

Tok Blong Pasifik

Vol. 8, Issue 1

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Celebrating 35 Years of Action and Solidarity

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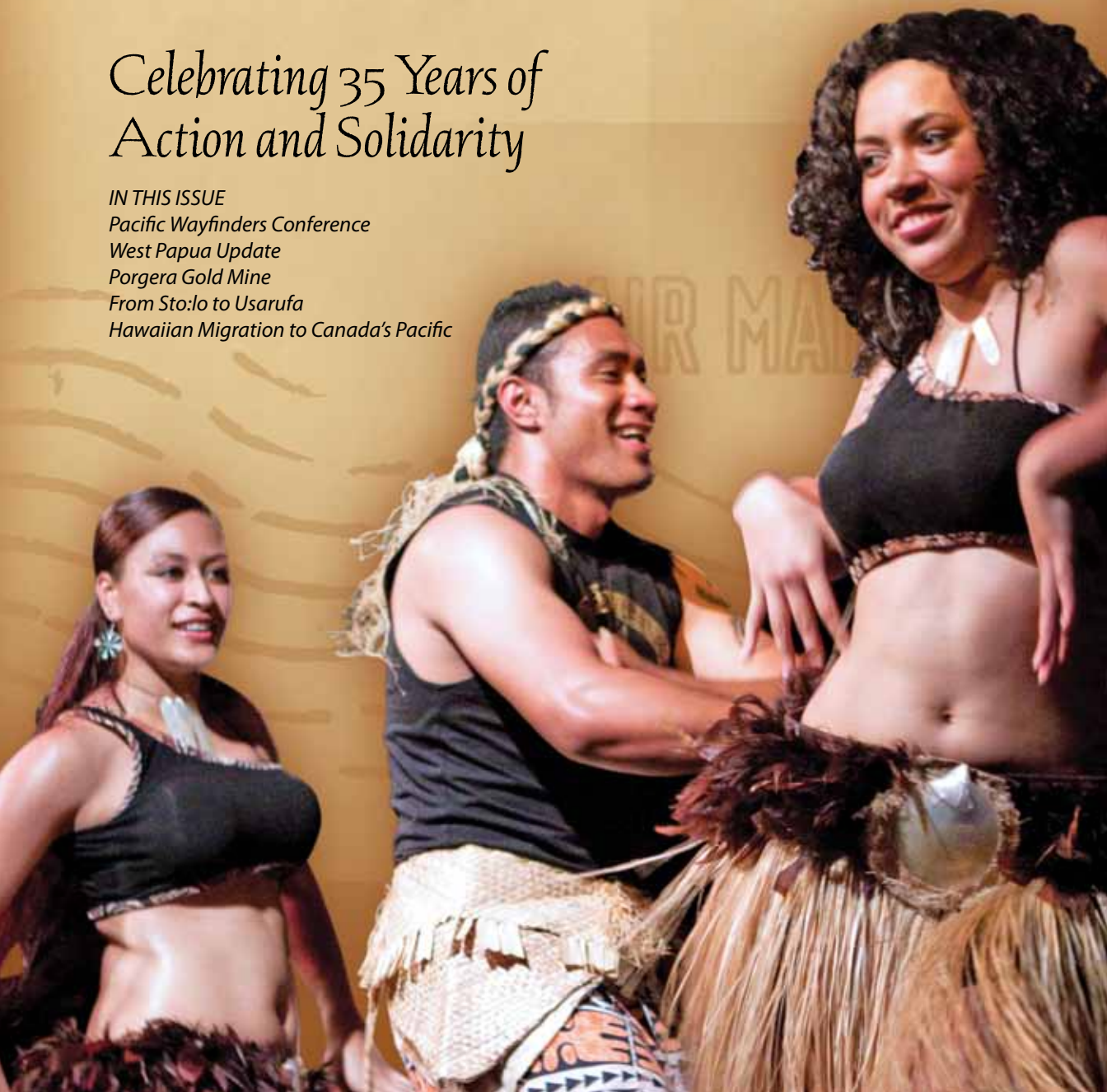
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PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP

Established in 1975, Pacific Peoples' Partnership is a unique non-governmental, non-profit organization working with communities and organizations in the South and North Pacific to support shared aspirations for peace, cultural integrity, social justice, human dignity, and environmental sustainability by:

- Promoting increased understanding among Canadians on issues of importance to the people of the Pacific islands.
- Advocating for social, political, and economic policy change at all levels.
- Fostering the development of sustainable communities in the Pacific.
- Facilitating links between indigenous peoples of the Pacific islands and Aboriginal peoples of Canada.
- Strengthening relations between Canadian and Pacific island communities and civil society organizations.

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ABOUT THE COVER:

Te Vaka in Performance on July 29th, 2010 in Victoria BC. The eight member performance group and winners of the 2010 Best Pacific Music Group Award spent nearly a week long cultural exchange on Vancouver Island with the Pacific Peoples' Partnership.

