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Wind speaker



Inform. Impact. Inspire. Independent. Indigenous.

Canada continues its attempts to dodge human rights hearing
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Bill to amend Indian Act introduced to House of Commons
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AFN candidates share thoughts on why they should lead
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Josh Bear strikes a dramatic pose while participating at last year's Saddle Lake Powwow. Bert Crowfoot will be at this year's event to capture more photos which we will share with readers in the upcoming August issue.

Photo by Bert Crowfoot

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before July 31st 2012 at:

leongoodstriker@gmail.com

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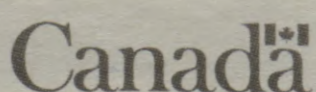
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Grassy Narrows marchers offer government mercury-tainted fish 8

One-fiftieth of a teaspoon of mercury is all it takes to poison a 20-acre lake. Decades after Dryden Chemicals dumped 10 tonnes of the neurotoxin into northwest Ontario's English-Wabigoon River in the 1960s, Aboriginal communities are literally reeling from its effects.

Canada continues its attempts to dodge human rights hearing 8

The federal government is once more ignoring the needs of the most vulnerable group in Canadian society, said an advocate for First Nations children.

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A new report released by the Native Women's Association of Canada draws a strong connection between Aboriginal girls and women serving time and the inter-generational impacts of Indian residential schools.

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As the chosen recipient of her grandmother's traditional knowledge, the late Lillian McGregor would go on to parlay those years learning about natural medicine with her grandmother into a 40-year career in healing.



Windspeaker is published by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) Canada's largest publisher of Aboriginal news and information.

AMMSA's other publications include:

- Alberta Sweetgrass — The Aboriginal Newspaper of Alberta
- Saskatchewan Sage — The Aboriginal Newspaper of Saskatchewan
- Business Quarterly — Canada's Aboriginal Business Magazine

If you or a family member attended the Lockwood, Yale, Makkovik, Nain or St. Anthony school, class action lawsuits may affect your rights.

Pour obtenir un avis en français, veuillez appeler au numéro sans frais ou visiter le site Web.

Kaujigiangagumaguvit Inuktitut phonesunguvutit akiKangitumut numaramut uvalo Kagitaujami KimmiKugulugu.

Ui katshitinameku mashinaikanuian e innushtet, tshe aimiek^u anite etashtet atshitashun eka ka tshishikashunanut kie ma nete tshe tapishimitishuiek^u atusseu-katshitapatakanit.

You may be affected by class action lawsuits about whether the Federal Government of Canada ("Government") exposed former Newfoundland residential school students to harms and abuses. The lawsuits were filed in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and are known as: *Anderson v. Attorney General of Canada*, No. 2007 01T4955CP; *Obed v. Attorney General of Canada*, No. 20075423CP; *Lucy v. Attorney General of Canada*, No. 2008 01T0846CP; *Asivak v. Attorney General of Canada*, No. 2008 01T0845CP; and *Boasa v. Attorney General of Canada*, No. 2008 01T0844CP.

The Courts decided that this lawsuit should be a class action on behalf of a "Class" or group of people that could include you.

Those included have a choice about whether to stay in the lawsuits and be bound by the results, or ask to be excluded and keep their rights to sue the Government in a different lawsuit about what happened to them or their family member at the schools.

WHO IS INCLUDED?

The lawsuits include two groups of people called a "Survivor Class" and "Family Class."

- You are part of the Survivor Class if you attended the Lockwood School, the Yale School, the Nain Boarding School, the Makkovik Boarding School, or St. Anthony's Orphanage anytime after March 31, 1949.
- You are part of the Family Class if you are (a) the spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent or sibling of a Survivor Class Member; (b) the spouse of a child, grandchild, parent, grandparent or sibling of a Survivor Class Member; (c) a former spouse of a Survivor Class Member; (d) a child or other ancestor of a grandchild of a Survivor Class Member; (e) someone who cohabitated with a Survivor Class Member for at least one year before they died; (f) someone who supported or was legally required to support a Survivor Class Member until they died; or (g) someone who was supported by a Survivor Class Member for at least three years prior to their death.

WHAT ARE THESE LAWSUITS ABOUT?

The lawsuits claim that the Government exposed former students to child abuse, neglect, and physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. The Plaintiffs claim that the Government did not protect students' physical and mental well-being even though it was its duty to do so. The Government denies that it had a responsibility to protect the children who attended these schools. The lawyers for the Classes will have to prove their claims at trials which are scheduled to begin in September 2013.

WHO REPRESENTS YOU?

The Courts have appointed Koskie Minsky LLP, Ches Crosbie Barristers and Ahlstrom Wright Oliver & Cooper LLP to represent you as "Class Counsel." If Class Counsel obtains money or benefits for the Classes, they may ask the Courts for fees and expenses. You will not have to pay any of these fees and expenses. If the Courts grant their requests, the fees and expenses may be deducted from any money obtained for the Classes, or be paid separately by the Government.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND OPTIONS NOW?

Residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador:

You have a choice of whether to stay in the lawsuits or not. If you do nothing, you are choosing to stay in the lawsuits. This means you will be legally bound by all orders and judgments of the Courts and you will not be able to start or continue with a lawsuit against the Government about what happened to you or a family member at these schools. If money or benefits are obtained, you will be notified about how to ask for a share.

If you don't want to stay in the lawsuits, you must exclude yourself from them. If you exclude yourself, you will not be able to get any money or benefits from these lawsuits if any are awarded or obtained. However, you will keep your right to sue the Government about what happened to you or a family member at these schools in a different lawsuit, now or in the future. You will not be bound by any of the Courts' orders or judgments.

To ask to be excluded, send a letter or exclusion request form (available at www.NewfoundlandRScases.ca) to the address on the form postmarked by **November 30, 2012**. Your request for exclusion must include your name, address, telephone number, the name of the former student, the name of the school attended, your relationship to the former student, and your signature.

Non Residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador:

You may opt-in to the lawsuits. To opt-in you must send a letter or opt-in request form (available at www.NewfoundlandRScases.ca) to the address on the form postmarked by **November 30, 2012**. Your opt-in must include your name, address, telephone number, the name of the former student, the name of the school attended, your relationship to the former student, and your signature.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Go to www.NewfoundlandRScases.ca, email nfldresidentialschools@kmlaw.ca, call toll-free 1-866-386-9295 or write to Newfoundland Residential Schools Cases, P.O. Box 2011, Chanhassen, MN 55317-2011.

1-866-386-9295

www.NewfoundlandRScases.ca

Chiefs are looking for more than just a pretty face to head up AFN

The Stephen Harper Conservative majority government has picked up a head of steam with the passage of its omnibus budget bill C-38, and the question now is: How do you stop a train?

That will be the big overarching question in the minds of voters when they mark their ballots at this month's Assembly of First Nations election for national chief. It has to be, because the Harper government is content to run over Canadians' best interests, so we have to know the interests of First Nations from coast to coast won't carry much sway unless the chiefs choose wisely.

On July 18, 600-plus chiefs will have their chance to determine the relationship they will have with this government and Canadians for the next three years. Who is going to speak for them on the federal stage, and what will be the tone of that national conversation?

This election for national chief is proving to be an interesting one. First Nations people can boast a great richness in the quality of these—let's count 'em—eight candidates. Shawn Atleo, Bill Erasmus, Ellen Gabriel, Joan Jack, Diane Kelly, Pam Palmater and George Stanley, we commend your courage to allow your name to stand, and for the commitment it takes to take part in an election of this high profile, whatever the results.

We are fully enjoying the discussion around the national family dinner table about your ideas and perspectives. It is a discussion that is energized, intelligent, for the most part, and helpful to the evolution of the organization.

For one thing, if the participation of grassroots activists Ellen Gabriel and Pam Palmater is any indication, we can foresee more pressure brought to bear on the AFN to become more than just a space for the voices of chiefs to be heard. Evolve, or become irrelevant, we say, and so say the grassroots people who are urging these "anti-establishment" candidates on.

The debate and discussion that will take place over the coming weeks will be of the highest order, we anticipate, and the windows and doors that are

going to be blown open at the AFN are going to provide for a real airing out of cobwebs and complacency.

And it would not be very smart for comfortable chiefs to dismiss the fact that there are four very qualified women attempting a run at the top job. The issues of women should become very important to the AFN now, and in the future. If not, there will be disappointment, we can tell you.

Now, in case you're wondering, we're not predicting any wholesale change when the voting is done on July 18. It is not yet clear if anyone but incumbent Shawn Atleo has the stuff to pull 60 per cent of 600-plus voting chiefs and proxies.

But we can't ignore that polarizing discussion around the direction of the AFN and the accusation leveled that Atleo has steered the organization too close to the government over the last three years, and is too affable in his dealing with these Conservatives.

Funny. It's the same complaint lobbed at the former national chief Phil Fontaine with the Liberals. Still, it will be interesting to see if this alleged coziness will dog Atleo through the next few weeks and have an impact on election day.

It will all come down to the differing perspectives about what the AFN is supposed to be and do. The stakes are high. The person chosen to lead this organization is in for three years of a very difficult time. Every chief in attendance on election day will know the difficulty of being at any table with this government these days; deaf, dumb and blind the Conservatives are to all but their own very specific agenda.

There are very real and practical consequences if the chiefs get this wrong. We will be watching for more than personalities in this election process. It will take more than what the candidates have done in the past to impress the voters. It will require a well thought out plan of action going forward, and a solid vision of how the AFN will relate to a very hard partner in Canada's government.

Windspeaker

[rants and raves] Page 5 Chatter

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR REPORTS

that Six Nations pulled out of a War of 1812 bicentennial opening ceremony after being pushed to the last, unofficial minutes of the program. Keith Jamieson, director of the Six Nations Legacy Consortium, said Six Nations were scheduled to go on for a few minutes after the official portion of the commemoration, slated to sing and dance after Governor General David Johnston had finished his speech and did a walkabout. "That was an insult. I tried strenuously right there to say, 'We can't do that,'" Jamieson said. "What's the point now? Just to be dancing and singing Indians? Is that the plan?" Originally, Six Nations had been allotted about two hours to participate in various bicentennial activities, he said. Six Nations delegates were to present the wampum belt given to the community's leaders after the war to renew the Covenant Chain of Peace between the Haudenosaunee and the Crown.

APTN NEWS REPORTS THAT THE

law firm Blott & Company is closing its doors as of June 30 after an assessment established the Calgary law firm had violated the trust of its residential school compensation clients, and breached the Independent Assessment Process, in part through a "loan scheme." The IAP is a compensation process for serious physical and/or sexual abuse suffered by former residential school students as children. Loans on potential residential school compensation are prohibited under the IAP to protect survivors and their compensation awards. The assessment of Blott's dealings concluded that loan companies linked with Blott were charging astronomical interest. Blott & Company had 5,600 clients with 3,200 residential school files that had little to no work done on them, despite looming deadlines for the IAP. Justice Brenda Brown said Blott seemed to be in it for the money, and had earlier this month removed the firm from the IAP and took steps to freeze the commissions paid by government on each file. The judge has appointed a "transition co-ordinator" to transfer Blott's files to new lawyers.

WAWATAY NEWS REPORTS FIRST NATION

leaders are critical of the new Mining Act in Ontario, saying it allows industry to be self-regulating on consultation with First Nations, trusting that industry will "do the right thing" without the province ensuring adequate monitoring or regulations for meaningful consultation. "There must be ongoing monitoring of all project sites to ensure companies are properly motivated to comply with permit terms," reads a six-page letter to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). The government has promised to identify the "bad apples" among exploration companies over time, the letter states, but NAN counters that by writing "The only way this would happen is by letting them spoil the land, perhaps even more than once, and then stop it from happening in the future," NAN wrote. "This reactionary approach is not acceptable." Concerns were identified with Phase Two of Ontario's Mining Act which deals with industry and First Nations relations. It includes the requirement that prospectors have to notify First Nations before exploring on traditional lands, sets a framework to withdraw lands of cultural and spiritual significance from exploration, and establishes a dispute resolution process to deal with conflicts.

THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW

Relationship Trust Foundation took place at the Bill Reid Gallery in Vancouver on June 7. The foundation is designed to create a long-term legacy for Aboriginal education advancement and First Nation language revitalization initiatives in British Columbia by fundraising for Aboriginal students. Education awards are distributed to students through scholarships and bursaries annually, and a portion of each donation will be set aside to establish a foundation endowment over the next 10 years. The event was opened with a welcome by Leah George-Wilson from Tsleil-Waututh Nation, followed by speeches from New Relationship Trust Chair Kathryn Teneese from Ktunaxa Nation, Lisa Ethans from the Chief Joe Mathias British Columbia Aboriginal Scholarship Fund and New Relationship Trust Foundation Treasurer Chief Hugh Braker of Tseshaht Nation.

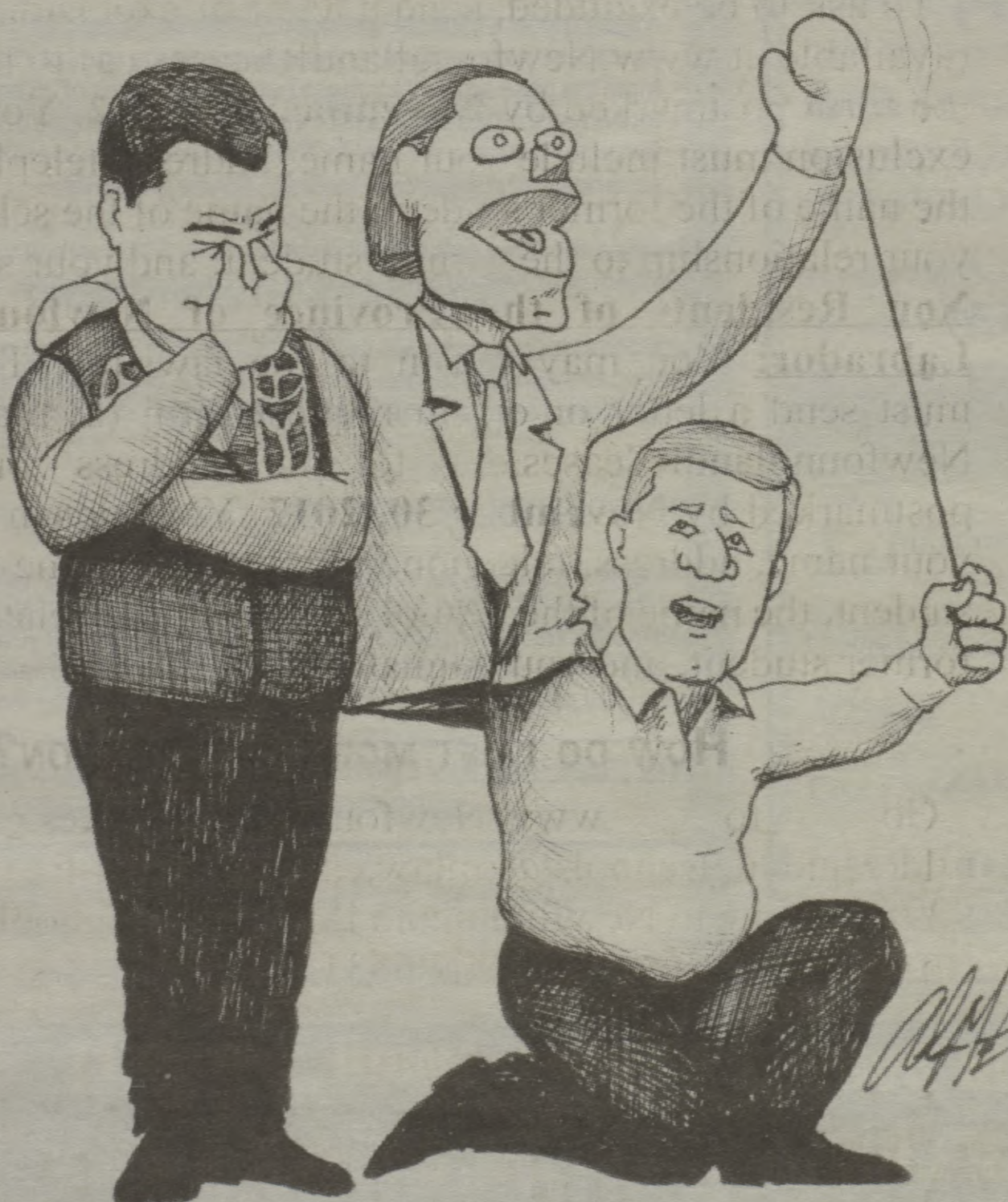
VERA PAWIS-TABOBONDUNG,

president of the National Association of Friendship Centres, said the cut in funding for the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) program "is devastating throughout all of the Aboriginal Friendship Centres. "The CCAY youth programs are very important to Friendship Centres, communities and to thousands of Aboriginal youth living in urban centres in Canada," she said. "Job losses will result throughout Friendship Centres across the country and thousands of young Aboriginals will not have an opportunity to have the experience this year that would help them to make positive decisions for their futures." The program cut is only temporary however, so a redesign can be undertaken. NAFC said it's very important to start the work soon so that the new terms and conditions can be drafted and possibly approved allowing for funds to flow this fiscal year. The NAFC feels that if funding is re-instated as soon as possible, Aboriginal youth can still have positive experiences from the revamped program. The NAFC is comprised of 119 member Aboriginal Friendship Centres nation-wide and supported in their work by seven provincial and territorial associations and a national office in Ottawa.

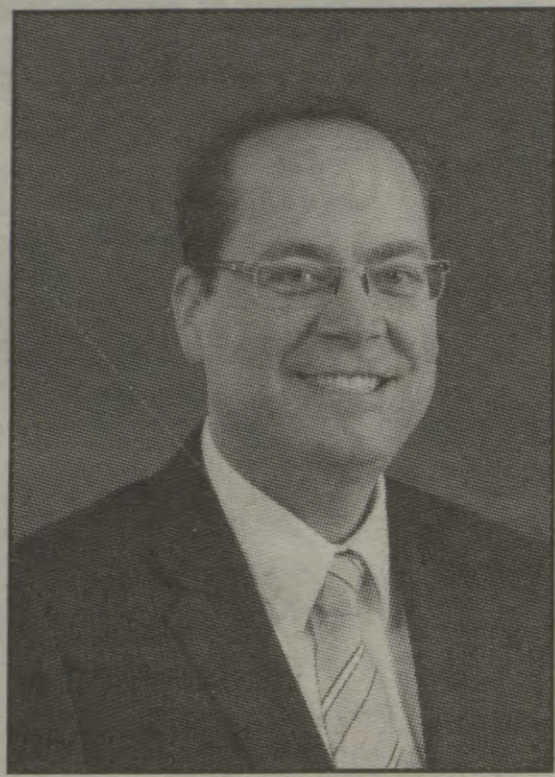
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by Adam Martin

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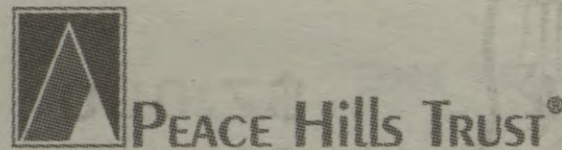
David S. J. Boisvert

Warren Hannay, Chairman of the Board of Peace Hills Trust Company and Chief Marvyn Yellowbird of Samson Cree Nation are pleased to announce the appointment of David Boisvert as President and CEO of Peace Hills Trust Company.

During Mr. Boisvert's 28 years of service with Peace Hills Trust he has worked in several of the Company's Regional Offices and has been intimately involved in the Company's growth and success. As president and CEO/Director he will continue to provide strong direction and will guide the Company towards its mission statement, values and objectives.

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When: August 12-17, 2012
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Spend time pursuing outdoor adventure activities like climbing, rafting and kayaking while exploring careers in environmental science and experiencing what environmental stewardship is all about!

This camp is for Alberta First Nations students in grades 9-12. TSAG will cover the cost of the camp, including food and lodging. **For more information and to register, please contact Amanda Doyle at adoyle@tsag.net or 780-483-8601.**

www.tsag.net

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS (IAP)

September 19, 2012, is the current deadline for filing applications under the IAP for sexual assault and serious physical assault claims arising from attendance at an Indian Residential School. Applications may not be accepted after this deadline so it is important for survivors to submit their claims now.

Call Toll Free 1-855-IAP-FILE (1-855-427-3453)

to speak to a First Nations lawyer experienced in Indian Residential School claims to discuss your claim. If you decide to pursue your IAP claim, Joseph Law can represent you.

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- ❖ Legal fees will not be taken from your settlement as our fees are 15%; the amount paid by Canada.

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SETTLEMENT OF THE CLASS ACTION REGARDING FUEL TAX PAID BY INDIANS ON RESERVE

NOTICE REGARDING THE FILING OF A CLAIM

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY TO KNOW HOW TO FILE A CLAIM

On December 9, 2011, the Superior Court approved an agreement between the plaintiff, Ghislain Picard, and the Agence du revenu du Québec to settle a class action regarding the fuel tax (on gasoline or diesel) paid on reserve by registered Indians.

This notice summarizes the procedure for filing a claim.

Those persons who may file a claim

You may file a claim under the settlement agreement if:

- 1) you are a registered Indian according to the Indian Act (except for a Cree beneficiary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)), you are an adult and you reside in Quebec or Akwesasne; or
- 2) you are a registered Indian according to the Indian Act (except for a Cree beneficiary of the JBNQA), you are an adult, you do not reside in Quebec but you are a member of a Quebec band; or
- 3) you are a registered Indian according to the Indian Act (except for a Cree beneficiary of the JBNQA), you are an adult, you are not a resident of Quebec, you are not a member of a Quebec band but you paid the fuel tax on a purchase at a service station located on an Indian reserve in Quebec before July 1, 2007.

Please note that for the purposes of this claim, a "Quebec band" includes any bands within the meaning of the *Indian Act* whose reserve or settlement is located in Quebec, in whole or in part, as well as the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, Wolf Lake First Nation and the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach (the Naskapi band within the meaning of the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*).

How to file your claim

If you wish to receive compensation under the settlement agreement, you must file a claim **before July 8, 2013**, using the designated form, accompanied by a copy of the necessary supporting documents, and send it to the firm appointed as the administrator of the settlement, whose address is:

Collectiva
Class Action Services Inc.
 285 Place D'Youville, Suite 9
 Montreal (Quebec) H2Y 2A4
 Tel.: 514 287-1000
 Toll-free: 1 800 287-8587
 Fax: 514 287-1617
info@collectiva.ca

You can file a claim immediately. The claim form is available at the settlement administrator's website at www.collectiva.ca or by contacting the administrator at the address or phone number indicated above. With your properly completed form, you must enclose a copy of the supporting documents confirming, as of the date of the claim:

- your status as an Indian registered in the Indian Register
- your place of residence; and
- your date of birth.

You do not need to provide a proof of purchase, **unless** you reside outside of Quebec and Akwesasne **and** are not a member of a Quebec band. In that case, you must attach a proof of purchase of fuel from a service station on an Indian reserve or an Indian settlement in Quebec before July 1, 2007.

The amount of compensation

A total amount of \$24,000,000 will be distributed to registered Indians who are residents of Quebec or Akwesasne and to members of Quebec bands who do not reside in Quebec on the basis of their age as of the date their claim is filed. The amount that each individual receives will depend on the total number of claimants. Compensation will be distributed based on the following criteria:

- a base amount for those between the ages of 18 and 24;
- double the base amount for those between the ages of 25 and 34;
- triple the base amount for those between the ages of 35 and 44;
- four times the base amount for those between the ages of 45 and 54;
- five times the base amount for those between the ages of 55 and 64;
- six times the base amount for those 65 years and older.

