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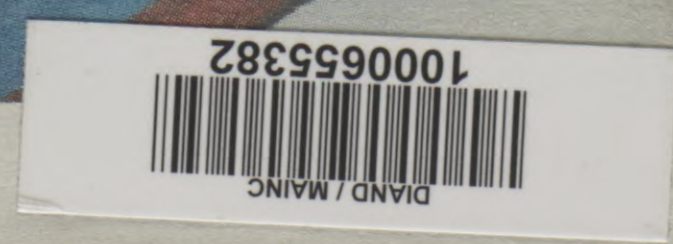
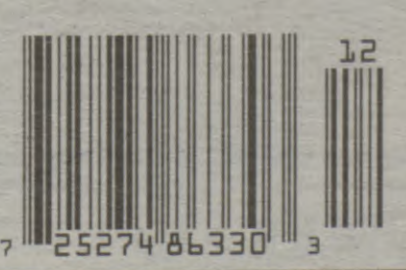
Honouring a powwow legend

Walter Bull (right) is kissed by his wife Valerie Tootoosis Bull. Both are from Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan. Walter Bull is a living legend in the powwow circle teaching several generations on the traditions of powwow over his 90 years. Walter was honoured at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Powwow.

Photo: Bert Crowfoot

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Merry Christmas blessings from the Chief, Council and staff of the
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Bare washdegina inimicin.

God from the heavens, during this time of the year in December as we celebrate birth of Jesus, teach us to always be grateful for what you have given us, help us to be united in spirit and to attain what you have given upon us, so that together we may live good lives.

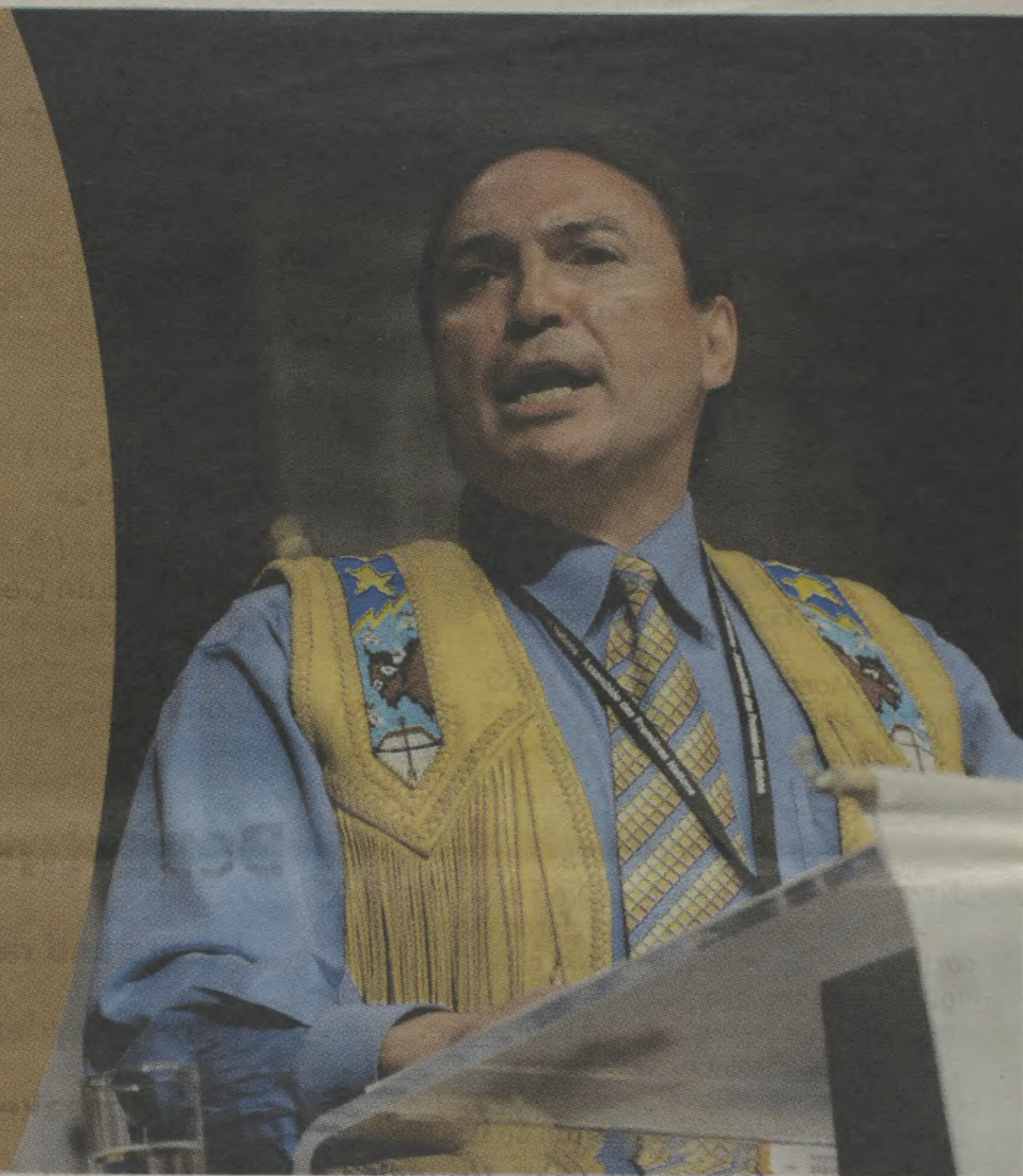
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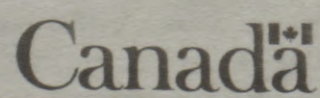


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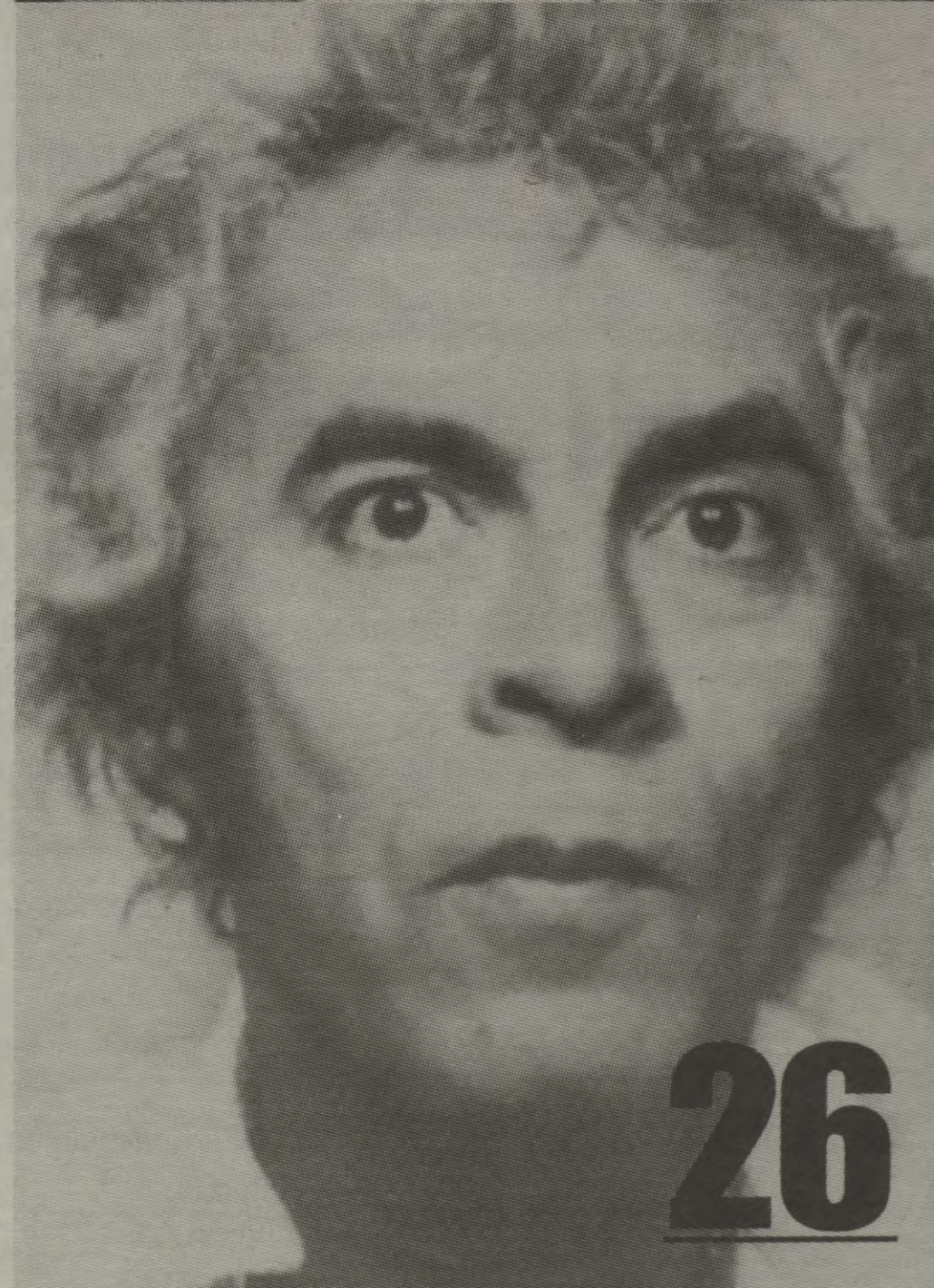
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Members of the Sandy Lake First Nation gathered at the Youth Centre on the evening of Nov. 13 for the opening of a two-day presentation on the role of jury members and an explanation of how coroner inquests are conducted.

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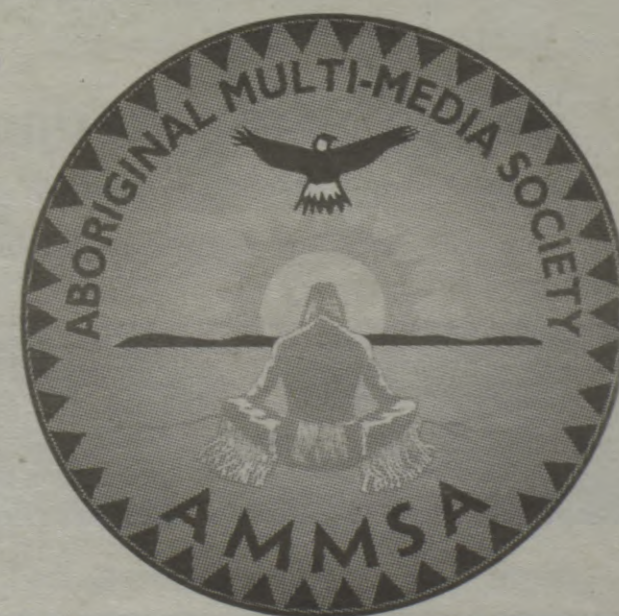
Though he passed away in 2005, three years after publishing city treaty-his unabashed manifesto about colonialism-Manitoba's Marvin Francis continues to influence award-winning writers like Katherena Vermette.



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The Harper Government continues to fail us all

Well, lucky Canada. Well done. Heading into the next federal election, the government will have some cash to throw around, to salt the clouds, so to speak, grease some palms. All those dollars that haven't gone to educate First Nations kids, keep them protected and from harm, all those dollars that didn't fix the crumbling infrastructure on reserve, kept people in moldy, tumble-down homes, didn't provide potable water, it's there now to sprinkle over the electorate like fairy dust, pushing the gaps between First World Canada and Third World Indigenous Nations further and further apart for years to come.

What a proud day Joe Oliver, Mr. Finance Minister. How proud you must have been to stand before the well-heeled crowd of the Canadian Club to crow about the surpluses your government anticipates in the coming years. Never mind that you gutted programs for Aboriginal families to put your books in order. Never mind that paying down Canada's debt is being done on the backs of Indigenous people. What a legacy, nonetheless. Yep! A real legacy.

What a mess Canada has pushed off into the unknown future. What potential you have squandered. Yet this has been the hallmark of this government; ruthless sacrifice of those who have nothing, the dispossessed, deprivation of the already deprived. This is what has passed for vision, achievement, accomplishment with this government. Bravo. Quite the resume.

"Significant reallocations from infrastructure to other programs have occurred over the past six years," says a June 2013 document that

was filed as part of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to get Aboriginal children in care some equity in funding from the federal government.

"For example, AANDC has reallocated approximately \$505-million in infrastructure dollars to social, education and other programs to try to fill the shortfall in these areas. "Since infrastructure was not able to cover off all of social and education needs in each year, other internal resources were used to cover off the remaining shortfall.

"This ongoing reallocation is putting pressure on an already strained infrastructure program and has still not been enough to adequately meet the needs of social and education programs."

Yes, the Conservatives have done quite the job over their years in power. Let them stand on their record of fiscal prudence, but we all know the truth. What they have really done is borrow heavily from future generations, specifically generations of Indigenous people, to edge into the black for 2015. Such a cynical activity. Such a cynical attitude. Such a disservice to us all.

The Conservative federal government under Stephen Harper will go down in history as the single-most uninspired government ever, without passion for leaving any kind of legacy beyond building pipelines. Think of the bright times of this government and you won't see any brilliance. All you'll see is a drab, dull, grey and miserly winter we've all been in since February 2006.

Windspeaker

We'd like to take this space to send our thoughts and prayers out to Renelle Harper and her family. Many of us at *Windspeaker* have children, grandchildren Renelle's age and our hearts exploded in pain when we heard of the assault on her. We can only imagine the nightmare she is living. The brutality endured by this 16-year-old child should make the blood boil in every Canadian. Let us say clearly, no child, no woman, no man should ever have to experience such violation.

And yet, in Canada, in this shiny part of the world where such events should be as rare as hen's teeth, we come face to face with our ugly reality. Such viciousness is all too common here, and more likely to occur against our people.

At what point does this federal government stop looking away and help us protect Indigenous women and girls by committing to an inquiry into the systemic issues that

adversely impact Aboriginal people in Canada.

By the lack of response from the federal government, we can only conclude that racism is at the root of inaction. First Nations people are throw away, it would seem.

"What is it that is so feared about a national inquiry into the murdered and missing women," asked Rose Laboucan, chief of the Driftpile Cree Nation in northern Alberta. "What is it that people fear is going to be found?" she asked.

Perhaps what's going to be found is that government has failed monumentally on so many fronts that it is overwhelming to comprehend; that by not stepping up to the plate with enthusiasm and vision, to right the wrongs of the past and move with conviction into a future of reconciliation, we are faced with the horror that Renelle and other young women have had to endure.

This has to be corrected. Now.

Windspeaker

[rants and raves] Page 5 Chatter

A woman from eastern Ontario was in court on Oct. 20

challenging the federal government after being denied Indian status in 1995 because she doesn't know the identity of one of her grandfathers. Lynn Gehl's grandmother and father have status, but she was denied. "They made the assumption that this unknown grandfather was a non-Indian man, and through the process of that assumption I was denied Indian status registration." Without status Gehl (Algonquin-Anishinaabe) cannot live on the reserve nor have a say in the decisions of her community. Technical arguments were heard in Ontario Superior Court to see if the case can continue in the court system.

A New Brunswick First Nation says it needs \$500,000

to repair roads, but the province isn't listening, saying the problem is a federal responsibility. Chief David Peter-Paul of the Pabineau First Nation says he has spoken with provincial officials many times and has shown them the conditions of the road, but the province isn't offering up any money. "Anyone who has travelled through the Pabineau First Nation community can attest to the fact that the conditions of the roadways are horrific, to say the least," said Peter-Paul. "We have worked very hard to effectively communicate to the government of New Brunswick our need for provincial support to undertake major road repairs in Pabineau. However, to date, these attempts seem to have fallen on deaf ears." Peter-Paul said \$1 million in federal funding will repair parts of the roadways, but repairs needed go beyond general road work. "The assessment on the road conditions for all First Nations in New Brunswick has been completed by the province and the proposal is now under review," said Aboriginal Affairs spokesperson Michelle Perron. "We will continue to work with the province of New Brunswick to determine opportunities that may exist for partnering on road construction projects in First Nation communities, including exploring options to include various First Nation roads in future provincial public-private partnerships (P3) road construction projects."

Darlene Ritchie of Atlohsa Native Family Healing Services

in London has received the John Robinson Lifetime Contribution Award for her work ending women abuse. The ceremony was held at the London Music Club on Nov. 13. The London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse created the John Robinson award in 1988. Robinson was a London police inspector. The award recognizes an individual or group who has promoted substantial change in the area of woman abuse. Ritchie is Turtle Clan, Oneida, a member of the Saugeen First Nation, and has served for 16 years as the director of operations at Atlohsa.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) responded

to the federal Fiscal Update delivered by Finance Minister Joe Oliver Nov. 13 that projects five years of budget surpluses starting in the 2014-15 fiscal year. The chiefs organization wants urgent investment in First Nations families and communities to address years of under-funding and reallocation of funds for First Nations.

"First Nations people and programs have been under-funded for decades now and struggling under a two per cent funding cap since 1996, a cap that does not keep pace with inflation or our booming population," said AFN Nova Scotia-Newfoundland Regional Chief Morley Googoo. "As a result we're falling further and further behind. We see this in education, employment and health outcomes that are far lower than national averages. It affects our ability to build our economies and build healthy communities. The government has been lecturing First Nations about accountability but that's a two-way street. The federal government knows it is under-funding First Nations and cannot just walk away from its responsibilities. First Nations will not stand for it. First Nations are the youngest, fastest growing segment of the population. Investing now will reap massive dividends for all Canadians in the very near future."

Aboriginal Affairs internal documents show the department has reallocated about \$500 million intended for infrastructure over a six-year period to cover shortfalls in social and education programs. AFN Alberta Regional Chief Cameron Alexis stated: "Recent information from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs proves that the department is knowingly under-funding essential programs for First Nations. Our people live with the results every day in deplorable housing conditions, poor drinking water or no running water at all and crumbling and inadequate schools. These documents show that Aboriginal Affairs knows it is not investing enough in First Nations education and says the amount should be doubled. The government should not be knowingly depriving First Nations children of opportunity or our communities of critical infrastructure. We need to seriously look at all options, including a new approach to resource revenue sharing consistent with the treaties. The surpluses projected by the Minister of Finance today provide the opportunity for a new start and new hope for First Nations families and this must be our priority."

