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## Nunavut

March 14, 2008

### NTI's four presidential candidates have their say

*March 18 is decision time for Nunavut beneficiaries*

NUNATSIAQ NEWS

Eligible Nunavut beneficiaries will go to the polls Tuesday, March 18 to elect a president and vice-president of finance for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

As a service to our readers, we have offered free space to each of the four candidates for president: Mickey Akavak, Jack Anawak, Paul Kaludjak and Abraham Tagalik.

We asked each of the four to submit a 700-word piece. You'll find them printed on the pages that follow, in English and Inuktitut.

The English versions appear just as they were submitted, but we have corrected obvious errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation.

The candidates for vice-president of finance are: Jayko Aloolloo, James T. Arreak and Raymond Ningeocheak.

In most Nunavut communities, beneficiaries may cast ballots at local hamlet facilities. Polls open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.

In Ottawa, beneficiaries may vote at the Tunngasuvvingat Inuit centre, and in Yellowknife, at Northern United Place. In Iqaluit, beneficiaries may vote at the St. Jude's Parish Hall or the Abe Okpik Community Hall in Apex.

To be eligible, you must be at least 16 years old and either be listed, or be eligible to be listed, as a beneficiary of the Nunavut land claims agreement.

**Mikidjuk L. Akavak**

Mikidjuk Akavak was raised in the small Nunavut community of Kimmirut. He was born into the days of hunting and fishing when dog teams were still commonly used.

He remembers his grandfather buying his first snowmobile, and how it impacted his grandfather's way of life.

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Mikidjuk Akavak

He also remembers the first time Inuit in his community started watching television for the very first time, which also had a huge impact on the Inuit way of life.

At 41 years of age, he has seen many changes in the ways of Inuit in Nunavut. Growing up in a small community, he remembers the first time he attended grade school. His first school teacher was a British lady and he remembers how strict she was, and how she used to cut their hair, and cut fingernails, and often wonders what they were being taught: "how to live" or "how to learn."

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In his later years, Mikidjuk had the opportunity to live in different communities in the North and South, which greatly expanded his perspective on life.

Mikidjuk is a graduate of Sir John Franklin High School in Yellowknife and later attended a college in Thunder Bay, Ont.

He went on to obtain his journeyman electrician certification in Red Deer, Alberta in 1992. He has served as a small electrical contractor for different companies since then, and from this he has truly learned to understand the human resource "capacity building" concerns of all Inuit beneficiaries in Nunavut.

He is a former mayor of Kimmirut, having served from 1997 to 2000, and remembers the creation of Nunavut in 1999 and the expectations that came with it. He realizes the challenges of the new government, created as a result of the Nunavut land claims agreement signed in 1993, and believes that the Nunavut government cannot meet those challenges without the partnership of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

He served as a board member for Canada Post Corp. and understands the logistical challenges within Nunavut.

Over the last seven and a half years, he proudly served as a board member of Atuqtuarvik Corporation, and understands the banking needs of all Nunavut communities and the challenges Inuit-owned companies and small businesses face.

Mikidjuk foresees a bright future for all Inuit beneficiaries, and expects many new investment opportunities in Nunavut, but would like to stress the importance of unity among all Nunavut regions and all Nunavut communities.

He believes the mandate of NTI. has to change with time, and that Inuit have to venture forward into the future with the same determination as their ancestors.

Ever since the start of the Second World War, Inuit have been adversely affected by forces beyond their control, with the construction of DEW Line sites within their lands.

Inuit had a role and that role has since diminished, and Mikidjuk knows the need to take back that useful role, and that their knowledge of the land was valuable and still is valuable today.

He is also convinced that Inuit have to play a role globally in the changing world and the upcoming issues that affect all Inuit. He also believes that the Inuit have to take a leading role on issues that involve the territory of Nunavut, as stated in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

He believes workable ideas have to be implemented - the "old" and the "new" ways have to be taken into account if we are going to remain a strong diverse culture.

He believes in the empowerment of all beneficiaries under the NLCA.

With the apology from the Federal government, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church for the treatment of Inuit in the past, he sees a "reconciliatory resolution," so that Inuit will become true partners within the Confederation of Canada.

The acceptance of NLCA beneficiaries has to be acknowledged by all governments. Nunavut is not a playground. It is the land of a proud people who signed an agreement with the Government of Canada.

Nunavut Inuit want a prosperous future in their territory!

We need the "spark" of our elders, and the "ignition" of our youth!  
We also need the qulliq and the 'internet' to leap forward into the future!

### **Jack Anawak**

The creation of Nunavut in 1999 was a proud moment for Inuit. We saw this as the beginning of a new chapter in our history and our lives. Nunavut was created through the vision and struggle of Inuit - through our belief and persistence in a better tomorrow where we could determine our own future.

