

The Daily GRRR! - Jan. 12, 2015 - Your "Ugh, Monday Morning" Edition

The Daily GRRR! HEADLINES for Jan. 12, 2015. 1. Quebec Court of Appeal rightly refuses to dismiss First Nations' lawsuit. 2. First Nation explains that financial statements wait on federal gov info. 3. Brantford man organizes neighbourhood association of fellow Mohawks. 4. BC train derailment emphasizes safety concerns during labour dispute. 5. Shell plans to cut tar sands jobs as oil markets remain in crisis. 6. New research warns global warming from tar sands will be 'catastrophic'. 7. Imprisoned Saudi blogger receives first of 1000 lashes for 'insulting Islam.'

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Welcome back to SoundFM! You are now listening to The Daily GRRR! heard every weekday from 9-10 a.m. here on the airwaves at 100.3fm, CKMS in Waterloo, Ontario, and SoundFM.ca on the web. This is Kathryn and I'll be your host on this Monday morning show for January 12th, 2015.

As always, we are broadcasting from the heart of the Haldimand Tract, the occupied Grand River Territory of the Six Nations, which we continue to recognize as Haudenosaunee land.

The Daily GRRR! is a project of the Grand River Media Collective and is supported by the Community Radio Fund of Canada and CKMS.

We will begin today with headlines:

The Daily GRRR!

HEADLINES for Jan. 12, 2015

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2. First Nation explains that financial statements wait on federal gov info
3. Brantford man organizes neighbourhood association of fellow Mohawks
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7. Imprisoned Saudi blogger receives first of 1000 lashes for 'insulting Islam'

1. Quebec Court of Appeal rightly refuses to dismiss First Nations' lawsuit

As reported by Mining Weekly, the Quebec Court of Appeal has refused to hear a motion to dismiss a C\$900-million class action lawsuit by two Innu First Nation communities against a Canada-based subsidiary of the British-Australian mining corporation Rio Tinto. The Innu communities of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam and Matimekush-Lac John asked the court last March for an injunction against Rio's Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) unit in Quebec and Labrador to stop all mining, as well as an estimated C\$900-million in damages. They explain that more than a half-century of iron-ore mining has disrupted their traditional way of life, but IOC in September tried to have the case dismissed on the grounds that the indigenous communities should be suing the government not the company.

But as Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam Chief Mike McKenzie was pleased to announce on Tuesday, "The highest court in Quebec has made clear that Rio Tinto's subsidiary IOC will have to answer in court for its violations of our constitutionally protected rights, back to the 1950s." Rio Tinto started operating its megaproject in the First Nation's claimed territory in 1954, including 20 iron-ore mines (which were abandoned in 1982), nine iron-ore mines, a 578 km railway for the transportation of iron-ore, and three hydroelectric dams on the territory. In recent

years, Canada's indigenous activists have stepped up demands for more control over mining and energy projects, as well as a greater share of benefits from resource development, and this court decision bodes well that their interests may at last be taken more seriously.

2. First Nation explains that financial statements wait on federal gov info

As reported by The Globe and Mail, a Quebec chief says his reserve is only in violation of the federal First Nations Financial Transparency Act because Ottawa and the outside company it appointed to manage the community's money have refused to provide him or his council with the information they need to comply. The Algonquins of Barrière Lake are at the top of a list posted on the Aboriginal Affairs department's website of about 50 First Nations which failed to meet a November deadline for publishing an overview of their annual expenses, as required by the act. As a penalty for non-compliance, Ottawa has withheld money the First Nation needs to pay for its administration and economic development. But Casey Ratt, chief of the remote reserve about 230 kilometres north of Ottawa, says the Algonquins of Barrière Lake can't meet their obligations under the act because the federal Human Resources and Natural Resources departments, along with the Quebec government, have not told him how much money they paid to the community last year.

That information is presumably in the hands of Atmacinta Hartel Financial Management Corp., which was appointed by Ottawa as a third-party manager to keep track of the community's finances, according to Chief Ratt. However, he has said, Atmacinta has instead kept the First Nation in the dark: "We don't know how much money was actually there for us, and how much was issued," said Mr. Ratt. "We don't have the financial information."

