



Nujignua'tegeg

news.listuguj.ca

July 2016, issue 24



On July 1st, the Listuguj Community Health Services hosted their 7th Annual Family Day.

In 2008 the Qospem Family Day was privately funded, and a group was created to fundraise for the event. In 2010 the event was brought into the Listuguj Crisis & Life Promotion program to secure funding from year to year.

In the beginning, it wasn't easy to have a Family Day. It required volunteers to help with fundraising and the event itself. In 2010, when The Listuguj Community Health Services began to host the event, it

ensured it would take place each year on Canada Day.

This year it ran from 11 A.M until 1 P.M. The weather was the perfect for being outside. Workers from the Listuguj Youth and Family Center were present, and brought canoes and kayaks for anyone wanting to go on the lake. They provided supervision for swimming around the wharf as well.

“All the workers there have been Water Safety Certified,” said Corey Metallic. “So that’s a relief for me.”

Hotdogs and Hamburgers were cooked throughout the day with pop and water available. Attendance was estimated to be roughly 120, with more arriving later.

It’s the help of volunteers, community programs and organizers that makes this possible each year.

Programs and Institutions helping with Qospem Family Day:
Brighter Futures, Community Wellness, Drug Strategy, CHRQ, Listuguj Crisis & Life Promotion and nurse Lori Wysote.



Listuguj



Listuguj channel



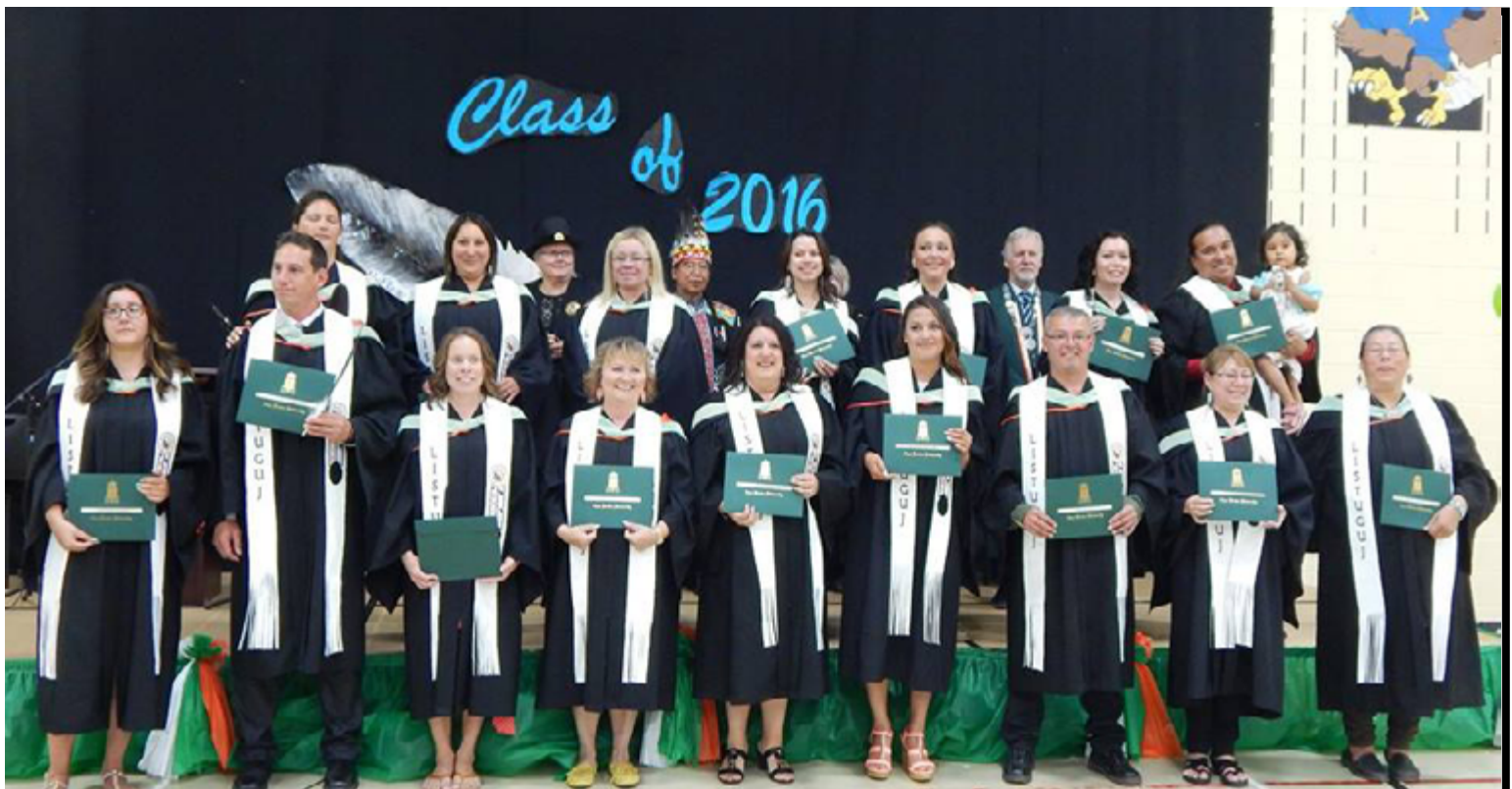
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First-ever in-community University class graduates