Nine years later, many Inuit feel that we have not achieved what we hoped for in Nunavut, and many of us feel disconnected from the organizations that are supposed to represent us.

#### *Youth*

Youth must have a role in NTI's decision-making process in a changing world. Their ideas and concerns have to be included in governance and implementation of the land claims agreement, and we have to work to turn their hopes and dreams into realities.



Jack Anawak

In recognition of the important role of youth in Nunavut, I will create an NTI Vice-President of Youth Issues position, and provide financial and political support for the creation of a Nunavut Youth Council.

#### *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*

I am a great supporter of Inuit culture and language. I grew up on the land with my family. In our community, everyone always knew just what to do to live and survive off the land. Elders and parents made sure we were given all the experiences necessary to

learn the skills we needed.

Though we have taken on many of the progressive ways of the world, we have to remember where we came from, our language, our culture, and our traditions, so that our unique lifestyle can continue to guide our lives in the modern world. One of the ways of maintaining this lifestyle is to involve our elders in as many parts of our lives as possible. We need to make IQ a real part of our lives - too many leaders use IQ as a slogan but do not respect its principles and values.

#### *Health and Social Issues*

Youth and elders both have to be more involved in addressing the health and social issues we face. We are facing many problems - suicide, poverty, family violence, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. However it is not the problems we face that define us - it is the way we address them that will define us.

We all know someone who has taken their own life. We all know someone who is living in poverty. We all know someone who has problems with substance abuse. We read and hear about these problems across town and across Nunavut.

To address these issues, we will have to talk openly and we will have to make some tough decisions. These issues are not going to go away on their own - we have to confront them. Many of our leaders today refuse to even talk about them, much less address them.

#### *Leadership*

A real leader is not someone who tells the people what they want to hear, but is willing to tell the people what they need to know. We cannot afford to allow leaders, who do so well for themselves, to do so little for the rest of us.

I have seen our leaders talk about their achievements and how great they are doing. I have seen them say, "We don't need change, we need continuity." I have seen them ignore so many of the things that we want to see changed.

Many of us have received compensation for the terrible abuses we suffered in the residential school system. I have seen some of our leaders claim credit for this - for getting the church and the federal government to apologize and compensate us for our pain and suffering.

I began working with other Inuit to address residential school issues in 1990. I have worked for 18 years on this issue that has affected so many of us.

In May, 2005 the federal government announced that they planned to settle outstanding claims by residential school survivors, and negotiations began in July, 2005. The leaders of NTI did not see fit to participate in the negotiations until September, when a lot of the work had already been done.

As NTI president, I will always provide real leadership when it's needed, not just when it's convenient.

### **Paul Kaludjak**

My gratitude to Inuit of Nunavut. I first wish to thank my wife for her never-ending support. She tirelessly supports me in my work, which is not easy and demands a lot of my time away from home. The understanding of my three sons, daughter and two daughters-in-law, plus our wonderful five grandkids, all my family for their support who need my time, but is not there a lot of times.

I wish to acknowledge the generosity of Inuit and people of Iqaluit for helping us to be part of their city and friends that we made over the last three and a half years we've been in Iqaluit.

I thank all Inuit within the communities of Nunavut and the friends we have gained who made our lives extra special and the respect I have reinforced for all the Inuit I served to this date. I understand the difficulty we face as Inuit with the great changes that have happened in just a few years. We Inuit have to deal with those challenges and hardship in the communities when they arise.



Paul Kaludjak

I wish also to thank Nunatsiaq News for their offer to submit this with some of the issues that I am dealing with.

#### *For proven leadership*

I have made the implementation issue the highest priority in my work as president and wish to continue to pressure the federal government's obligation, keeping them accountable to our Nunavut Land Claims Agreement its objections to benefits be realized by Inuit that is long overdue.

We as a team at the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. board, the

executive, and our staff have raised the profile on issues facing us, such things as climate change affecting Nunavutmiut and that stake of our NLCA under my leadership.

I have been a frontline worker in the regional organizations and fully understand their role, our claim and the respective mandates they set. They are currently assisting in the important work of restructuring NTI in keeping us accountable and mandating NTI to become more sufficient in its operations and living under constraints we set for ourselves for the long term.

Why is it important? Because we are looking at cost-saving measures for NTI and the regional organizations and looking at the operations of not only NTI, but also the regions, to be cost-effective in the long term saving and investments can be made for Inuit monies. This would create more benefit for Inuit enrolled in our claim. The land claim compensation has to be protected in whatever we do.

NTI has been deficit-free for the last six years that I have been with NTI and has worked under real constraints since we established the policy the board adopted since then.

One other important achievement we have reached is the Indian residential school file that we have forcefully raised to fully include Inuit and make sure Inuit too were fully compensated for those that were taken away, some against their will, and some who were treated very unfairly by groups that ran the residential school in the past years. The next step in the residential schools project now will be reconciliation and a memorial celebration to mark those events.