The First Nation was put under third-party management several years ago when disagreements about who was the rightful chief left it financially dysfunctional. That rift has since healed and the Algonquins of Barrière Lake want to regain control of their community's administration. But Katherine Hensel, the lawyer for the First Nation, says her letters to Atmacinta requesting basic financial information have gone unanswered. "We don't know how much money was actually there for us, and how much was issued," said Mr. Ratt. "We don't have the financial information." To make matters worse, she said, Atmacinta has issued cheques on behalf of the First Nation knowing there was insufficient funds in the bank to cover them. And, she said, Atmacinta has made no effort to teach the First Nation's administrative staff how to resume control of the community finances, even though it is obligated to do so under the terms of its contract. And adding a further insult to their financial injury, Chief Ratt has said that the First Nation does not know how much Atmacinta is being paid for its services, but similar third-party managers have received more than \$1,000 a day – money that would otherwise go to the First Nation.

3. Brantford man organizes neighbourhood association of fellow Mohawks

As reported by The Two Row Times, a member of the Kanienkehaka ~ that's the Mohawk Nation, for my fellow English-speakers ~ living within the city of Brantford has begun a neighbourhood association. On its agenda is clearing up a number of assumptions on the part of Mayor Chris Friel and his council, as well as Conservative MP Phil McColeman and Liberal MPP Dave Levac.

"During the last municipal election Ward 5 councillor David Neumann came to my door and introduced himself as my representative at city hall," recalls Benjamin Doolittle. "I said, 'before I shake your hand, I need to ask you a question. Do you represent me as a Kanienkehaka?'" When his answer was no, Doolittle posed the question, "How can you come here and claim that you represent me then?" The second question he is asking is, "As Kanienkehaka, do I qualify to vote in a Canadian election?" Doolittle has sent letters to city hall seeking an answer to these same questions but has never gotten any kind of response to date, nor even an acknowledgement of the letters being received. According to Doolittle, "For us 'urban and migrant' Onkwehon:we people, it is not commonly known how we are represented, since we are not Canadians, and the Elected Band Council do not qualify to represent us. These questions if answered will show the conflict of representation. Its essential for all parties to understand the nature and the limits of any claims to representation."

Doolittle would like to organize Brantford's urban Native population who, like himself, are living in the city, into a recognized association to be better represented from an Onkwehon:we perspective without being assumed to be Canadian citizens. He believes Onkwehon:we people are in some kind of legal purgatory until they declare themselves Canadian citizens or allow Canada to assume that all natives are somehow qualified by inviting them to participate within their political and judicial system. But Doolittle's neighborhood association also includes non-Native Canadian citizens in addition to its primary demographic of Haudenosaunee members. He describes those non-Natives as guest-friends, or people who have recognized the benefits of mutual coexistence under the virtues of hospitality and the principles of peace and friendship: "These are known guests and friends who are standing with us to pressure their government to answer our questions," he explains. "As an organization, we carry more weight than individuals, who can be easily ignored, as records will show."

4. BC train derailment emphasizes safety concerns during labour dispute

As reported by Rabble.ca, the rail yard employees of Southern Railway (SRY) received an unwelcome New Year's greeting when the company issued a lockout notice to union members from CUPE 7000. The promised lockout of 126 CUPE members took effect on Monday January 5 with the company shutting the gates at work sites and using hired security guards to forcibly remove workers from the property. But as Digital Journal notes, the lockout was only a few hours old when a derailed, rolling onto its side in front of the company's main office in New Westminster, British Columbia. The derailment, which took place as the trains were being run by managers, highlights the concerns many have raised during the labour dispute. CUPE 7000 President Bill Magri said that SRY tabled a full concessionary package and was not willing to address either health and safety issues around fatigue and overtime or wages and working conditions. The lockout was preceded by a final offer vote that the membership rejected by 91 percent.

In the words of President Magri, "We have a number of safety concerns with regard to managers who may appear to be qualified on paper now (who are now) running trains despite, in many cases, having little experience actually running a train. Even those who have done so certainly have not put in the time, on a regular weekly basis, that our members have. So our primary concern is with public safety and maintaining the highest safety standards, especially given the transport of dangerous goods. Today's derailment only reinforces that concern."