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[strictly speaking]

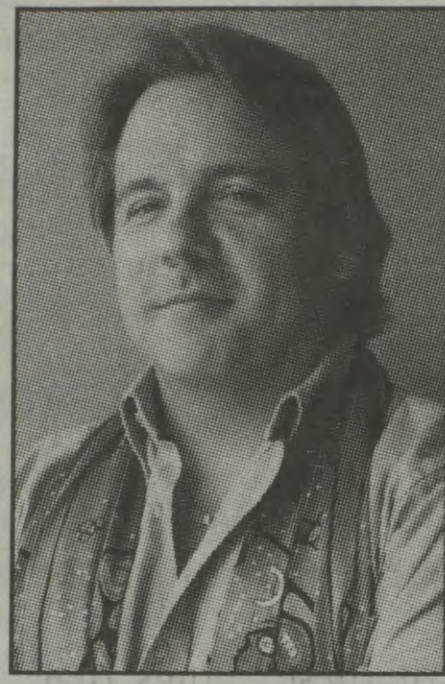
Out of order: Courts tackle a broken system

Once again, an august row of educated, privileged white men and women are sitting in judgement on the fate of Canada's Native people. I am talking about the Supreme Court of this country. The question being debated, should a row of educated, privileged white men and women sit in judgement on the fate of Canada's Native people?

Recently, the conviction of an Aboriginal man for manslaughter was tossed out of the Canadian legal canoe and sank into the deep waters of the jurisprudence river because his lawyer successfully argued the jury that convicted him was not of his peers, i.e. no on-reserve Indigenous people. This violated Clifford Kokopenace's right to a fair trial.

Now it's up to the chief justice (note the irony of that title and this issue) and her blackrobes to decide if the provinces, Ontario in this case, should be forced to use "reasonable efforts" to ensure its jury rolls are accurate and proportionate to the ethnicity of the population. Good luck.

Yes, I am aware that a jury representing a proper demographic of this country would, more than likely, contain the odd Asian or African-Canadian face, but it still seems that after all these years, it's still the People of Palour/Colour-



THE URBANE INDIAN Drew Hayden Taylor

Challenged who decide the vast majority of these important issues. And as we all know, First Nations people have done so well under their wise and benevolent rule.

On the face of it, the concept seems like a good idea. It's no secret that something is amiss out there when it comes to Native people and the court system. Proportionately, First Nations make up four per cent of the overall population, but an astounding 23 per cent of the Federal prison population. And this says nothing of the two years-less-a-day residents in provincial jails. Anybody who's taken Grade 11 math knows that's not a good ratio. The long arm of the law, too frequently, is seen as putting a choke hold on the throats of this country's original inhabitants.

Entire libraries have been

written on why we are over-represented. Most agree this is the repercussions of a cultural PCSD – post-contact stress disorder. When you've lived through 500 years of colonization which included the scoop up, residential schools, the Indian Act and other assorted treats, there is bound to be some social rebellion and acting out.

Simply put, when you feel you've been abused by society, you tend to want to abuse society right back. Not that the larger Native population are by any means condoning any illegal or unlawful act. Trust me, the majority of Native people in this country are good people. They want good government and law and order. It's just that so frequently, we get so little of it. Witness those missing or murdered 1,200 Native women that Prime Minister Stephen

Harper classifies as simply a crime, not a social issue. That could be a good rationale for why there are so many Native people in prison. At least there, they know what the real score is, not political rhetoric.

But back to the point. Here are more statistics to decode: According to the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website, there are approximately 700,000 status/registered Native people in Canada. And just over 45 per cent of those live on reserve. So that leaves around 300,000. It's generally accepted that around 50 per cent of that population is under 25. And if you remember the 23 per cent of the prison population at any given time, I believe those that have served time in prison cannot sit on a jury which further whittles away at that target jury population.

Add to that those that live on isolated reserves, that leave us with, give or take, 17 people, three of whom spend most of the winter with the Seminoles in Florida – the tribe, not the football team.

That puts an awful lot of strain on the rest of those within that target group. This could conceivably turn into a full-time job. Personally, I think this could be one of those sneaky make works projects to combat the rampant on-reserve

unemployment rate, except there are no honorariums involved. Usually you have to pay your own transportation and parking.

Another problem with adding more Aboriginal people to the jury pool, I believe, is that Native people don't differ that much from the rest of Canadians. Sitting on a jury is not exactly high on our list of things to do. Its priority or interest in our lives probably sits only second to attending a residential school or participating in one of those long starlight winter walks that used to be so popular in Saskatoon.

And truthfully, if I was a defendant looking across a courtroom at 12 people ready to pass judgement on me, I am not sure I would feel all that comfortable looking at a jury of my cultural and ethnological peers because Native people, I think I can safely say, dislike and find excessive fault with murderers, rapists, thieves and people making illegal left hand turns as any other people in Canada. And with the issue of those missing or murdered 1,200 Aboriginal women still hanging over this country's head, possibly more so.

So, I would probably feel more at ease if my jury consisted of 12 left leaning, socially conscious White people, carrying a certain amount of collective social guilt.

I mean, who wouldn't?

Ending systemic violence against Aboriginal women

Guest Column
By Senator Sandra
Lovell Nicholas

It is with a heavy heart that I am writing about the ongoing tragedy of murdered and missing Aboriginal women, a national epidemic of violence that persists in devastating ever more families each year.

The dreadful cases of Bernice Rich, Loretta Saunders and Tina Fontaine – to name a few innocent victims murdered this year – have personalized the horrendous nature of the problem and prompted Aboriginal women to ask: "Am I next?"

According to a recent RCMP report, the tragedy has made more than 1,200 victims between 1980 and 2012. This is more than double the most

pessimistic estimates available a few months ago. A stark reality of poverty, unemployment and violence is painted. It can be summarized in one simple – but outrageous – fact: Aboriginal women are five times more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal ones.

Action must be taken on several fronts:

Justice –
Support –
Protection –
Prevention.

It must be championed at the community, municipal, provincial and federal levels. While the renewed calls of premiers for a public inquiry are strong indicators of their commitment for improved services and programs, the federal government has been sending less than encouraging

signals.

Their so-called action plan recently tabled is nothing more than a laundry list of existing piecemeal initiatives, many not specific to Aboriginal women and inadequate, as proven by the alarming RCMP figures.

More troubling is the Prime Minister's view of the tragedy. He is not only dismissing calls for a public inquiry, but denying that this is a social phenomenon. For him, it is rather a series of isolated crimes that should be addressed through police investigations.

This government's approach is quite disturbing.

Who believes that there is no correlation between the crisis and generalized gender and race-based discrimination, continued impoverishment or economic marginalization?

Shouldn't we be proactive and do something before people are murdered or go missing?

If everything is known about the issue, why is it persisting and why are 20 per cent of the cases still unsolved? We need to understand how to bring the perpetrators to justice, provide closure to the families, and protect women from criminals walking free in their communities.

As a result of this government's inaction, we are now dealing with Aboriginal communities that feel ignored. And, more importantly, we are no closer to ensuring that Aboriginal women are treated the same as any other Canadian woman when it comes to being protected against violent crimes.

The government needs to do much more. The conditions for

a larger conversation must be created to send a strong signal to Aboriginal women that they are not "invisible" and to allow Canadians to better understand the challenges facing these women on and off reserves.

It would also provide an opportunity for a "foundational" look at the issue and form the basis for a comprehensive national action plan. Information, education and action need to go hand-in-hand to prevent this human crisis from persisting.

There is no alternative. Ignoring the calls of experts, organizations and citizens pleading for such conversation would not only be disrespectful but would indicate, not only to Aboriginal communities, but to all Canadians, that we are indeed indifferent as to "who is next."

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Childhood after childhood left without support

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

A verdict delivered by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal within the next six months could find Canada in a unique position: the first country to be held liable for contemporary mistreatment of children.

"Many of these things that have happened in Canada and worldwide have been about wayward policies of governments that have happened in the past. But this case has the potential of holding governments accountable for doing the right thing for children today and going into the future. It's a case that can fix things instead of just saying, 'I'm sorry for the past,'" said Dr. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

The decision has been eight years in the making.

Blackstock's organization and the Assembly of First Nations jointly launched a Canadian Human Rights complaint against the federal government in 2007. They maintained that the government had a longstanding pattern of providing unequal funding for child welfare services for First Nations children on reserves compared to provincial dollars non-Aboriginal children received. They said the federal government's funding constituted a discriminatory practice which resulted in inequitable services.

Final arguments took place in late October. The tribunal must file its decision within four to six months.

Blackstock said nothing in the federal government's closing statement surprised her.

"The only thing that surprised me was how weak they were." She said there was no "robust argument."

The federal government's final written argument re-iterated its earlier case, stating that federal and provincial funding could not be compared as they were two different levels of service providers.

The federal government stated that the allegations "were not borne out by the evidence."

Blackstock said the government both dismissed information provided by their own employees as well as information provided by now former Auditor General Sheila Fraser.

"They dropped their own expert witness. We filed their expert reports as part of our claim," said Blackstock.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has requested that the tribunal find the federal government's funding formula discriminatory, end the discriminatory aspects of the federal program, and address the

discriminatory aspects, taking remedial action within a 12-month period.

The Caring Society and AFN are going a step further, calling for the establishment of a trust fund, which would allow guardians to access support services for culture, wellness and education for the children impacted. As the federal government has tracked the children through their Indian registry system, identification of the affected children will be simple, said Blacklock.

"Under the Canadian Human Rights Act, every person who has been harmed has opportunity to receive some damages," she said. "We feel that Canada has been so negligent on this file, that it has known about these inequalities for years, it has known it has been harmful for children for years and it has failed to take adequate measures, that it shouldn't profit from the discrimination."

Blacklock said they are also calling for immediate compensation.

"There are some fundamental flaws to the whole funding regime and those are the funds we are saying should go out the door right away," she said.

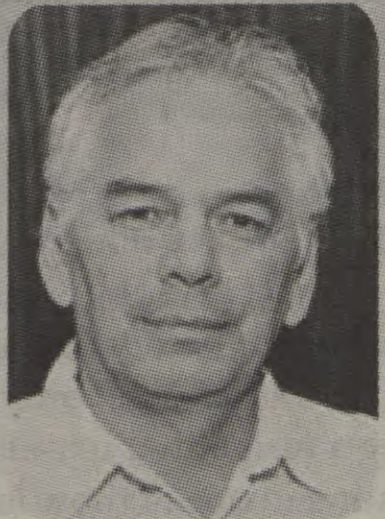
Other funding needs will be specific to the situation of each First Nation and that is why it is paramount that the federal government work with First Nations in addressing the funding issue, Blacklock said.

Even more critical, though, she says, is that the tribunal remain involved if the verdict goes against the federal government.

"There absolutely needs to be independent oversight over the government's implementation process," she said. "And the fact that they're fighting this case for the past six years, this isn't a government that's prepared to say, 'I'm going to take accountability for the problem as our internal documents say we should and let's get busy fixing it.' Instead they're fighting for the right to discriminate against the kids so I don't think we should rely at all on their motivation to fix the problem on a voluntary basis."

Although Blackstock is confident the decision will go in favour of First Nations children, she says whatever verdict is rendered, she thinks the process has been fair and impartial.

"Some people say it's taken pretty much eight years and isn't that a long time? And it is a long time but I'm absolutely convinced that without this case there would be no further action by the federal government to fix this problem. I would rather have undertaken this for eight years and have an opportunity to do something for kids versus sitting at endless negotiation tables where solution after solution goes unimplemented and childhood after childhood goes unsupported," she said.



Ghislain Picard
Candidate for National Chief

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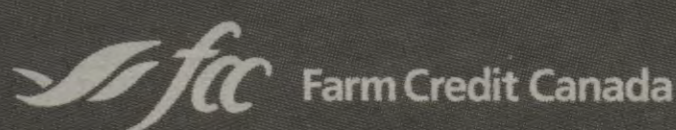
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AFN must provide a unified voice, says Bellegarde

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

SASKATOON

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde is hoping to go from being the Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief for Saskatchewan to heading the organization. It will be Bellegarde's second run at the position.

Bellegarde was the first candidate to officially declare his intentions to take over the AFN's top job. Bellegarde challenged Shawn Atleo in 2009, conceding to him in a record eight ballot vote. Bellegarde didn't run in 2012, when Atleo was successful in garnering a second term. However, Atleo stepped down in May 2014.

"I've been involved in First Nations politics all my life at every level. Basically, a servant working with and for First Nations people," said Bellegarde. "It's all about being an agent for change, a catalyst for change and getting things done. At every level I've gotten things done that improved the quality of life for our people."

Bellegarde has an impressive record in Saskatchewan where he "was part of a team" that worked toward opening the All Nations hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle; helped stabilize FSIN's funding through new slot machines for

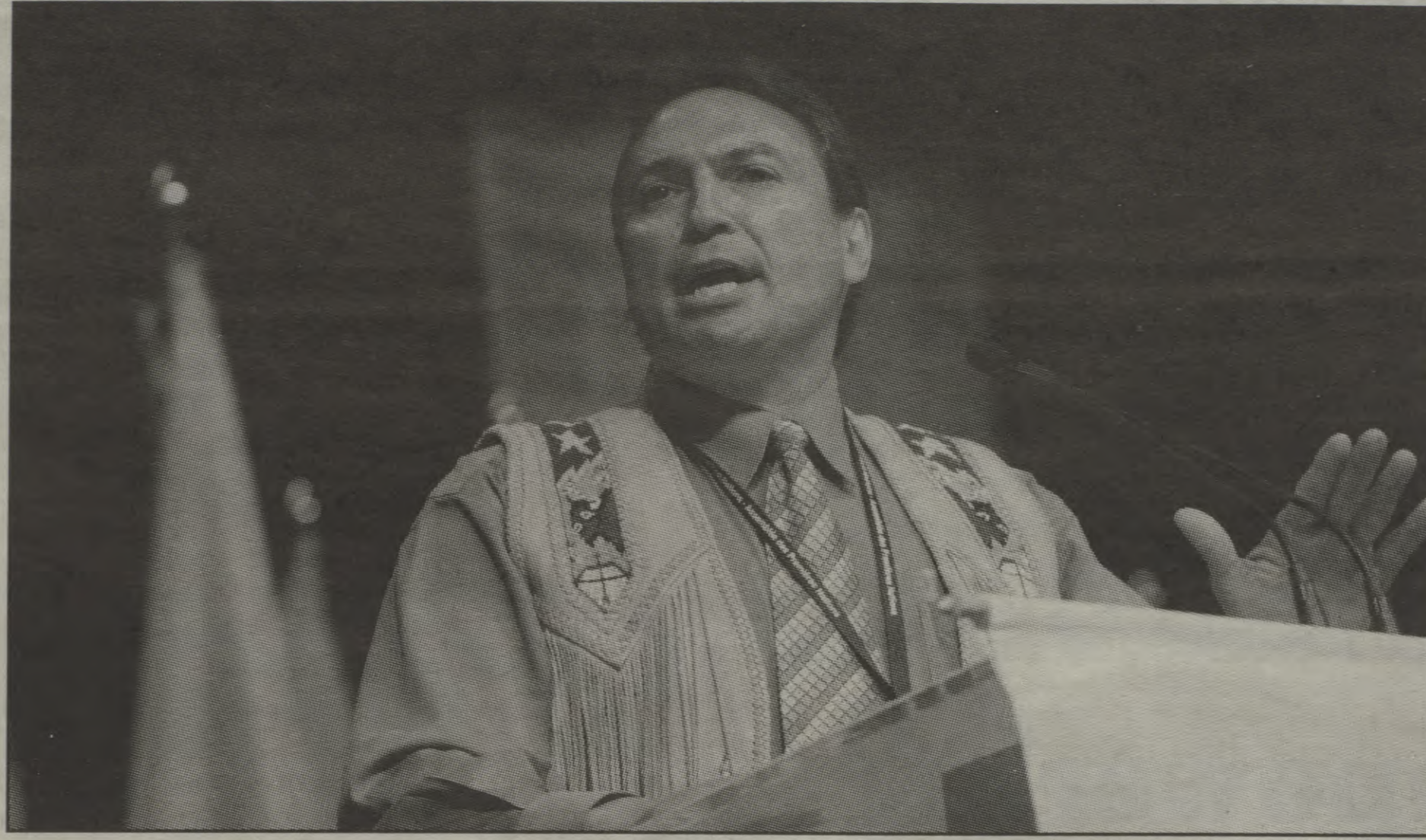


PHOTO: FILE

Chief Perry Bellegarde

Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority; brought about a seventh First Nations casino; and, negotiated a compensation package for First Nation veterans.

"I believe I've demonstrated that ability, that dedication and commitment to get things done and I just want to bring it to a national level," he said.

Bellegarde has been running his campaign on the basis that a "whole transformational change" is needed.

"We really do need a whole transformational change in Canada as it deals with Aboriginal rights and title and

treaty implementation," he said. "We've got to find new ways, new mechanisms to get that done."

But change is also needed within the AFN, he says, to ensure the organization remains "relevant, responsive and respectful of the diversity across Canada."

Bellegarde said the government would like to see the organization fall to infighting and now more than ever, the AFN has to provide a unified voice for all First Nations members – including those living off-reserve, which 2006 figures indicate is as high as 60

per cent. A strategy needs to be developed, he said, which takes into account adequate housing, employment, and training opportunities for those living off reserve.

"We need a new fiscal relationship with Canada. The contribution agreements that we signed just don't meet the need. They don't even keep up with inflation and they're not even based on population. That has to be addressed," said Bellegarde.

Closing the gap in funding between the First Nations and non-First Nations population in areas such as education, health, infrastructure, and child welfare

is a priority for Bellegarde.

"What people in Canada have to realize (is) that there's a high social cost to poverty," he said.

Resource revenue sharing is key and has been strengthened by the recent Supreme Court of Canada's decision on the Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia case.

"We have to address that and if we do that ... that's also linked to self-determination and that's also linked to economic self-sufficiency. You can't have economic self-determination without talking about economic self-sufficiency," he said.

Bellegarde will also continue to push for an inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls. But he says the issue can't stop at an inquiry. It needs to address the root causes, which include poverty, homelessness and substance abuse.

Enhancing First Nations' language is also important. Bellegarde says studies show that Indigenous people who are fluent in their language by the age of 13 have more success in school and in life.

"I want to bring my experience and my education of getting things done to a national level," said Bellegarde. "I'm trying to show people that I'm not just talk; that I will get things done and I'll give my 110 per cent effort to get things done and I won't quit. I'm committed."

Jourdain says he can lead the rebuilding of nations

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

LAC LA CROIX, Ont.

Leon Jourdain says he is the candidate who has been given the nod by the grassroots.

"My grandchildren, everybody's grandchildren, those people I look to on the ground level, are saying, 'You need to run. You're on the ground all the time. We tell you about our issues,'" said Jourdain. "All the information I have is shaped by the people on the ground."

He adds that he was nominated by chiefs and Elders.

The former two-term Treaty 3 grand chief says he comes to the position with a unique perspective, presently serving as a counsellor and therapist in Lac La Croix.