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TOK TOK *By April Ingham*

Recently the Pacific Peoples' Partnership staff had the honour to bear witness to an inspiring and historic event, the naming of the Salish Sea at the Songhees Nation on Canada's dramatic coastline. This newly named stretch of the north eastern Pacific Ocean rims the southern part of Vancouver Island, washing upon both Canadian and USA western shores. Spanish, French, and English place names have been dominant on the regional maps until now. Thanks due to the cooperation of visionaries, nations including the Canadian and American governments and the Indigenous Peoples who have from time immemorial resided upon these shores and voyaged these waterways. The appropriate name has been officially declared "Salish Sea".

This celebration was led by British Columbia's Lieutenant Governor Steven Point, a member of the Stó:lo First Nation. His powerful words expressed the day: "This gesture to aboriginal people is a long time coming," he told the diverse crowd. "It demonstrates, though, that there is a path to reconciliation, that there is a path that brings us out of darkness, that there is a way that we can find common ground and work together. Today is a wonderful day of celebration."

Indeed the summer of 2010 has been a celebration for Pacific Peoples' Partnership as we continue to mark our 35th Anniversary. We were thrilled to host "Te Vaka" the 2010 Pacific Group of the Year, for a cultural exchange that included an Ava Ceremony hosted by South Pacific Islanders upon Tsartlip territory with Chief Wayne Morris and local Elders in attendance, a series of Pacific dance & drumming workshops and a sold out performance of the award winning international group! Following on this series of successes our board of directors and staff organized our 3rd Annual One Wave Festival to rave reviews.

In these days of uncertainty, when so much turmoil is taking place throughout the world, it is easy to get caught in a whirlpool of despair. The way out is to look for the light and remember that the real power is with the people and at the grass roots. We must come together, celebrate each success and respect the teachings of the past as we look towards the future. It is with this in mind that PPP is presenting our 21st Pacific Networking Conference "Pacific Wayfinders: Celebrating



PPP Staff and members of the Board celebrating at our 3rd One Wave Festival. August 21, 2010. Photo by Mutsumi Shimizu

Indigenous Leadership and Knowledge" planned for November 10 – 13th, 2010 in Victoria, BC.

We urge all our PPP friends to help us mark this special occasion and achievement. Join us at the Conference and Honouring Ceremony. Send your reflections on your involvement with this incredible organization for our Anniversary celebrations. Tell us your Pacific stories. Join us on Facebook. Make a donation to support our critical work in West Papua. We need our friends more than ever!

Happy anniversary to all who love the Pacific and have supported our work past, present and future! Let us walk together in partnership for another 35 years.

In solidarity,

April Ingham
Executive Director



PPP Staff April Ingham & Amy Mawdsley at the Naming of the Salish Sea. Photo by Fern Albany

PACIFIC WAYFINDERS CONFERENCE



Artist Ake Lianga from the Solomon Islands now residing in BC Canada, is the designer of PPP's logo and a multi-talented Artist. This artwork "Changing Current" is part of his upcoming exhibition "Pacific Currents" at Alcheringa Gallery

PPP IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR 21ST PACIFIC NETWORKING CONFERENCE:

Celebrating Indigenous Knowledge and Leadership - 35 Years of Action and Solidarity

November 10th to 13th, 2010 | Victoria, BC Canada

The Pacific Peoples' Partnership is celebrating 35 years of work with communities and organizations in the South and North Pacific. We are inviting the Pacific Wayfinders and Changemakers to gather and reflect on the exciting innovations taking place throughout the Pacific. Together, we will inspire future directions for renewed partnerships and solidarity action.

This will be the 21st Pacific Networking Conference hosted by PPP. Drawing from PPP's mandate the conference topics will examine peace, human dignity, cultural integrity, social justice, and environmental sustainability. We envision the conference as a tool to review and reflect upon 35 years of partnership throughout the Pacific. Being a landmark year for the organization, we seek to renew old partnerships, strengthen current ones, and unfold new opportunities for the future. Looking beyond the discourse of problems, the conference will be an interactive forum that profiles community leadership and innovation that has emerged in the Pacific context. As a meeting place, it will provide a unique opportunity for dialogue and exchange between the Indigenous Peoples from all over the Pacific, North and South, together with other civil society actors, academics and organisations. Collectively, the event will serve to inspire renewed partnerships that steer towards horizons of increased local resilience and community wellbeing.

The conference will be held from November 10-13, 2010 at the University of Victoria and upon the Coast Salish territories. The session formats will include round table discussions, key note presentations, moderated panels, workshops and break out groups.

Confirmed Conference Key Note Speakers



Dr. Vilsoni Hereniko, *Professor of Pacific Studies*, University of the South Pacific, Fiji; award winning filmmaker; author and playwright



Chad Kalepa Baybayan, *Navigator-in-Residence*, Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo, Hawaii; Pwo (master navigator in the Micronesian tradition)

Cultural & Celebrations Components

A wide range of cultural celebrations, events and activities are being planned for the delegates and the public. This will include arts and cultural events, such as:

- A night of films from the Pacific including a screening of "The Land has Eyes";
- Postcards of the Pacific (message project);
- Special 35th Anniversary Edition of Tok Blong Pasifik;
- Honouring Feast for PPP champions and supporters;
- Showcase of PPP history and testimonials from interns, board members, volunteers, partners and supporters.

