

Circles of Light

January 2001 – Number 8

Umiak Builders Inc. Ideal Boats for Inuit Hunters

by Wendy MacIntyre

Umiak Builders Inc. specializes in custom-designed boats built for tough arctic conditions. The company's boat builders translate the traditional flat-bottomed umiak design into modern materials like fibreglass or aluminum. For Inuit hunters in Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) and Nunavut, Umiak's vessels offer a practical, thoroughly reliable and affordable form of transport.



Umiak Builders' staff have over 20 years of boat-building experience.

Based in Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Umiak Builders is a subsidiary of Nayumivik Landholding Corporation, created under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

"There are no other boat manufacturers this far north," says Umiak manager **Sean Aitchison**. Until Umiak was founded in 1995, Nunavik residents had to purchase boats manufactured in the south and brought in by air- or sea-lift. Now, Umiak

ships its own boats by sea and air to customers throughout the North.

Aitchison, who grew up in Kuujuaq, knows what clients want: a work boat that is solidly constructed and buoyant, yet able to carry a substantial cargo.

Umiak's six full-time Inuit staff have over 20 years of boat-building experience. The company's 465-square-metre (5,000-square-foot) shop is located in Kuujuaq near the Kuujuaq River, with easy access to Ungava Bay and the Hudson Strait, south of Baffin Island. As the centre of all transportation, communications, commercial and administrative infrastructure for the region, Kuujuaq is the ideal location for Umiak Builders.

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Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Canada

"Umiak Builders..."
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On the company's Web site, prospective clients can view images of the basic types of boats Umiak has available. There are the pilot and full-cabin models, which are ideal for long trips and bad weather. The cuddy cabin (partially covered cabin) model provides both a large dry storage area and good protection for the pilot. This model is sturdy enough to carry a load of up to about 1,640 kilograms (3,600 pounds), but still light enough

to be transported by trailer to and from the beach.

Umiak's open-boat model is a skiff that has undergone extensive testing. Its design and large cargo capacity make it a good choice for a heavy-duty work boat.

Customers present Umiak with their specifications; the boat builders then construct a custom-design boat that will provide a lifetime of service.

For hunters on land, as well as recreational users, Umiak also serves as the local Honda, Mercury and Bombardier skidoo dealers.

"We're also the region's Choko clothing distributor (skidoo and snow-mobile clothing)," says Aitchison about the company's diversified service.

For more information about Umiak Builders, visit the company Web site at <http://inuit.pail.ca/umiak-builders> *

Makivik Businesses

Building on the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

by Raymond Lawrence

When the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed 25 years ago, it might not have answered all the questions for the people of Nunavik (Arctic Quebec). But it did provide them with a solid base from which they have been able to develop their economy and control of their own affairs.

Although there have been struggles, Inuit in Nunavik have enjoyed successes by building on an agreement that was created in a mere two years. Under the prudent guidance of the Makivik Corporation (formally established three years after the agreement was signed), the people of Nunavik have invested in everything from regional businesses to the stock exchange.

Inuit learned to build on the strengths of the agreement, which remains flexible and responsive to their needs. "There's an aspect of uniqueness to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement because it was the first comprehensive agreement in modern times, and therefore it didn't have all the bells and whistles that successive claims have.... There have

been 13 complementary agreements (negotiated) since it was signed," says Hendrie. "We see it as a living document."

In the mid-1990s, for example, one was signed that allows for the commercial harvest of caribou from the George River herd. As a result, Makivik created a subsidiary company called Nunavik Arctic Foods which produces and markets a range of caribou products.

Under the agreement, the people of Nunavik received \$90 million over 20 years, allowing them to invest as they see fit. "We follow a conservative criteria for investment. We have some wholly owned subsidiary companies and then we have some joint ventures," says Hendrie.

Makivik has four wholly owned businesses, including First Air, the third-largest airline in Canada; Air Inuit, which has carried more than 1 million passengers through Nunavik skies; Nunavik Arctic Foods, whose caribou paté is served in

some of North America's finest restaurants; and Halutik Fuel. Makivik's joint venture enterprises include Pan Arctic Inuit Logistics Corporation, which is involved in operating and maintaining the North Warning System on behalf of the Department of National Defence. Hendrie adds that the Corporation currently has money in stocks, bonds, and money markets, and also used that one-time capital pool to create Makivik Corporation. *



Raymond Lawrence is a freelance writer of Ojibway and European ancestry.