However, the base amount will be reduced by 50% for registered Indians who are members of a Quebec band, but who do not reside in Quebec or Akwesasne.

Registered Indians who are neither members of a Quebec band nor residents of Quebec or Akwesasne, and who have filed a claim including proof of purchase, will each receive an amount not exceeding \$50.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This notice is only a summary of certain elements of the settlement agreement and the conditions and terms for distribution of compensation. We invite you to read the full settlement agreement at www.collectiva.ca. If you have questions or if you wish to obtain a printed copy of the settlement agreement, please contact the settlement administrator at the address and phone number indicated above.

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Every single Windspeaker article ever published (well, almost) is now available on our online archives at: www.ammsa.com
 Access is now available through online subscription.

Grassy Narrows marchers offer government mercury-tainted fish

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

One-fiftieth of a teaspoon of mercury is all it takes to poison a 20-acre lake.

Decades after Dryden Chemicals dumped 10 tonnes of the neurotoxin into northwest Ontario's English-Wabigoon River in the 1960s, Aboriginal communities are literally reeling from its effects.

"I get dizzy spells where I fall down," said Judy Da Silva of Grassy Narrows (Asubpeeschoseewagong) First Nation. "I'm on mercury disability. I use a cane to walk. . . I used to have fainting spells, too."

"My symptoms are not as severe as some people's. Some people shake when they grab something. It deteriorates your body, so by the time you're 60 or 70, you become very disabled. . . There's been a couple children born with cancer in the brain. I feel it's connected to the mercury."

On June 6, Da Silva and 33 others arrived at the legislature in Queen's Park in Toronto, demanding Ontario address their concerns. Mercury has been found in her community's fish, also eaten by White Dog (Wabaseemoong) and Wabauskang First Nations.

Da Silva travelled by train, but six walked the entire 1,820 km trek. Hosting a fish fry, they demanded the government apologize, fund monitoring, clean up their rivers, and compensate those excluded from an existing Mercury Disability Board (MDB) fund. They also called for an end to logging on their traditional territories.

"The government is not addressing the issues," Da Silva said. "It's a really shameful way of governing people."

"I feel they could still rectify it by respecting the things we're asking for. . . They are responsible for the poisoning of our people, because they give these huge industries the permission to dump these things and to continue poisoning the waters, and to continue destroying the forest."

Joined by several hundred Torontonians, the delegation invited officials to eat fish caught back home, served by a waiter at reserved place settings.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Kathleen Wynne was the only politician who took up their invitation, and addressed the group. She promised to start a "conversation" and launch a committee to look at their concerns. Her schedule prevented her from staying for the fish, she told Windspeaker.

"This contamination should never have happened," she said. "We've acknowledge there's a burden of responsibility on our government."

"Obviously compensation is a concern, the food supply is a concern to me—nobody should be eating tainted fish. . . The fish are not just a food supply. It was the local economy. . . I don't think anybody should be eating that fish on a regular basis."

In 1986, the government established the MDB, spending \$15.6 million on compensation. But there are substantial differences between Health Canada's mercury criteria—used to evaluate claims—and the research of Japanese scientist Dr. Masazumi Harada.

Harada—who died of leukemia



PHOTO: DAVID P. BALL

Judy da Silva, with her husband Bepgogoti Kaiapo, outside their home in Grassy Narrows First Nation.

on June 11, only days after the publication of his final Grassy Narrows report—found mercury poisoning to be higher than Canada admits.

His story is profound for both health sciences and Grassy Narrows. Researching Minamata Disease, an advanced form of industrial mercury poisoning, Harada visited the reserve in 1975, returning in 2004 and 2010.

He found that 79 per cent of residents originally tested had developed Minamata. But 59 per cent of 160 people tested in 2010 had symptoms of mercury poisoning, even those born long after Dryden Chemicals closed—and despite mercury levels lower than Health Canada's thresholds.

Da Silva remembers Harada's 1975 researchers testing hair samples.

"I was a little girl at the time," she recalled. "I remember them coming. . . I just remember these

Asian people cutting my hair. They'd take a piece from the top of your head."

"I feel thankful for Dr. Harada's report and his study, because it affirms our feelings about the poisoning."

Hunter, fisherman and trapper Shoon Keewatin remembers Harada's visits too, and though he was too young at the time to fish, he recalls the government's fishing ban.

"People who got most of their food from fishing had to stop," he recalls. "It really broke the spirit of some of the fishermen."

"That's when the drinking really started to be heavy in the community, when they couldn't go out fishing."

Keewatin still fishes, but his health prevents him from hunting.

"I'm losing my sense of balance," he said. "Sometimes, I'll just be standing around and I just want to topple over—my

sense of balance just goes.

"I used to hunt moose and deer. I used to stalk them in the bush, in the wintertime, following tracks in the snow. I'd sneak up on a moose or deer, but that's hard to do when you keep on grabbing branches and swinging them in the air to stop myself from falling down."

Despite his Minamata symptoms, the MDB rejected Keewatin's application, declaring he did not qualify for mercury poisoning compensation.

Da Silva hopes her voyage to Toronto will bring change, but her community has been protesting for years. Perhaps now Aboriginal Affairs will listen.

"I honour Katherine Wynne for having the guts to come and stand out and talk to a whole bunch of us," Da Silva said. "The poison doesn't stop in Grassy. It shouldn't be just our fight. It should be everybody telling the government to stop."

Canada continues its attempts to dodge human rights hearing

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The federal government is once more ignoring the needs of the most vulnerable group in Canadian society, said an advocate for First Nations children.

The Department of Justice Canada has appealed the decision rendered April 18 by the federal court that orders the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) to consider the charges levied by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and other organizations. They say the federal government is discriminating against First Nations children in care in their delivery of treatment and services.

"I think the question all Canadians should be asking is,

'Why?' said Dr. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the Caring Society.

"Why is the federal government appealing a decision that would basically call on them to present all their facts to defend themselves against these allegations of discrimination? If they're innocent, then why would they be trying to run away from a hearing like that?"

Federal Court Judge Anne Mactavish found that an earlier tribunal erred when it failed to provide its reasons for deciding the complaint brought against the federal government could not proceed under the Canadian Human Rights Act, as well as erred when it determined that federal care of First Nations children could not be compared to provincial care.

"I was absolutely thrilled (with

the judge's decision). What we've been after here is a full hearing on the facts so we and Canadians can learn if the government of Canada is racially discriminating against (First Nations) children, and I believe strongly that they are doing that," said Blackstock.

In its grounds of appeal, the federal government stated that the trial judge erred in all areas of her findings.

Blackstock takes particular exception to the government's claim that "the application judge erred in determining that the tribunal breached procedural fairness by considering extrinsic evidence without advising the parties and permitting an opportunity to respond."

Blackstock said the tribunal considered more than 10,000 pages of material in making its decision, but only 2,000 pages had

been submitted by the parties. She noted that one document considered by the tribunal had been filed two months after the hearing.

"Canada is appealing even on that ground. So what are they suggesting? Are they suggesting that members of the judiciary should be free to look at any kind of material that they so choose in making a decision regarding a matter that comes before court and that the parties don't know what that information is and should have no input into it? It's unbelievable," she said.

Blackstock's organization, along with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), has been fighting since 2007 for the Canadian Human Rights Commission to hear evidence that the federal government underfunds care for First Nations children living on

reserves compared to other Canadian children living off-reserve.

In 2011, the human rights tribunal dismissed the discrimination complaint. That dismissal was then challenged in court by the Caring Society and the AFN, which were joined by the commission. The Chiefs of Ontario and Amnesty International received intervenor status.

No date has been set for the Federal Court of Appeal to hear Canada's challenge to Mactavish's decision, but Blackstock said all five organizations fighting for First Nations children will be present.

The court-ordered tribunal will not be delayed while the appeal is waiting to be heard unless Canada applies for and receives a stay of proceedings.

(See *Human* on page 11.)

Private Members Bill launched without consultation, says chief

By Shauna Lewis
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

A Private Members Bill to amend aspects of the Indian Act has been introduced to the House of Commons, and is expected to be discussed there this fall.

Saskatchewan MP Rob Clarke, (Desneth-É-Missinippi-Churchill River) introduced the Bill June 4.

The Bill, entitled "An Act to Amend the Indian Act (publication of by-laws) and to provide for its replacement" will remove many outdated and unused sections of the Act, will provide for the removal of all references to residential schools, will repeal the Wills and Estates sections, and will return control over the publication of bylaws to First Nations governance bodies.

Clarke, a Conservative backbencher and member of the Muskeg Lake First Nation, spoke of his Bill as the "8th Fire," which is a First Nations prophecy meaning it is time to build new relationships.

"I believe this is an important next step toward creating a more respectful and modern relationship between Canada and First Nations," Clarke said in a statement. "I am particularly pleased with the section of this bill that will require the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to report annually to Parliament on progress made toward fully replacing the Indian Act," he said.

"There would be lots of consultation," Clarke told Windspeaker.

"My bill will allow for a lengthy and collaborative consultation period with willing First Nations partners to find the best way to replace the Indian Act," Clarke said.

"Everyone's dream is to get rid of the Indian Act, but what I'm trying to do is start the ground work."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, isn't buying it though. Opposed to Clarke's Bill, Phillip said consultation with First Nations leaders and communities should have occurred prior to the Bill's radical introduction.

"I think it's completely bizarre, but not inconsistent with the Harper legislative agenda which represents an all-out assault on the rights and agenda of First Nations people in Canada," said Philip.

"This Private Member's Bill initiative is such a unilateralized approach... There was no consultation with First Nations whatsoever before [the Bill's] introduction."

“Everyone’s dream is to get rid of the Indian Act, but what I’m trying to do is start the ground work.”

Saskatchewan MP Rob Clarke

Phillip said he had fully expected respectful consultation regarding future First Nations issues following the Crown First Nation gathering last January. He claims a "joint approach" was to be initiated regarding all issues involving First Nations.

"[Clarke] just decided on his own volition that he was going to toss this Private Members Bill in the mix," Phillip said.

"The Harper government is proving itself a few clowns short of a circus," he concluded.

Of course, Phillip has voiced concerns about similar initiatives in the past.

In 2001, then Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault announced the proposal of a national consultation process regarding the proposed 'First Nations Governance Act.'

At that time Stewart called Nault's consultation process "just another elaborate federal con game to off-load federal responsibilities onto the Bands themselves." He added that "with this process, if you combine con and insult you get 'consult'."

Former Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, also failed to get support for his package of Indian Act amendments in 1996. Then UBCIC called the move nothing short of "draconian."

Critics back then claimed the federal government, through the Minister of Indian Affairs, was attempting to: eliminate Indian reserves by converting them to "Fee Simple" lands; eliminate Indian tax immunity (enforcing property, income, and sales taxes and users fees by Indians on Indian lands); impose application of federal and provincial laws over Indians; and extinguish Aboriginal title and rights to traditional territories (now called acquiring "certainty" over the land).

Minister Irwin's proposed package was rejected by 85 per cent of the Bands across the country and the Bill later died on the order paper when the federal election was called in June 1997.

Clarke maintains that his Bill is different than past propositions.

"This is 2012," he points out. "A decade has passed and I'm not trying to find a solution. I'm trying to provide an avenue to bring forth a solution," he said.

Clarke, who calls the dated Act

"archaic" and "quite cumbersome," says that he knew changes were needed to the legislation when he served with the RCMP prior to being elected. He admits it was difficult working in law enforcement where he was expected to maintain and enforce certain outdated regulations on his people.

Along with hoping to "raise some awareness and discussion and debate," Clarke said changes must be made to the historic Act in order to cradle the economic development strategies of First Nations people pushing for financial self-reliance.

"What the Indian Act does is inhibit any kind of further economic development for First Nations people," he said.