As the month and days to graduation grew closer, panic started to set in,” said Sarah Arseneault, in front of the crowd in the Alaqsit’w Gitpu School gym on June 30th.

Sarah is the class-elected valedictorian of the very first University course offered in Listuguj. The Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies (BACS), offered through the Cape Breton University, began in 2013. Nineteen of the original 23 students graduated this year.

“This program was truly a collective achievement,” said Dr. Fred Metallic, at the convocation. “We don’t learn by ourselves, we learn from – and with – each other.”

The number of classes taught by Listuguj teachers is a definite point of pride for those involved in developing the program. There are many points to be proud of.

The program was also tailored specifically for Listuguj. The schedule was meant to accommodate mature students, with all the commitments of adult life. Without saying it outright, the program essentially “Indigenized” mainstream courses. For example – Mi’gmaq History was offered instead of a standard history course.

“Many students learned for the first time about their Mi’gmaq identity, history, and language,” said Sandra Germain, who assisted in the coordination the BACS program part-time. “All those little pieces help to make the program belong to the students and to the community.”

Germain is also the coordinator of the Mi’kmaq Malisiet Bachelor of Social Work Program (MMBSW) at St. Thomas University. She is passionate about adult learning – having earned her own Masters at 50 years old. Through her experience, she was well aware of some of the obstacles for the community.

“I had been noticing for a number of years that the people in Listuguj had an interest in the Bachelor of Social Work program, however, they did not meet the prerequisites,” she said. The BBSW requires a Bachelor Degree. And earning one use to mean leaving home.

This was part of the motivation to bring a University program to the community, instead of bringing community members to the universities. And while there was a clear desire to bring in a program – it had to be done right.

“We wanted to maintain control of the program and not simply have them deliver their style of programming in the community,” said Germain. This led to many negotiations, and many aspects still left to improve on.

But Germain calls the BACS program “unprecedented.” The high percentage of graduates makes it clear that the program’s approach has hit on something.

“You can’t compare [traditional programs to] First Nations students working and learning with First Nations students,” Germain said. “I think that’s how we learn best.”

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Another act of Resistance



When representatives of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government and the Government of Quebec were talking on the phone, Listuguj loggers were already on the highway 132, ready to defend the exercising of Mi'gmaq rights.

The day before, Quebec had declared the wood harvested by the loggers “illegal” and closed the market for these logs. The GDS mill, the first main buyers, was instructed not to buy these logs because no stumpage fees were paid for them.

Listuguj loggers have access to 40,000 cubic feet of forest to cut. This includes the 15,000, cubic feet from a previous agreement with a provision exempting stumpage fees. Not really exempted but paid by Quebec itself. Now, Quebec wants Listuguj loggers to pay the stumpage fees on the other 25,000 cubic feet.

As the meeting started, the politeness faded and strong positions were taken on both sides. Quebec insisted on the payment, and Listuguj defended its Aboriginal right.

Chief Darcy Gray firmly expressed that “it’s not an option. We honor our people and we affirm that this is our territory and natural resources, and you stand in our way. Mi'gmaq people won't pay taxes to access the resources of its territory.”

Geoffrey Kelly, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs insisted on payment before opening the market to Listuguj loggers.

“We need to be able to decide and manage the sustainability of the forest not only for the Mi'gmaq but also for the Birds, the Moose, the Deer, medicinal plants, etc. It's our home.”