"I've heard and seen the struggles and the pain that our people have been going through since contact," he said.

Jourdain says he also knows the struggles chiefs, including himself, have experienced in dealing with the both the federal and provincial governments.

"The processes have gone astray, like when it comes to treaties, when it comes to



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Leon Jourdain

inherent rights, when it comes to Aboriginal rights," he said. "There is a drastic change that needs to happen in Canada."

Jourdain is proposing returning to the "original foundation of building nations, which would bring about change that would bring back the dignity and the pride as well as securing our own revenues."

First Nations governance needs to be taken out of the hands of the Indian Act, he says,

which restricts what chiefs can do to meet the needs of their people.

"At the time of contact, there were nations right across the country. And those nations must be rebuilt. Those nations have to be reborn," he said. "We have to concentrate on building our own method of government as Indigenous people."

Another priority for Jourdain is to develop a platform that would set out interim steps to

allow First Nations to make their own laws on such issues as health and education and make the necessary moves to become self-sufficient and self-sustaining.

Going back to the original foundation also means operating on a nation-to-nation basis, with First Nations interacting with the federal government at the same level.

Jourdain said the Assembly of First Nations would "have to evolve as the nations begin to develop" and he envisions the AFN playing a role similar to an embassy.

"When the nation comes to life, the treaty comes to life," he said.

Jourdain would also create an urban strategy to guide the AFN in dealing with urban-residing First Nations people. He notes that people are forced off the reserve because of lack of housing and employment only to end up living in poor conditions in the cities.

"But they have a right to vote in the community," he said. "They should be given the right by their voting to be able to be provided the service they rightfully need ... off the reserve."

Jourdain says he favours a

national inquiry "to an extent" on the subject of murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls

"There's been inquiries, there's been commissions, there's been different types of vehicles put forward every time there's a national crisis on our people....Where do those (recommendations) go? They sit on a shelf of the government," said Jourdain.

His approach would be to lobby corporations and private donors for funding for an inquiry.

"We would be in control and we would design whatever the recommendations are that come out and we ensure that we would own the problem and it would be us that makes sure the (recommendations) get implemented," he said.

Being approached by the grassroots to run for the position of national chief is a strong position to be in, said Jourdain.

"I believe I am the candidate who can at least begin the foundation of transforming the nations to a better place," he said. "It's time for change. We are at a crossroads right now."

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Picard says AFN can change, remain relevant

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WENDAKE, Que.

Serving as interim national chief for the Assembly of First Nations since July, Ghislain Picard has decided to try to make the position his for the next term.

The Innu leader is one of three people vying to head the AFN in what many consider a pivotal point for the organization following Shawn Atleo's sudden resignation in May.

"I'm very much affected by how our house has been shaken over the last few months and to me, I felt the same kind of anguish as my chiefs, not feeling good about how things turned out," said Picard.

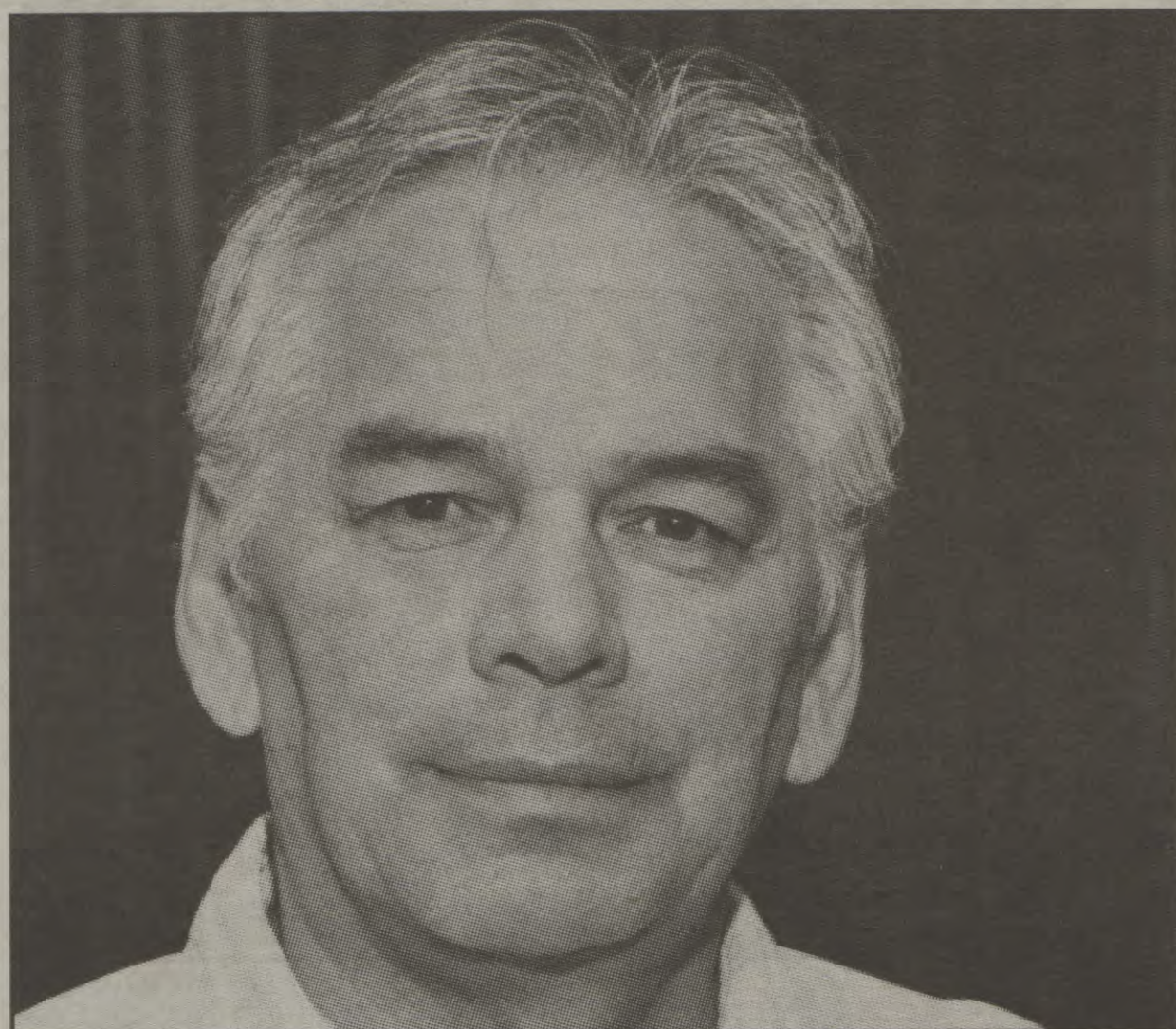
Picard, who also serves as AFN Regional Chief for Quebec and Labrador, was one of the first leaders to criticize Atleo's stand on the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act. Ultimately, it was dissent over the legislation that brought about Atleo's downfall.

Picard says one of the strengths he brings to the position is the ability to listen.

"I am very good at listening. I think it's important. In these very critical times you need someone who is able to listen and understand and certainly have the capacity to build consensus around issues. And I certainly have demonstrated that over the last 20 years," Picard said, adding his background in communications is also an asset.

That ability to listen is what will guide him in restructuring the AFN, one of Picard's priorities.

"What I would try to promote is the idea of having citizen forums. Why not seek our people's opinion on how they see the AFN evolving over the next few years?" he said. "And to me it's very important that we provide them with a space to express their opinions, good or bad. I think it is expected there



Ghislain Picard

will be criticism, but it should be constructive criticism."

Public forums would be balanced by short-term action, said Picard, which would address the current structure through amendments to the charter within the first 12 months.

Among the changes that need to occur to ensure the organization "becomes more effective and more relevant" is establishing "adequate balance" between the country's smaller and larger regions and determining how to give voice to the ever-increasing number of First Nations members living off-reserve.

"To me the AFN has always been a national political organization representing the interests of First Nations. It has to remain that but at the same time there are new realities. The AFN of today is not the AFN from 30 years ago. We need to adjust. We need as a national organization to evolve as our nations do," said Picard. "So this is certainly a key priority because it conditions everything else. It conditions the way we engage with government, it conditions the way we engage with our people."

Picard said he will continue to

press the federal government for an inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, but will also encourage chiefs to consider holding their own inquiry.

"Tied with that is the whole issue of the state of things when it comes to our people," said Picard. "It's closely related to the failure of this government in terms of directing some very fundamental and basic issues, such as housing, such as education, such as infrastructure, drinking water—all of that I think is certainly a big issue."

Picard cites his 22 years of experience on the executive, his ability to build consensus, and his willingness to step up to the challenges that face the AFN as his strengths.

"I think the leadership across the country has been challenged on many fronts, including the structure of the AFN (and) the education issue is very much key to this day. To me maybe there's a sense of maybe a negative take (that) the AFN is not worth the time or effort to restructure it," he said. "But obviously since I'm a candidate, I very much feel that the AFN can reinforce its structure and become a relevant organization."

Windspeaker News Briefs

Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee has heaped praise on the Durham Regional Police, saying he is impressed with the respect shown during a dig for three murdered boys at a farm north of Toronto in Anishinabek Nation territory.

"Detective Sgt. Mitch Martin, Major Crime Unit – Homicide, and his team at the Durham Regional Police handled this site dig in a very respectful way," said Madahbee. "The positive and respectful way that the Durham Regional Police worked with us and other First Nation leadership is a good example of how First Nations and police services can work collaboratively with each other."

Madahbee said community protocols and perspectives were sought and respected during an investigation, and ceremonies were conducted by communities closest to the farm in October. Investigators tore up the concrete floor of a barn where a woman says she witnessed murdered First Nations boys buried in the 1950s. Police have found nothing after digging up the barn. Karen Restoule, Justice Coordinator for the Chiefs of Ontario, said even though Glenna Mae Breckenridge's accounts were not accurate in terms of location of the bodies, her allegations raise the issue of missing children from that time period.

"The state, church and authorities placed little value on the lives of First Nations peoples and in particular as we see here—on the lives of First Nations children," said Restoule. "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is doing research on the issue of missing and unreported cases of missing First Nations children in their 'Missing Children Project.'" So far the project has identified 4,100 children missing from Indian residential schools who were unreported.

Madahbee said First Nations communities have stated that they might know of three missing First Nation boys in that area and an investigation should be opened to find them.

"The investigations into Glenna Mae's claims were very thorough – they dug wider and deeper than originally suggested," said Madahbee. "I thank all of those involved in this investigation."

Test results published by Indian Affairs Canada shows

First Nations students on reserves in Ontario, Manitoba, Atlantic Canada and Alberta are struggling with reading, writing and math. In Ontario, only 21 per cent of boys and 32 per cent of girls are meeting requirements in reading and writing. In Alberta, 28 per cent of boys and 36 per cent of girls are meeting the standard. In Ontario, 18 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls are making the grade in numeracy, with similar results showing in Alberta. Yet not all schools did the standardized tests. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, citing privacy concerns, could not say how many took the tests.

The Assembly of First Nations is commending police

in Winnipeg on the handling of the brutal sexual assault of 16-year-old Rinelle Harper of Garden Hill First Nation. Regional Chief for Alberta, Cameron Alexis, offered his thoughts and prayers to the girl and her family. Alexis leads the AFN's work in addressing and ending violence against Indigenous women and girls. "Your strength at this difficult time is a testament to the resilience of our peoples," he told the family. "I commend all efforts by local police to ensure justice is sought, and the community of Winnipeg in coming together to show their support. We must all stand together to condemn these senseless acts of violence, particularly by our own people. We must stop hurting one another, we must end the pattern. We have so many challenges before us, it is essential that we remain united and positive for the future of all of us – our children, our peers, our families," said Alexis. Two First Nations men have been charged with attempted murder, aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault with a weapon. "This kind of senseless violence must end, and it starts with all of us.†It is an absolute requirement that our peoples have access to adequate supports to ensure that we can all remain safe and secure and prevent these kinds of horrific incidents from happening in the first place.†This is why a National Public Commission of Inquiry looking into root causes of violence and vulnerability is so urgently required, particularly at a time when three-quarters of Canadians support it."

MADD Canada and Eskasoni First Nation dedicate a white cross

Nov. 17 in memory of a young community member who was killed by an impaired driver. On Oct. 9, 1999, Noreen Michelle Paul was walking home with a friend when she was hit and killed by an impaired driver. The 19-year-old was within sight of her house when she was struck. A white cross bearing Noreen's name is dedicated as both a tribute to the young woman who lost her life, and as a reminder to all of the deadly consequences of impaired driving. "We are honored to work with the Eskasoni First Nation to establish this touching memorial," said Susan MacAskill, MADD Canada Chapter Services Manager for the Atlantic Region. "Together, we celebrate her life, and we grieve her tragic and senseless loss."

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Forbister, Kinew say internal conflicts exposed in AFN

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

Three men running for the position of national chief for the Assembly of First Nations is a far cry from the eight – four men and four women – who jumped into the race in 2012.

“The political climate is too extreme,” said Grassy Narrows First Nation Chief Simon Forbister. “There’s a lot of mixed emotions across the board so it would have been challenging for anyone to enter into that climate.”

Forbister’s name would have been on the ballot alongside Perry Bellegarde, Leon Jourdain and Ghislain Picard if not for a mix up in communication between the chief electoral officer’s assistant and Forbister, he said. Forbister says he was told he could not electronically submit his nomination form so went to Ottawa to get the signatures he needed. He was

unable to meet the commitment.

Shawn Atleo resigned suddenly in May, midway through his second term, amidst controversy surrounding the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act and charges of being too close to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the governing Conservatives.

“In my opinion, the AFN has become more fractured and regionalized and we can’t seem to find common ground to fight for common issues,” said Forbister.

“It’s certainly a different time to be coming into the AFN,” said Wab Kinew. “I think Atleo’s resignation exposed a lot of the internal conflicts and controversies within the AFN.” Kinew, the University of Winnipeg’s director of Indigenous inclusion, had considered entering the race but personal reasons – a new wife and spending more time with his two children – convinced him that politics at this time wasn’t a

good fit.

Kinew said the new leader also faces challenges outside of the organization with constant clashes with the federal government.

Forbister said he had heard rumours that Mi’qmaq lawyer Pam Palmater, who finished a distant second to Atleo in 2012, had considered running again. But there are no women contenders this time around.

“First Nations politics has a long way to go to be a level playing field for Indigenous women and the especially toxic nature of it right now may have turned some female candidates off,” said Kinew.

However, he notes that a number of high profile First Nations women have expressed interest in seeking seats in the upcoming federal election.

Relevance of the AFN – an issue raised by all three contenders for national chief – is also another reason why the number vying for the position has decreased.

“Some leaders are very concerned about the AFN’s roles and responsibilities and that it needs to be restructured so that it can become stronger and unite all the regions,” said Forbister.

“AFN seems to be disconnected from a lot of grassroots people,” said Kinew, who suggests remedying that by offering services and supports to the grassroots and playing a role in cultural and language revitalization.

The AFN is also facing the challenge of representing an ever-growing number of members who live in urban settings.

Kinew is adamant that a relevant AFN has a role to play.

“There’s always going to be need for a national voice for First Nations people because there’s always going to be federal legislation,” he said. “There should be a national advocacy body like the AFN. So it’s needed.”

Both Kinew and Forbister believe that the three contenders

– Ghislain Picard, currently acting national chief, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde, and former Treaty 3 Grand Chief Leon Jourdain – all have strengths.

“They’re all experienced politicians but that cuts both ways,” said Kinew. “So they’re certainly knowledgeable about the political scene, First Nations communities, but it also means they’re all status quo.”

Neither Kinew nor Forbister is endorsing a candidate at this time.

At the end of the day, said Forbister, it is up to the 633 chiefs or their proxies.

“Very bright, intelligent men and women that occupy those positions, they’ll make the decision and I think it’ll be the right one,” he said.

The national chief is elected by a majority of 60 per cent of the ballots cast. The vote will take place Dec. 10, during the Special Chiefs Assembly Dec. 9 to Dec. 11 in Winnipeg.

Stats on sex trade staggering and shocking

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

A newly released series of reports on sex trafficking in Canada has found that Indigenous women and girls are especially vulnerable to the sex trade.

The Native Women’s Association of Canada reviewed studies from 1982 to 2011 of Indigenous women or youth in the sex industry and found colonial history, which included residential schools, and poor socio-economic conditions matched the risk factors for sex trafficking.

“The trafficking is all based on poverty. We have no money. We have to sell the only commodity we have (and it) is our girls,” said Muriel Stanley Venne, co-founder and president of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, in

Edmonton.

According to the literature review undertaken by the National Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada, which was created by the Canadian Women’s Foundation in 2013, five factors figure into those involved in the sex trade: being female; being poor; having a history of violence and/or neglect; having a history of child sexual abuse; and a low level of education.

One of the key findings from the report is that Aboriginal women and girls are over-represented in trafficking, said NWAC in a news release.

The 24-member task force, which included A Ojibway Metis Elder Mae Louise Campbell, from Grandmother Moon Lodge in Winnipeg; Chapeau Cree First Nation member Erin Corston, executive director for Ontario Native Women’s Association; Blood Tribe member Lanna Many

Grey Horses, manager of women’s and children’s services, the Bloom Group in Vancouver; Dr. Marie Delorme, CEO with the Imagination Group of Companies in Calgary; and superintendent Shirley Cuillierier, and First Nations Mohawk from Kanasatake, director general with federal policing partnership and external relations RCMP in Ottawa. They spent 18 months gathering information for the reports.

CWF’s report, “No More” Ending Sex-Trafficking in Canada, states, “In some Indigenous communities, these root causes are coupled with rural/remote living conditions. The result is a complex environment that contributes to an increased risk among Indigenous women and girls in being sexually exploited and trafficked.”

“I’ve heard ... 20 years or more ago, ... that the way to get out

of your community, which was so much desired by the young women to have a future, was that they were told, if they have a nice ass, you go to the city,” said Venne.

A limited survey of experiential Indigenous women conducted by NWAC produced startling results. Half of those surveyed were first recruited between the ages of nine and 14. More than 87 per cent had been sexually abused, raped or molested before they were trafficked; 75 per cent could not keep any of their earnings; and 85.7 per cent had tried to resist and leave their situation.

Venne relates the situation of Marilyn Merasty, a 14-year-old girl in Pelican Narrows, SK, who was sold by her mother to an RCMP member.

Merasty’s situation is not unique. According to the NWAC survey, 80 per cent of the Indigenous women surveyed had been forced to have sex with

the police, 71 per cent with doctors, 60 per cent with judges, and 40 per cent with social workers.

“It’s a national shame as I’ve said publicly and I’ll say it until the day I die. This is the most shameful act of non-attention to the lives of Aboriginal women,” said Venne.