Clarke says his Bill has three phases. The first phase being the engagement of meaningful discussion and a discussion around the legislation required for First Nations to form their own bylaws.

The second step includes repealing out-dated legislation around such things as agriculture and residential schools. Finally, Clarke says an amended Act would include provisions for consultation and transparency between the government and First Nations.

"It's a paternalist document," Clarke said of the Indian Act. "We need a new model of government that reflects these times... Let's look at the meat and potatoes of the Indian Act and get rid of an aspect of it and move forward," he suggested.

John Duncan, federal minister of Aboriginal Affairs, says he backs the Bill.

"The spirit of MP Clarke's bill is something that I can support. Our government understands that there are impediments to the Indian Act. This is why we have worked in collaboration with our First Nations partners to develop the First Nations Electoral Reform Act, as well as the First Nation Land Management Act, and it is why we continue to work to create opportunities for First Nations communities to participate more fully in Canada's economy," Duncan said in a statement. "We're just waiting to study the bill and make sure there are no implications that would be problematic," he added.

Windspeaker News Briefs

GRAND CHIEF DAVID HARPER

of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak said a Winnipeg Aboriginal high school did not communicate enough with worried parents after their children inappropriately received a diabetes test. On May 4, a University of Manitoba faculty member tested the blood sugar levels of 71 students and staff of Southeast Collegiate by pricking their fingers with the same glucometer pen resulting in the students having to undergo HIV and hepatitis screening. The needles were changed for each test, but the pen itself is not meant to be used by more than one person. It took about 24 days before parents learned of the potential risk of infection.

THE MISSING WOMEN'S INQUIRY

in British Columbia has finished and all that's left is for Commissioner Wally Oppal to deliver his report, but the inquiry ended with two police forces pointing the finger of blame at each other for failing to stop serial killer Robert Pickton sooner. Both forces have faced criticism about their handling of the investigation of missing women from the Downtown Eastside with accusations of apathy among senior management to flawed investigations, even when Pickton seemed the likely culprit behind the disappearances of sex workers. Both forces have apologized to the murdered women's families for not doing more.

NISHNAWBE ASKI NATIONS

have joined other organizations to oppose changes to social assistance programs in the new provincial budget for 2012. NAN said the changes will have devastating impacts on First Nations people that are already impoverished. "Ontario's social assistance system already fails to meet the needs of First Nations and it is shameful that this government is proposing cuts that will only further impoverish and endanger the health and well-being of our people," said Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose. "NAN First Nations do not have the resources to absorb the impacts from any reduction in social assistance and these cuts will only lead to greater hardship in northern and remote communities," Waboose states in a letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty.

ABOUT 99,000 CANADIANS WERE VICTIMS

of family violence in 2010, according to a Statistics Canada report released in May, and of these victims, more than 1,100 were located in Nunavut. With Ontario noting the lowest incidences of family violence nationally, incidences in Nunavut were 17 times higher. The Northwest Territories, with a larger population than Nunavut, also had more than 1,000 incidences of family violence. StatsCan reports that 50 per cent of these violent incidences were committed by the victims' spouses, with 17 per cent committed by a parent, 14 per cent by an extended family member, 11 per cent by a sibling and nine per cent by a child, usually a grown child. Women were two-times more likely to be a victim than men.

GRADE SIX STUDENTS AND STAFF FROM

Parkway Public School in Brampton, Ont. donated books to children in four First Nations schools, one of which is located in the community of Christian Island. Parkway students began a social justice project called CORE - *Creating Opportunities to Restore Equality*. They wanted to take action in support of First Nations students living on reserves. The Grade 6 program will be eliminated from Parkway next year, so the students took the opportunity to donate education materials that would have gone unused. With the assistance of Peel Regional Police Constable Krista Noakes, the school's Youth Education officer and a First Nations member herself, the books will be loaded into a police vehicle and delivered to First Nations communities in Ontario.

THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

has officially recognized the customary rules of adoption of the First Nations and Inuit with a bill tabled June 13 at the National Assembly to modify the Quebec Civil Code. "This is a very important step in Quebec's recognition of our status as Aboriginal people and of the specific laws of governance of the First Nations," said a pleased Ghislain Picard, chief of the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. The recognition of the customary rules of adoption set out in the Bill dealing with adoption and parental authority is a direct result of the "Report of the Working Group of Aboriginal Customary Adoption," tabled on April 16 which stated: "In the Aboriginal tradition, the historical actions of various authorities were hardly propitious to the development of customary adoption. However, its very survival demonstrates clearly the resilience of this practice. Furthermore, it is a real and contemporary expression of the uniqueness of Aboriginal cultures." Consultations were held in Aboriginal communities in order to document the status of customary adoption and to clarify how this practice could be integrated into legislation. "This was remarkable work. This study made it possible to recognize, not only the reality of customary adoption, but also its relevance which is well established in the lifestyles of our people and communities. We are extremely happy that the Quebec government is now able to adapt its laws in order to meet the needs and expectations of our populations", said Picard. The legislative amendment will grant the right to families who have adopted a child under customary rules to exercise all parental authority, just as any other parent who has adopted a child according to the legal regime.

Minister refuses to back down on panel representation

By **Shayne Morrow**
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

On May 30, Prime Minister Stephen Harper alienated Canada's Indigenous population by telling them they had no place on a national hunting and fishing advisory panel, and Environment Minister Peter Kent has not softened that position since that day.

Ernie Crey, a former employee of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, who now serves as senior adviser to the Sto:lo Tribal Council on the Fraser River, said the minister is taking a dangerous step backwards in light of the progress that has been made in recent years.

"I was quite taken aback by the Minister of the Environment, who said—if you want to put it into plain English—I don't want to talk to Indians, to Aboriginal people. I don't think I have to talk to them, and if they want to talk to government, they can talk to the Minister of Indian Affairs or someone else," Crey said.

On June 4, Kent explained that the panel, composed of 19 member groups ranging from provincial wildlife federations to environmental stewardship organizations like Ducks Unlimited and the Pacific Salmon Foundation, was struck "to create a dialogue with this important segment of the population who have previously been under-consulted."

By contrast, Kent argued, First Nations are "routinely engaged in consultations on a wide array of subjects, including hunting, fishing and conservation," which, apparently, makes their participation redundant or unnecessary.

On June 11, the minister's press secretary, Adam Sweet, turned down Windspeaker's request for an interview with the minister or a ministry spokesperson.

"Minister Kent is not available for an interview, but I encourage you to take a look at his statement, which specifically addresses your question," Sweet wrote, before pasting in a paragraph from Kent's June 4 statement and a link to Harper's original May 30 announcement of the hunting and fishing panel. The press secretary then concluded the e-mail with, "Thanks, and have a nice day."

Crey said the Fraser River had been one of the battlegrounds for Aboriginal fishing rights and the scene of numerous confrontations over the past several decades. But these days, Aboriginal, sport and commercial stakeholder groups, along with officials from DFO and environmental groups, now take

part in the Fraser River Salmon Table Society. Sitting at one table as equals, Crey said the society discusses matters from allocation of fish to habitat restoration and development on the river.

"These efforts are working because they're not prompted by government intervention," Crey said.

While Crey said he believes consultations between the Environment minister and wildlife/environmental organizations should normally be considered a positive thing, in this instance, the government is currently in the process of finessing changes to the Federal Fisheries Act, by way of the omnibus Budget Bill (Bill C-38). That places the specific exclusion of Aboriginal organizations from an advisory panel in a more insidious light.

"This has to be a serious omission, to exclude the Aboriginal voices, and I don't think we should just stand aside," Crey said. "I put it this way so the minister can understand just how badly he has insulted us."

Jean Crowder, NDP Opposition Critic for Aboriginal Affairs, echoed Crey's concerns. Crowder, MP for Nanaimo-Cowichan, spoke to Windspeaker on Wednesday, June 13, shortly before Canada's Opposition parties launched a marathon session of Parliament, with votes on hundreds of individual amendments to Bill C-38.

"Given that Bill C-38 is going to strip away significant amounts of protection for fish, I would question the Prime Minister saying that this panel is going to help with a balanced perspective," Crowder said.

Included in Bill C-38 are \$5 million in cuts to environmental monitoring and a new \$8 million provision for what amounts to government surveillance on environmental groups.

Crowder cited a statement from Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs: "I have the sneaking suspicion that [Harper] was so paranoid about First Nations participation that he has attempted to remove us completely from the national conversation."

Crowder noted that the Environment minister has issued dire warnings about environmental organizations that receive funding from foreign sources. "What they are going to do is put the fear into these organizations that if they speak up, they will be subject to some sort of scrutiny," Crowder said.

If the environmental groups tasked with providing "a balanced perspective" to the panel haven't necessarily been co-opted by government, their freedom of

action has been compromised, Crowder said.

Factor in the exclusion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit voices, and it begins to look like a deliberate strategy to legitimize a toothless advisory body.

"This government has continued to indicate it doesn't want to hear from anyone who doesn't agree with it," she said.

Crey said he has received messages from members of some of the organizations named to the panel, including the B.C. Wildlife Federation, expressing their dismay over the exclusion of Aboriginal groups.

"I think he's made a serious mistake and he needs to correct it. He needs to look at how he's come across," Crey said. "There are now people on the panel who are saying 'This is wrong.'"

At the Fur Institute of Canada office in Ottawa, executive director Rob Cahill said the invitation to join the federal advisory panel came as a pleasant surprise, at first.

"Originally, we were just pleased that 'A,' the panel was struck, and 'B,' that our organization was chosen," Cahill said. "But I very quickly received a note from one of our members—an Aboriginal harvesting group—who saw the lack of Aboriginal representation and inquired how they could be added to the panel."

Cahill said FIC has an Aboriginal communications committee that is scheduled to meet this month in Iqaluit, and the advisory panel would be part of the discussions.

Like Ernie Crey, he also believes Canada's Indigenous people should be able to sit at the table as equals in any discussion regarding their traditional territories. That's over and above any constitutional requirement to consult, he explained.

"Personally, I would think that Aboriginal communities would be sitting at a higher level, because they have [constitutional protections] for addressing these issues, but we believe all environmental issues and rural community issues are better handled when all the stakeholders are sitting around the same table," Cahill said.

Shortly after Kent released his statement, Crey spoke with Conservative Chilliwack-Fraser Canyon Member of Parliament Mark Strahl, who promised to meet with the minister to discuss the exclusion. Strahl is the son of former Conservative Minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development Chuck Strahl.

"[Mark Strahl] knows that, right in his backyard, we're making great strides in our efforts with sport and commercial fishermen," Crey said, adding, "He hasn't gotten back to me yet." (See *Minister* on page 11.)

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Residential school related to increased female incarceration

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

A new report released by the Native Women's Association of Canada draws a strong connection between Aboriginal girls and women serving time and the inter-generational impacts of Indian residential schools.

"I don't think we've had a report in the past that puts all of these things together in one way, drawing clearly those links between residential schools... and incarcerations," said Fiona Meyer-Cook, project lead and research and policy analyst for NWAC.

Gender Matters; building strength in reconciliation was released last month by Ottawa-based NWAC and Justice for Girls, a British Columbia organization. Work on the report began in January 2011 and focused on Aboriginal women and girls who had been in conflict with the law. The report included

a section on residential schools in light of the work undertaken by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was struck in 2007 as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

"We wanted to ensure that women who were hard to reach, in particular, were heard," said Meyer-Cook. "We knew that those who were in jail were often impacted by residential schools."

Many of those incarcerated, she said, were in the child welfare system and many were inter-generational residential school survivors.

That section, entitled *Arrest the Legacy: from Residential Schools to Prisons*, presents some harsh realities.

"One thing that was disturbing to us was how much Aboriginal girls are over-criminalized," said Asia Czapska, board member with Justice for Girls. The numbers of incarcerated girls and women are climbing. Federal statistics indicate that 44 per cent of all girls in youth custody are

Aboriginal while 34 per cent of women incarcerated are Aboriginal. Two-thirds of the women in prison are single mothers, which means that the majority of their children will go into the foster system.