**Makivik
Businesses**

Wholly owned: Air Inuit, First Air, Nunavik Arctic Foods Inc., Halutik Enterprises Inc.

Joint venture companies: Pan Arctic Inuit Logistics (PAIL), Unaaq Fisheries Inc., Nunavut Eastern Arctic Shipping (NEAS), Natsiq Investment Corporation

For more information, visit Makivik's Web site at www.makivik.org



Qikiqtaaluk Corporation Looking at the Long Haul

by Raymond Lawrence

If something is brought north to the Arctic, it goes by air or sea.

Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, the economic development arm of Nunavut's Qikiqtani Inuit Association, is the direct result of the Nunavut Land Claim settlement. This corporation has two massive cargo ships for arctic transport. But it has not limited itself to the sea when it comes to conveying cargo.

Three years ago, the corporation formed a business link with Canadian Helicopters Limited. With mining starting to heat up in the North, the helicopter venture promises financial stability in the long run.

Because training is the key to full Inuit involvement in the local economy, the joint venture has a special education component. This will help qualified Inuit get training in aviation-related fields so that they can fill positions as they arise.

"When you look at the big picture up here, you'll see that mineral exploration and mining are going to be the cornerstone of the economy in the long run," says **Michael Hine**, manager of mineral development with the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation. "We felt that we'd like to be involved in providing services to the exploration companies because we weren't in a position where we could actually do it ourselves. That led us to look around to see who would be interested in partnering with us. Canadian Helicopters was looking around at the same time so we put a joint venture together, and it's worked out well for both parties over the past three years."

"We provide some marketing in the Arctic to help Canadian Helicopters get business, but we don't own or fly the helicopters," he explains. "We

Qikiqtaaluk Corporation has a joint venture with Canadian Helicopters Limited.



keep a finger on the local pulse and do some of the marketing and we get a percentage of the profits."

The joint venture is also sponsoring some scholarship candidates, Hine adds. "We have one person who went to the flight engineer school and another who is just finishing pilot school. The flight engineer has worked for Canadian since he got out of school two years ago and we expect the pilot to work for Canadian when he finishes."

"The ultimate goal is to have local guys up here flying these machines and working on them," Hine emphasizes.

Qikiqtaaluk Corporation's investment in cargo shipping is another area in which it expects to employ a number of Inuit. "We have two relatively new cargo ships that can carry crated general cargo and containerized goods," he says.

This venture involves a number of northern partners, and not just because cargo ships are expensive: "Qikiqtaaluk felt it was important that we involve the three Inuit organizations that are directly served by these ships," Hine says.

From early July to late October, the ships are going around the clock and therefore have to keep to tight schedules. "When the ship pulls into the bay, they hustle like crazy here and then it goes off to the other communities," says Hine.

For more information about Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, visit the Web site at www.qikiqtaalukcorp.nu.ca *



Osoyoos Land Claim Settlement Supporting Economic Development

by Diane Koven

Chief **Clarence Louie** of the Osoyoos First Nation cites the old real estate adage for the community's economic success — location, location, location. Situated in the lush south Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, the First Nation has been able to take advantage of the moderate climate and lush surroundings in developing several successful businesses.

With the help of funds received in one of the largest specific land claim settlements in British Columbia history (a total package of \$11.5 million comprising both federal and provincial contributions), the Osoyoos First Nation has been able to intensify its efforts to improve and add to its various economic ventures.

Chief Louie is committed to long-term planning. "Land is more important than money," he says. "We have bought a piece of land and are going through the process of having it added to the reserve. Then we are looking at hopefully acquiring additional property so that there will be long-term benefits."

Although the Osoyoos First Nation runs eight successful businesses, the community is always mindful of its obligation to the environment. Says Chief Louie, "A portion of your business earnings must go to support environmental programs. At Osoyoos, we participate in water quality programs and fund fish and wildlife enhancement. We are also protecting one of the most endangered habitats in all of Canada, the South Okanagan 'desert lands.'" The First Nation has set aside about 360 hectares (890 acres) of prime real estate for ecological purposes.



Chief **Clarence Louie** recently received the "2000 Economic Developer of the Year Award" from the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers.

The community's Nk'Mip Vineyards is the largest privately owned vineyard in Canada and there are plans to use some of the settlement funds for further expansion. A market and feasibility study is under way for a joint venture that will result in the establishment of North America's first Aboriginal-owned winery. A \$3.5-million golf course expansion is in the final stages, with the grand opening scheduled for this spring. Another major project involves 72 all-season RV (recreational vehicle) sites being added to the community's existing campground.