“We want more for our women and girls – we want a life filled with choices, peace and economic security and a world where our women are valued,” said NWAC President Michelle Audette.

The task force set eight goals, the first of which is to change the systems, judicial, legal and child welfare; provide instant and comprehensive services; build awareness; and collective action, which includes provincial anti-trafficking strategies and establishing a Council of Funders to promote long-term investment in ending sex trafficking.

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Aboriginal opportunities close to new mayor's heart

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

Brian Bowman may not have been elected on the strength of his Métis heritage, but Winnipeg's first Indigenous mayor has made it clear that the Aboriginal population is a priority to him.

A week after being sworn in to run the city that boasts the largest urban Aboriginal population in the country, Bowman not only appointed a new chair of the Winnipeg Police Board, who shares a "key priority" to ensure Aboriginal people, like teenager Tina Fontaine, get the attention they deserve, but has taken on the portfolio of Urban Aboriginal Opportunities.

"I changed the name to opportunities (from affairs) and also appointed myself because this is something that is very important to me personally. It's very important to the citizens of Winnipeg, so as mayor I wanted

to serve in that capacity myself and be more hands on," said Bowman.

Bowman's victory on Oct. 23 was a decisive one taking 47.54 per cent of the vote. Bowman, a privacy lawyer, entered the campaign as an underdog, with former NDP politician Judy Wasylycia-Leis the front runner.

Another surprise in the race for mayor was the third place showing of Robert-Falcon Ouellette, a University of Manitoba administrator.

Aboriginal voters turned out in record numbers spurred on in the last few weeks through the grassroots campaign and Facebook page 'Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote 2014!'

Ouellette, who is Cree, has no doubt that his strong showing was due to the Indigenous vote.

"I think it's because they had someone who was running who looked somewhat like what an Aboriginal person might look like. I don't hide who I am. I have long hair, I'm traditional and I hope I was speaking to their values. I hope I was talking

to things that actually meant something to them," said Ouellette. He notes his campaign didn't focus on Aboriginal issues as much as how the issues affected everyone, including the city's Aboriginal people.

Ouellette believes Bowman's victory was not strengthened by the strong Aboriginal showing.

"I don't think anyone knew he was Métis," said Ouellette, who points to early campaign statements by Bowman identifying his sister and mother as Métis. "When he saw there was no fear of being Aboriginal and people were very supportive of it in Winnipeg, (then) he decided, 'Well, I'm Métis.'"

Bowman says he doesn't believe being Aboriginal contributed to his victory.

"I think most people voted for me just because of the platform and who I am as a person. I don't think my election win had too much to do with my family heritage. And I've been careful ... in not making that why people should vote for me," he

said.

Bowman says he doesn't want the title of being the first Indigenous mayor of a large city to be nothing more than symbolism.

He plans to "act as a bridge builder" and focus on what he sees as a city-wide change in attitude – despite a recent survey that indicated 76 per cent of Winnipeggers believe there is a serious divide between the city's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Bowman says organizations like the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council of Winnipeg are setting "Aboriginal issues at the top of their agenda" for the first time and, through his own community work, he has seen priority given to creating greater opportunities for the growing Aboriginal population.

"So there's a lot of goodwill and a lot of energy ... and that's something I want to amplify as mayor," he said.

Ouellette is hopeful that Bowman will put forward

policies that will benefit all Winnipeggers, including the Indigenous population.

"At the end of the day... I don't want to be too critical of him because I think perhaps he's on a new path and it might be very good for him, it might be very good for Aboriginal people, because if he's now saying that he's very proud of his Métis heritage, then I hope he's going to demonstrate that and do something for the people," said Ouellette.

Bowman, whose swearing-in ceremony included a blessing from an Ojibway Elder, plans to deliver for all Winnipeggers.

"I think whether you're Aboriginal or not, you can do good work in that area," he said. "All I can do is ensure people I'm going to work as hard on this and other priorities and the fact that I'm Métis, I hope, will allow people to know that my intentions in helping improve the lives of young Aboriginal people is right from the heart and I'm going to do everything I can to help."

NAN takes jury initiative to northern communities

By Geoff Shields
Windspeaker Contributor

Members of the Sandy Lake First Nation gathered at the Youth Centre on the evening of Nov. 13 for the opening of a two-day presentation on the role of jury members and an explanation of how coroner inquests are conducted.

The workshop was put together by a team from the Nishnawabe Aski Nation, including NAN former deputy grand chief Terry Waboose, Sam Achneepinescum, Julian Falconer, NAN legal representative, and lawyer Meaghan T. Daniel, both from Falconer LLP. There was also an observer from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, Jodie-Lynn Waddilove, and John Cutfeet and Jerry Sawanas, who attended in the role of translators.

The lack of Aboriginal representation on juries has, until recently, been largely ignored. Although requests for jury duty have been sent out to First Nations communities by letters addressed to chiefs and councils to be distributed to community members, they are perceived by many recipients as threatening. Misinterpretation of the document's wording has resulted in a lack of participation.

At present, there are 12 inquests that are unable to go forward, including the one to examine the mysterious deaths of seven students who attended school away from home in Thunder Bay. They all came from northern communities to further their education.

Five died in similar circumstances, their bodies



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Members of the Sandy Lake First Nation gathered at the Youth Centre on Nov. 13 for the opening of a two-day presentation on the role of jury members.

recovered from the McIntyre or Kaministiquai rivers. The manner of their deaths have led to speculation and hastened the need for inquests.

The urgent need for First Nation jury representation was highlighted in a report put forward by former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci, who was appointed in August 2011 to examine First Nation representation on Ontario jury rolls.

Upon its release, the report was followed up by the government and wheels were set in motion to gather a team to visit northern communities.

Following a closed meeting with Chief Bart Meekis and council in the afternoon,

representatives adjourned to the centre for dinner, which commenced at 7 p.m. with a prayer said by Elder Adelaide Meekis. Waboose then explained "The issue we are going to talk about to you is the jury role with respect to inquests. That is our purpose here. But more importantly it is to tell you about the process, the background of why we are here and also to ask for your assistance. We are asking for volunteers to serve on the inquest juries."

He then introduced Falconer, who spoke of the role that jury members play in relation to coroners inquests and the need for First Nation representation on juries.

"The idea is to provide you

legal information and legal advice, to answer questions and, most importantly, to try and give you the opportunity to decide for yourself that what we are discussing is a good idea. For far too long, key information that First Nations need isn't given to them, respect isn't extended. You get envelopes in the mail with her Majesty, the Queen on them and you are supposed to do what you are told and then they found they could not get jurists together because community members do not respond to that.

"The Justice System has not been kind to First Nations and the information circulars (provided on the night) are about trying to protect your communities and a coroner's

inquest is one way of doing this."

He concluded, "They can't convene 12 inquests in the north right now, because they can't get juries together because First Nations are not off the jury rolls and the juries cannot go forward without First Nation participation."

"There is a benefit in doing this, because you become involved on your terms, you make the decision... This is intended to create integrity in the system. It is intended to give community a voice on their own terms."

He then invited members of the community to ask questions.

Among those in attendance was Lorene Morriveau, whose 17-year-old son Kyle's body was found in the McIntyre River on Nov. 10, 2009. At the conclusion of the evening she commented, "I am hoping that things will work out to help the families get over the losses they have been going through. It's been too long and it's time to do something and I feel that by getting volunteers to appear on juries will hopefully get the inquest process moving faster."

Casey Fiddler agreed. "I think it's a good idea for the families and friends that don't know anything about the inquests. I understand now what a jury does, it was explained well and I would consider doing jury duty."

The second day started with a luncheon and a thank you speech from Chief Meekis, after which one of the sessions that interested community members was conducted by team members. At the close of the session, 48 people had volunteered their services.

(See NAN on page 22.)



Raven's Eye: Special Section providing news from BC & Yukon

British Columbia has developed a new online tool for businesses to help them prepare to tap into the "generational opportunities" that will be driven by the Liquefied Natural Gas industry. B.C. wants businesses large and small to be ready "and profile their goods and services to proponents and their contractors when the first Final Investment Decision is reached. Businesses create online profiles at LNGBuyBC.ca in the LNG-Buy BC online tool that will highlight their

specialties, their certifications, and their contact information. So far more than 300 companies, 25 of them Aboriginal owned, have pre-registered in the tool, and are offering a range of services, including accommodation and catering services, construction expertise, and finance and insurance.

A New Brunswick First Nation says it needs \$500,000

to repair roads, but the province isn't listening, saying the problem is a federal

responsibility. Chief David Peter-Paul of the Pabineau First Nation says he spoke with provincial officials many times and has shown them the conditions of the road, but the province isn't offering up any money. "Anyone who has travelled through the Pabineau First Nation community can attest to the fact that the conditions of the roadways are horrific, to say the least," said Peter-Paul. "We have worked very hard to effectively communicate to the government of New Brunswick

our need for provincial support to undertake major road repairs in Pabineau. However, to date, these attempts seem to have fallen on deaf ears." Peter-Paul said \$1 million in federal funding will repair parts of the roadways, but repairs needed go beyond general road work. "The assessment on the road conditions for all First Nations in New Brunswick has been completed by the province and the proposal is now under review," said Aboriginal Affairs spokesperson Michelle Perron. "We will continue to work with

the province of New Brunswick to determine opportunities that may exist for partnering on road construction projects in First Nation communities, including exploring options to include various First Nation roads in future provincial public-private partnerships (P3) road construction projects."

The Specific Claims Tribunal's 2014 Annual Report

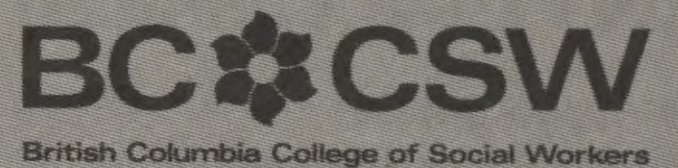
was made public Nov. 14 and warned that understaffing and underfunding will impair the tribunal to function. The Specific



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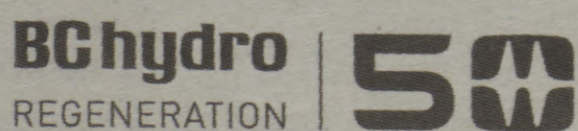
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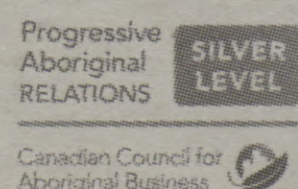
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GDS11-255

Environmental Assessment of
the Proposed Ajax Mine Project

Public Comment Period and Information Sessions

KGHM Ajax Mining Inc. is proposing the construction and operation of the Ajax Mine Project (the Project), a copper-gold mine located near the city of Kamloops, British Columbia (B.C.). The Project has an expected mine life of up to 23 years with a production capacity of approximately 60,000 tonnes of mineral ore per day.

The Ajax Mine Project is subject to review under both the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and B.C.'s *Environmental Assessment Act* and is undergoing a cooperative environmental assessment.

Public Comment Period

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) and B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) are inviting the public to comment on revisions to the environmental assessment information requirements that result from changes to the mine plan for the Ajax Mine Project.

The Agency and the EAO have recently revised the Application Information Requirements / Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines (AIR / EIS Guidelines) to reflect the proponent's changes to the layout and design of the project. The AIR / EIS Guidelines provide direction regarding the studies, methods and information the proponent is required to include in the preparation of its Application / EIS document. The proponent's Application / EIS will describe the new project design and layout, and provide the assessment results for the potential environmental, heritage, health, social, and economic effects of all phases of the project.

The revised AIR / EIS Guidelines document is available online on the EAO's website at www.eao.gov.bc.ca. The revised AIR / EIS Guidelines and a summary of the document will be available on the Agency's website, www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca, as of November 18, 2014. Additional information regarding the environmental assessment process for the Project is available on either website.

The public comment period is **from November 18 to December 18, 2014**. The Agency and the EAO accept public comments during that time submitted by any of the following means:

By Online Form: www.eao.gov.bc.ca **By Email:** Ajax@ceaa-acee.gc.ca **By Fax:** 250-387-2208

By Mail:

Scott Bailey
Executive Project Director
Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V1

Kevin Inouye,
Project Manager
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
410-701 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, British Columbia V7Y 1C6

The Agency accepts comments in English or in French. Any comments filed need only be submitted once to either the Agency or the EAO, to be considered for both the provincial and federal environmental assessments.

Copies of the summary of the revised AIR / EIS Guidelines and the complete version of the revised AIR / EIS Guidelines are available for viewing at these locations:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Vancouver, British Columbia Viewing by appointment only Telephone: 604-666-2431	Kamloops Library 100 - 465 Victoria Street Kamloops, British Columbia	North Kamloops Library 693 Tranquille Road Kamloops, British Columbia	City of Kamloops Offices 7 Victoria Street West Kamloops, British Columbia
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Information Sessions

Information sessions will be held during the comment period:

Kamloops, British Columbia
November 25 and 26, 2014
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Kamloops Coast Hotel and Conference Centre
1250 Rogers Way

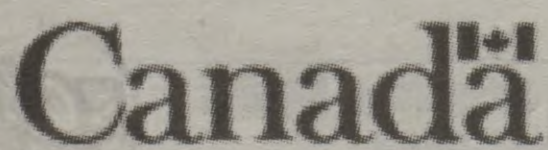
Information on the Ajax Mine Project and the revised AIR / EIS Guidelines will be available for viewing, and interested individuals will be able to speak with various provincial and federal environmental assessment representatives and the proponent's technical experts. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn about the steps of the cooperative environmental assessment process.

Next Steps

The comments received during the comment period on the revised AIR / EIS Guidelines will be considered in the ongoing provincial and federal environmental assessments of the Ajax Mine Project, and will also be considered in finalizing the revised AIR / EIS Guidelines document.

Once finalized, the AIR / EIS Guidelines will be provided to the proponent to support the submission of its Application / Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A public comment period on the proponent's Application / EIS will be announced at a later date.

All submissions received by the Agency and the EAO during the comment period in relation to the Ajax Mine Project are considered public. They will be posted to the EAO website and will become part of the Agency project file.



Claims Tribunal was established to make final and binding decisions on specific land.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, is not impressed with the ruling Conservative government. "Harper has once again demonstrated his lack of commitment to resolving land claims and his patent disregard for the rule of law," Phillip said. "Harper's egregiously unfair negotiation practices, chronic underfunding and willful misleading of the public is gravely undermining the honour of the Crown. The tribunal's report makes it clear Harper is walking away from his government's lawful obligations by sabotaging the very body it set up to bring about resolution and certainty for all Canadians. The report signals the death of this process and warns of a return to the courts and, where necessary, to the land and to the streets to exercise and defend our rights - as we did at Oka and Ipperwash."

Tribunal Chair Justice Harry Slade wrote in the report, "The Tribunal has neither a sufficient number of members to address its present and future case load in a timely manner, if at all. Nor is it... assured of its ability to continue to function with adequate protection of its independence... Without the appointment of at least one additional full-time member and several part time members...The Tribunal will fail..."

"These concerns have been raised with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. There has been no adequate response from Government."

The Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations have launched a legal challenge

of the Site C dam project. Both are located in Alberta and have joined with nations in the northeastern part of B.C. in their opposition to the dam which will be built by BC Hydro on the Peace River. Treaty 8 First Nations in B.C. filed a judicial review of Site C, saying the ministry of the Environment didn't fully consider the effect of Site C on treaty rights. A report released in May by a Joint Review Panel said Site C would have impacts on treaty rights that could not be mitigated. The province is still to make final decision about whether to go ahead with the project, though a decision is expected before Christmas.

Pull Together, a grassroots campaign to raise funds

for six First Nations to challenge Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, has been so successful organizers are increasing their goal from \$250,000 to \$300,000 by December 31. As of Nov. 17, the fund had grown to \$218,000. "The Pull Together campaign is driven by people who care and are politically astute," said kil laats 'gaa Peter Lantin, president of the Haida Nation. "They can see how the future of the country is shaping up and want to be part of it." Chief Marilyn Slett of the Heiltsuk Tribal Council said the fight against the Northern Gateway is a "global issue." "It's an issue that we all should be standing up to protect the land and the sea, we have that responsibility as human beings."



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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

Remembrance Day poem read in Michif

Métis veteran Alex Maurice, from Beauval, read the "Act of Remembrance" in Michif at the national Remembrance Day ceremony in Ottawa. It marked the first time the poem has been read at the national ceremony in an Aboriginal language. Maurice read the poem with Korean War veterans and Aboriginal veterans. The "Act of Remembrance," an extract from the poem *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon, has been a staple at the national ceremony but up until this year it has been read in English and French. "It's quite an honour and it's something that my family feels good about," Maurice said. "It will be a year I will always remember. It will be an honour and a privilege."

Online tip received about Tamra Keepness leads no where

A hand-drawn map submitted anonymously and labelled "Location of Tamra Keepness, Check the Wells" was posted on the Reddit website. The investigation that ensued resulted in "nothing suspicious," said Regina Police spokesperson Elizabeth Popowich. She said that investigators did not find the crudely drawn map, which appeared to show part of the Muscowpetung First Nation, to be authentic. The person who posted it says he or she does not have first-hand information about the case. Police believe Tamra, who disappeared from her home in an inner-city Regina neighbourhood in July 2004, is dead. They have received more than 1,700 tips, but nothing that has led them to her remains. The person who posted the map said a late grandmother had obtained the map from a late aunt who created it based on visits to a prison. Posting the map on Reddit was designed to bring more attention to the case, the person said. Muscowpetung First Nation is one of the areas police had searched years ago. In June, the reward offered for information in the case was doubled to \$50,000.

On-reserve school becomes part of a Saskatchewan school division

Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Saskatoon Public Schools have signed an education agreement that sees Whitecap Dakota Elementary School become an alliance school, making it the first on-reserve school to be a part of a Saskatchewan school division. The four-year agreement has federal funding for the education of Whitecap students flow to Saskatoon Public Schools. All Whitecap Dakota Elementary School teachers

are now employed by Saskatoon Public Schools. The partnership agreement is in effect from Sept. 1, 2014 to Aug. 31, 2018, with provisions for renewal. Although Whitecap Dakota Elementary School will be operated by SPS, the First Nation maintains jurisdiction over on-reserve education. As WDFN continues towards self-governance, Whitecap Council and membership intend to assert its jurisdiction adopting a Whitecap Dakota Education Act. This law would continue to enable the WDFN-SPS partnership as the most appropriate and effective tool for the community to sustain student achievement.