Pacific Currents: An exhibition featuring a cross-cultural collaboration by Solomon Islands artist Ake Lianga and Coast Salish artist John Marston. Drawing from their respective traditions, the artists explore cultural themes from both sides of the Pacific, by means of wood sculpture, painting, lino printing and serigraphy. The opening celebration at Alcheringa Gallery will also see the blessing of a completed seventeen-foot ceremonial war canoe. This magnificent work was initiated by Sepik carver Claytus Yambon working together with John Marston during last fall's *Hailans to Ailans* international exhibition.

A special ceremonial reception will be held at Alcheringa Gallery, 665 Fort Street, Victoria, BC Canada on *November 10th, 2010* from 7-9 pm www.alcheringa-gallery.com

Conference Opportunities

Pacific Wayfinders: Celebrating Indigenous Knowledge and Leadership will provide an opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon the work of historical PPP friends and partners. While engaging the next generation of Changemakers, through an examination of innovative solutions and best practices taking place within Indigenous communities.

Delegates, speakers and participants representing the South Pacific, the First Peoples, Métis and Inuit Peoples of Canada, Academia, Students, Faith Based organizations, NGOs and impassioned friends; will together chart the future and re-energize PPP's work into the current networks to face issues relevant to our stakeholders.

Together we will reflect on the past, celebrate the successes and inspiring innovations of today and plan for solidarity in our actions for tomorrow.

Watch our website www.pacificpeoplespartnership.org for Conference updates, program details, additional confirmed speakers and registration information.

Special thanks to our partners: *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Museum of Anthropology - UBC, Development and Peace, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), University of Victoria, Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives (CAPI), The United Church of Canada, Primate's World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF), First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Cultural Council, Rights & Democracy, Alcheringa Gallery, Travel with a Challenge, VIDEA and VanCity Credit Union.*

WEST PAPUA UPDATE *By Todd Biderman*

MRP Pass Landmark Resolution¹

Following a two-day meeting in Jayapura (June 9-10 2010), the Papuan People's Council (Majelis Rakyat Papua or MRP, a body formed by the Indonesian government in 2005) concluded that the implementation of special autonomy has failed, passing a broad resolution that the law should be returned to the Indonesian government.

With wide consultation with indigenous community and civil society groups, outcomes reflected frustration that the living conditions and human rights of Papuans have not improved under special autonomy, while economic exploitation of their land and resources increased. Up to 20,000 people were estimated to participate in a peaceful march delivering the recommendations to the provincial legislature (DPRP) in Jayapura on June 18 2010, mirrored by demonstrations throughout Papua.

Included in the MRP's 11 recommendations issued were demands for a referendum on Papuans' political future, internationally mediated dialogue, demilitarisation of Papua and release of all Papuan political prisoners.

Cordaid Blocked from West Papua²

On August 6 2010 the Jakarta Post reported that Cordaid, a Dutch funding agency, was banned from operating in West Papua. The ban came as a refusal from the Ministry of Social Affairs to extend a Memorandum of Understanding that expired in April 2010, alleging that Cordaid supported separatist elements via an exchange through Initiatives for International Dialog. The program promoted participation of women in development from a faith-based and women's perspective. Cordaid strongly denied helping Papua separatists. They've operated in West Papua for over three decades supporting social development and economic empowerment.

The respected US-based West Papua Advocacy Team (WPAT) noted that closing the Cordaid office in West Papua parallels the decision to close operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) there in 2009. "Shutting down these respected humanitarian organizations is consistent with Jakarta's policy to limit international awareness to Papuan struggles and

international assistance to Papuans who for decades have suffered from a dearth of basic humanitarian services and respect for human rights, areas of need addressed by Cordaid and the ICRC."

PPP's West Papua Project Update

We've been using space in Tok Blong Pasifik to keep our readership informed on PPP's current program in West Papua entitled "Papua - Land of Peace: Civil Society Leadership in Conflict Transformation", a 3-year initiative (funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Development & Peace and other Canadian donors) working alongside Papuan civil society partners strengthening their work in transforming the root dynamics of conflict. Now at the halfway mark there is already a tremendous sense of enriched capacity, opportunity, and connections made through on the ground activities. Some of these were highlighted recently in Just Change magazine.³ Programs combining capacity strengthening and education on human rights, sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, and health have engaged more than 40 organisations, community groups and local government agencies. Partners have reached several thousand people in vulnerable urban and rural communities confronting threats including ecological degradation and cultural loss, HIV/AIDS, and disempowerment from the socio-economic and political forces shaping their lives and compromise community wellbeing.

Supporting peaceful, just, and empowering change in the lives of our Papuan counterparts remains central to our mandate. The small sample of news reported here underscores the importance of PPP's focus there. While there are many ways to get involved, with CIDA's contributions contingent on PPP matching 25% of project costs over the program, donations are critical. By donating to this work you become active in building leadership in vulnerable Indigenous communities throughout Papua. Your generous support has sustained the work of PPP for 35 years, and we're proud to continue to work together.