5. Shell plans to cut tar sands jobs as oil markets remain in crisis

As reported by The Globe and Mail, Royal Dutch Shell PLC ~ better known as Shell Oil ~ is cutting hundreds of jobs at a massive Alberta tar sands project, stoking oil industry fears that more large-scale layoffs are in store as companies slash spending to cope with collapsing oil prices. Shell's move comes as Alberta prepares for a multibillion-dollar drop in provincial energy revenue, and while activists would generally lament the loss of jobs for hardworking people, having fewer folks labouring in the heart of the tar sands is welcome news as a necessary measure of the decreasing tar sands production in Canada's Mordor. This comes as some companies have already put longer-term tar sands projects on hold until markets stabilize, which analysts say may not start to happen until at least midway through 2015. In the meantime, grassroots organizing against those very projects will almost certainly continue, so the time for fossil fuel projects to come unpaused may be pushed off even further down the line.

6. New research warns global warming from tar sands will be 'catastrophic'

As reported by Indian Country Today Media Network, the Alberta tar sands region is high on the list of fossil fuel deposits that must be left underground in order to avoid potentially catastrophic global warming, a new study has found. The first-of-its-kind research, published in the journal Nature, identified not only the amount, but also the geographical locations of carbon-based fossil fuels that should not be extracted if the world is to keep global temperatures from rising above a dangerous threshold, according to scientists at University College London (UCL) Institute for Sustainable Resources.

The study shows that the overwhelming majority of the huge coal reserves in China, Russia and the United States should remain unused along with oil reserves in the Middle East, equivalent to all of the oil reserves held by Saudi Arabia. When it comes to Canada, the study found that the oil sands of Alberta should remain virtually untouched in order to stay below the 2°C warming threshold that nations have agreed upon and will finalize in December meetings in Paris this year. Unexploited Arctic oil and gas reserves should also be off limits. This is not the first time scientists have implied or stated that unused fossil fuel deposits should remain in the ground. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released last year came to similar conclusions, though without studying or naming specific regions. The researchers acknowledged that it wouldn't be easy and would in fact entail a massive paradigm shift ~ one that grassroots anti-pipeline activists and alternative energy advocates have been emphasizing for a great many years.

7. Imprisoned Saudi blogger receives first of 1000 lashes for 'insulting Islam'

As reported by The Guardian, Saudi blogger Raif Badawi was brought after to a public square in the port city of Jeddah on Friday after morning prayers and flogged 50 times before hundreds of spectators. According to a witness, Badawi's feet and hands were shackled during the flogging but his face was visible. He remained silent and did not cry out, said the witness, who spoke to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity for fear of government reprisal. Badawi was sentenced last May to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes. He had criticized Saudi Arabia's powerful clerics on a liberal blog he founded. But while the blog has since been shut down, he was also ordered to pay a fine of 1 million riyals (or about \$266,600 and received the aforementioned sentences for prison time and public lashings.

London-based Amnesty International said he would receive 50 lashes once a week for 20 weeks. The US, a close ally of Saudi Arabia, has called on authorities to cancel the punishment. However, rights activists say Saudi authorities are using Badawi's case as a warning to others who think to criticise the kingdom's powerful religious establishment from which the ruling family partly derives its authority. Badawi has been held since mid-2012 after he founded the Free Saudi Liberals blog. He used it to criticise the kingdom's influential clerics who follow a strict, conservative interpretation of Islam known as Wahhabism, which originated in Saudi Arabia. Rights groups argue that the case against Badawi is part of a wider crackdown on freedom of speech and dissent in Saudi Arabia since the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

Midway Music: *Bile Rising* by Compassion Gorilla

Feature: Two critical responses to the public outrage over last week's shooting in Paris, starting with...

Monia Mazigh's article "The False Debate Between Freedom of Expression and Religious Extremism" on [Rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca)

<http://rabble.ca/columnists/2015/01/false-debate-between-freedom-express...>

...followed by Tezu Cole's article for The New Yorker entitled "Unmournable Bodies"

<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/unmournable-bodies>

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Closing Song: *Killing God* by Comrade Black