Yellow Quill to build on urban reserve in Saskatoon

Yellow Quill First Nation plans to construct its first urban reserve project in Saskatoon in what is now a parking lot. The \$40 million commercial and office building will have the First Nations Bank as its lead tenant. The building is to be constructed to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental) Gold Certification standards. It has been a four-year process but Yellow Quill has secured reserve status for the property and is looking to secure additional tenant leasing commitments before starting construction. More than 50 urban reserves already exist in the province, with more than 50 more on the way. "The positive impact of urban reserves is just one more example of what I mean when I talk about 'transformative change,'" said Assembly of First Nations leadership candidate Perry Bellegarde, who presently serves as Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. The urban reserve will lead to employment opportunities, business opportunities and return on investment for First Nations peoples.

Equity deal opens doors for engineering, management services

Kitsaki Development Corporation has acquired 25 per cent equity in the Saskatoon-based March Consulting Associates Inc., which will allow Kitsaki to access professional project engineering and management services in turn providing March with access to First Nations resources and services. "This partnership offers Kitsaki the opportunity to deliver more services to our clients and to tap into new markets that will allow us to grow the business," said Russel Roberts, CEO of Kitsaki. Kitsaki is owned by Lac La Ronge Indian Band, the largest First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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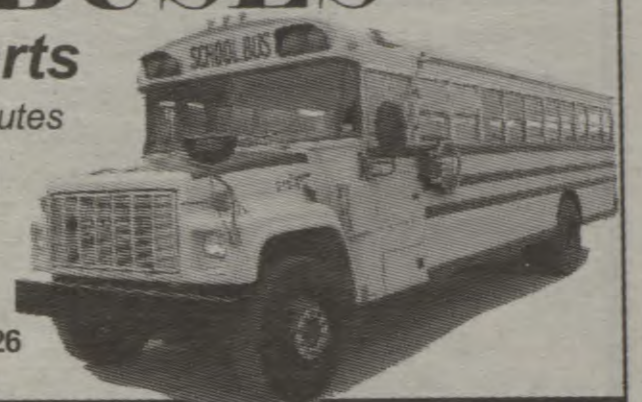
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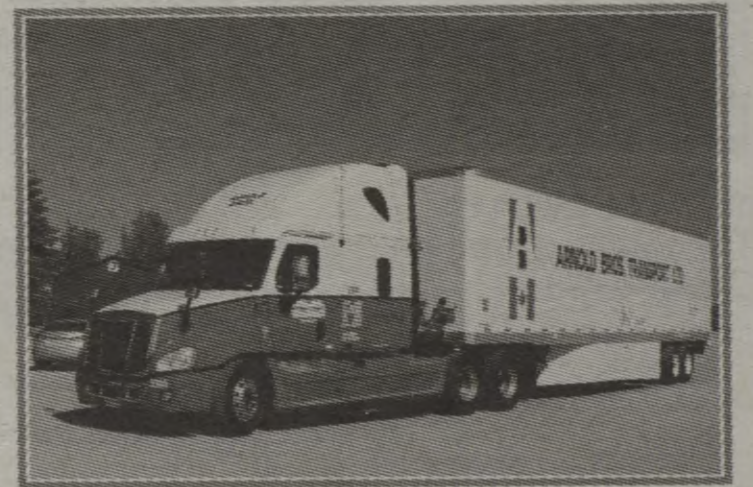
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Manitoba Pipestone: Special Section providing news from Manitoba

First Nations boycott Sun News Media

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Southern Chiefs Organization and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak joined forces to boycott Sun News Media and companies who use the outlet for advertisement. The First Nations organizations contend that articles within the *Winnipeg Sun* continue "to provide false information that feed into the stereotypical ideologies against Indigenous People." *Winnipeg Sun* editor-in-chief Mark Hamm said he disagrees with the chiefs' position that the newspaper's articles are discriminatory, biased and racist. Hamm said he has met with the chiefs and offered them a column in the paper and while he hopes to mend the *Sun's* relationship with First Nations, the newspaper's approach to coverage will not change. The chiefs say their boycott will extend to include the businesses who continue to advertise in Sun Media. Canadians are also being asked to cancel their *Sun* subscriptions.

Agreement signed to change system of apprehending Aboriginal children

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Grand Chief David Harper of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Grand Chief Terrence Nelson of the Southern Chiefs Organization and Manitoba Regional Chief Bill Traverse of the Assembly of First Nations recently signed an agreement

aiming to change the system of apprehending Aboriginal children in crisis. The chiefs were part of a leadership council that met in November with Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross. "We've said for a long time, sometimes it takes a community to raise a child and we're being denied that opportunity for the community to help raise the child because children are being moved from our communities and into private homes that aren't part of our collective," Nepinak told the *Canadian Press*. The chiefs want to see a redirection of the approximately \$6 billion expected to be spent by the provincial government in the next 10 years apprehending and holding Aboriginal children in the current system. Nepinak said the money could be used to create care options within First Nations communities.

Manitoba Association of Native Firefighters loses funding

The federal government has pulled funding from the Manitoba Association of Native Firefighters and says it will not renew its agreement. The association was audited by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada after receiving millions of dollars to care for flood and forest fire evacuees. There were allegations that the money had been misused. Earlier this year, the Red Cross was put in charge of the long-term care of about 2,000 people evacuated from reserves around the province in 2011. In November, Aboriginal Affairs Minister

Bernard Valcourt said that MANFF was in default of its agreement with the federal government and that the organization has not proven it can competently deliver the services. "Going forward, we continue to strongly encourage the province of Manitoba to negotiate an emergency management agreement with the federal government so that together we can ensure First Nations receive the support they deserve. These services need to be made available equally, as they are in other provinces across Canada," said Valcourt.

Film on flood evacuees wins Best Short

Treading Water: Plight of the Manitoba First Nation Flood Evacuees won Best Short Documentary at the recent imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. The film is the work of brother/sister filmmaking team Janelle and Jérémie Wookey. Janelle said she hopes the award will help keep attention on the story of the flood evacuees – who still remain displaced from their homes. *Treading Water* is a deeply intimate and moving look at the unexpected, untold story of the real-life citizens, community and controversy behind the headlines. For three-and-a-half years (and still counting) residents from

Manitoba's Lake St. Martin region have been displaced from their homes. It's an ongoing saga, with no end in sight. And while mainstream news outlets resurrect the story every time another 'development' is announced, it quickly fades away into the background. This displacement has triggered family breakdown, compromised education, stress and depression, and ultimately, increased substance abuse and suicide rates. The people in the documentary are as frustrated as they are devastated, as they struggle with feelings of isolation, loneliness and dejection.

Manitoba website launched to pitch health careers for Aboriginal people

Manitoba's Office of Rural and Northern Health launched a new website aimed at increasing the number of Aboriginal people in the health profession. We need to increase the representation of First Nation people in these careers, especially in rural and northern areas," said Wayne Heide, the office's administrative director.

The project includes a website and portal ManitobaAboriginalHealthCareers.ca that provides access to information needed to have a career in health, as well as inspirational success stories. "It

won't happen overnight but I'm confident in the not so distant future we will see more of our young people graduating Grade 12 then on to post-secondary and going on into a career in health," said Robert Maytwayashing, Aboriginal human resources development officer, Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority.

"Dynamic teacher" wins national award

Connie Wyatt Anderson, a teacher at Oscar Lathlin Collegiate in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, has been awarded a 2014 Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. The awards, made possible through Canada's History Society, recognizes Canadian teachers who are helping to 'bring history to life' for Canadian students. Canada's History Society, a national charity which promotes Canadian history, describes Anderson as a "dynamic teacher on a First Nations reserve 600 km north of Winnipeg [who] is engaging her students in a real-life cultural quest." The society said Anderson's interactive curriculum allows her students to learn about the First World War through the eyes of First Nations soldiers. There are five other recipients of the award.

Compiled by Shari Narine



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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Youth of nine friendship centres gathered with Elder Josephine Mandamin for the sacred water project.

Awareness campaign to protect water underway

Through a partnership between the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres Aboriginal Youth Council and the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada, youth participated in a weekend workshop in October that involved traditional teachings from Elder Water Walker Josephine Mandamin and a session on the governance of water presented by Dr. Seanna Davidson, a water expert from the area. The youth, from nine friendship centres each received \$1,000 from the RBC Blue Water Project to research local issues and implement awareness campaigns on the importance of protecting water.

Onigaming First Nation rocked by suicides

Onigaming First Nation declared a state of emergency Oct. 31 following the suicide of an 18-year-old man in the community. The most recent death is the fourth suicide on the

reserve in the past year, along with a number of suicide attempts. By declaring a state of emergency, the band council and Grand Council Treaty 3 say they are calling on governments, health care providers, the justice system and social services agencies to find ways to deal with the "crisis situation" in Onigaming. Chief Kathy Kishiqueb said both the federal and provincial governments know about the state of emergency and she has been in talks with Ontario Children and Youth Services minister. "We have to work collectively and to encourage our children, our youth, and our people to deal with their problems in more healthy ways. We have to give our children and youth their voice," said Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy.

Talk4Healing experiences drastic increase

Over the last seven months Talk4Healing has seen a 100 per cent increase in calls. The higher numbers are a result of

promoting who they are and what they do, said program coordinator Robin Haliuk. "Women are hearing about Talk4Healing and are getting more and more comfortable with calling for help." Talk4Healing has Aboriginal women, who have lived in remote communities and can relate to the callers, as the ones answering the phones. Beendigen in partnership with the Ontario Native Women's Association launched Talk4Healing in October 2012. It was the first of its kind in Ontario, providing culturally safe and appropriate resources for Aboriginal women and their families living in Northern Ontario. To date the help line has received 4,500 calls, with women calling from remote, urban, and rural communities, both on and off reserve.

Remote communities to be connected to grid

Under Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan, connecting remote First Nations to the province's

electricity grid was identified as a priority. The Remote Electrification Readiness Program will support the development of community readiness plans. These plans will help eligible communities identify opportunities for job-specific training, relevant health programs, business innovation mentoring and economic development supports. This initiative will help to fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, connecting up to 21 diesel-reliant First Nations could result in savings of about \$1 billion over the next 40 years compared to continuing with diesel generation.

MOU to bring more training to Greenstone area

Northern College has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Greenstone Regional Skills Centre, which will see the college and skills centre collaborating to provide skills training programs in northwestern Ontario. The

centre has a dedicated emphasis on training Aboriginal peoples. Northern College offers a wide variety of programming in areas relevant to industries in the Greenstone region, including mining and environmental sciences. The college delivers training at the preparatory, apprenticeship, post-secondary and graduate certificate levels. "We both have a strong commitment to increasing access to education, particularly for Aboriginal learners, and we're looking forward to offering new education options to people and employers in the Greenstone area," said Fred Gibbons, president of Northern College.

Birchbark canoe displayed at visitor centre

A birchbark canoe, made by Algonquin Elder William Commanda and presented to the Friends of Gatineau Park by the Waddell family, is now part of the National Capital Commission's Gatineau Park Visitor Centre. The canoe was unveiled by Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Chief Gilbert Whiteduck, National Capital Commission Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mark Kristmanson, Claudette Commanda, Alexander Waddell and Sarah Crowe, of the Friends of Gatineau Park. Elder William Commanda crafted the canoe in 1988 and gifted it to Dr. Walter G. Waddell, the man he credited for having saved his life in the 1960s. Waddell passed away in July 2013, and his family wished to showcase this canoe in the capital region, as well as recognize Commanda's legacy. "One of Elder Commanda's most important teachings was being a promoter of environmental stewardship and bringing people of all walks of life together, which resonates with the Friends of Gatineau Park," said Crowe.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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[health] Beaded condom a symbol of tagging back sexuality

By Andrea Smith
Windspeaker Writer

EDMONTON

A local Edmonton artist has found a provocative way to make a statement with one of her latest creations. Erin Marie Konsmo has been creating beaded condoms as a way to help Indigenous youth reclaim their right to sexuality and sexual health awareness.

"Condoms, in the way they've been presented in Indigenous communities, are about fear, stopping youth pregnancy, and shame," said Konsmo, who is the media arts and justice coordinator for the Native Youth Sexual Health Network. Konsmo operates mostly out of Edmonton, but travels across Canada, and even collaborates with colleagues in the United States. "It's very disease control oriented... and about stopping Indigenous youth from having babies."

Konsmo's beaded condom workshops focus on sex positivity and even pleasure.

"The things we have a birthright to as Indigenous youth," she said.

Konsmo runs workshops by request, and also creates condom art on her own time. Some of her designs include a strawberry with seeds and leaves, a corn with corn husks, a blueberry to commemorate wild blueberry season, and a turtle to represent Turtle Island.

"It started off as a joke," she said, as she launched into a story about Twitter, and what inspired her to start beading condoms.

"A hashtag called 'Nativer than you' came out a few years ago. It was Indigenous peoples poking fun at the idea of what makes you Indigenous," she said.

Konsmo did a sexual health version of the tweets, and one of hers read "My condoms are beaded, not ribbed. #Nativerthanyou."

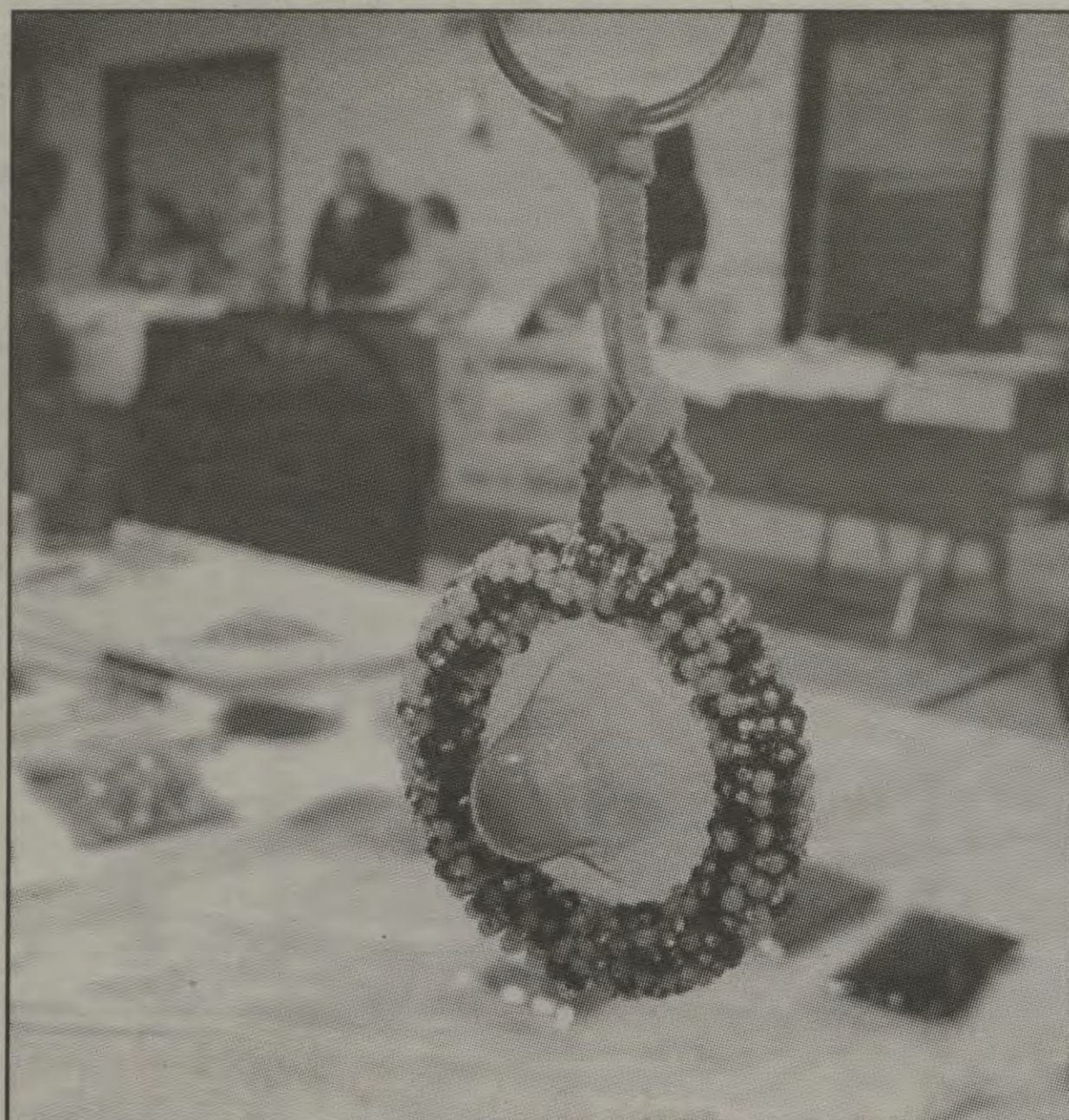


PHOTO: COURTESY OF ERIN MARIE KONSMO

A beaded condom keychain created during a Native Youth Sexual Health Network workshop in Kahnawake, Quebec.

Two years later she reviewed those tweets and grew curious enough to try beading her very first condom.

"It was a rainbow condom... The first one that I did. And then I couldn't stop. I thought, 'Why wouldn't we turn this into a workshop?'" she said.

Each session takes about two hours and involves the youth and youth facilitators seated around a table, beading and chatting about all things sex-related.

Some youth have never beaded before.

"For three of the youth (in a workshop in Kahnawake, QB), it was their first time beading... and they did it on a condom. I think that's an acknowledgement of the fact that we've had, through colonization, a lot of our culture taken away from us," said Konsmo.

"Being able to sit and bead condoms is a pretty big pushback," she said.

Megan Whyte, a NYSHN youth facilitator from Kahnawake, also received

Konsmo's "teachings."

Whyte says while there are a lot of laughs when it comes to sitting in a room and beading condoms with strangers, there is also a deeper meaning. She draws parallels between the workshops and the work of artist Nadia Myre, who in 2002 beaded over a copy of Canada's Indian Act and symbolically reclaimed Indigenous identity.

"We are beading onto a condom to say we have our own ways and our own traditions and our own cultures and our own ways of seeing what sexuality is about," she said.

Billy-Ray Belcourt, another youth facilitator in Edmonton, says that while art - and the beaded condom project - have become an important political strategy, it is only one aspect of reproductive justice.

Belcourt warned the condoms are not usable.

"They've been appropriated as an art form... because there's a lot of holes in them," he said with a laugh.

Health Watch

Study on gangs sheds light on prevention

University of British Columbia counselling psychology professor Alanaise Goodwill, a member of Manitoba's Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, has conducted a study of the Aboriginal gangs that are prevalent in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba as part of her PhD. She interviewed 10 gang members, including a relative, in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Youth said they joined not only to belong somewhere, but to gain basic necessities, such as shelter and food. While there are a number of ways to leave a gang, Goodwill was told the most successful way is to get a legal job. Programs are delivered to prevent kids from joining gangs, but the programs are neither steady nor sustainable so fail. One promising approach to preventing gang-affiliation is wraparound intervention, where at-risk youth handpick known adults in their lives to work as a team with child and family service agencies, and their school. The team then identifies health, social, cultural and vocational goals for the youth and helps him work towards those specific objectives.