The findings of *Arrest the Legacy* are based on dialogues that occurred in Yellowknife, Hay River, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay and Vancouver. What researchers learned was "disturbing," said Czapska.

Not only did Aboriginal girls and women claim they were kept in poor conditions, but they were also spoken to and addressed with demeaning language. And those who came from fly-in communities tended to be in custody one to one-and-a-half years before they were sentenced.

"The brutal legacy of the residential school system as well

as current discrimination with the child welfare system and the prison system has created now this huge human rights breach where Aboriginal girls are so over incarcerated," said Czapska.

The answer isn't prison terms, Meyer-Cook says, but for the federal, provincial and territorial governments to put money into early intervention programs and better educational opportunities.

The report outlines a number of recommendations, including culturally-relevant programs; inclusion of reports on background before a judge makes sentencing; and appropriate and timely health care while incarcerated.

The report also notes programs that have been implemented in different provinces and territories which are working well.

"They really need to be

(implemented) across the board," said Meyer-Cook. "There will be some (social programs) that will be more relevant provincially or territorially."

The report will be presented to the TRC and Meyer-Cook is hopeful that the TRC will take into consideration not only the gender-specific recommendations in the NWAC report but will include gender-specific language in its own report.

"We would want to make sure they just don't say, 'Aboriginal people,' generally, because there are conditions for women and girls that we really tried to capture," said Meyer-Cook.

While the numbers of Aboriginal girls and women being incarcerated is on the increase, Meyer-Cook is optimistic that new programs and new funding will help address the concerns.

Human rights

(Continued from page 8.)

"I expect they will (apply for the stay) because they have just simply had a long-term pattern of not wanting to face up to the fact—using loopholes, whatever they can find—to try and delay things for the children," said Blackstock. She is confident a stay will not be granted and noted that her organization will "vigourously oppose" any delay.

Blackstock is hoping to meet with the tribunal soon to establish dates for the hearing. However, she is concerned that a delay may come about because of internal problems with the tribunal group

itself.

She noted that Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Chairwoman Shirish Chotalia went on a stress leave in April, and that an internal investigation upheld allegations by tribunal members of harassment by Chotalia.

As well, the CHRT is operating short-staffed as a number of employees have left the organization.

"We're saying, look, it was because of this flawed decision-making by the chair that we've been set back three years, pretty much, and we want to move

forward," said Blackstock.

The tribunal has the authority to order a remedy to the discrimination. Any decision made by the tribunal is binding.

"I measure success at the level of children and I want them to have the same opportunities to succeed that all other Canadian children already enjoy," said Blackstock.

She noted that Mactavish's ruling opens the door to similar challenges on federal funding to First Nations in other areas such as education, policing and health.

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Porter Law

Minister refuses to back down

(Continued from page 10.)

In response to Windspeaker's inquiries on June 11, a spokesman from Mark Strahl's constituency office said the backbench MP had no statement on his meeting with the minister. Asked if that meant the meeting did not go well, the spokesman replied, "You'd have to

speak to the minister about that."

Crowder said the exclusion of Aboriginal voices from such an important issue flies in the face of the Prime Minister's public statements and public face.

"The Prime Minister was engaged in a Crown/First Nations gathering back in January where

people were optimistic that a more workable relationship was going to be forged, but so far we haven't seen any evidence of it," Crowder said. "I think they are again contributing to the notion that the Prime Minister says one thing and does something completely the opposite."

insIGHT

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[strictly speaking]

'Rezpect' is an important Anishnaabe teaching

Most people in Indian country are familiar the Seven Grandfather teachings as presented in Anishnaabe tradition. It's sort of a guide book for human conduct towards others. All together these teachings include wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth—Sort of the 'greatest hits of human nature.'

Of late, I have been thinking about these teachings and wondering how they influence my life, and the life of others I come across. It's been said that 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' is the cornerstone of practically all religions, not just the Bible. It's just phrased in different ways. I think the same could be said about the Seven Grandfathers.

What made me think of this was an incident that happened a few weeks ago in my own community of Curve Lake. It was something unfortunate and unpleasant, and made me want to focus specifically on the concept of 'respect', or as I like to call it around here, 'rezpect.' To me, it's one of the most important of the seven teachings.

A very good friend of mine,



THE URBANE INDIAN

Drew Hayden Taylor

who owns a cottage here with her partner, was out biking one day, taking in the landscape we were blessed with. She is a successful woman with a shock of blonde hair and her partner is African-Canadian. They had stopped to adjust her helmet when a white (how ironic) truck full of Native guys drove by and shouted at them the 'N' word! Hint: it rhymes with Winnie-The-Pooh's tiger friend, Tigger.

And then it was shouted a second time as they drove away.

Though it all happened so fast, my friend seemed positive the occupants of the truck appeared drunk. Needless to say, my friends were greatly astonished that things like this still happen in 2012. In Curve Lake, no less. I was too.

Worried about their safety, they reported it to the village police who coincidentally told my friend he knew exactly who the fellows in the truck were and had just come from their place for some other incident.

Evidently these erudite and sophisticated men had called the police constable several names too, though probably not ones that 'rhymes with Tigger' word. I hope I am not the only one noting the obvious lack of respect in this incident.

I was embarrassed and upset for my friends. Trying to understand such actions, I pondered it. There are several ways of looking at this incident and breaking it down. A sociologist or political scientist might say that it is a form of lateral violence that takes place in

a lot of our communities, an oppressed group lashes out against others who are oppressed rather than at the oppressor. Who says you can't learn anything watching Oprah?

However, understanding that this lateral violence has a long history with colonialism, the residential school system etc., does not make dealing with these situations any easier, or excuse the behavior of idiots. All it does is make life a little more difficult for everybody.

Another way of looking at this event, paraphrasing Shakespeare, is that all the world's a playground and we're just kids in it calling each other names. I guess the Seven Grandfathers were absent from those gentlemen's lives.

I found myself in the unique position of apologizing for the stupid actions of these people, whom I may or may not know. Luckily these friends have made many acquaintances in our community, so they already know this definitely was not reflective of the community as a whole.

As the old saying about racism goes, you can cut the tree down but the roots grow pretty deep.

Every winter as Christmas

comes closer, I look forward to one of the side benefits of the season. I love Christmas nuts; almonds, filberts, walnuts etc. Supermarkets are flooded with them. But unlike some people, I prefer them still in their shell.† To me, they seem fresher and more time consuming (therefore I eat less) if I crack the shells myself.

However, for the last 10 years or so, I've noticed a growing scarcity in supermarkets of my favourite nut still in the shell. It's called the Brazil nut. And when I would lament its disappearance to older people in my community, some would get a conspiratorial look and lean over to me to whisper "do you know what we used to call those kinds of nuts when I was a kid?"

Of course I do. I am hitting the half-century mark myself this year. They were called 'Tigger toes.' Again, you'll understand the poetic license I take with the name.

And don't get me started on 'eenie, meenie minie moe, catch a...'

This one, depending on your rezpect, could include either a tigger or a tiger.

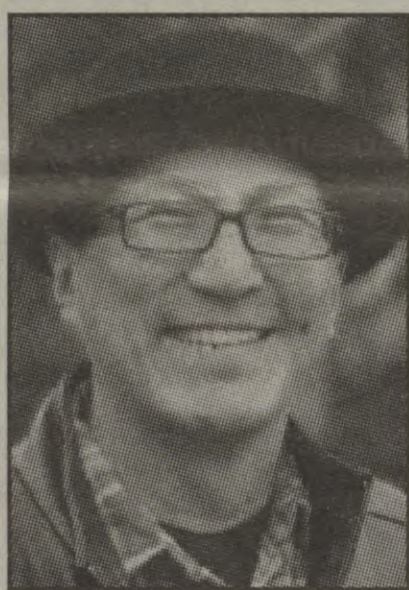
We flail in life until we understand basic truths

We inflated frogs. We were eight years old. We were Ojibway kids trying to navigate the world of foster homes, a white neighborhood, white school, and the callous disregard of us by the 1960s mill town.

The world was cold then. Empty. We spent our days longing for things we vaguely remembered, and the rivers and the bush were the only places we felt like ourselves—or, at least, who we thought we should be.

So we inflated frogs. A milkshake straw or a lopped-off reed worked fine. We'd puff them up into large green balloons and throw them into the water. They would kick and flail and try to dive, the panic of them drawing the pike to take them so we'd know where to fish. We caught a lot of fish that way.

But we didn't know then that all life is sacred. We didn't know that everything deserved our respect and honor, our stewardship and protection. We didn't know that we are all one body moving through time together. We didn't know that the



WOLF SONGS & FIRE CHATS

Richard Wagamese

dishonor of one thing is the dishonor of all.

We didn't know that all things are part of us. We didn't know that every act, regardless of how seemingly small and insignificant, affects something else. All we knew was that we were doing something Indian, or at least as close to it as we could get. When I look back at those days I feel bad about my ignorance, but I had no one to teach me and I did not understand.

Years later I recall the fat kid in school, as shy and awkward and scared of being who he was as I was terrified of being me. Both of us were set apart because

difference was everything; left alone because when you befriend the outcasts you become an outcast too, and no one wanted that. So I did the only thing I knew how to do. I teased the fat kid.

I teased him, belittled him so they wouldn't see how scared I was to be brown, different, shy, and so Ojibway with nothing to say about it. One day I pushed him into a mud puddle and everyone laughed and slapped me on the back and told me how hip and slick and cool I was, how welcome. And I ate it up. I pulled it deep into me like the feast I had been starving for; the sustenance of sameness.

And the fat kid walked home alone, desolate, terrified and lost. I couldn't take my eyes off him. I teased him so I could survive, never knowing the Ojibway truth of things that we are all related, that we are all one creation and we need each other. I never knew that, because I had no one to teach me and I did not understand.

Many years went by and I did a lot of things to not be different. I wore a lot of masks that never really fit. I became what I thought people or circumstance needed me to be, and the idea of frogs and fat kids and masks that didn't fit, haunted me and drove me down to where the darkness lays, waiting for all of us who never bother to try to see the truth of ourselves. I lived there a long, long time.

It took me a long time to learn that wounds run the deepest when you inflict them on yourself. I never knew the Ojibway truth of things that your first task is to learn to be a good human being. When you do that you learn how to be a

good man in the process. And when you learn to be a good man, you become a good Ojibway all on its own accord. I never knew that. Never knew that that's the spiritual way of things, and it can't be done in any other order.

I never understood that I am always three sacred truths—a human being, a man, Ojibway. Three sacred truths that only Creator can change, and she's not likely to. Not yet. And it's the same for all of us no matter who we are. I never knew that, because I had no one to teach me and I did not understand.

So it seems to me that what we need to do is share. Teach each other who we are. Hear each other. Feel each other. Remember the teachings we are given to carry, because if there comes a time on this planet when there's only one child left, the saddest thing I can imagine is for them to look at themselves and the ruins of the earth in shame and sorrow and say 'I had no one to teach me and I did not understand.'

Federal prison has failed our Canadian geese too

By Vernon Wilson
Guest Columnist

As an Aboriginal prisoner, I appreciate the recent and much-needed media attention given to the issue of the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canadian prisons. But, I'm also disappointed with the fact that another national crisis has once again been overlooked. I speak of the over-representation of

Canadian geese in Canadian prison yards.

In the six years I have served in prison, I have witnessed the plight of our geese worsen. They literally swarm the prison yard at the Regional Treatment Centre in Abbotsford, B.C.

This is not an isolated yard problem, but a national crisis. Our geese are at a disproportionate rate flying into the barbed wire fences than their non-geese peers.

They have a higher rate of being fed bread by the inmates, and it's a well-documented statistical fact, at least according to my calculations, that geese also have a higher percentage of drinking from the water faucet that leaks periodically throughout the clay in our yard.