Chief Louie was recognized for his business acumen and leadership at the seventh annual conference of CANDO (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) held in Yellowknife this past September. Named Economic Developer of the Year, he was chosen by the 260 delegates from four finalists, out of an original list of 25 candidates from across Canada.

"Being in business for Aboriginal corporations," said Chief Louie to conference delegates, "is far more than jobs and revenue — it means supporting the very core of what makes up your community, to re-invest some of those profits back in your people, your programs and services, to improve the quality of life and retain your heritage."

As Chief of the Osoyoos First Nation for 14 years, Louie has shown leadership in improving his people's social programs through economic self-sufficiency. "The success of your people," he says, "is directly tied to how your people participate in the economy of your area." A portion of the profits from each of the First Nation's companies goes toward funding social programs for health, education and Elders' needs, following the socio-economic model that Chief Louie has implemented with such success. ★

Nunasi Pays Dividends Jobs for Inuit Shareholders

by Wendy MacIntyre

From state-of-the-art optical services to environmental reclamation, Nunasi Corporation is earning dividends — including employment opportunities — for all Inuit of Nunavut.

First established in 1976 as the economic development arm of Inuit Tapirisat, Nunasi is a birthright development corporation. This means that every Inuk in Nunavut is a shareholder, with Nunasi jointly owned by all Inuit in the territory.

Nunasi's mandate is to maximize profits for its shareholders, while creating training, employment and other economic opportunities for Inuit. The 26 companies, which Nunasi owns wholly or partly, have created a wide range of jobs for Inuit shareholders.

"We're very diversified," says Nunasi CEO **Fred Hunt**, "from air transportation to retailing clothing to construction."

By the time the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement was finalized in 1993, the corporation was already self-sufficient. But the agreement made a crucial difference in terms of joint-venture opportunities, Hunt explains. The settlement has also made it easier for Nunasi to access capital from conventional sources.

"We've taken off since then," Hunt says. "We've been able to reap the rewards of all those aspects of the agreement that encourage economic development. It made us a player."

Through Nunasi's joint venture with the Alberta-based NorTerra Group of companies, for example, \$1 million has been invested annually in career development for Inuit. One of those joint ventures is Canadian North Airlines, which provides jet and cargo services linking Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to southern Canada and the rest of the world.

Arctic Spirit Clothing Company is one of Nunasi Corporation's many wide-ranging ventures.



Last May, Nunasi and one of its regional counterparts — Kitikmeot Corporation — purchased a major player in the construction and clean-up industries in the Kitikmeot region. Hunt says the purchase of Fred H. Ross and Associates puts the two corporations in a better position to take advantage of potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in clean-up contracts.

Nunasi Projects Inc., one of the Nunasi's 100-percent Inuit-owned companies, already has extensive experience in environmental reclamation, including clean up of Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line sites.

Other Nunasi ventures include Arctic Spirit Clothing Company, which markets sports clothing with a northern flair, and Polar Vision Centers Ltd., a full-service optical company with outlets in Yellowknife and Iqaluit.

Nunasi is also part owner of the Iqaluit- and Yellowknife-based Top of

the World Travel, specializing in corporate and commercial travel services for northern air travellers. And Nunasi Helicopters Inc., which the corporation owns in joint partnership with Northern Mountain Helicopters, has gross sales of over \$40 million.

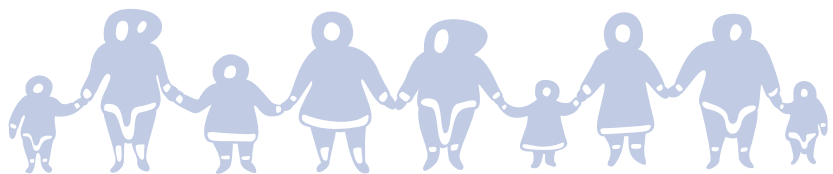
Hunt emphasizes that Nunasi works together with Nunavut's three regional development corporations: Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, Sakku Investment Corporation and Kitikmeot Corporation.

"We are going to work together for our common shareholders to prosper in every way," he says. "Our strategic plan allows us to grow in concert with our regional brethren."

Nunavut's three regions are represented on Nunasi's Board, and it is the board members who decide where Nunasi's corporate profits should go. To date, monies have gone into enhancing programs for Inuit Elders and support for traditional hunters.