PPP takes no official position on the political status of West Papua. We neither endorse independence claims nor Indonesian sovereignty, but support the right and aspirations for West Papuan people to decide their own future peacefully.

^{1,2} Adapted from reports courtesy of Tapol (<http://tapol.gn.apc.org>) and WPAT (<http://www.etan.org>)

³ Just Change, Issue18 (<http://www.globalfocus.org.nz/infoservices/justchange>)

PORGERA GOLD MINE: BLESSING OR CURSE? *By Dr. John Moore*



Jethro Tulin of Porgera, PNG, speaking at a Canadian press gallery.

The Porgera gold mine, in Enga Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG), has been a subject of controversy in recent years because of conflicts between the mine operators and local villagers, leading to a number of local people killed and injured and to destruction of property. In many ways, Porgera represents a typical case of the problems that can arise when a prosperous mining operation is set up in the midst of a relatively traditional agrarian society. I have seen the much greater negative impact of the Freeport Indonesia operation in Papua Province of western New Guinea, and the pattern is oft repeated elsewhere. The question arises: can mining and local lifestyles be compatible, and if so what has to happen?

The Porgera story is of considerable interest not only in PNG but also in Canada, because the principal investor and operator of the mine is the Toronto-based Barrick Gold Corporation, who acquired Placer Dome, the developer of the mine and also a Canadian company, in 2006. Since 2007, Barrick has owned 95% of the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV); the remaining 5% is held by Mineral Resources Enga (MRE), owned half by the Enga Provincial Government and half by the Porgera landowners.

Porgera began operations in 1989 and has grown to one of the ten top gold producers worldwide, with annual production of up to a million ounces of gold. In 2008, the Porgera mine produced 627,000 ounces of gold, worth approximately US\$546 million. Using a combination of open pit and underground mining, PJV moves of the order of 12-14 million tonnes of rock each year, most of which ends up as crushed waste rock

carried by local rivers 800 km into the Gulf of Papua.

There can be no doubt that the mine has conferred considerable benefit on the local population, as well as the governments involved. PJV has introduced health and educational services, and provided training, apprenticeships and jobs to local people, of whom many have become skilled mine workers with well-paid employment not only locally, but elsewhere in the world. Tax revenues are an important component in the gross domestic product of PNG. These benefits are not distributed uniformly, however and a number of negative aspects can be identified, among them:

1. The rapid influx of wealth has spawned increased crime and alcoholism in nearby communities;
2. Illegal mining and metal theft by villagers has provoked reprisals by the company and state authorities, including destruction of nearby settlements in 2009;
3. Proposals to relocate settlements, in order to reduce incursions by villagers and to provide acceptable living conditions for those residents of the Special Mining Lease (SML) area, have sparked protests (2007) and may have led to persecution by company and government security personnel (2009);
4. Allegations of environmental pollution and human rights violations have brought attention from international NGOs, leading in at least one instance to divestment in Barrick shares by a national pension fund.

View from Paiam - Porgera mine in background





I pili tribe representatives from Porgera, PNG, meet with Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch Canada

I will not dwell here on the allegations regarding environmental despoliation by Porgera. The mine waste disposal adds only about 1% to the sediment load of the rivers concerned; the main issue is the impact of chemical pollution, which remains a matter of serious debate. What is indisputable, however, are negative social impacts. The mine operator has acknowledged at least eight villagers killed by their security staff. In October 2009, Tyler Giannini from Harvard University's International Human Rights Clinic and Sarah Knuckey of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University testified before Canada's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development about the serious human rights abuses associated with the mine's security forces including rapes, gang rapes, physical assault and killings (Mining Watch Canada, 2010).

In the most recent example, Amnesty International (AI; 2010) has reported in well-documented detail on "Operation Ipili", carried out between April and July 2009 by members of the PNG police Mobile Squad, during which at least 130 and possibly up to 300 houses were burned in the SML area, accompanied by the forced eviction and displacement of the owners, beatings, alleged rapes and destruction of valuables including crops and livestock. It is clear that this operation was requested of the PNG government by politically connected groups in the Porgera area, ostensibly to suppress crime (including illegal mining) and that an increased police presence was widely supported. It is also clear from AI's account that both national and international laws were violated in the extreme, as well as that local political conflicts may have come into play. From the correspondence between AI and PJV and Barrick it is possible to conclude that, although the mine operators did not request the attack

on the villagers (and even asserted their right to live in the SML), they chose to ignore the abuses perpetrated by the Mobile Squad and as of last report have not asked the PNG government for an investigation of even the worst abuses. To date there has been no compensation from either PJV or the government. PJV and Barrick were also notably uncooperative with AI during its investigation, choosing to deny several of the villagers' allegations until the evidence required otherwise. This past May, representatives of the Porgera landowners travelled to Canada to publicize their cause and confront Barrick regarding its lack of action in reporting abuses or seeking an equitable relocation plan for the affected residents (Mining Watch Canada, 2010).