All these tragic statistics lead to a geese population that is more injured, constipated, and dependent on the institutional

environment which contributes to a lower rate of geese migrations south and a higher rate of geese returns to the prison yards. It goes without saying that several geese fail to successfully reintegrate back into their home wildernesses compared to their non-geese peers.

Don't get me wrong. I think it's important to know that we, the Aboriginal people of Canada, make up only four per cent of the

national population, but comprise 20 per cent of the prison population.

But I also realize that this has for far too long undermined the ongoing discrimination against our geese. You think it's bad that one in five federal inmates are Aboriginal, but consider the fact that one in two birds in the prison yard this morning alone were geese!

(See *Canadian* on page 23.)

Windspeaker: What one quality do you most value in a friend?

Gillian Thomson: The one quality I value most in a friend is genuineness.

Robert Thomson: I always look for honesty in friendship.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

G.T.: What really makes me mad is when I see someone being treated unfairly.

R.T.: Anytime I see a person take advantage of someone who is vulnerable or defenseless.

W: When are you at your happiest?

G.T.: I am at my happiest when I am creating art and being around loved ones.

R.T.: When I'm with the people I love.

W: What one word best describes you when you are at your worst?

G.T.: The one word that best describes me when I'm at my worst is "stubborn".

R.T.: "Vicious".

W: What one person do you most admire and why?

G.T.: I most admire my Mother because she is incredibly strong.

R.T.: My Mom, she has taught me always to be strong and fight for what I believe in.

W: What is the most difficult thing you've ever had to do?

G.T.: The most difficult thing I've ever had to do is be strong when a family member was diagnosed with cancer.

R.T.: Part ways with a good

friend in a band.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

G.T.: My greatest accomplishment is being able to create art freely to share with others.

R.T.: I don't think I have reached my greatest accomplishment yet, but being able to share my art with others is amazing.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

G.T.: The one goal that remains out of reach is making more time to create art other than music, such as painting and drawing.

R.T.: Making a consistent and comfortable living playing music.

W: If you couldn't do what you're doing today, what would you be doing?

G.T.: If I couldn't do what I'm doing today I would probably get into fashion or some type of visual art more.

R.T.: I have always taken an interest in computers, so maybe something in the tech field.

W: What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

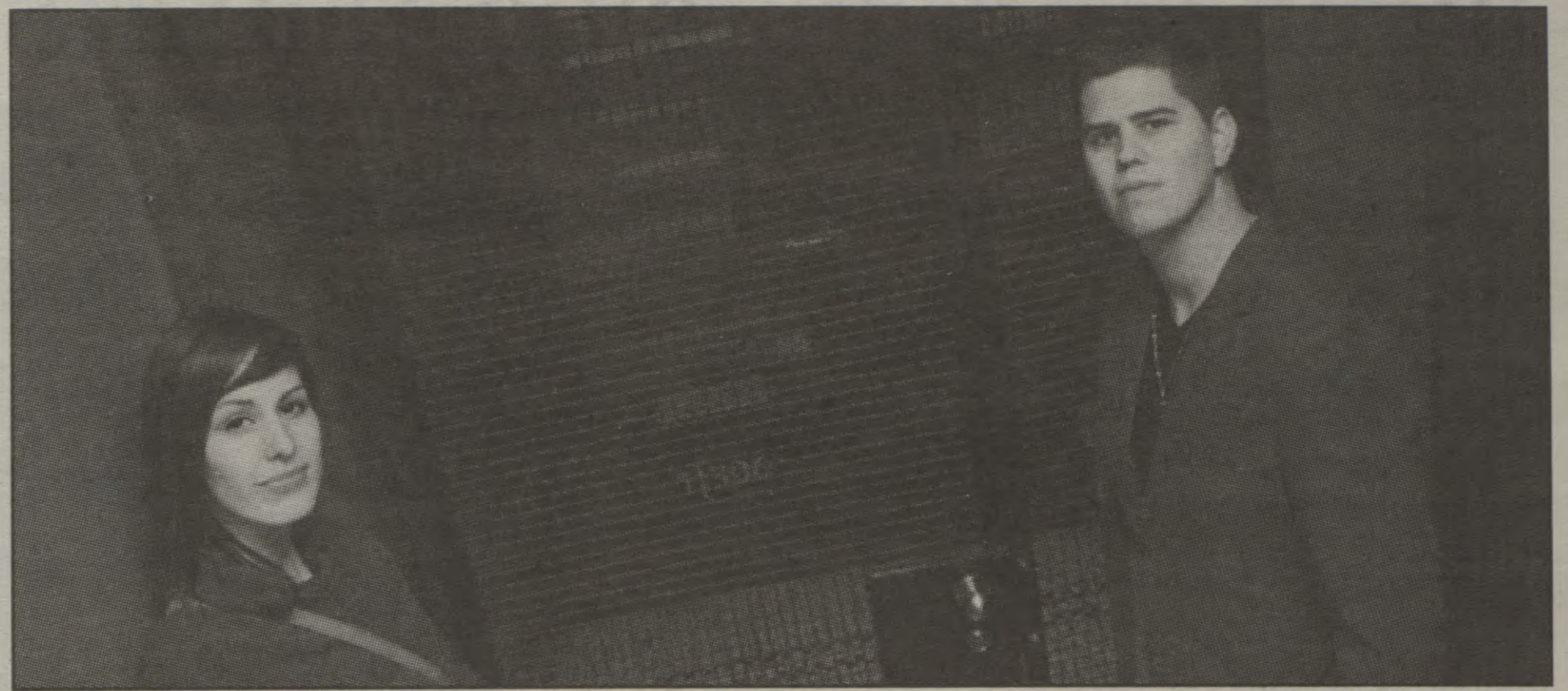
G.T.: The best piece of advice that I've ever received is "don't let anyone tell you who to be and what to create."

R.T.: From Roy Vickers "Don't worry about what other people think, express your art in the way that's right to you."

W: Did you take it?

G.T.: Yes.

R.T.: We named our first album "The Only Way" after our



Sister Says

PHOTO: SRED WORKS STUDIO

discussion with Roy.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

G.T.: I hope to be remembered as someone who is genuine and creates art that is relevant.

R.T.: I'm an artist so I want to be remembered for whatever work I leave.

Sister Says is a band that launched in late 2005 and consists of two siblings that had been performing together for some time. The band is made up of Robert and Gillian Thomson who were born four years apart with Robert being the eldest of the two.

At 19, Robert gave up his dream of becoming a professional hockey player and began experimenting with musical sounds, specifically beats, and earlier on most of them were straight hip hop. Later he started developing in-depth orchestral arrangements with guitar and bass with a synthesizer.

He says of his music, "I'm really into listening to songs and figuring out where the sounds came from, whether it's electronic, a live instrument or a sample."

Gillian's love of singing began as a young child and as a little girl she would often sing while her father played guitar. She says she always wanted to be a singer. For a while her favorite song was "Crazy," the way that Patsy Cline sang it. By the age of 12 she was studying in Vancouver with jazz singers learning the standards that helped shape her vocal style. She has a strong and abiding appreciation of the classic jazz songs. "Sometimes a song will just hit you and transfix you ... my favorite artists do that to me. It's like when you hear Nina Simone sing Mississippi Goddam, there is no way you won't feel something after listening to that song" said Gillian. Strong lyricists like Joni Mitchell, Patti Smith and Elliott

Smith have also had an influence on her style.

They took part in the kick-off of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as part of the Four Host Nations. They also were a part of the Canadian Olympics 2010 in Vancouver performing at the Aboriginal Pavilion as well as taking part in the Talking Stick Festival.

In June 2010, after touring Toronto, Boston and New York, the band met with the Nightingale music label and ended up signing, which allowed their music to be used in film and television. Rounding out a busy year brought the band nominations for the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards for Best Female Vocalist and Best Group or Duo. This exposure brought them numerous performance opportunities and at present they are in pre-production for their second album.

[radio's most active]

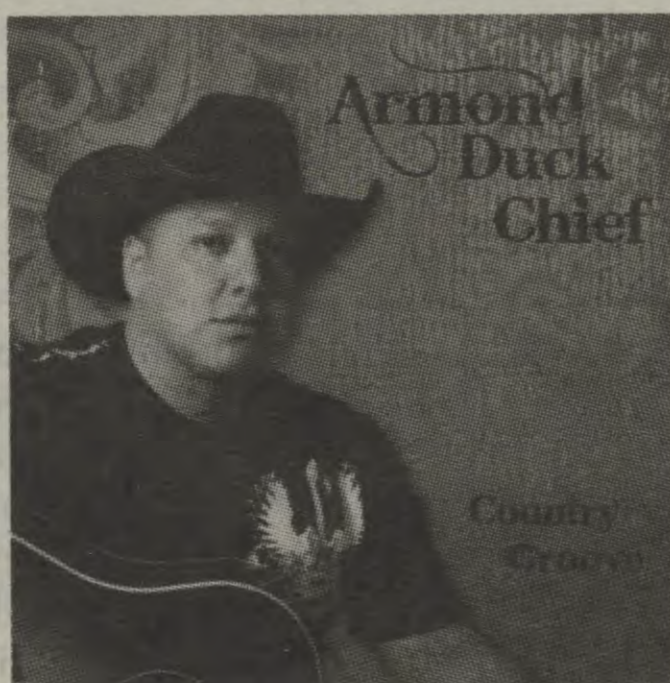
OUR PICK

Artist— Armond Duck Chief
Song— Country Groove
Album— Country Groove
Year— 2011

Living a life honest to the land, working and playing in the dirt, Armond Duck Chief puts you in the mood for some good old country music to make you feel at home. Hailing from Alberta, Armond delivers one of the most enjoyable straight ahead country albums of 2011 without any of the trendy attitude many new country artists have. Armond is just a down home, feeling good, country boy playing feel good *Honky Tonk Blues*, paying tribute to country music legend George Jones in song with *If George Knew* and passes you a little hurtin' in *Falls Hard*. *Ridin' The Rodeo* will encourage you to look for the nearest country dance and failing that, you could just drag the nearest partner into the middle of the room with songs like *Feels Good*. They used to say this kind of music was Country and Western, C&W, crybaby and worry-wort music. But Armond gives you that and a little bit more with joyous twang that's bound to have you line dancing and forgetting what's concerning you. Living the country life has a close relationship with rodeo life and Armond clearly has his own connections with the roughrider culture with two versions of *Gold Buckle Dreams* on this cd. Armond clearly comes by his country roots honestly and delivers the sound that makes you wish you were in that old Chevy pickup truck, hauling hay with your sweetie seated beside you, heading to the saloon for a cool beverage to relax after a day of working on a tractor in the hot sun. There are no failings in musicianship or production so if you aren't ready to go out two-stepping with this album, you may just not have any country in you. I do suspect even the most hardcore city slicker will embrace Armond's *Country Groove*.

Web: armondduckchief.com

Review by : K. Kanten



ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Nathan Cunningham Ft. T Lamouche	N8tive Pride	Single
Richard McKay	Can This Be Love	Single
C-Weed Band	Have A Light Heart On Your New	Forever
Terri-Lynn	Journey	New Journeys
Tim Cruly	What's Left Of Me	Single
Christa Couture	Oh Yes Oh Yes	Wedding Singer & Undertaker
Direction Four	Dreams Like Mine	Single
CerAmony	Kingdom Come	CerAmony
Art Napoleon	Long As I Can See The Light	Creeland Covers
Fargo Arizona	I Promise	Single
Flying Down Thunder & Rise Ashen	Path Of Truth	One Nation
Wanbdi	Where The Fishes Go	Wanbdi
Bob Chartrand	Let's Play Love	The Hits
Leanne Goose	You're No Damn Good	Got You Covered
Susan Aglukark	Revolution Road	White Sahara
Vince Fontaine's Indian City	Stand Feat. Don Amero	Supernation
David St. Germain	Come Home	My Country Song
Phyllis Sinclair	Washerwoman's Lament	Dreams Of The Washerwomen
Conrad Bigknife	Single Tear	Single
Ali Fontaine	Say It To Me	Ali Fontaine

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:



Eight candidates vie for title of National Chief

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Shawn Atleo faces a slate of seven others, including two Regional Chiefs, as he tries to retain his position as head of the Assembly of First Nations.