“For most of the loggers, it's their only income” said Alexander “Popoff” Morrison, the elected representative of the loggers. His working crew includes four individuals that support families of three or more. There are around 64 people working in the logging operations, and they and their families are all impacted by the outcome of the meeting.

As the meeting progressed, Chief, Councillors, the Director of Natural Resources and the logger's representatives discussed the condition from Quebec — “Pay stumpage fees and we will open the market.” The meeting was suspended for 20 minutes to deliberate, and when communication was reestablished, Listuguj response was unanimous in a diplomatic tone and very spirited tone from Councillor Wendell Metallic — “This is Mi'gmaq territory and we don't pay no fees for our natural resources.”

Quebec was also reminded about Mi'gmaq determination, and the many battles Listuguj has had to reaffirm and exercise its rights, including the 1998 blockade for the same issue. Quebec requested a pause to the meeting.

Back at the highway, loggers and supporters were waiting and ready to block the road and stand up one more time. But this time, Chief and Council were supporting the loggers.

The logging operations for the 40,000 cubic feet represents around six months of work, enough time to access the unemployment program for seasonal work. These operations are mostly non-mechanical. Around 20 timber jacks, 40 guys with chainsaw and 25 guys hauling logs. Most of them went through the training provided by Listuguj Natural Resources and are certified chain saw operators, complying with security and safety regulations.

“In the past Quebec had issues with the security, safety, and harvesting practices. In the last two years we have improved our standards to follow Quebec regulations”, said Listuguj Natural Resources Forestry Engineer Martin Cummings. These concerns were resolved and the issue of “paying stumpage fees as a condition to get a license was never raised in the past,” said Dr. Fred Metallic, Director of Listuguj Natural Resources.

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The trend has been set – a second University Degree will be offered in the community, starting this fall. McGill University will be offering a Bachelor of Education. Some of the BACS graduates have enrolled. So clearly the BACS program left a positive impression.

“There might have been times when we wanted to strangle each other,” continued Arseneault, with her classmates in the front

rows. “And we may not have always agreed on things. But when it came down to it, we were there for each other, and always will be.

How amazing is it to have the opportunity of completing a university degree in our own community! Today graduates – we make history. We are showing the people of our community that something like this is possible.”

Early in the meeting Minister Kelly insisted that these fees were necessary to cover the cost of fire safety, silviculture, and forestry management. Listuguj pays between 15 to 20 thousand dollars for fire safety and they pay an engineer to manage the logging operations.

When Quebec called back after their deliberation, their tone was less adamant. First the Minister insisted on improving the harvesting practices before announcing that Quebec would open the market. Chief Gray agreed to open discussions, but insisted that any negotiation will be on the basis that this is Mi'gmaq unceded territory and no taxes of any form should be paid by Mi'gmaq loggers to Quebec to access natural resources.

After the meeting Chief Gray went to the highway 132 to tell the loggers about the outcome. They celebrated, gave hoorays and high-fives. Not long after the road was cleared, the flags were rolled back and they all went back to their families. Another battle in Mi'gmaq history.

For logger Morrison "we just bought time because the main issue was not resolved. However, I'm glad that the loggers are now consulted and supported" he said. For now, there are no further negotiations scheduled. The loggers are organizing a



After the conference call with Ministers of Quebec Government, Chief Darcy Gray met the loggers who were glad and cheering for the outcome. Not long after the road was cleared.

meeting before the Listuguj Pow-Wow.

In fact Quebec has one more time avoided talks about an important question according to Dr. Metallic. "The Mi'gmaq tried to bring Quebec and Canada to the table to talk about the fundamental issue of land title. We need to be able to decide and manage the sustainability of the forest not only for the Mi'gmaq but also for the Birds, the Moose, the Deer, medicinal plants, etc. It's our home."



Lawrence Metallic, Curtis Barnaby, Captain Blaze Isaac, Pamela Wysote and Frank Brisk finished the snow crab season and they are now in Newport getting the vessel ready for next year. Listuguj fishermen are gaining respect from non-native fishermen in the Gaspesie region.



On August 5th we wish a Happy Birthday to Mary-Ann Mitchell, an avid reader of Nujignua'tegeg in Montreal. From Sonia & Gary Mitchell and her extended family and friends in Listuguj.

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