For the future, there seems no limit to Nunasi's potential to create jobs for its shareholders through diverse ventures and partnerships.

Visit Nunasi's Web site at www.nunasi.com *



Cree Construction Helping Build James Bay Region Economy

by Raymond Lawrence

The name is deceptive — Cree Construction. In fact, the company is involved in much more than just the building trade.

Established in 1978, three years after the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Cree Construction and Development Company Ltd. (CCDC) quickly found its niche. But it has since expanded to include catering and janitorial, and tree-cutting and pruning services. And the company is now developing a major tourism strategy.

Cree Construction marketing and business development officer, **Tina Petawabano**, says CCDC literally built the nine Cree communities affected by the agreement. At the same time, it gave people from those communities work. “We have 40 year-round employees, and during the peak season — spring, summer, and fall — we have about 300 people on our payroll,” she says.

The company has grown in both experience and size. In 1978, there were just 12 full-time staff. “We follow the construction industry,” Petawabano says. “There were very good times during the Hydro Quebec development in the late ’70s into the late ’80s. At the same time, the Cree communities were also being built...housing,

roads, public buildings, sewers...so during that time, there was a lot of work.” In spite of downturns, the company has remained profitable, she emphasizes.

Cree Construction currently has four joint ventures with four Cree communities, Petawabano adds. Most of these joint ventures involve housing, public facilities like police and fire-fighting services, and road maintenance projects, particularly in the winter. “We offer our expertise, and then we hire locally,” Petawabano explains. “One of the other things we push for is hiring local manpower wherever our jobs may be.”

Cree Construction’s tree-pruning department bids on contracts in and around Montreal, and also negotiates work with Hydro Quebec, Petawabano says. “We do tree clearing on the lines running through our territories from one community to the next. We also have a catering and janitor service for camps, and have contracts with Hydro Quebec for various residences they have in Northern Quebec.”

“The entire Cree community are shareholders in this company,” Petawabano makes clear. “The board of compensation — the financial arm of the Grand Council of the Cree — created the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company (CREECO).” This community-owned holding company maintains three businesses in addition to the construction firm, all of which put money back into the communities.

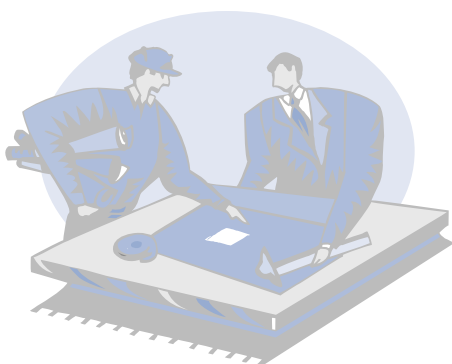
Cree Construction’s next big undertaking is a tourism project for the James Bay area that would bring people from all over the world into the



Chisasibi area. “It’s called *Bonjour Baie James*,” Petawabano says, adding that the project is still in the early planning stages. The company landed the task of developing this tourism strategy because it is CREECO’s marketing and business development arm.

“We’ll need our construction department to build airstrips, airports, hotels, cultural camps and other facilities that we might need to complete this project,” she says. The Cree’s own airline — Air Creebec — will fly people in. On-flight meals will be provided by a CREECO company, as will all janitorial services.

Visit the Cree Construction and Development Company Web site at www.ccdc.qc.ca *



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Muskeg Lake First Nation Building Base for Future

by Doug Cuthand

In a time and climate of cutbacks and mounting debt for many First Nations, the Muskeg Lake First Nation is quietly putting in place a strong economic and employment foundation.

Muskeg Lake is located north of Saskatoon. The First Nation has developed an economic strategy that not only includes the on-reserve population but many of their people living off the reserve.

The strategy began to unfold in 1988 with the acquisition of urban land as a part of the band's outstanding treaty land entitlement. The approximately 11 hectares (27 acres) of land was located within the Saskatoon city limits and was converted to a commercial reserve.

The First Nation developed a unique service agreement with the City of Saskatoon. The educational portion of the tax revenue is withheld as band capital. This revenue is added to the funding available to assist individuals' or the First Nation's economic development projects.

This new piece of reserve land has become the economic pillar of the Muskeg Lake economic strategy.

Over the past decade the property has been developed to include two large office buildings providing accommodation to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, the Saskatoon Tribal Council and a variety of Aboriginal businesses.