When the country's 633 AFN-member First Nations Chiefs or their proxies cast their votes on July 18, the second day of the three-day Annual General Assembly in Toronto, Atleo's name will be followed on the ballot by Bill Erasmus, chief of the Dene Nation and AFN Regional Chief of the Northwest Territories; Elaine Gabriel, former president of the Quebec Native Women's Association; Manitoba lawyer Joan Jack; Diane M. Kelly, former Grand Chief of Treaty 3; former Manitoba Chief Terrance Nelson; Ryerson professor Pamela Palmater; and Alberta AFN Regional Chief George Stanley. Nelson is the only candidate in the running to have challenged Atleo in 2009 when Atleo became National Chief.

Stanley holds that the large number of contenders – three more than the last election – has

to do with general discontent.

"I think everybody wants to get rid of our leader," he said. "I think everyone is a good candidate."

Atleo is not surprised by the strength of the candidates and is pleased by the split between men and women. In 2009 there were no women candidates.

"We have such strong women leaders, right across the country, strong women chiefs," he said.

Joan Jack says it is time for women to take their place as leaders and is pleased to be joined by Gabriel, Kelly and Palmater in contesting the position of head of the national organization which represents First Nations citizens.

"The chiefs, who are predominantly male, are constantly going around saying that they respect women.... But I think we really need to look at this. We can't be saying we respect something and don't take action on it," she said.

In endorsing Palmater, Morris Swan Shannacappo, twice-elected Grand Chief of Manitoba's Southern Chiefs Organization, said, "We believe it's time for the AFN to be led by a female leader – one who can exercise her perseverance and



PHOTO: SHARI NARINE

In 2009, Shawn Atleo (left) and Perry Bellegarde were involved in the longest race in the history of the Assembly of First Nations to elect the National Chief.

knowledge and give life to an organization that seems to be failing our peoples because of our diversity."

The National Chief is elected by a majority of 60 per cent of the ballots cast.

Atleo and Nelson were involved in the marathon voting session that took place in 2009 when Atleo was declared

victorious when runner-up Perry Bellegarde conceded the race. Twenty-three hours and eight rounds of balloting saw Atleo finish with 58 per cent of the vote. After the first round of balloting, Atleo had 43 per cent of the supporters while Bellegarde had 29 per cent. John Beaucage, who had garnered 15 per cent of the vote and third

place and was eligible to remain on the second ballot, made the surprise move of dropping out. He then threw his support behind Bellegarde as did Nelson and the fifth candidate, Bill Wilson. Atleo's selection as leader marked the longest AFN vote. Atleo succeeded long-time National Chief Phil Fontaine.

Land security, sovereignty head Erasmus' priorities

By Shauna Lewis
Windspeaker Contributor

TIDI, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

After 25 years serving as Dene Chief, Bill Erasmus is hoping to expand the legacy of his First Nations leadership by becoming the new National Chief for the Assembly of First Nations.

"I deal in the truth," Erasmus, 58, said as an explanation as to why he is running. "People want a particular kind of leadership. I'm prepared to do the work and ensure that our lands are secure and that we're protecting our sovereignty."

The current national climate is of concern to Erasmus.

"I think we are in a very fragile situation where it is very volatile.... (First Nations) have many interests and rights and they're not being put in effect. The whole issue for our people is the land and we're being threatened by the way the Canadian government is treating us."

Erasmus said the issue of Bill C-38 is of immediate concern.

The omnibus bill, which recently passed without amendment, is being widely criticized by First Nations leaders and environmentalists for its

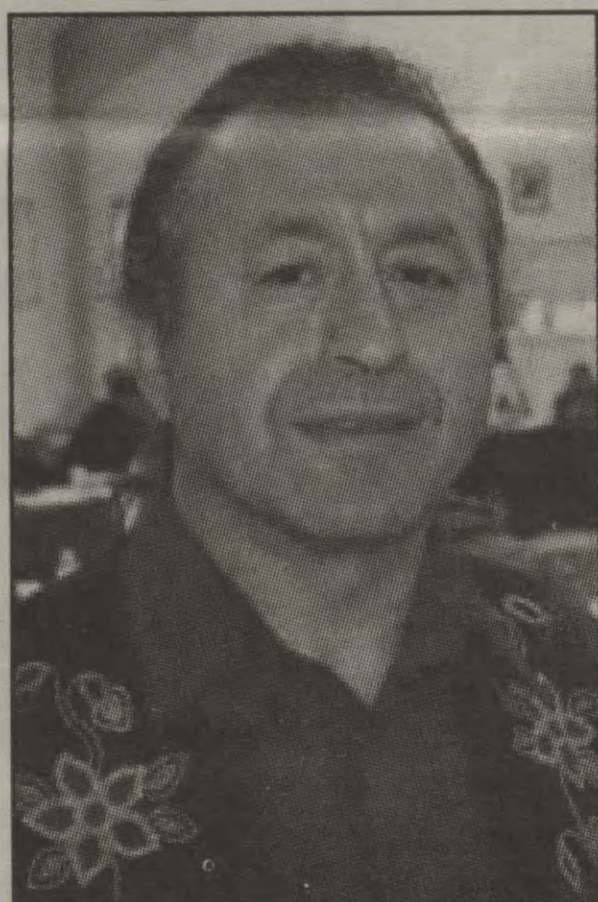


PHOTO: DENENATION.COM

Bill Erasmus: hopes to go from Regional Chief to National Chief for the AFN.

mandate to

slash currently implemented legislation that protects air, water and vulnerable wildlife. The bill is expected to introduce changes to over 70 existing pieces of legislation, including the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act and Species at Risk Act. Bill C-38 impacts areas such as fisheries, employment insurance, immigration and environmental policies like the current controversial Northern Gateway oil pipeline and marine terminal

project. Indigenous leaders say Bill C-38 will also impose a series of new regulations and policies that will alter opportunities for First Nations to examine and be engaged in the consultation and approval processes for major resource development projects.

Bill C-38, said Erasmus, is a major negation of the Crown's obligations towards First Nations, as well as the obligation to accommodate the First Nations after a meaningful consultation.

"They're trying to impose the bill on us and they don't have the ability to impose legislation," Erasmus said. "Our people are sovereign people, we're independent people. Canada tries to impose legislation on us and they can't because we're not subject to the Crown."

A staunch environmentalist who is passionate about such issues as climate change, Erasmus says he is vehemently against the controversial Northern Gateway Pipeline project and expansion of the tar sands.

"As people from the Dene, we've been mandated not to support expansion of the tar sands because we're being polluted by toxic chemicals," he said, of the First Nations proximity to the sands and the polluting affects industry has on the community's

drinking water. "They're polluting us and Canada is allowing it to happen. As independent people we have to run our own affairs and that includes everything. We are people of the land and environment is a huge issue for us."

While Erasmus discounts Canada's ability to impose certain legislation, he makes no apologies for his view that aspects of the *Indian Act* are needed.

"The *Indian Act* does protect us to some degree. It also protects our land so you can't dismiss it," he said.

"The whole issue with the *Indian Act* is that Canada doesn't have authority to legislate our rights," he continued. "(The *Indian Act*) was set up to regulate and it has gone way beyond that."

Erasmus doesn't support the Private Members Bill to repeal portions of the *Indian Act* legislation that was introduced last month by Saskatchewan Conservative MP Rob Clarke. Erasmus says the issue must be examined and debated further than the introduction of a bill.

"We need to sit down with the Crown and decide how we're going move forward," he said.

"Canada is not a nation, our people are Nations," he added, pointing to the respect First

Nations deserve when engaged in consultations with the Canadian government.

Along with his views on legislation debates and the environment, Erasmus says issues such as First Nations poverty, youth violence and social services also top his list of platform priorities.

Erasmus says more funding is desperately needed to provide essential social services such as support shelters and safe houses for youth.

He says gang violence and homelessness is a "volatile situation" that must be addressed through strategic measures that aim at rehabilitation and prevention rather than incarceration.

Furthermore, he asserts that First Nations people in Canada can transform what he calls the current "police state" mentality through enforcing inherent peace-keeping characteristics that are a part of being Indigenous.

Erasmus, who aided Mohawk leaders during the 1990 Oka crisis in Quebec and was recently acclaimed to serve another term as chief of the Dene Nation, has also been a member of the AFN's executive committee since 1987. He currently serves as the Regional Chief of the Northwest Territories.

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Palmater dubbed a "wild card" in race for National Chief

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

AJAX, ONTARIO

"I'm talking about our sovereignty as Indigenous nations," Pam Palmater declares enthusiastically, her voice edged with a passion for which the Mi'kmaq lawyer and academic has become renowned.

On May 28, the chair of Ryerson University's Centre for Indigenous Governance joined the quest for leadership of the Assembly of First Nations. Immediately, the member of New Brunswick's Eel Bar First Nation was dubbed a "wild card" in the race.

Sovereignty is "fundamental to everything that we are as Indigenous people," said Palmater.

In her view, the AFN is failing as a First Nations advocate and she wants to take the organization back to its advocacy roots, exemplified in its charter, "To protect our succeeding generations from colonialism; to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights."

Resisting colonialism must be front-and-centre in the AFN's work, Palmater argues, alongside urgent attention to crises in housing, health, and violence. But recent federal budget legislation – not to mention the



PHOTO: RYERSON UNIVERSITY CENTRE IN INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

Outspoken lawyer Pam Palmater brings Indigenous sovereignty as a focus to the AFN race.

omnibus

Bill C-38, with its prisoner increases and a raft of Aboriginal-specific laws – deserves a radical response.

"If we do not offer resistance to this legislative sweep that's coming down against us, that's ongoing colonization. AFN has to make a choice: if it's too scared to say anything

because it's worried about

losing its funding, then it can't be an advocacy organization any more," she said.

"It's coming so fast and furious – how do we deal with it all? But it's more devastating if the AFN – our national organization – isn't resisting. If they can't do it, what do they expect to happen?"

This type of fiery challenge is precisely what makes Palmater a wild card. For those seeking to shake up the

First Nations-Crown relationship, the 42-year old lawyer is a breath of fresh air. For others – including those who criticize her lack of leadership experience and the fact she only got her Indian status a year ago – calling out perceived complacency amongst First Nations leaders may be a recipe for disaster.

"It's one thing to have a positive relationship with Canada," she said. "That's important – they're our treaty partner. But we can't put all of our eggs in one basket. That can't be all that we do – just focus on how much we can give up to make Canada happy. At some point in time we also have to stand up for our people."

Palmater is critical of the Crown-First Nations gathering in January.

"It was all about the pomp and circumstance, the shaking of hands and photos. What came out of it?" she asked.

"Nothing has changed in the First Nations-Canada relationship except the AFN signed on to a joint action plan that was drafted by the Conservative government which is about integration of First Nations people into society. It was not about recognizing our distinctiveness. It's about benefiting and giving entitlements to individuals versus dealing with the chronic poverty as a collective in First Nations – and maintaining paternalistic control."

Palmater's campaign has been endorsed by grassroots and chiefs alike.

"Pam Palmater is speaking a language that we should all be speaking – a language of sovereignty and true nation-building," said Morris Swan Shannacappo, twice-elected Grand Chief of Manitoba's Southern Chiefs Organization and former Chief of Rolling River First Nation. "(She's) a good, strong, vocal leader that is also a very good listener and observer."

Palmater was called to the bar in 1998, and earned a doctorate three years ago for her thesis, "Beyond Blood: Rethinking Aboriginal Identity and Belonging."

