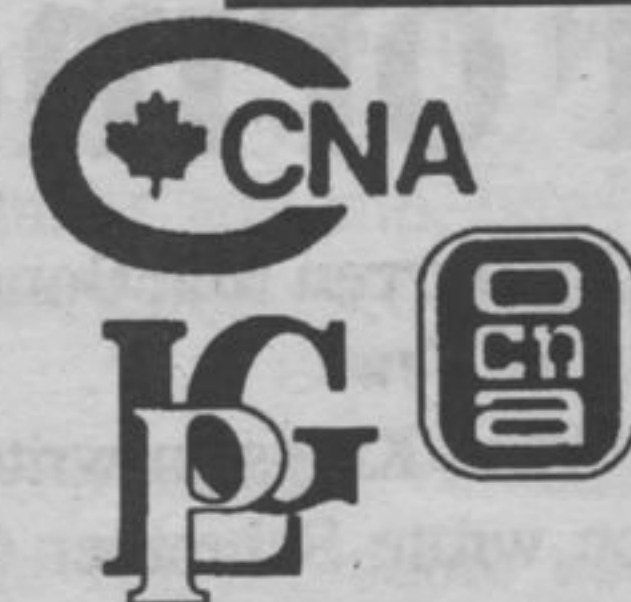


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Money just isn't there for a m/d centre this year

The distressing news out of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is that, although Schreiber has clearly shown a need for a new medical/dental centre, and has more or less met all the financial and design requirements, the money to help build the facility just isn't there.

As MNDM spokesperson Katie Heikkinen put it, her ministry has been hit by budget cuts this year "like never before." Over the past few years, MNDM have been involved in helping to finance an average of one or two of the centres a year. But as the never-ending recession makes a mockery of overly-optimistic revenue projections, even the least financially prudent provincial government in Canada—our very own NDP—is being forced to tighten its belt to prevent Ontario from having Argentina-size deficits.

But the fact the MNDM budget cuts have happened now really is a shame for everyone in Schreiber. Budgets cuts aside, the conditions couldn't be better to have the thing built as soon as possible: Council is willing to arrange financing for its share of the cost; Dr. Rohani, Dr. Sweetnam and Dr. Jackes are willing to commit to a new facility; our new doctor—Dr. Hurst—is planning to partially split his practice between the two towns.

And on top of all that, both of the facilities the doctors are using now simply aren't adequate for their needs.

In other words, the time couldn't be better for a new facility, but the timing couldn't be worse.

I'll be on vacation for the next couple of weeks, on a whirlwind tour of Nova Scotia, trying to see as many people as possible before coming back to work. In my absence, Dan Heidman will be taking over my job here at The News. Dan works at our paper in Parry Sound, The Beacon-Star, and I know he'll do an excellent job while I'm gone. So don't be shy about calling the office if you have a few good story tips for Dan.

Letters are welcome

The Terrace Bay - Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject. Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ont., P0T 2W0, or dropped off at the News office on Highway 17, at the Mill Road.

Letters must be signed, and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false, libelous or anonymous comments. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

Letters to the editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of the members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this important forum is used responsibly.



Land links a new passion

About 10,000 years ago, give or take a millennium or two, some nameless member of a ragtag long-forgotten band of Siberian nomads lifted his or her foot off the ground, leaving a footprint behind. It was the usual residue from an ordinary, human footstep, but in its own way, that footprint was as momentous as the one Neil Armstrong planted on the moon's kisser, back in 1969.

It was the first human footprint ever to appear in North America.

Technically, North America was part of Asia 'way back then. The continent was connected by a narrow umbilicus of barren rock that ran from Siberia to Alaska.

They were a restless bunch, those early Siberians. Not content with crossing the Bering Sea, they kept moving farther and farther into the new World. Over the eons, they evolved into the native peoples of North and South America. They became our Inuit and our Aztecs; our Haida and our Hurons. And they settled everywhere from the Great Arctic Barrens to the jungles of the Yucatan.

They had no choice. The land bridge that they used to cross the Bering Sea disappeared.

They were stuck in the New World whether they liked it or not.

I can't help wondering if some of the nomads didn't have second thoughts about this dubious adventure. What if some of them got fed up with this harsh New World full of unfamiliar plants and animals? What if they got homesick for the old world? What if, after several unhappy years, a band of them turned around and retraced their steps to that Alaska beach, only to discover that the bridge they'd crossed over to . . . had disappeared? Sunk beneath the waves?