Lack of mental health support reflected in Nunavut justice system

A new report based on the Inuit Health Survey carried out in Nunavut indicates that the territory is the most under-served region in the country when it comes to dealing with mental health issues and that has an impact on the justice system. The report, which looks at three areas of Nunavut's justice system — community justice, family violence and the relationship between mental health and the criminal justice system — says the system has "failed children and youth." NTI wants the Government of Nunavut to create a screening program that would identify people who could be at risk because of a history of trauma or mental health issues. NTI also wants Aboriginal health organizations to have federal funding restored and is pushing for the creation of a recruitment strategy, aimed at getting psychiatrists and clinical psychologists living and working in the territory. In the report, NTI says that even if all of its recommendations were put into place, it wouldn't immediately fix the problems within the system.

Connection between diabetes and cultural continuity examined

A study entitled, "Cultural continuity, traditional Indigenous language, and diabetes in Alberta First Nations: a mixed methods study," looked at the relationship between cultural continuity, self-determination, and diabetes prevalence. Diabetes prevalence is a major Indigenous health problem. Using information garnered from interviews conducted of 10 Cree and Blackfoot leaders, and developing a quantitative analysis using public and provincial administrative data for the 31 First Nations communities, it was determined that cultural continuity was a key factor to health success between the First Nations. Specifically for diabetes, they observed that First Nations with longer cultural continuity exhibited significantly lower levels for diabetes prevalence, even after adjusting for socio-economic factors. These findings represent an important aspect since cultural continuity is compromised in the Alberta Cree and Blackfoot Nations, due to colonization effects and First Nations are struggling with government policy. The study was published in International Journal for Equity in Health.

FNHA works with partners to improve cancer care

The First Nations Health Authority will be working in collaboration with BC Cancer Agency, Provincial Health Services Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia, and British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres to improve cancer care for Aboriginal peoples in the province. The new strategy will advance improvements in continuity of cancer care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit patients in rural and remote communities. A key focus in the three-year project is to improve the continuity of cancer care in a culturally competent and safe manner for Aboriginal cancer patients, with a focus on rural and remote communities to ensure sustainable transformative change. Through regional and province-wide engagement, the project will create a better understanding of the needs and opportunities, and will address gaps identified by developing relevant resources and tools within communities, for communities.

Aboriginal inmates give back to impoverished children

UBC nursing professor Helen Brown has received about \$150,000 in funding from the Movember Foundation to study the effect of replacing idle time of male Aboriginal inmates with work aimed at giving back to impoverished children and families. Brown's project was one of 15 approved by the Movember Foundation's Men's Health & Wellbeing Innovation Challenge to share in \$2.2 million. Projects needed to be "creative and innovative ideas that [aim] to disrupt long-held assumptions about men's health, focus on positive elements of masculinity, and get men to take action with their health." Brown's project treats the inmates, 25 in all, as co-researchers, and she called it "almost more activism" than research. The men involved are across three sites in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. Jobs involve making furniture, toys, cultural items and growing food. All of it is sent to the most impoverished First Nations children and families in B.C. Those children have begun writing to thank the inmates as well, which Brown says has further motivated the men. This element of helping others is integral to the project. Brown said she targeted Aboriginal men because they are over-represented in the justice system and the usual methods of rehabilitation are not working. The funding allows Brown to study metrics such as early release dates and repeat offences among the men over two years to see if the new strategies have an impact. Already she has heard and recorded testimony from the men in the program which has both moved and impressed her.

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Sports Briefs

By Sam Laskaris

Pioneer inducted into Hall of Fame

A former First Nations soccer star has been inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame.

Harry Manson was inducted posthumously into the hall of fame via the Pioneer category. Induction ceremonies were held Nov. 9 in Vaughan, Ont. The Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame is housed and operated in Vaughan by the Ontario Soccer Association.

Manson was better known by his First Nations name, Xulsi-malt, which translates into one who leaves his mark. Manson was born in 1879 and was regarded as the best First Nations soccer player in the late 1800s. He made his competitive debut at the age of 18 with the Nanaimo Thistles.

A few years later Manson decided there was enough First Nations soccer talent to form a team that would compete against the best intermediate men's squads in British Columbia.

Manson was instrumental in fielding the Nanaimo Indian Wanderers. His leadership qualities and on-field presence earned him the captaincy of the team.

The Wanderers made history in 1902 when they became the first Indigenous club to win a B.C. soccer championship.

Manson was the only individual inducted via the Pioneer category into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame this year. The other inductees were three players, two builders, a team of distinction and two organizations of distinction.

Memorial Cup Champ Goes To School

Trey Lewis, who was the captain of the Halifax Mooseheads when they captured the 2013 Memorial Cup, is now playing at the Canadian university level. Lewis, a 21-year-old Mi'kmaq from New Brunswick's Elsipogtog First Nation, is a rookie defenceman now with the St. Francis Xavier University X-Men.

The university is based in Antigonish, N.S.

After the Mooseheads' Memorial Cup campaign, Lewis also started last season with the Halifax team. He finished off the year as a member of the Mirimachi Timberwolves, members of the Maritime Junior Hockey League.

Ferland Makes NHL Debut

Halloween night will now forever have extra special memories for Michael Ferland, even though he sustained a concussion on Oct. 31.

That's because the 22-year-old Metis made his National Hockey League debut that night. Ferland suited up for the Calgary Flames in their home contest against the Nashville Predators.

Though Ferland did not earn a point in his first NHL game, the Flames did end up picking up a victory, registering a 4-3 decision over the Predators. Ferland was injured late in the second period after being hit in the head by Predators' defenceman Anton Volchenkov. The Nashville blueliner was later suspended for four games for the hit.

Ferland, who was placed on the injured list, had yet to return to action in mid-November. Ferland had been hoping to suit up for the Flames ever since the Calgary franchise selected him in the fifth round, 133rd over-all, in the 2010 NHL Entry Draft.

Ferland, who is from Swan River, Man., is in his second full season as a pro.

After playing three seasons in the Western Hockey League with the Brandon Wheat Kings, he began his professional career at the start of the 2012-13 campaign.

Ferland began the year in the American Hockey League with the Flames' then top affiliate, the Abbotsford Heat. But after seven contests he was sent down to the Utah Grizzlies, members of the East Coast Hockey League.

Shortly after that, Ferland was returned to the Wheat Kings in the junior ranks. But he didn't stay long in Brandon (only four games) as he was traded to the Saskatoon Blades.

As for last season, Ferland was once again started off the year in Abbotsford. But after playing 25 games with the Heat he suffered a season-ending knee injury.

Ferland began the current campaign with the Flames' top affiliate, who relocated to the U.S. and are now in the state of New York and called the Adirondack Flames.

Ferland played nine games with Adirondack before he was called up by Calgary after it ran into some injury woes.

Tournament Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Entrants are being sought for an Aboriginal youth hockey tournament in Manitoba that is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2015.

The 2015 Indigenous Minor Hockey Tournament, organized by the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council, will be staged from April 10 to April 12.

Squads will be competing in five divisions. They are Squirt (players born in 2009 and '08), Novice ('07 and '06), Atom ('05 and '04), Pee wee ('03 and '02) and Bantam ('01 and 2000).

Games will be held at rinks in Winnipeg, St. Adolphe and Ile-des-Chenes.

For more information contact Marvin Magpantay at melvin.magpantay@sportmanitoba.ca.

[sports]

Player has high hopes for a pro career



Heather Kashman

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

DURAHM, New Hampshire

A young Métis woman from Edmonton has been able to Kash her hockey skills into a free education.

And now Heather Kashman, a student/athlete at the University of New Hampshire, is hoping to one day take her talents overseas.

Kashman is in her fourth year at the New Hampshire school. Though athletes are only allowed to play four seasons in the NCAA ranks, the 21-year-old will still have one season of eligibility remaining after the 2014-15 campaign.

That's because following her impressive rookie season in 2011-12, Kashman sat out the entire following year as she recuperated from hip and shoulder surgeries.

Since she knew she would return for a fifth year at the school, Kashman spread out her academic workload as well. She now plans to graduate in the spring of 2016.

The business administration student has a dual major, marketing and management, with a minor in women's studies.

Following her collegiate career, Kashman is hoping to continue playing the sport at an elite level.

"I really want to play in a pro league," she said. "There are a bunch of pro teams and leagues in Europe. They don't pay enough for you to just play hockey, but it is something I want to try for a bit."

The Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL) is considered to be the top women's circuit in the world.

The CWHL is operating with five franchises this season. There are teams in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Brampton, as well

as a lone American entry in Boston.

But instead of aspiring to suit up for a squad in the CWHL, at this point, Kashman is keen to try her luck overseas.

"I don't think the quality is any better (than the CWHL) but there's a lot more teams than there are in North America," said Kashman, who started playing hockey at the age of four.

Kashman grew up playing on boys' teams and made the switch to girls' hockey around the age of 12.

She is on a full scholarship at her American school. Her tuition, books, residence and meals (valued at about \$50,000 per year) are covered by the university.

For those that are contemplating an athletic/academic university career, Kashman offers this advice.

"Definitely do it if you can," she said. "This is one of the best life experiences I've ever had."

After starting with the Edmonton Thunder Midget AAA squad, Kashman had plenty of scholarship offers.

"The University of New Hampshire was the first one to offer me a full scholarship and they showed the most interest in me," she said. "There were quite a few offers after that. The University of New Hampshire campus is gorgeous. Something about being on that campus made me instantly choose it."

Kashman and her teammates, however, have had a bit of a rocky road the last couple of years.

The team's head coach got fired last year during the season, and after the assistant coach took over, the squad finished the year on a 10-game losing streak.

As for this season, Hilary Witt

has been brought in as the team's head coach. Witt most recently served as an assistant coach for the U.S. women's squad that captured the silver medal at the Sochi Olympics earlier this year.

The UNH squad, however, got off to a slow start, posting a 3-10-1 record after its first 14 contests.

"We're rebuilding I guess you could say," Kashman said. "It's a pretty young team and we have eight new freshmen this year. And our coach has brought in some different values and some different systems."

Despite its record, Kashman believes her club is heading in the right direction.

"Team-wise we have to keep building," she said. "We have come so far since our first game this year. If we keep learning we'll be successful by the end. It might not happen this year but we are growing."

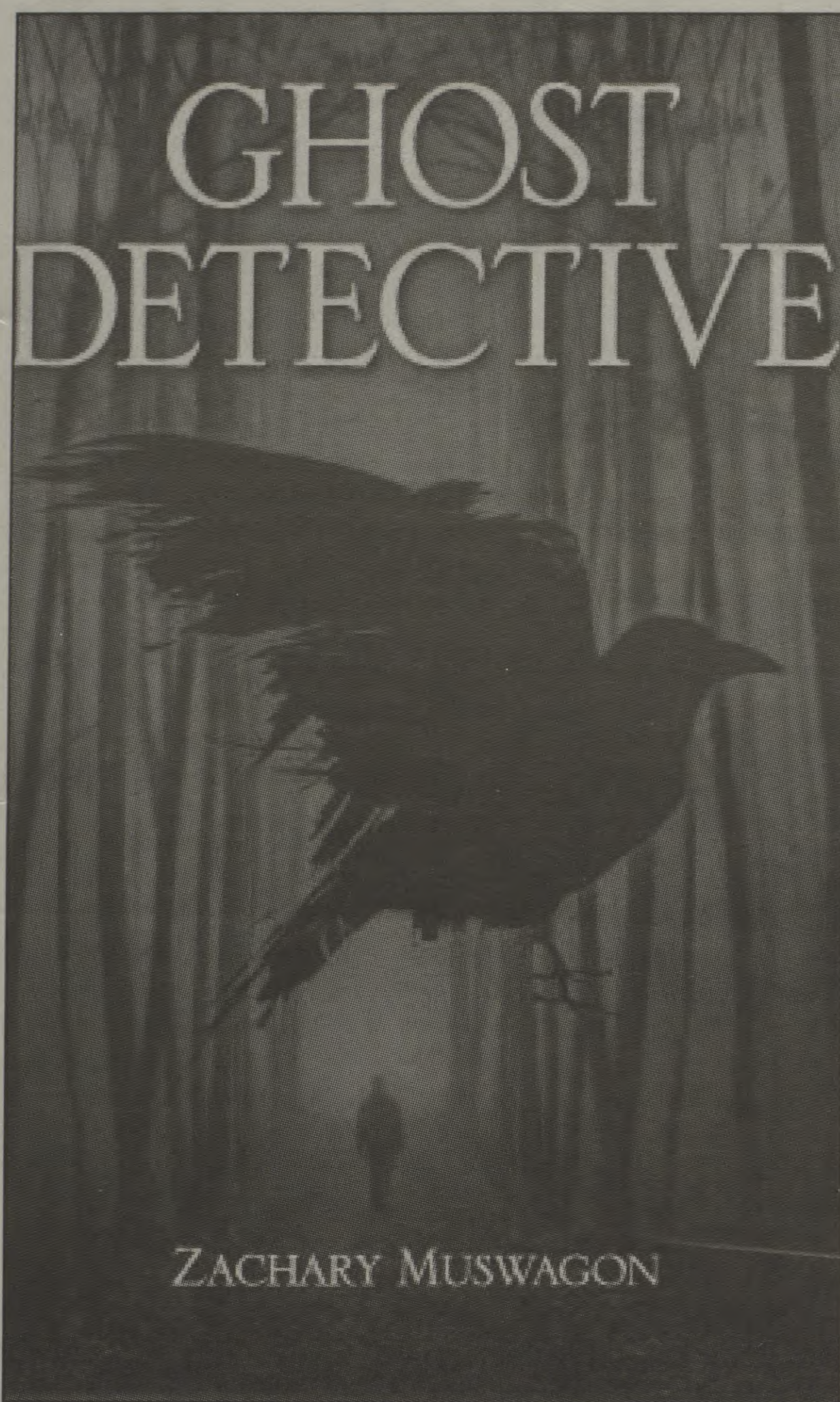
Kashman said the UNH team is also getting a different perspective this season, being coached by a female as opposed to male bench bosses in her earlier years at the school.

"It's like a different experience now," Kashman said. "(Coach Witt) has so much experience playing and coaching women's hockey and she can back up that knowledge."

For the past five summers Kashman has worked as a counsellor for the city of Edmonton. During the past two years she has been a program specialist for Flying Eagle.

This drop-in program gives youngsters an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal cultures and heritage. Counsellors lead program participants through various games, crafts and other recreational activities.

Whodunit provides more than just a good ghost story



Ghost Detective
Zachary Muswagon
(Published by Eschia
Books Inc.)

Review by Shari Narine

Ghost Detective is an engaging blend of supernatural and whodunit wrapped around life on the reserve. It could easily have remained a mystery novel with a twist, but author Zachary Muswagon makes it more as he explores the conditions on reserves and the reasons that motivate the antagonists.

Clearly written and easily read, Ghost Detective spins the tale of the Ghostkeeper cousins, Billy and Dale, both of whom are flawed but likeable, as they make their way through the unnamed Rez, trying to piece together the murder of, yes, Billy Ghostkeeper.

Dale is Billy's reluctant helper, drawn into the fray when Billy reminds Dale that he saved Dale's life from gang leader Gar all those years ago when Dale was in Grade 7.

Ghost Detective also blends the traditional ways with the modern ways. Billy is helped along by the Crow, his spirit guide, Crotchety Aunt Kena, who has the Eyes of Fire, can talk to Billy (and others in the spirit world) directly but Dale has to depend on his

Bluetooth for communication with Billy the ghost.

As the two work their way through the mystery of Billy's death, two suspects become clear. First, gang leader Gar. In this way, Muswagon tackles the issue of the ever-growing problem of gangs on reserves. A little heavy-handed in his dealing of the topic, Muswagon refers to the gang members as thugs who are wanna-be great Aboriginal warriors.

The second suspect is DBA Resources executive Grant, whose oil company pumps so much money into the Rez that Billy, who holds the position of assistant band compliance officer, turns a blind eye – initially – to the company's deadly infractions. Muswagon is blatant in slamming big oil for its unethical behaviour and its never-failing pursuit of the dollar.

DBA Resources is so bad that at one point a dead Billy is confronted by the ghosts of two children, who died of leukemia and who lived at a house where Billy fudged water and air emission sample results. Muswagon also takes an anti-government stand, with Grant telling Dale that even if Billy had damning information against the company, the government would not shut down a multinational billion dollar corporation,

regardless of deaths.

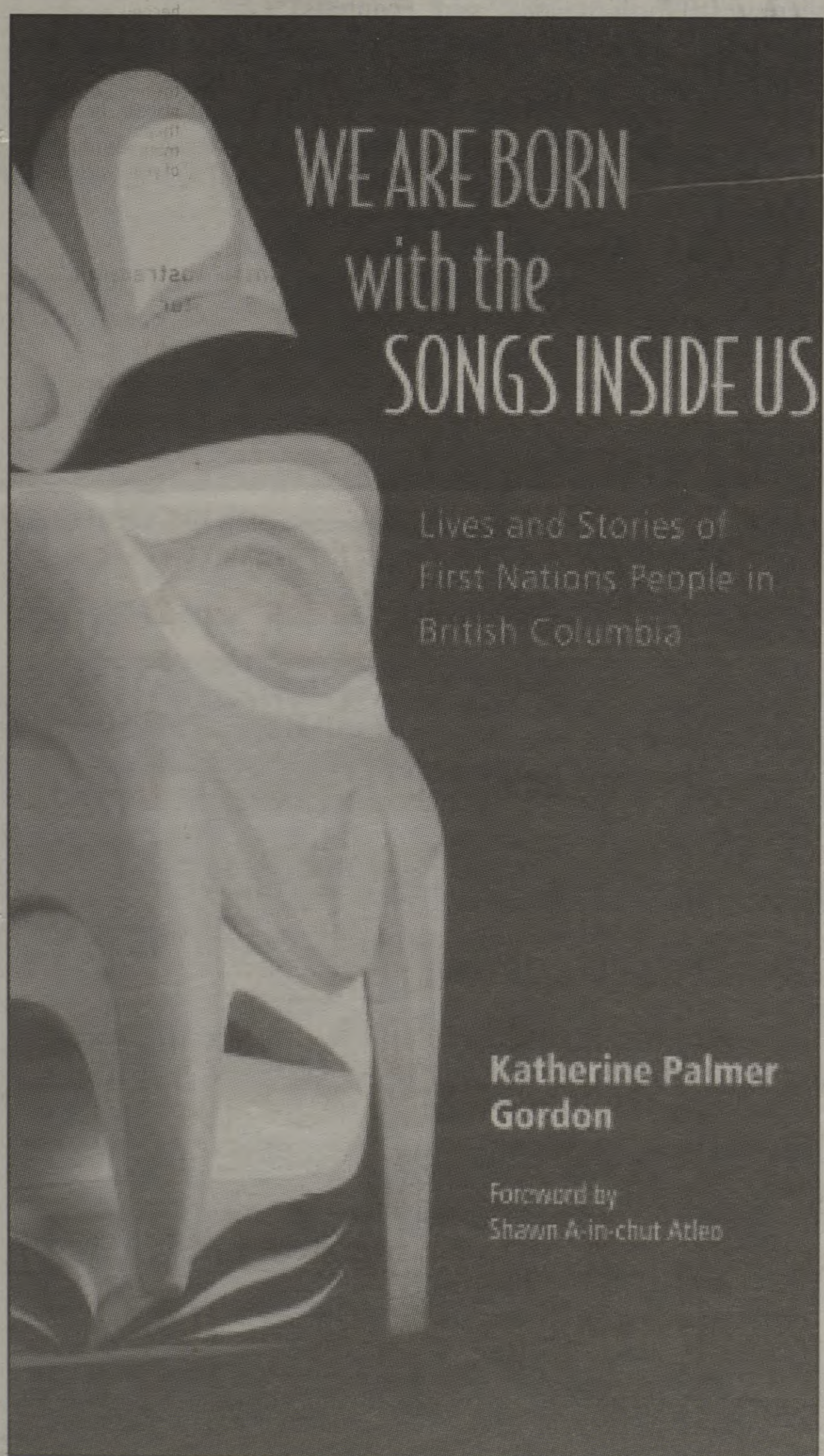
But of course, no whodunit is complete without a twist and Ghost Detective offers just that.