Two new buildings were recently opened including Kocsis Transport, an Aboriginal-owned trucking company and a commercial complex. Kocsis



Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Elders **Georgina Venne, Nora Ledoux, Dave Lafond** and **Freda Ahenakew** officially open the Cattail Centre, the new office/retail complex in Saskatoon on the First Nation's urban reserve.

Transport is a state-of-the-art operation employing over 70 drivers — one of the flagship Aboriginal companies in the province. The new office complex will house a number of Aboriginal businesses and retail outlets.

The revenue generated from rental revenue is reinvested in further development. It also provides equity to individual members on and off the reserve who want to get into business opportunities.

Through successive updates of the economic development strategy, coupled with the ongoing treaty land entitlement acquisition of about 11,000 hectares (27,000) acres, the First Nation is heading toward full economic self-sufficiency within the foreseeable future.

“The answers to improving our quality of life and self-sufficiency are within ourselves,” states former Chief **Harry Lafond**. “The solutions cannot be dictated by other orders of government. This is a lesson we learned very early on in the process.”

Through careful planning, regular review and update, and the full inclusion of all members of the Muskeg Lake members in the process, the First Nation has become a beacon for successful economic development. ★

Doug Cuthand is Cree, a freelance writer based in Saskatoon and owner of Blue Hills Productions.

The “Quarante Arpents” of Wendake A Unique Specific Claim in Quebec

by Annabelle Dionne

A museum and a hotel are two projects set to emerge from the most important specific claim settled in Quebec to date. The Huron-Wendat Nation has received \$12 million dollars in compensation for its claim relating to the territory of the *Quarante Arpents* (Forty Acres). The compensation, for reserve lands that the Government of Canada auctioned in 1904, will directly benefit the community.

Raymond Picard is responsible for the Nation’s economic development. He explains that the claim settlement funds will generate interest in keeping with the agreement’s conditions. The interest on the capital will be used as an economic springboard in community initiatives, with the Huron-Wendat Nation Council looking at various priorities, together with community members. The revitalization of Old Wendake, the establishment of a museum and the building of a hotel “are in keeping with our wish to preserve our heritage and make it accessible,” Picard says.

The revitalization of Old Wendake is part of an overall approach and a major project in the community — to create a tourist circuit. “We want to give exposure to our heritage and culture in Old Wendake, where tourists can come and discover the culture, the spirituality, as well as the Huron-Wendat art, and taste our traditional meals,” Picard explains. The physical setting will respect the past, using construction materials consistent with tradition. The landscaping will reflect the images and the colours important to the Nation. “Our goal is to make things as authentic as possible,” Picard emphasizes.



Photo credit: Huron-Wendat Nation Council

Grand Chief
Wellie Picard of the
Huron-Wendat Nation.

The museum, to be built in Old Wendake, will be another means of preserving the history of the Huron-Wendat people. “This museum will enable us to exhibit old items from our collections and provide information on our Nation’s customs and traditions. A showcase on First Nations will also offer other Nations the possibility of presenting themselves,” Picard adds.

Another huge tourism project involves the construction of a hotel, near Jacques-Cartier Park, close to Québec City. This hotel will provide an Aboriginal food service, health services, a forest interpretation program, and many other attractions.

“The hotel will be available year-round for those who want to live a unique Aboriginal experience,” Picard says.

Picard believes it is important to continue developing these projects, while at the same time supporting entrepreneurial initiatives in Wendake. The compensation it receives as part of the *Quarante Arpents* settlement will also allow the Huron-Wendat Nation to acquire more land over the next 20 years.

The settlement of the *Quarante Arpents* specific claim will greatly help economic development in Wendake, and give the First Nation the tools it needs to build a future that reflects its traditions. ✨



Portrait

Soul of a Hunter

Tagak Curley
Inuk

Hunter, Builder, Visionary

by Fred Favel

My world was outdoor life. I thought that I had the God-given right to go with my father as he was getting ready for seal hunting or trap lines....When he was preparing, it would be a few days getting his dog team cache meat organized and his traps and his equipment....