It is all too common for mining companies to find themselves in conflict with the inhabitants of the territory from which they are extracting – or seeking to extract – mineral resources. This is predictable, given that they need to acquire land for their operations, sometimes in large quantities; that mining generates waste, the disposal of which requires yet more land and is often polluting; and that mining activities, being largely excluded from urban areas, tend to be imposed on rural populations. Mines often generate large revenues during their lifetimes, making them popular with governments as sources of tax revenue. Local landowners tend to lack political influence, nor do they possess the wealth to build that influence or to legally contest a mining project that negatively impacts their quality of life and from which they stand to gain little – at least in their view. Especially where the government concerned is weak and/or impoverished (as in PNG), it is easily corrupted by the influx of mining revenue and prone to resort to unsavoury means to quell local dissent. It is, accordingly, not a surprise that, of recorded human rights abuses arising from industrial activity, the proportion associated with extractive industries is unduly high (28%; AI 2010). Companies often become complicit because a pacified local community, and a happy host government, make their corporate lives less complicated (and, it must be said, more profitable). Given even the best of intentions, a company that is operating in an alien culture (none of PJV's managers are Papuan) is prone to make errors in setting up local development measures and in dealing with varied and often conflicting demands.

Where does this road lead? Despite continually improved recycling and re-use of metals, demand for the products of mining will continue for the foreseeable future; mining is not going to go away. Corporate cultures change slowly, but I think we have seen improvement in social and

environmental ethics on the part of resource extractors over the past 20 years. There is still far too much window-dressing and “greenwashing”, but the values of today’s mining executives are different from those of the previous generation. This is in part due to the influence of the myriad social and environmental NGOs that are quick to act in response to reported abuses. This response is now possible thanks to the huge advances in communication technology – the Internet, cellular phones and digital imagery – over the past two decades. Dealings between local residents, companies and government will inevitably become more transparent. We may also hope that the governments of the countries in which the companies are incorporated (Canada in the case of Barrick) will continue to be pressured by their citizens to better watch over their corporations’ activities abroad. Canadian Bill C-300, which would permit aggrieved parties such as the Porgera landowners to bring legal action in Canada against a Canadian company, is an example of a potential way to induce our corporate sector to apply at least the same standards abroad as they are required to do at home.

The Porgera mine is estimated to have just a further ten years of life; if no new deposits are discovered in the vicinity, their will be little economic incentive for Barrick to spend money on righting past wrongs. We can only

hope that justice will be done before the company packs up and takes its business elsewhere.

John Moore, July 2010

Dr. Moore is a member of PPP Board and a retired professor of geology. He has lived and worked in Papua and West Papua Provinces of Indonesian New Guinea, as well as his native Canada and Ethiopia.

Four members of the Ipili tribe of Porgera, PNG, travelled to Canada in 2010 to bring attention to human rights abuses and environmental destruction related to Barrick’s Porgera Joint Venture gold mine

All Photos by Catherine Coumans, MiningWatch Canada

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Mr. Tulin speaking at a public demonstration

FROM STO:LO TO USARUFA

DISTANT PEOPLES SHARE A COMMON GOAL

From opposite sides of the globe two nations share in the struggle to preserve their native language.

By Greg Pauls, Teacher at Seabird Community School

Papua New Guinea has been widely recognized as the most linguistic diverse country in the world. With an area of 452,860 km² and more than 800 languages Papua New Guinea boasts an unparalleled wealth of language and culture. Coupled with a dramatic terrain exquisitely etched by precipitous ravines, soaring mountains and graceful coastline this beautiful bird-shaped island is an exotic and ancient masterpiece among the islands of the South Pacific. Yet, as it is with every country on earth, the people of the land are the ones who truly make a place beautiful. Each contributing culture, with its unique food, dress, music and dance bring the very earth to life.

Eighteen hours time difference and some 10,800 km away on the West Coast of Canada there is a similar beauty reflected off our Pacific waters. Rocky peaks play host to the eternal ebb and flow of rain and snow pouring their life down to lush valleys and mossy coast line. A land rich in its own unique physical beauty holds with ancient arms a dazzling array of traditional cultures. Canada's Aboriginal peoples continue to bring some of the deepest textures, rhythm, story and song the Canadian landscape.

As the people of Papua New Guinea and the coastal First Nations of Canada gaze out onto the shared waters of the Pacific both are keenly aware of the distortions in an ancient reflection. Waves of global influence, some good, others quite the opposite, are eroding and diluting the ancient traditions and cultural beauty of the land. Central to this struggle against cultural erosion is the preservation of language. Great strength and courage are needed to stand against the onslaught of this storm, and from each side of our mighty waters amazing work is being done.

In the Eastern Highlands province of Papua New Guinea the Usarufa have been making a concerted effort to re-establish their language. As is happening among many of the people groups of Papua New Guinea, the Usarufa

language, with less than 1500 speakers, is being pushed out of use. Through the pressures and influence of larger language groups, the essential use Tok Pisin in order to communicate between language groups and an National Education system that is, for the benefit of global relevance, English based, there seems to be very little space left for Usarufa. Having recently been assessed and deemed moribund the long term viability of the Usarufa language is indeed low, but even this has not dampened the passion and focus of the leaders of this important work. With very few resources teachers have been trained and small schools are now open to young and old alike, pressing hard the value of becoming literate as well as fluent in their traditional language.