And more. Muswagon examines the conditions on the reserves, pointing to housing on Attawapiskat First Nation, and the attitudes of the public towards the deaths of Aboriginal people, naming the Pickton murders as one example.

But all is not lost for Billy. Before his death, Billy is on the road to redemption and in his death, he finds forgiveness from the two children he inadvertently led to their deaths, and he also connects with his cousin. Billy realizes that he has been selfish and points out to Dale, that while the younger cousin is a poser, he's also a good guy who has stepped up to help Billy out more than he needed to. Billy learns to control his ghost body and understand his role in the spirit world in time to help solve his murder and get the help of Aunt Kena to rescue Dale.

Ultimately, Ghost Detective is about trying to balance the traditional ways of caring for the land and the people with moving forward and providing for the people on the reserve. Can that happen? Says spirit guide Bear to Crow, "We're moving in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go."

Current and creative look at our own perspective



We Are Born with the Songs Inside Us
By Katherine Palmer
Gordon
(Published by Harbour
Publishing)

Review by Shari Narine

Recent health developments surrounding former Vancouver Canucks' hockey player Gino Odjick is a clear indication that he is a man, who has broken through the racial divide.

Odjick is one of 16 First Nations people in British Columbia highlighted in Katherine Palmer Gordon's book We Are Born with the Songs Inside Us. And Odjick's song is strong.

Odjick, who is Algonquin from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nations in Quebec, is claimed by Gordon as a west coast face because upon retiring from hockey in 2002, Odjick made B.C. his home. Gordon refers to Odjick as "put(ting) his money where his mouth is, investing in numerous initiatives and partnerships supporting First Nations development and employment." Odjick's commitment to bettering other peoples' lives was recognized by fans, who gathered outside Vancouver General Hospital to show their respect when Odjick made it known through the Canucks website that he had

been diagnosed with AL amyloidosis, a rare terminal disease. And Odjick, despite shortness of breath, went outside to acknowledge his fans, once more showing his commitment to others.

"I believe that seeing us as human beings, as people with our own unique perspectives and lives, is a fundamental first step toward understanding who we are, rejecting false and imposed stereotypes, and ultimately reaching reconciliation," writes former Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo in the foreword of We Are Born with the Songs Inside Us.

It is this connection between First Nations people and the rest of Canada that Gordon strives to relay through the array of people, whose lives she celebrates.

Reading about these people, who range from artists to environmentalists to scientists to actors, it is clear that they have one thing in common: a belief in the importance of their cultural heritage in all aspects of their lives. However, not all of them were raised with this belief. Some of them came to this understanding through trial. But all of them are now at that point and it is no accident that they are successful both in their professional and personal lives.

Gordon does not gloss over the struggle that continues for First Nations people when it comes to etching out a place for themselves. Individual stories talk about growing up in the face of racism and continuing the battle to be respected.

What stands out about Gordon's collection of people is that they exist in the modern-day realm and whether the reader is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, references to such events as the 2008 residential school apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper or the Idle No More movement, are relevant today. This is not a collection to be considered a history book.

By highlighting the people she has chosen and their variety of careers, Gordon also highlights that First Nations people are active participants in today's society and have a bright future. First Nations people are by no means to be relegated to the past.

Writes Gordon, "... there really are literally thousands upon thousands of creative, energetic, ordinary and extraordinary and inspirational people in this country who happen to be of First Nations heritage and are simply living their lives..."

Writes Atleo, "We need these stories to be told, read and celebrated."

Medicine Walk is poetry in prose form

Medicine Walk
Richard Wagamese
 (Published by McClelland
 and Stewart.)

Review by Shari Narine

Set with the backdrop of the BC wilderness, author Richard Wagamese intricately weaves the hardship of the physical journey with the emotional journey as estranged father and son travel a rocky ascending path to the beginning of understanding and forgiveness.

Franklin Starlight has grown up knowing little about his father Eldon and nothing about his mother. Frank's caregiver, or the old man, has provided "the kid" with everything he needs, from a grounding in First Nation's culture that the old man is not part of to an understanding of the value of hard work. The old man's need to care for the kid becomes clearer as the story unfolds.

Eldon Starlight is a man haunted by his decisions and the love he lost. When Eldon asks Frank to take him on his final journey so he can be laid to rest in the traditional Ojibway manner, Frank grudgingly complies out of duty and not

love.

What transpires is an awakening for both the 16-year-old and his dying father. After years of bottling up his feelings and experiences, Eldon finally lives up to his name. Starlight, he was told by his boyhood friend Jimmy, is the name "given to them that get teachin's from Star People" and these people are meant to be teachers and storytellers. But up until this point, Eldon has only been able to deal with the harsh secrets he holds through alcohol and it is dying through "the drink" that has spurred this final journey.

Eldon tells Frank the secret he has kept about Jimmy, both of them having served in the Korean War, and he also tells the story of Frank's mother. These incidences combine to lead Eldon to delivering a newly born baby into the arms and home of the old man. It is the old man who names the baby Franklin, after Benjamin Franklin, who "was trying to catch lightning. Said he knew the world would change if he caught it. Took courage ... to want something for others like that."

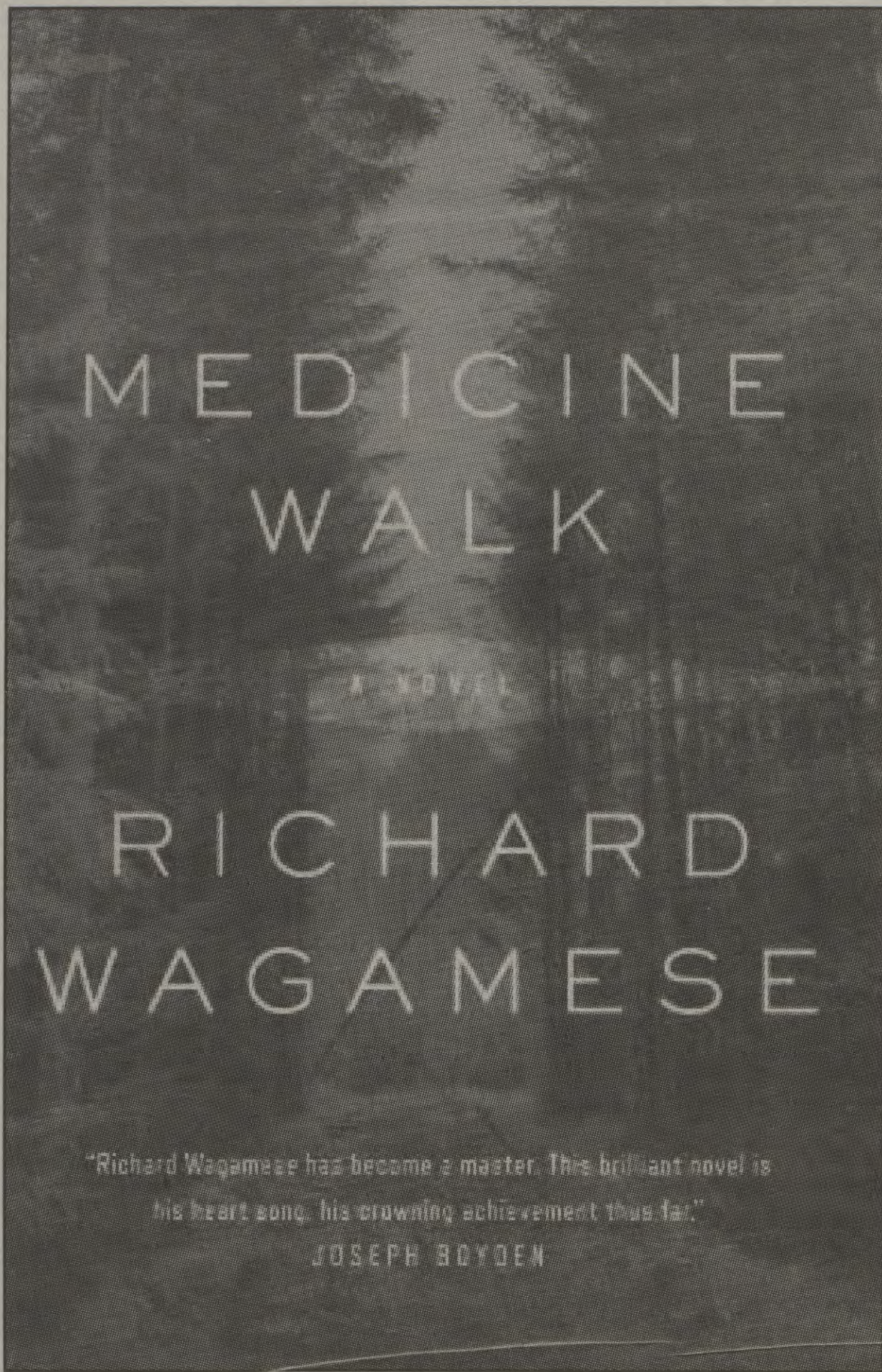
In the end, Frank is left with

a feeling he cannot understand, but the start of forgiveness for the man, who has always let him down. Frank also comes to put into words what he has always known: that the old man is his father.

The pieces slot together to deliver the larger story of what has brought Eldon to the point of dying from the drink and in so doing, Wagamese is careful to relate the tale of a man, who initially the reader judges as just another drunk and deadbeat dad, but for whom the reader comes to feel compassion and empathy.

Wagamese raises questions about how we move throughout life. Is it what we prove each day, as the old man says, or is whether we choose to run away or run to, as Eldon says. Or is what Frank has learned – that loss can be dealt with in different ways and both define how life is lived.

Wagamese's tale of love and loss and moving into forgiveness is strengthened by the depth of his characters. It is a harsh life that Eldon lives, and a hard-working life that the kid and the old man lead and Wagamese's choice of language, the beauty of his words convey their reality.



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Idle No More a sign of historic Indigenous 'Comeback'

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

Pre-eminent Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul has written on almost every topic, from the nature of ethics to the dangers of modern reason. He's even been dubbed by TIME magazine a "prophet."

Nonetheless, the 67-year-old essayist waited nearly two years after the explosion of the Idle No More movement to release his book on the Indigenous rights movement, and what he sees as its major impact on the future of Canada.

"I was very silent because I felt it was a really fabulous moment to sit and listen to people we're not used to hearing," he told Windspeaker; "this whole range of new voices, a new generation really of Aboriginal leaders who are not established."

"Afterwards, it seemed to me there was something that needed to be done by someone like me—a non-Aboriginal person—to write what is almost a pamphlet to non-Aboriginal Canadians saying that what has just happened with Idle No More is not over. It was an explosion."

Idle No More burst onto the national scene during the Winter Solstice in December 2012, and quickly spread to almost every corner of Canada and even further abroad.

The Indigenous rights movement sparked hundreds of protests, ceremonies and events—including Cree round dances that drew thousands from all backgrounds into the middle major urban intersections, the reclamation of traditional Salish names for mountains and sacred landmarks on Vancouver Island, and even a full-scale powwow grand entry procession replete

NAN takes jury initiative

(Continued from page 11.)

Terrance Meekis, who is Justice Coordinator for the Sandy Lake Justice Committee and also runs the Band radio station, was one of the first to volunteer.

"I think it's important for people to get closure and healing from the inquests. I got the emails and I was asked to coordinate the meetings so I thought it was important with all the inquests that are waiting to become involved. It took a bit of time to explain to some of the people what the process is about and once we broadcast on the radio we got a greater response. I feel positive that once the information sessions are completed there will be a speeding up of the inquest process," he said.

Chief Meekis was pleased with the outcome of the information session. "I am very happy with the way the presentation went at the Band office, also at the radio station and here at the Youth Centre. It is an historic moment

with regalia and ceremony in the mammoth West Edmonton Mall only paces from a replica of one of Columbus' colonial ships.

Saul—celebrated author of *The Doubter's Companion*, *The Unconscious Civilization* and *A Fair Country*—traces Idle No More's roots back beyond its immediate sparks of outrage at the passing of federal Conservative omnibus budget bills that gutted waterway and environmental assessment laws.

He looks earlier through centuries of history tracing back to first contact, the Royal Proclamation of 1763, through to the assimilationist 1968 White Paper and a sweeping royal commission nearly three decades later.

The Idle No More movement was at first ignored by national media outlets. When they were forced to listen, the media quickly got distracted into sanctimonious scrutiny of hunger striking Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, reserve finances, and debate over the leadership of the Assembly of First Nations.

"When it ended, a lot of people said, 'Well, that's over now,'" Saul recalled. "But it isn't over, actually. It's really a sign of what's to come ... an amazing growth in terms of power and influence."

Take, for example, the enduring power arising from the Tsilhqot'in nation's groundbreaking land rights victory at the Supreme Court of Canada. Or the vow of B.C., Ontario and midwest U.S. First Nations to block the passing of oil sands pipelines from Alberta through their traditional territories.

Idle No More and its accompanying eruption of Indigenous activism—particularly among a new generation of young and

for Sandy Lake.

"It's been 104 years since we signed the treaty in 1910 and we have been having injustice to our people since that time and we have been fighting the good fight to have justice for our people.... There is a movement to work together and to come up with a solution and a chance to work together."

He added, "For my people to step up and become volunteer jurists for the coroner is great. So what I feel is if that happens there will be more justice for our people, which would make finding out what happened will be able to find out and put closure to these inquests for the families and I would hope that this leads to positive changes for the First Nations people and for the future of our children."

Waboose was optimistic. "This is our first community so I think there will be a few things we have learned that will guide us as we go to the other communities."

emerging Métis, Inuit and First Nations leaders—was not about merely one crisis or injustice, Saul argued, but about the breadth of history.

"In fact, what we're talking about is a question of rights, restitution, reconciliation," Saul said in a telephone interview. "Which means real work."

That "real work" is the main responsibility of non-Aboriginal Canadians, Saul argued: forcing Indigenous rights to the forefront of politics, "to push the Aboriginal reality to the top of the political pile," he said. "This is the issue of the day."

That doesn't mean non-Aboriginals should sympathize with Indigenous peoples, however. Saul sees sympathy as merely a well-intentioned symptom of colonialism, one that leads not to solutions but to stagnation—"a dead end."

Instead, he wants to see deep changes. That means forcing the system to accomplish "things that have to be done in terms of spending, education, finishing up treaty negotiations, et cetera, instead of dragging things out," he said. "While we're feeling sympathy, the Department of Indian Affairs is continuing to drag out treaty negotiations, and problems of poverty and amounts of spending on Aboriginal education continue to be below national averages."

The problem as Saul sees it is that every crisis that emerges in the national news—whether

substandard housing extremes on Attawapiskat nation because of a nearby De Beers diamond mine's sewage flooding, or devastatingly high suicide rates, or 1,200 missing and murdered women—is dealt with on a "one-off catastrophe basis."

What needs to happen, instead, is a fundamentally different Canadian response that acknowledges our "national disgrace" and makes a plan for action, "a program [to] get this thing done."

The cover of Saul's new book *The Comeback* is not graced with vivid photos or abstract motifs, but rather words in stark black and red that expound its thesis: "For the last hundred years, Aboriginal Peoples have been making a comeback—a remarkable point of population, of legal respect, of civilizational stability," it reads. "A comeback to a position of power, influence and civilizational creativity."

That shift is of historic proportions and will continue to impact the country for centuries to come, he believes.

"This comeback from a low point around 1900 is astonishing," he argued. "It's going to continue—it's not going away."

"If you're a younger person today, this is your generation's responsibility to fix what other people have not dealt with ... Don't let the political-bureaucratic system get in the way of it."

But a full third of Saul's nearly 300-page book is not his own words but the words of just a few of the emerging Indigenous voices and leaders who increased in prominence because of Idle No More. Many of them have graced the pages of Windspeaker—from Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred to Inuk international leader Siila Watt-Cloutier to Anishinabe broadcaster and rapper Wab Kinew, who was this fall named the temporary host of CBC Radio's arts and culture flagship show, Q.

Idle No More was about more than leaders. Or more precisely, it was about a multitude of them. Instead, it was a true grassroots explosion, or as Saul noted near the end of

The Comeback, "Idle No More was a moment—a large moment—that seemed to catch most people by surprise," he wrote. "Why? Because the moment was real... Here was a moment unfolding over several months that was not planned, was not top down."

Out of the Idle No More experience, he said, "came a whole new structure" of how Aboriginal people could quickly mobilize large numbers of grassroots people.


"What used to be impossible to organize could now be organized in 48 hours," he said. "There was a new leadership structure there and it's looking for ways to grab hold of issues and move."

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Tour provides an Indigenous view of Canada's capital

By Dan Rubinstein
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Thirty teachers from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board stood beside the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument on the edge of Confederation Park half a dozen blocks from Parliament Hill in the capital's downtown core.

They were listening to Jaime Koebel, a thirty-something Métis artist and educator from Lac la Biche, Alta, explain the significance of the statue's human and animal figures, and why Aboriginal soldiers are often overrepresented in the Canadian military in times of war.