The NTI under my leadership has started something no other leader has done since the signing of the claim, the regular meeting with cabinet ministers of the Nunavut government to speak to our respective mandates and achievements we have reached. These meetings give us an opportunity to work on the challenges we face, to move forward on issues knowing together we are stronger.

*To continue progress on our land claim agreement*

We are currently on a need for continuity for NTI and its work on implementation matters that are at a critical stage right now. I have firsthand experience and progress is being made, for example, more funding for our independent public governments to institutions of public government created from our claim.

*For strong Inuit tradition*

I have been a leader to Inuit for 13 years now and have seen great change in our Inuit tradition in our modern day communities. I understand our elders' difficulties that they face due to this change. I am able to connect both younger and older Inuit generations alike.

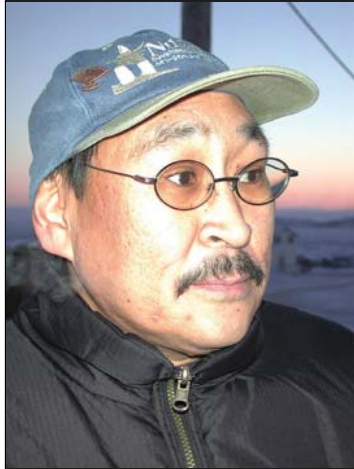
I have come from a family who lived in a sod house and igloos just 30 miles northeast of Arviat and have seen this traditional life style. Today we live in a computer world and modern technology that we can now use to our advantage.

I am well-versed in this time of change; we Inuit have come a long way in very short time.

Please look at my website once it's up and running. My email is [Kaludjak@northwestel.net](mailto:Kaludjak@northwestel.net).

### **Abraham Tagalik**

Hi Inuit, and fellow NLCA beneficiaries. I'm Abraham Tagalik. I have thrown my hat into the ring to become the next president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., a choice I did not take lightly.



Abraham Tagalik

I believe very much in our organization and I feel strongly in the principles we have exchanged with the Queen and the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories along with the creation of the Nunavut territory. As in any agreement, we got what we negotiated, not necessarily what we deserved.

Since the very first contact by Qallunaat, Inuit society has been influenced and adversely eroded by outside values and ongoing dependency, a trend that unfortunately continues to this very day. We need to buck that trend and take back some

ownership of our Inuit lives.

I have received much support from many people, both Inuit and non-Inuit, and I am very grateful for that support.

I would like to think that people who support me feel that I am open and approachable. I believe firmly in fairness and equality for all.

We need to be able to think outside the box and be creative in finding solutions and nurture partnerships from the highest levels in the Government in Canada right down to the common folks who make decisions in our fine territory.

I have been to every community in Nunavut. I have been a communicator most of my life, since the time when I had to interpret for my unilingual Mom in kindergarten. I, like many of my generation, have struggled between two cultures - not excelling in either but blending the best of both cultures.

Outside of family, one of my proudest moments was the day of APTN's creation. In the sunrise ceremony along the banks of the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg to the gala concert and show that followed was Jenny Tootoo, Piungnuathaq, formerly from the flats in Churchill.

She was remembering how my mother used to aqaq me and call me "Angutaupaak," knowing the love my mother had for me.

The strength of Inuit culture was the base that I leaned on during my work in setting up APTN. It took much effort to gel the aboriginal forces across this vast country and present a united voice, and much coordination to enhance our aboriginal voice as part of the Canadian spectrum.

Nunavut has much to contribute. Inuit want to be involved, Inuit want to be employed and feel they can influence our association.

What are your dreams and aspirations? What can our organization do to assist you with your aspirations?

I would like to see our organization more relevant in a meaningful manner. I would push for an Inuit association for each community, chaired by your current NTI-Inuit association representative. Funding from NTI (and other partners) would flow from the top down to the community level.

A plan would be to trim down our current organizations and find synergies where possible. A reduction at the top of NTI and the regional Inuit associations would have to be explored to put emphasis into community development.

The hunter support program would or could transition from awarding individuals to collectively owning the equipment by the local Inuit Association. Boats, snowmobiles and ATVs would be managed by the HTO.

If you didn't have your own equipment you would be able to reserve and use the equipment in exchange for sharing your catch with the community.

There are so many positive possibilities if we invest in our people and not just make NTI a larger organization.

We would start small, but it is a base that we could build on. Socially, it would be the basis and the start of gaining Inuit control back; economically it would help with the high unemployment currently existing across much of Nunavut.

Spiritually it would be the base for gaining our heritage back. Partnerships could be explored to enhance the quality of life, education, housing, justice, health, income support and others could or would have to be involved.

Imagine that.

We can't keep doing the same thing, getting the same results.

This election is about you. We can work together to make the dream of Nunavut something we can all be proud of.

*Niruaarumaqpusi.*

*Abraham Tagalik*



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