Among the Sto:lo people, work has recently been completed to deepen the aging roots of the Halq'eméylem language, but there is an urgency to the work. To date there are only two fluent Halq'eméylem speakers! Against such odds one might feel that there is little hope but the opposite seems to be the case. It has spurred on cultural leaders of the Sto:lo to use what resources they have to ensure the survival of their language, the very pulse





of the culture. In 2008, work was completed on the Halq'eméylem Integrated Resource Package and in the Fall of 2009 it was officially recognized in a special ceremony and made available throughout the Provincial educational system. The language once synonymous with the powerful currents of the Fraser River is now positioned to begin seeping back into Aboriginal and Public Schools throughout BC and Canada.

When Shari White, the High School principle, and Evelyn Peters, the head of the Seabird Community School cultural faculty, heard of the challenges and hard work of Usarufa people, the desire to help led to immediate action. After some discussion it was decided that, as part of the High School Woodworking program, we would build a type of light weight lap top desk that could be used in the Usarufa literacy schools. The high school students were challenged to come up with a design that would be robust, handle travel, store for basic school supplies and provide a versatile writing surface. The result was a 12" X 15" X 3" (30.5 cm X 38 cm X 7.75 cm) birch and plywood box with a small divider and a lid which could be written on but painted with chalk board paint in the event that paper became scarce. When eleven boxes were complete we put out a plea to the community to provide supplies to fill the boxes. Paper, pens, pencils, erasers and white chalk were generously supplied.

As it has turned out the boxes have become a catalyst for much bigger endeavours. Plans are now under way for a trip to Papua New Guinea! Many details will need to be arranged and a great deal of financial support raised but it is the deep desire of the school and community leaders to see a group make the trip to PNG. As it stands now we are making arrangements to connect with community leaders from the Usarufa and surrounding area to share

knowledge on traditional medicines. The intention is to encourage those who have the knowledge of traditional medicines to ensure it is passed on but to also be aware of some of the key issues surrounding the protection of tribal knowledge. We will be stopping in at one or more of the schools to see how language instruction is being done and encourage the youth to participate in Usarufa literacy and fluency.

Lastly, we want to participate in some sort of community support. I found out that some years back the Usarufa village of Imikori worked hard and saved funds for sewing machines in order to help cloth orphans and widows as well as others in need. Unfortunately the sewing instructor pulled out at the last minute leaving the community with valuable pedal sewing machines they could not use. With the resources available and a number of our team being skilled seamstresses it seemed a perfect fit for us to run a three day sewing workshop for the women of that village. If you would like more information or have resources that you would like to send our way in support or our upcoming 2011 trip please contact Greg Pauls via email at gregp@seabirdisland.ca.

So as you read this article the boxes are making that 10,800 km trip, a small act of generosity coming from a heart of understanding. For although we are separated by a vast ocean and unable to speak each other's language, we share a common purpose. We hope to stand shoulder to shoulder in the Easter Highlands in 2011. But even from this great distance we strive together to preserve and hold high traditional language and with them the cultures that are the beauty, vibrancy and vitality of our homelands. We are filled with the hope that future generations of Sto:lo and Usarufa will, from opposite sides of the globe, raise a unique voice of wisdom to enrich the peoples of the earth.



HAWAIIAN MIGRATION TO CANADA'S PACIFIC

By Amy Mawdsley, *PPP Cultural Events Coordinator*

Pacific Peoples' Partnership nurtures connections between Indigenous peoples of North America and the South Pacific to collaborate on shared concerns of the environment, land, cultural integrity, health and human rights. As a new staff member to PPP I was surprised to learn of a Hawaiian migration to Canada's Pacific in the late 1800's, and that these north south Pacific Indigenous relations have taken place for over a hundred years. Immediately I was curious as to why the Hawaiians left their homes and what their descendants' lives in Canada look like today. What was the Hawaiian experience while settling in the Pacific Northwest in the nineteenth century? Did they have connections with relatives in Hawaii? Do they continue to celebrate their culture? What characterized interactions between Hawaiians and local Indigenous groups? In this article, I will give a snap shot of the background to this migration, the Hawaiian experience in Canada, and contemporary Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest.

Late Coast Salish elder, Simon Charlie, had spoken about Hawaiian-Coast Salish canoes travelling back and forth across the Pacific before the Spanish and English had come to the west coast of Canada. Oral histories pass on these stories, in which intermarriage brought the two nations together.

The first written recordings of the contact between Hawaiian and the Indigenous peoples of the northwest coast tell of Captain Cook's initial visit to the Hawaiian Islands in January 1778. After this time, Hawaii became a main trading and wintering port for trading vessels. European and American traders transported Hawaiians to North America as labourers and crew; many later settled in the Pacific Northwest, such as on Salt Spring Island. Hawaiians continued to embrace their culture with traditional luaus, and eating foods cooked traditionally.