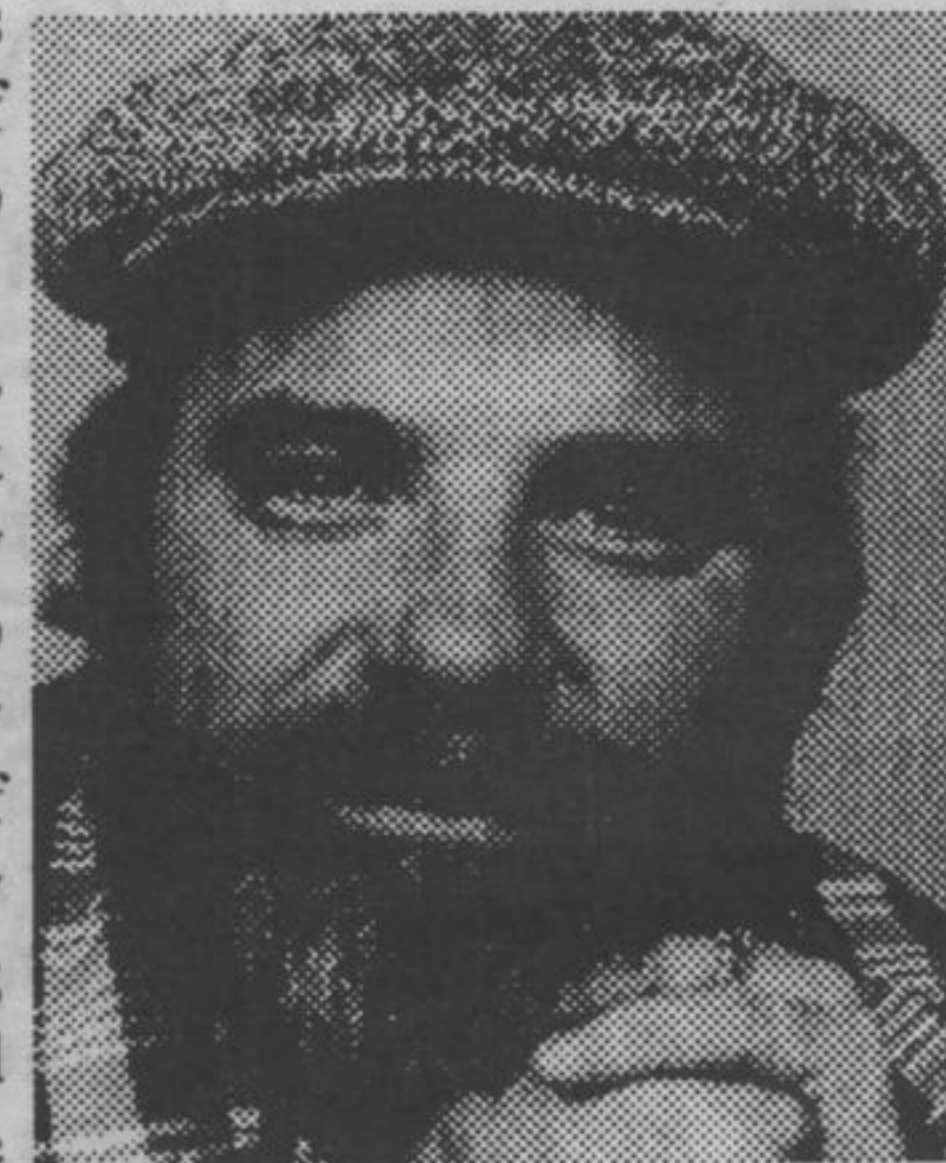
Imagine how alone that would make them feel.

If it happened, it might account for mankind's passion for relinking landmasses. We build bridges and trestles and viaducts and tunnels. Especially tunnels. We've got the Lincoln Tunnel connecting New York and New Jersey; the

tunnel between Windsor and Detroit. On the East Coast, we've been talking for decades about reaming out a tunnel under the Northumberland Strait, joining Prince Edward Island to the rest of the Maritimes. And over in Europe of course, they've done it. The Channel Tunnel—or Chunnel—now routinely carries auto, truck and railway cars back and forth between Dover and Calais.

The success of the British/French Chunnel seems to have sparked worldwide interest in underground linkups. Austria and Italy are seriously talking about a 35-mile-long tunnel between their two countries. Japan has already finished a 33-mile underground railway tunnel that links two major Japanese islands.

Now there's a group that wants to re-create that Bering Land Bridge that carried the first humans to the Americas. But this time they plan to run the bridge underground. The Inter-hemispheric Bering Strait Tunnel and Railroad Group hopes to forge a man-made link between Alaskan and Siberian tundra.



Arthur Black

A Tundrel, perhaps?

It's not as wacky as it sounds—the two land masses are only 56 miles apart at the closest point. If it works, it could lead to a railway linkup—even a roadway, eventually.

Which means that some day, in our lifetimes, it might be feasible for a really adventurous type to jump in a car in say, Land's End, England and, thanks to the Chunnel and the Tundrel, drive all the way to . . . say Pictou, Nova Scotia.

And who knows? By that time they may have finished the tunnel link between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—so you could keep right on trucking into Anne of Green Gables back yard.

That Maritime tunnel won't get in the Guinness Record Book as the longest, or the deepest or the most dangerous in the world.

However with a nickname like the PEI/NS tunnel, it just might make it in as the world's first X-rated land link.