
Kuujuarapik	31	1	4.7
Umiujaq	10	1	2.1
Inukjuak	48	1	2.7
Puvirnituq	14	0	0.7
Akulivik	7	3	1.0
Ivujivik	10	5	2.7
Salluit	47	0	3.2
Kangiqsujuaq	17	0	2.0
Quaqtaq	14	0	3.5
Kangirsuk	21	2	3.6
Aupaluk	4	0	2.7
Tasiujaq	3	0	0.9
Kuujuuaq	88	2	3.7
Kangiqsualujjuaq	5	0	0.5
Not recorded	1	0	-
Total	320	15	2.5

Figure 2: Number of Nunavimmiut potentially exposed to rabies by age group, sex (female and male) and animal (dog or wildlife)

* Note that the large majority of potential exposures through wildlife were made by men over 15 years old. Exposures through dogs were equal between both sexes in children below 14 years, but there were relatively more contacts in men compared to women at older ages.



mushing. Obviously, this does not mean that people outside these two groups will not be in contact with a potential rabid animal.

In case of an animal bite or a direct contact with saliva, the first thing to do is to wash the skin with soap and water for 10 minutes when possible. The next thing is to contact the health services as soon as possible. It is advised to keep a potentially rabid animal that has come in contact with a human (after a bite for example), isolated and under observation: if the animal does not show rabies signs after 10 days of observation, it is unlikely that it was rabid and exposed the human to the virus, which is good news. Finally, dog vaccination against rabies is recommended to prevent them becoming rabid and to protect human health as well.

The research shows that Nunavimmiut are exposed to the deadly rabies virus through contact with animals from time to time. In Nunavik, children playing with dogs and young male adults in contact with wildlife seem to be potentially more exposed, but everyone is still at risk. Cautious and safe contact with animals and immediate reaction with medical consultation after contact with animal saliva are the best guidelines to avoid rabies and to stay alive and healthy, unlike the hunter in Markoosie Patsauq's novel. ♦



REBECCA TOWNLEY

Full name:

Rebecca Townley

Birthday:

May 24, 2002

Place of birth:

Kuujuaq

Home community:

Kangiqsualujjuaq

Role model:

My mom, Eleonora Townley

Favourite food:

Caribou meat

Occupation:

Janitor at the daycare and Coop cashier at the moment

Most proud moment:

When I caught my first caribou

Future goals:

To be happy and doing what I love to do.

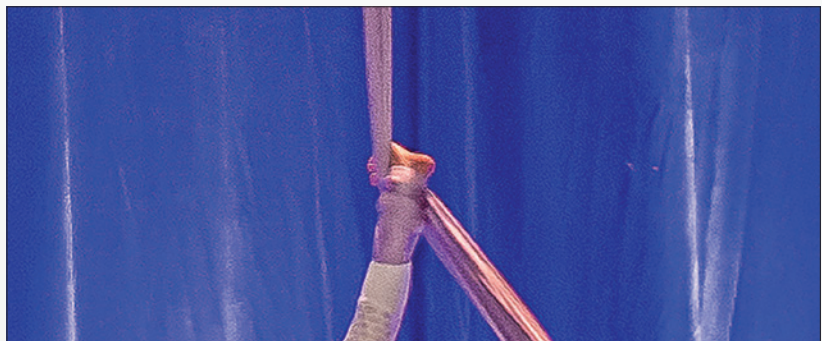
Best advice you can offer youth:

Dream big! Everything is possible.

MYSTERY PHOTO CONTEST

You could win \$100 if you correctly guess what this mystery photo is. Mail your answer to the address below, or you can email your answer to mdewar@makivik.org. The winner of this Mystery Photo Contest will be chosen on November 6, 2020.

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



WHAT IS THIS ?

Patience is a learned skill of the experienced hunter; whether waiting for a caribou or a seal, success is often found through endurance. Our ancestors recognized the importance of patience thanks to many years of resilient living. Now, in these times of doubt and uncertainty, the same skill is needed – the skill of patience. Today, when doubt or frustration arise in you, remember the calm patience that was required by those who came before you.