Tagak Curley's home town is Coral Harbour, Southampton Island on the northern tip of Hudson Bay. To many people, there seemed to be nothing there. But for Curley, "There was lots. I had my relatives... and the whole tribe of people that I was very proud of. We didn't need anything else." The Curleys were hunters, living completely off the land, moving from camp to camp. Aside from dog teams and sleds, Curley's father had a boat which he had purchased through his fur trading. The family lived mainly in igloos in the winter months when the trap lines had to be maintained. Curley can still apply the igloo-building skills he learned as a child. "I like comfort when I'm in an igloo... when you build an igloo, you're an architect." His building skills probably began with his father on trips out on the land. "That's how my father raised us, he was a perfectionist...and I grew up with that kind of guidance. Building something is always interesting. When you build it, you can also train others to do a similar thing (and) you give other people involvement. That's what I like doing."

Curley didn't go to school until he was seven years old. A federal school — the first day school in the Arctic — had been built next to the Hudson's Bay Post. "The government pretty much commanded the Inuit to move into town and go to school, and if they didn't keep going to school, they were not going to get welfare or family allowance cheques." The welfare incentive was wasted on the Curley family as his father was a successful provider.

Curley did not like school. "It (school) was terrible, it was a frightening thing. Because you could not even understand what they were trying to teach you." Children were forbidden to speak their own language in school, and as soon as he was able, Curley left school at the age of 16. "So I went back pretty much to the old way of life, fox trapping, and I had my own dog team then."

But Curley's father had taught him to be aware that change was coming, and this stuck in his mind. He was determined to improve his command of English and developed a love for books. There were not many books in town for him to read, so he used to borrow magazines from the offices of a large local construction corporation. "I was fascinated by the written material...So in the igloo, I used to read. I was better at reading than understanding...really understanding the meaning of it was always a challenge. My goal was — the only way that I would learn to speak enough and get a command of it — was to get out of my home town."

Although Curley had been offered jobs at the local Hudson's Bay store, he turned them down. "I was never going to accept being an Inuk in a store. That was to me like a demotion from being a hunter." He decided to take advantage of a heavy equipment operator course sponsored by the federal government in Chilliwack, British Columbia. On completing the course, he was hired back in Coral Harbour by the Ministry of Transport to work at the airport. "In my mind, I was seeing a lot," he says of this time. "Even before I went to Chilliwack, I was noticing

that the white people had too much influence on our lives. That was always the message of my father. That they needed to take the command back to themselves, because he was always his own man."

Curley went south again, this time for upgrading in Ottawa at the Ottawa Technical High School and Algonquin College. Starting in 1967, he worked as a field worker in Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Community Development Adult Education Program, and soon became known throughout the North. "But I was very disillusioned. I was trying very hard as a young radical through the system, and it wasn't working. I knew what I wanted. I wanted an Inuit movement!" He was impressed by non-governmental organizations that had a voice in Canada. "I was slightly aware of the national movement of the Indian, our friends down below. We used to hear about that but we were too far away to really understand how they were set up."

After a year of letters of support for Curley's idea of an Inuit organization, he founded the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, which in future years, was to lay the groundwork for the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and the territory of Nunavut. He served as president for three years before moving home to stay with his aging father and help organize the Inuit Cultural Institute. In 1979, Tagak Curley was elected to the Territorial Council Legislative Assembly. In his first term, he served his constituency as the honourable member for Keewatin South. Re-elected in his second term, he took on the double portfolio of Minister of Economic Development and Minister of Mines and Resources with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

While a Minister, he established the NWT Pavilion at Expo '86 in Vancouver, B.C., which received an award for the best on the Expo site. He also led the first major trade mission to Finland, Norway and Sweden. In 1998, Curley received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Business. His life has been a never-ending crusade to see his people become self-sufficient and in control of their lives. He has been president and director of many organizations and companies, one of the most significant being the Nunavut Construction Corporation, an arm of the Nunavut Investment Group, Inc. The construction corporation delivered \$130 million in Nunavut government infrastructure projects, 250 residential units and 10 office buildings. The crowning jewel, without a doubt, is the newly formed Nunavut Territorial Government's legislature building. When asked about this structure whose architecture reflects the form of a traditional igloo, Curley replies very modestly, "Oh, quite proud about that. The Inuit people own that facility."

Curley's philosophy is to make a commitment to what you want with your life. "The moment you make a commitment to your objective, concentrate on it, do things one at a time. And when you have that determination developing, there's no stopping you from achieving what you want."

Some people go south for their holidays. Tagak Curley, the hunter, has other ideas. He's going out on the land "to fish, hunt and relax. When I'm out in an igloo, I'm relaxed."

Fred Favel is an Aboriginal writer and communications consultant.



Photo credit: Fred Favel



Photo credit: Courtesy of Tagak Curley

