Denman Islanders Respond to Distant Atrocities

brought to you by Graham Brazier

A moral dilemma faced by Denman's Conservancy Association in 1997 was fully reported in the August edition of Denman's Newsletter & Calendar of the time — ***The Denman Islander*** — and is quoted below.

"Many Conservancy meeting hours have been spent discussing our involvement with Shell Canada and their grant to us from the Shell Environmental Fund. We have finally decided to return the full amount to Shell and have included a copy of our letter here:

Shannon McIntee, Administrator,
Shell Environmental Fund,
P.O. Box 100,
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2H5

July 24, 1997

Dear Shannon McIntee,

We are writing to acknowledge our discomfort over receiving funds from the Shell Environmental Fund, due to its connection with Shell International and human rights and environmental abuses in Nigeria. Our Board of Directors were thorough in their investigations of the situation in Nigeria and conducted long and arduous deliberations over our position. Our final decision is to return all of the funds which were received for the project "Development of the Denman Conservancy Resource and Education Centre and the Mapping Project", #95.0157. A cheque for $4,875.00 is enclosed.

We recognized that the Denman Conservancy Association accomplished critical environmental work with the Shell funds; that the amount of the Shell funds was significant to our non-profit society and that Shell Canada employees may have little involvement in decisions affecting Nigeria. However, we also recognized that we all make choices with respect to the limit of our acceptance of morally wrong acts; and we, as a group of individuals, could not accept funds from Shell which is directly connected to the Nigerian atrocities. We researched a number of avenues to address our concern and the only one which remains possible, after all our efforts, is to return the funds to Shell. We thank the Shell Canada employees who reviewed our proposal and awarded us these funds. We hope that Shell Canada, if unable to influence the deplorable actions of Shell International, will then examine its own inescapable connections to such acts.

Yours Sincerely,
J. Balke and D. Kennedy
co-coordinators, Denman Conservancy"

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Notes:
1) Other members of the Board of Directors of the Denman Conservancy Association that took part in this conversation and decision in 1997 are Juan Barker, Anne de Cosson, David Fraser, George Ferry, Rudy Friesen, Bentley LeBaron, Bill Limin, Denise McKean, Heather McLeod, Sheila Salas, Susan-Marie Yoshihara

2) "***The Denman Islander***" was a descendent of a 'Newsletter & Calendar' initially compiled & distributed by Mike Comeau in 1993 and subsequently passed on to Jen Carruthers, a.k.a. Pied Paper, in 1995 and now available online at:
https://denmanmuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Denman-Island-Oct.-93-Aug.-97-incomplete.pdf