One reason is economic, she said — they need the work. Another reason: they feel a need to help defend this land.

"How many of you have ever noticed this monument before?" asked Koebel, turning to look up at the towering dark bronze form. Clustered together on a van-sized block of marble, four life-sized people stand facing the four points of the compass, with their spirit guides (wolf, buffalo, elk and bear) howling in front. A golden eagle, wings spread wide, is perched on top. Most of the teachers shake their heads.



PHOTO: DAN RUBINSTEIN

Jaime Koebel, a Métis artist and educator, with a tour stops at the Joseph Brant statue.

"Of all the monuments in Ottawa, this is the only one that doesn't need extra maintenance because of bird poop," she said. "I like to think it's because of a higher power, but it's probably because of the bird of prey."

Koebel, who runs a fledgling company called Indigenous Walks, is leading the group on a tour that explores local social, political and cultural issues from an Indigenous perspective. She averaged about one walk per

week from early May until early November in her first year of operation, leading packs of five to 100 people. She wants participants to gain a deeper understanding of the many layers of history and story that are hidden beneath the surface of the capital, a swath of unceded Algonquin land where "official" narratives — such as the construction of the Rideau Canal, or the performances inside the auditoriums of the

National Arts Centre — tend to dominate.

"People feel a need to connect to their surroundings," said Koebel. "I want them to experience the sights, the sounds and the smell of a place, but to see it in a different way than they otherwise might. I give them something to think about, but they come to their own conclusions."

The teachers who followed her are members of the school

board's First Nations, Métis and Inuit education network. They are creating Aboriginal-themed lesson plans that reach across the curriculum, from social studies and art to languages and science. These resources can be shared throughout the city and, eventually, the entire province.

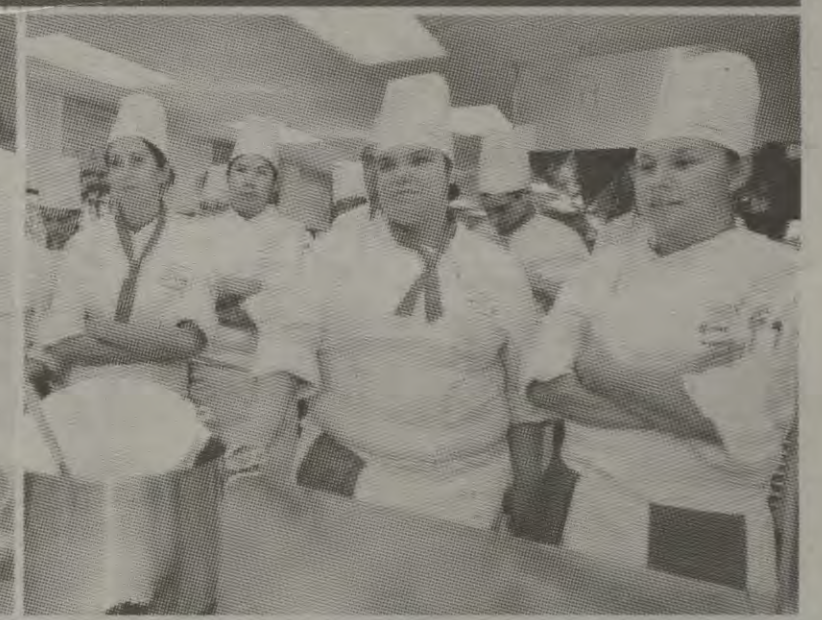
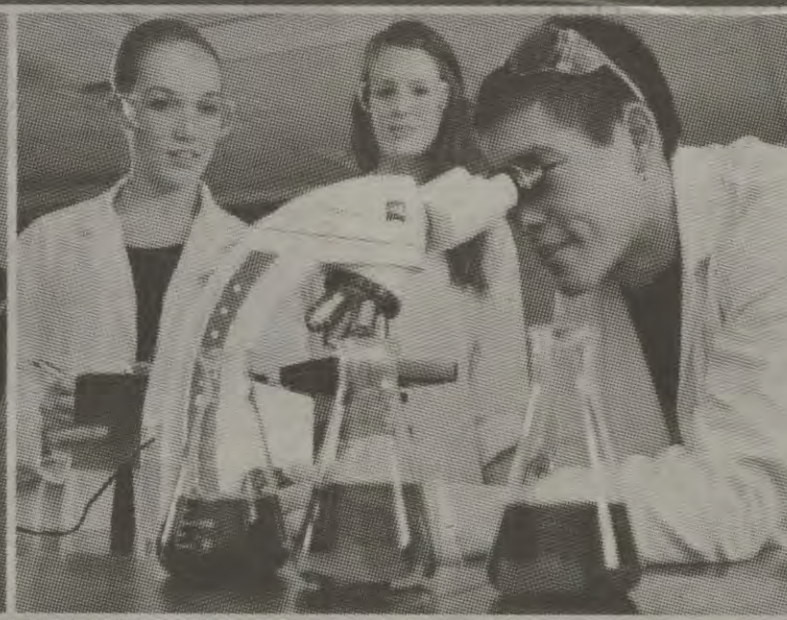
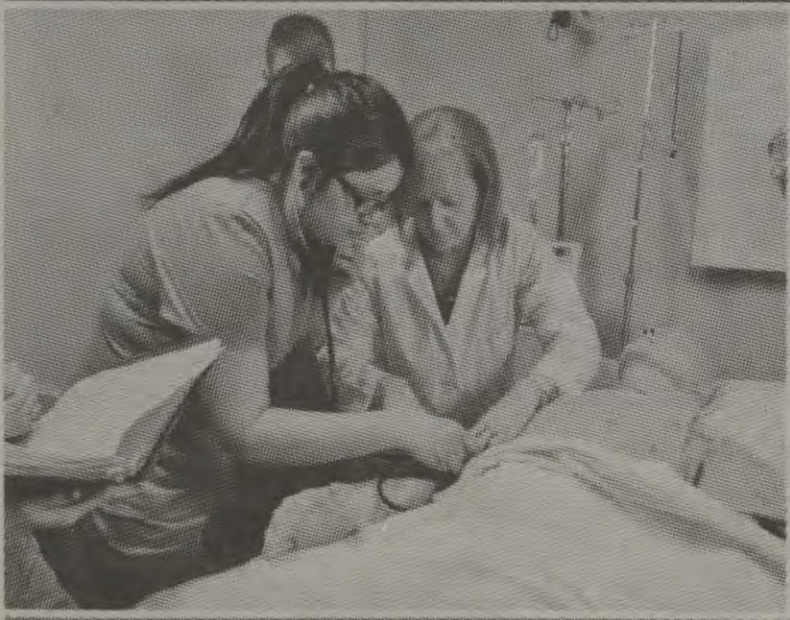
"Part of the reason I'm here is to educate myself," said Justin Shulman, a Grade 7 and 8 teacher who has several Aboriginal students in his class. "I want to create a safe and inclusive learning environment."

"It's also about being current and relevant to my students," he continued. "The kids have to relate to the things I teach. A textbook doesn't always cut it."

Koebel, who moved to Ottawa from Alberta to attend university, got the idea to launch her company while working as an interpreter at the National Gallery of Canada's Sakahjñ Indigenous art exhibition in 2013. She was also inspired by taking touristy sightseeing buses around the city. "I could add an Indigenous story right here," she'd think at almost every stop, and from pointing out local Aboriginal sites and statues to her three children while walking downtown.

(See *Tour* on page 24.)

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**Tour provides an
 Indigenous view of
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(Continued from page 23.)

"I want to make sure they can see themselves in the environment around them," she said. "They were my test subjects. Now they're experts."

The teachers' tour began at the Canadian Tribute to Human Rights monument near City Hall, where 73 granite plaques express concepts such as equality and dignity in 73 Aboriginal languages spoken in Canada. Koebel used the location to talk about the basics of Indigenous identity — including the vast differences between many of Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities — and the cultural practices of Ottawa's 40,000 Aboriginal residents.

A few steps north, in front of the Ontario Court of Justice, she talked about sentencing circles and the province's Aboriginal justice system, and how, for instance, looking somebody in the eye is often considered a sign of disrespect in traditional Aboriginal society, something that judges have started to understand.

Next, at the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument, she discussed the struggle many Aboriginal war vets have faced when seeking benefits, shuffled back and forth between the federal departments of Veterans Affairs and Aboriginal Affairs. "This is another trauma that many Aboriginal families endure," she said.

Not only is this a poop-free statue and the contributions of Aboriginal soldiers often overlooked, Koebel pointed out another open secret: every year on Remembrance Day, at 9:30 a.m., not long before the high-profile ceremony at the National War Memorial just up the road, there's a ceremony at the

National Aboriginal Veterans Monument as well.

On the other side of Confederation Park, Koebel stopped at a totem pole donated by First Nations from British Columbia in 1971 to commemorate the centenary of B.C. joining Confederation. She noted the salmon at the bottom of the carving. "You know that expression, 'It sucks to be at the bottom of the totem pole'? That's actually not the case. You're holding everything up. It's not a bad thing."

The rest of the walk is a kaleidoscope of history, culture and memories. At a statue of Mohawk chief Joseph Brant, which is right beside the National War Memorial, Koebel looked two blocks east to The Bay. Seeing the store's sign makes her think of Hudson's Bay Company blankets and the smallpox epidemic they spread. In Major's Hill Park, she looked west, up the Ottawa River, to a site where a developer wants to build condos on land considered sacred by the Algonquin nation.

A few feet away, Koebel stopped beside a life-sized bronze statue of a shirtless, loin-cloth-wearing man with feathers in his hair and a quiver of arrows slung over his shoulder.

"Anishinabe Scout" was originally located at the foot of the nearby Samuel de Champlain statue, kneeling and subservient. In 1999, after protests about the scout's position and historically inaccurate attire, he was moved to the current location. Last year, he was given a name, Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini Anishinabe, and he now has a Facebook page. "I like to think of this guy as my buddy," said Koebel. "I bring him visitors."

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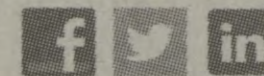


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[footprints] Marvin Francis

Scholarship honours

Winnipeg's "cigarette poet"

By Dianne Meili

Though he passed away in 2005, three years after publishing city treaty—his unabashed manifesto about colonialism—Manitoba's Marvin Francis continues to influence award-winning writers like Katherena Vermette.

"Francis's city treaty was the first book that made me say 'I am going to do this too'," said the winner of the 2013 Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry for North End Love Songs, quoted by The Toronto Quarterly Literary and Arts Journal last year.

A recently announced scholarship bearing Francis' name should result in even more "word drummers" as he dubbed them in a poem — writers who hurtle words into that English landscape like brown beer bottles tossed from the back seat on a country road.

Further keeping the influential writer and artist's memory alive is the Marvin Francis Gallery in Winnipeg's Urban Shaman art gallery, named for the former board member who also provided leadership to the Manitoba Writers Guild.

"Ah, the 'cigarette poet'," began close friend and fellow poet Duncan Mercredi when asked to profile Francis. "He was always writing and if he ran out of paper, he'd break pieces off his constant companion, the cigarette pack, and scribble thoughts and ideas on these bits of paper. Some contained a full piece, short, but full of meaning; others were the start of something amazing."

Colleagues also affectionately dubbed Francis 'I'll read just one more piece' because "once he got under the lights to recite, it was almost impossible to take him off," Mercredi explained. "He'd always say 'just one more when his time was up, inevitably that one piece would stretch to a few more and that is why we always put Marvin on last whenever the (Manitoba Aboriginal Writers

Collective had a reading."

"His enthusiasm for the Collective and for writing, and his love of performing, served as our backbone and example of what the written word was supposed to be when done with love and passion," Mercredi added.

Always expanding his horizons, Francis not only wrote but made visual art and created virtual Internet exhibits, as well. He dabbled in wood-cut printmaking and was completing his Ph.D. in English at the University of Manitoba when he passed.

"He was always working on so many projects," said Jamis Paulson of Turnstone Press, publisher of city treaty and bush camp, Francis's second book of poetry published posthumously in 2008.

"He had this idea to install a poem without end that would run along the underground circular concourse here in Winnipeg. Wherever you entered you could read the poem. Today with LCD technology someone could string up monitors in a circle to make it happen, but back in 2000 when he was talking about it, it was radical. Brilliant."

Reasons behind his railings against cultural assimilation and dominant society are evident in his 2004 contribution to Canadian Dimension magazine, where he identifies as "part of the massive migration of Aboriginal peoples to the city. I was raised by a single mother who moved us to Edmonton (and many other places) from the Heart Lake First Nation in Alberta to avoid residential school for my siblings and me."

The "urban rez" became his life and his first city experiences "loaded with culture shock, mostly negative, with the in-your-face racism of the seventies" overwhelmed him.

"Marvin was part of that generation of underground

Indigenous writers, those that knew no boundaries," said Mercredi. "He wrote about life as he saw it and experienced it. That is probably why we got along. We came from that same background, that blue collar working background that we placed on the page in our way, a no-holds-barred style of street writing. We both worked in construction camps, Marvin on the railroad crews, me, hydro and highway camps ... bush camps we called them."

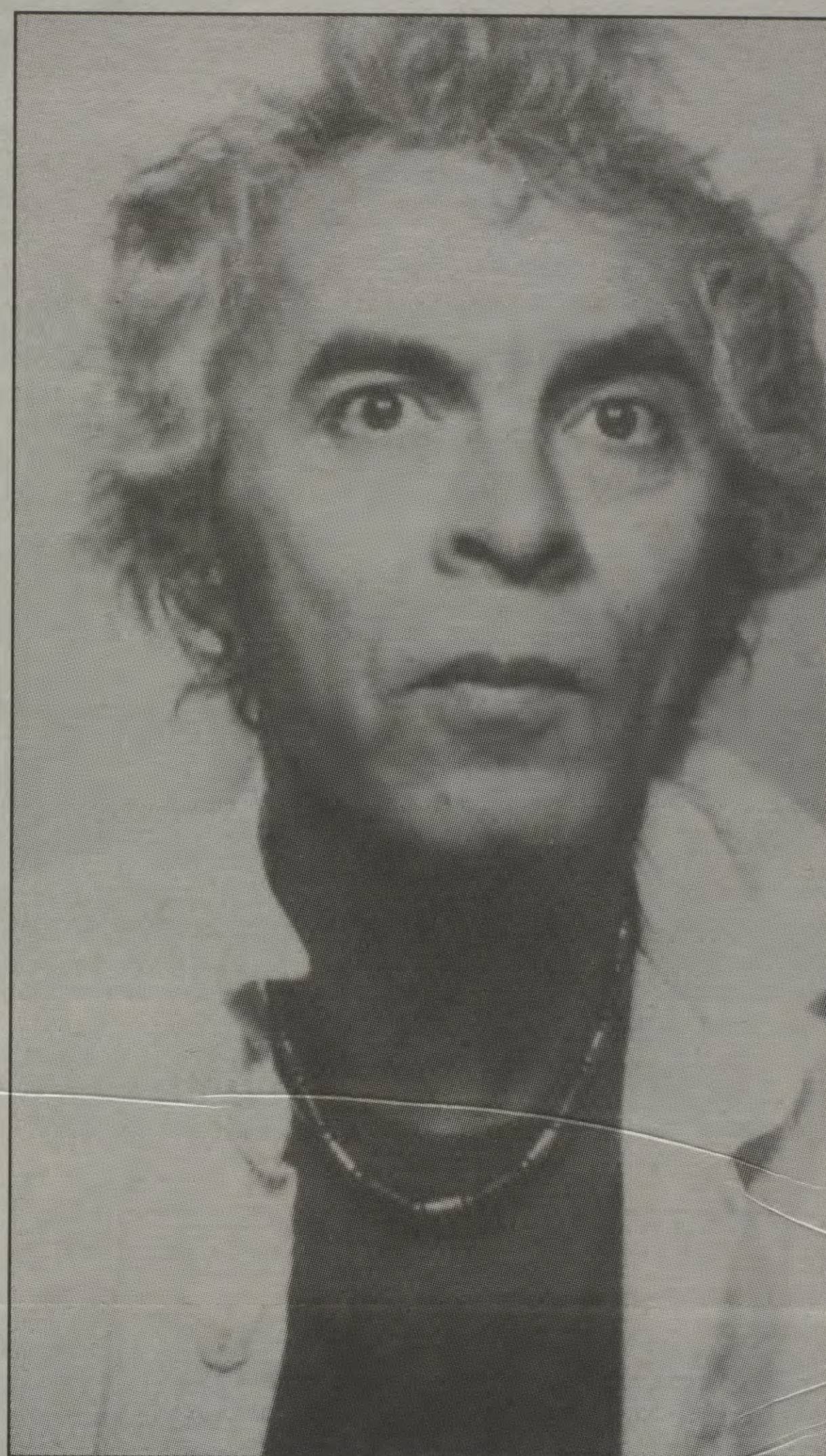
"Marvin was a genius."

Paulson marvels at Francis' ability to say 'hey, pay attention to this (social issue)' all the while using so much humour "that it was fun to listen to him." Case in point is *McPemmican*, the oft-quoted poem from city treaty taking aim at our fast-food, throwaway culture: first you get the grease from canola buffalo then you find mystery meat/you must package this in bright colours just like beads ... special this day *McPemmican* "cash those icons in/how about a *McTreaty*" would you like some lies with that?

Urban Aboriginal experience depends on the circumstances of the individual, Francis wrote, but also "contains a spectrum that ranges from new possibilities to that social monster, crack."

Indeed, as a marginalized renter, he lived next door to a crack house on Furby Street in Winnipeg, prompting him to write *Furby Shakespeare*: traffic jams all stages of a life the street of my mind/star-crossed drugs love/feed me feed me lethal feed me deep/furby theatre thrives/purple fountains from the veins ...

Paulson wonders if Francis was still alive how far he could have taken his agenda to protest today's pipeline proposals and inaction regarding missing and murdered Aboriginal women. He had already won the John Hirsch Award as Manitoba's



Marvin Francis

most promising writer by 2003, and was looked upon as a "burgeoning voice and cultural ambassador."

"Marvin passed away from cancer in 2005, and as I understand it, died the day after finishing his bush camp manuscript," Paulson said.

At only 49 years of age, friends say his battle with cancer was longstanding, but he never spoke of it. "All the while he was getting treatment, people did not know. That's why it was such

a shock when he left us so suddenly. He was just getting started," Paulson said.

Francis left a small family, his life partner Cindy Singer; daughter Samahra; and three brothers and one sister, to mourn him. But there is a small multitude who miss his intelligent, street smart voice, not to mention the word drummers who continue to blog about him, and have adopted his poetry and art as their own.

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