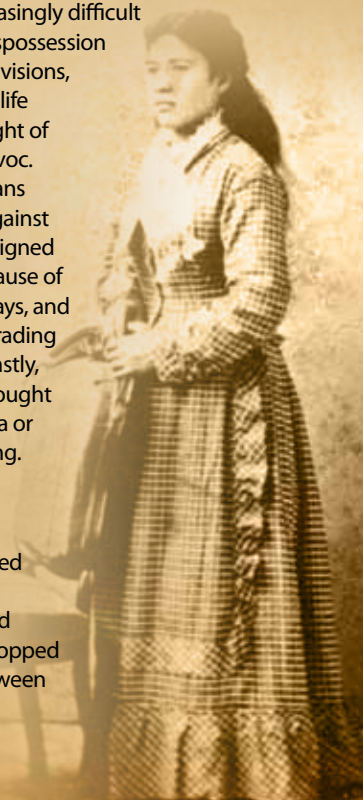
Before European contact, Hawaii contained numerous chiefdoms. The chiefdoms grew in size until the 1700's when it was standard for there to be a dominant chief of each island, and they continued to balloon until most

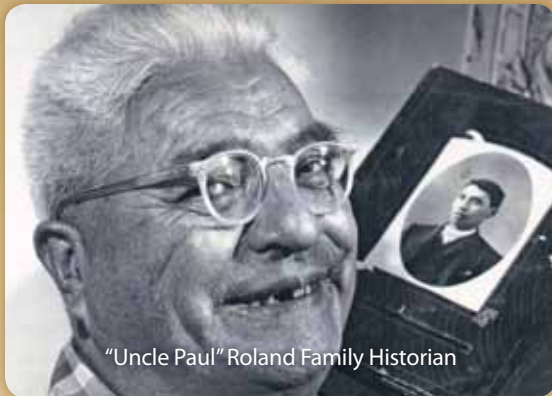
of Hawaii was controlled by three chiefdoms in the mid 1770's. The founders of these chiefdoms all died within ten years, opening up space for successors and heirs to gain power. Civil wars broke out to gain authority, and subsequent inter-chiefdom wars occurred to gain more territory and power. Through his high rank, alliances with Europeans as advisors, and warfare against chiefdoms, King Kamehameha successfully establish a kingdom encompassing most of Hawaii in 1796 which he maintained for 25 years.

There is record of seven Hawaiians joining trading vessels in the late 1780's and 90's, primarily as curiosities to Europeans. Between 1787, when Hawaiians first arrived in the Pacific Northwest and 1898, the year that Hawaii became an American territory, it has been estimated that over 1000 Hawaiians migrated to the Pacific Northwest.

Life in Hawaii became increasingly difficult for native Hawaiians: the dispossession of traditional lands, social divisions, shifts away from traditional life and beliefs, and the onslaught of foreign diseases created havoc. It is likely that some Hawaiians were persuaded or taken against their will. Other Hawaiians signed employment contracts because of the erosion of traditional ways, and enticed by entrepreneurs, trading goods, and foreign lands. Lastly, participation in trade was sought as a means to develop mana or improve one's social standing.

Parallel to other Indigenous peoples' experience, the population in Hawaii declined sharply after contact with foreigners due to introduced diseases. The population dropped from 300,000 to 80,000 between





"Uncle Paul" Roland Family Historian

Cooks arrival and the mid-1800's, and down to 30,000 by the late 1800's.

Hawaiians were hired as labourers in the Fur Trade, and as ship crew as they were recognized as being advanced swimmers and boaters. These abilities were highly valued by the European traders in the Pacific Northwest. Hawaiians were employed by the Montreal-based North West Company's, which was later absorbed by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821. HBC's Fort Vancouver, was established in 1825 at the mouth of Columbia River as a main center for trading, and was run by Hawaiians, by producing food, and performing manual labour.

The Hawaiians called themselves Kanakas, meaning 'person' in Hawaiian. They settled on West and North Vancouver, Victoria, Fraser River, Maple Ridge and Gulf Islands, including Salt Spring Island, Russell Island, and San Juan Islands. The presence of Hawaiians is reflected in places names such as Kanaka road, Kanaka Place Restaurant, Kanaka trail, and Kanaka bluff. The settlements often consisted of subsistence farming, but Hawaiians became involved in wage labour with saw mills, fishing, logging and ferrying people by boat.

The California Gold Rush began in January of 1848, drawing many Hawaiians whose contracts had expired with trading companies. Hawaiians were drawn from both North America and Hawaii. In California, they faced discrimination as an ethnic group, were required to pay a foreigner tax to mine for gold, and were excluded from some employment.

The thirteen year Pig War ending in 1872 in which Britain and America disputed ownership of the Gulf Islands.

Many Hawaiians chose to live in British territory because they received more respect and rights, such as the right to own property, be naturalized, vote, and in the Oregon Territory, Hawaiians were not allowed to purchase liquor or testify against white people.

The tracing of the Hawaiian migration and descendants is challenged by the inconsistency, and flexibility of Hawaiian names in records. Names were tremendously fluid in that Hawaiians could be known by a first name, last name, nick-name or an adopted Christian name. The marriage of Hawaiian women out of the Hawaiian community is difficult to follow because they would take their husbands names and move away. Inter-marriage followed patterns. Primarily Hawaiian men came to the Northwest and they married First Nations women. There were very few European-descent women, so many European men married second generation Hawaiian women.

Hawaiian settlements in the isolated Gulf Islands were unique in that they allowed for continuation of cultural practices, such as Luaus, beyond the first generation of settlers. These settlements had more inter-marriage of Hawaiians than in other regions, carrying on ethnic identity and cultural practices that were lost in other parts of the Pacific Northwest.

Kate Roland kindly shared some of her Hawaiian and First Nations family history with me. The Rolands are descendants of William Naukana, who came to North America to work in the fur trade from 1845 to 1856. William acted as an interpreter between Indigenous peoples and European fur traders, and helped to run forts as a jack-of-all-trades, largely at a fort on the San Juan Islands.

Growing up on Salt Spring Island, Kate's family paid little attention to their Hawaiian ancestry, but continued Hawaiian traditions by using Hawaiian expressions, and celebrating luaus. The Luaus, or large parties would go on for days and include tremendous amounts of food including beef, pork, venison, salmon, and clams. Kate's Uncles and Aunties would sing Hawaiian music with English lyrics. The older generations would not speak Hawaiian, because they preferred to integrate into their new community, although, Hawaiian and First Nations words would be spoken. Despite the expense, Kate's family encouraged their children to learn instruments. While growing up, Kate saw these practices as normal parts of life, rather than an expression of her Hawaiian roots.

Kate shared memories of the time when Hawaiian connections developed with her family in the early 1970's. A student group from Honolulu came to Vancouver Island, and was lead by a guide, named Pat Crofton, who mentioned in passing that Hawaiians lived on Salt Spring Island. A reporter who accompanied the group immediately picked up on this and organized to visit Salt Spring Island. The reporter wrote a large article about a "Hawaiian colony" which sent shock waves throughout Hawaii. Kate's Uncle Paul was the family historian, and was sponsored to visit Hawaii in 1972. He was greeted and welcomed with an outpouring of love, as about 300 Hawaiian relatives lined up to present him with stacks of flower leis. Kate describes his arrival as being "treated like royalty." Uncle Paul passed on Roland family history to Kate, who shares her knowledge with the next generation, as they are showing interest in their Hawaiian roots.

The Rolands also have First Nations ancestry. Kate's grandparents on her father's side both had First Nations mothers. It is not clear where they came from, but likely one from Mayne Island, and the other possibly from the San Juan Islands. As a musician, Kate recently performed both the Hawaiian wedding song and Hawaiian chants at her sisters wedding.

Another local Hawaiian history is that of Maria Mahoy. First Married to Abel Douglas, Maria was the daughter of Hawaiian William Haumea and her unknown mother who likely died during Maria's birth. On Salt Spring Island, she had six children with Douglas until their marriage fell apart and Maria remarried to George Fisher, who had an English father and a First Nations mother. Upon her father's death, Maria inherited her fathers land and orchard on Russell Island, where she lived with her second husband, George.

As a mother of twelve, Maria is remembered by her descendants as hardworking, resourceful, and an excellent midwife. Largely self-sufficient, the family grew strawberries, and other fruits and vegetables. Maria's husband would fish for both his family and for an income. They also harvested seaweed, sea urchins, clams, and octopus from the ocean. Maria passed on her Hawaiian culture to her children and grandchildren by teaching Hawaiian words, hula, and meaning of hand movements. She was often visited by First Nation friends, who would give her fish and she would offer tea to her guests. Maria held large gatherings with her neighbours,

and they would dance to fiddle, piano, and ukulele music. The Mahoy descendants continue to visit Russell Island since it was sold around 1960.

Hawaiian descendants continue to reside in the Pacific North West. Over the last 20 years, there have been numerous reunions and gatherings of Indigenous Hawaiians and First Nations groups in British Columbia and Washington. Beginning in 1992 in Fort Langley, the Hawaiians of the Northwest coast are re-establishing ties with each other and with Hawaiians in the motherland. The Hawaiian Connection holds events where Hawaiians living across the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii came together to celebrate culture and history. The similarities of physical appearances struck the descendants so much so that one man joked that he saw his deceased uncle nine times as he navigated the gathering's parking lot. Numerous other Hawaiian reunions incorporate local Indigenous groups which share lineages and experiences.

Today, many Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest are working diligently to fill in their family trees. Understanding of the Hawaiian migration to the Pacific Northwest fills in the details of the history of British Columbia and highlights the connections between local people and Pacific Islanders.

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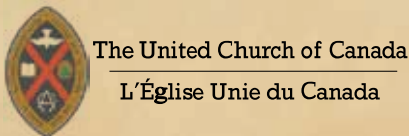
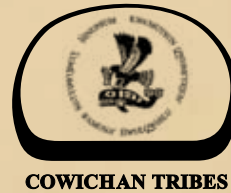
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