But it's the struggles of Indigenous communities across the country that most troubles

her. With crises increasingly making headlines – from housing shortages in Ontario's Attawapiskat First Nation, to communities displaced by flooding in Manitoba, extreme suicide rates on reserves and missing and murdered women – Palmater wants a more urgent response from AFN.

"If the AFN can't acknowledge that, and work with First Nations to come up with an emergency action plan to deal with this crisis," she warned, "then it's all semantics when we talk about the Seventh Generation, because if we can't take care of this one, we won't have to worry about the seventh generation."

She may be fiercely critical of the status quo, but Palmater is known as both approachable and understanding.

"What's exciting most people is the thought of re-unifying First Nations across the country in a way that respects everyone's diversity, sovereignty and rights," she said. "Our right to govern ourselves. Our right to have our laws recognized and respected. Our own governments, our own trade networks, our own alliances and treaties, management of land and resources – citizenship even. How we choose our own governments."

Fighting words, yes. But for those looking for change, words of hope.

Treaty rights, education important to Kelly

By Jennifer Ashawasegai
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

Diane M. Kelly was the first woman elected Grand Chief of the Grand Council of Treaty 3, and if elected as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, would be the first woman in that role as well. But gender shouldn't be the deciding factor, says Kelly.

"We all have gifts (and) not necessarily because you're a man or a woman. It's because of your life's experiences. And that's what I'm bringing to the table, my life experiences and my work ethic," she said.

Kelly is concentrating on the treaty relationship between Canada and treaty First Nations.

"I'm running because I think we need a really strong voice on treaties. There's so many First Nation communities that are impacted and our treaties are our strength and we need to get that



PHOTO: ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS ONTARIO

Diane M. Kelly is a strong believer in traditional governance.

voice out there," she said.

Kelly, who is Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation, believes she is qualified for the top job. She served as Grand Chief at Grand Council Treaty 3 from 2008 to 2012 and is a lawyer. She

has extensive experience in First Nations governance, board training, land claims research and development, treaty negotiations, education policies, and all aspects of child welfare.

"I'm also running because I'm educated in both worlds," she said. "I've also been taught by the Elders about the spirit and intent of the treaties, since I was a young child."

As well, Treaty 3 was involved in a court case, asking the court to declare that the treaty right to education had been breached. In a media release, Kelly said the government went back on its words from 1873 when it promised that Treaty 3 would be entitled to more education than farming initiatives, since the area wasn't conducive to farm.

In addition to concentrating on treaties, Kelly wants to elevate First Nations education.

"We have a treaty right to education. So, we shouldn't be marginalized, and that's really the key to the future," she said.

First Nations have been fighting with mining companies and other resource related developments for years. One of the most recent fights is in northwestern Ontario between Ring of Fire First Nations, the province and a mining company. First Nations there have indicated they would be on the same playing fields as companies and the government if they had the financial resources and adequate time to meaningfully consult their communities.

"We have to have the capacities within the communities to make informed decisions because the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples indicates that we do have to consent, and our treaties indicate that we have to consent to these projects. But we have to be properly informed and educated about the impacts so we can make those decisions ... we have to ensure we are making the best decision with the least impact to the future. Because we have

responsibilities and not just rights. Those responsibilities have to be equally looked at," said Kelly.

Kelly says strong leadership is needed.

"We have a Conservative majority government right now, that's passing all kinds of pieces of legislation impacting our communities and we need to have a strong voice."

Though only Chiefs can vote for National Chief, grassroots are closely following the race and sharing news articles through social media on Facebook and Twitter. Kelly is well aware of their voices and would like to include the people in AFN decision-making. Kelly says the AFN as a political advocacy group needs to be balanced with the voice of the people.

"We have rights and we have responsibilities, and so does the AFN, which has a role of political advocacy and we'll need to have a forum to be able to hear from the people," she said.

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Atleo pushes actions now need to follow promises made

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

It is time to move beyond symbolic gestures and words. It is time for action.

Shawn Atleo, who is seeking his second term as National Chief with the Assembly of First Nations, is adamant that it is time to move beyond the words spoken by Stephen Harper in 2008 when he delivered his apology for the government's role in operating residential schools; that it is time for the government to implement the intent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada endorsed in 2010; and that it is time for the government to accept the 2007 challenge put forward by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and upheld by the federal court in April and examine the support Canada gives to First Nations children.

And Atleo has his sights set on continuing another battle should he be re-elected. C-38, the omnibus bill that is the government's "attempt to overstep our treaty rights and our constitutionally recognized title rights" by pushing through



PHOTO: FILE

National Chief Shawn Atleo attends a demonstration on the steps of the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton.

resource development, won't be accepted by First Nations quietly.

"I've got a dire warning for government: their approach will result in the exact opposite and we will in fact end up with a greater heightened sense of conflict, both on the ground and in the courts," said Atleo. "First Nations just will not stand for it and my role and responsibility and commitment is to stand firmly with them in that effort.

There is nothing conciliatory about Atleo's manner, a criticism that has been levied against his style of leadership during his first term as head of the AFN. Atleo has repeatedly said his role is to open doors and "kicking them open if we need to."

"I think we have every reason and right, even while we try to seek a more respectful nation to nation relationship, that we confront Canada," he said.

The nine forums, three virtual, that the AFN has undertaken in the past three years as well as the Crown-First Nations Gathering, and visits to Parliament Hill, have all been done in an effort to reach First Nations people both on the reserve and in urban settings, as well as politicians and the general public.

"To continue to broaden the engagement and discussion is really important to our work moving forward," said Atleo.

Atleo believes the AFN has been successful in getting Canadians to reflect on how First Nations people are treated by the government. He points to questions that were asked by the public when the housing crisis at Attawapiskat First Nation became known as well as the heightened awareness that has been created around missing and

murdered Aboriginal girls and women, the poor education funding children on reserve receive, and the fight Canada has put up instead of coming to the table with information on how the federal government funds child welfare on reserves.

"Dialogue is the ultimate objective. To find a reasonable solution is the ultimate objective but not at the expense of our rights," said Atleo.

He pledges to continue to stand with chiefs as they fight for what is needed in their territories and communities, whether it is for environmental control, better economic opportunities, safe drinking water, food security, adequate housing or safe communities.

"We'll continue to stand with them, stand with the communities who are taking a strong stand, who are making these sorts of actions. Our role is to support and advocate for that and we will continue to do so in a very firm way and make sure Canada knows that the gap and misunderstanding run deep and the words of the apology, while I think are important, they need to be followed up with real action," said Atleo.

Presenting a unified front is also important.

"I fully believe that the original vision of the AFN ... was of the First Nations truly coming together. If ... we can find areas of both common experience... common vision ... a greater sense of unity and common purpose because that's where the real change will occur ... First Nations coming together to compel the government to uphold and honour the pure intent of treaty," said Atleo.

And that intent of treaty is what is upheld in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, he says, noting that it upholds the rights of Indigenous people to make informed decisions and give consent to what happens in their traditional territories and in their lives.

Atleo recalls that four years ago he sat in the House of Commons with his grandmother as Harper apologized to First Nations and Inuit people for the government's role in operating residential schools. Atleo clearly recalls his grandmother saying, "They're just beginning to see us."

Atleo wants to continue building on his grandmother's words, to continue "the work and the deep aspirations to see real change that I and so many of our leaders share, that we've created."

Self-determination key plank in Gabriel's campaign

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

Kanehsatà:ke FIRST NATION

Who can forget the iconic 1990 image of a masked warrior facing off against a Canadian soldier at Kanehsatà:ke?

But any memory of the so-called "Oka crisis" would be incomplete without the women on the front lines of the stand-off. Ellen Gabriel was chosen by the People of the Longhouse and then by her community to be spokesperson for Kanehsatà:ke during the Oka Crisis. Now she is back in the spotlight and hopeful that her people will once more choose her as spokesperson, but this time as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Though it has been 22 years since appearing nightly on television amidst burning tires and army checkpoints, Gabriel remains a grassroots hero for many across the land. In the intervening years, she picked up her calling as president of the Quebec Native Women Association, serving for six years, and continues educating audiences worldwide and works in her home community's Kanehsatà:ke Language and



PHOTO: JUSTICE FOR NATIVE PEOPLE

Ellen Gabriel wants to be bring back the voice of the people.

Cultural Centre.

"We need change to bring back the voice of the people... People at the grassroots level have felt very marginalized," said Gabriel, whose traditional name is Katsitsakwas.

"People want a change. ... Change is not going to happen with a moderate perspective. That's what's been used in the past, but it hasn't gotten us anywhere. I believe in diplomatic, frank discussions, in an honest, fair manner, with the

federal government. But they haven't respected us - they've made unilateral decisions without consulting us."

Self-determination is a key pillar of Gabriel's AFN candidacy. She dances delicately between diplomacy and uncompromising rhetoric: she attacks colonization, but also understands the difficulties facing chiefs - her voters - elected under Canada's *Indian Act*.

"We don't like a system that needs a rubber stamp from Ottawa - that says we can't do something in our communities. I hear the same frustration by people elected as band council chiefs. They don't like being part of that system either. So what do we do to get rid of it?" asked Gabriel. "The AFN has said publicly that it will work with the government to get rid of the *Indian Act* - but how is that going to transpire. ... We need to get out of the negative impacts colonization has put us under for more than 200 years. It's not going to happen overnight, but we're stronger united."

Gabriel, 53, looks back to 1990 as a watershed moment in her life - not to mention as a historic assertion of Native rights attracting thousands from across

Turtle Island.

B.C. hereditary chief Bill Wilson, unsuccessful contender against Atleo in 2009 election, is one leader backing Gabriel, describing her on Facebook as "the only candidate tested under fire."

"I was greatly relieved and excited when Ellen was finally recognized as a candidate," Wilson wrote. "There is a long hard struggle ahead of us."

Gabriel is used to struggle. "(Before 1990) I think our people were sleeping," she said. "In 1990, Aboriginal peoples asserted our sovereignty, and we were criminalized for doing that. Our people are holding their heads high now. I and my community stood up to fight the expansion of a golf course in 1990, and the Longhouse peoples are still excluded in negotiations regarding our lands and our collective human rights, in spite of what Canada promised then. It seems that there's not much difference in the attitude of more than 500 years ago. We as Indigenous peoples are still fighting a government who thinks they are superior to us."

Gabriel frequently references the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples, which was signed in 2007. Canada only adopted the declaration in 2010. Applying its broad articulation of Indigenous rights is another key plank, and one she believes is vital to facing the federal government.

"The Conservative government representing Canada now is stomping all over our rights," she said. "They blatantly do that without consequence. They're not even respecting their own rule of law or the international rule of law."

Ultimately, Gabriel said, her campaign is about First Nations making urgent choices.

"We are at a crossroads right now, whether we will be totally assimilated and whether we will have the ability to be self-determining people," she said.

"How do we take control of our own destiny, in order to have a brighter future for our children and youth? Here we are in 2012 (and) we're still dealing with the challenges of how to de-colonize our relationship with Canada, but also to decolonize the one we have with each other. We have a rich culture to build upon, in spite of everything that has happened to us in the process of colonization and oppression. That richness is our strength, and what we need to keep going."

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RAVEN'S EYE

Special section providing Aboriginal news from BC & Yukon

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Pre-contact artifact comes home to BC

By SHAUNA LEWIS
Raven's Eye Writer

Vancouver

An early 18th century pre-contact Nuu-chah-nulth artifact that once belonged to explorer Captain James Cook has returned home to the Northwest Coast, thanks to the generosity of a wealthy art collector.

The nearly 300-year-old artifact was purchased by Vancouver art philanthropist Michael Audain last December from a private New York collector. It's estimated worth is \$1.2 million.

Then on March 20th, Audain gave the artifact to the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver.

The artifact, created by ancestors of the Mowachaht-Muchalaht people currently located near Gold River, B.C. at Tsaxana, is believed to be a fish club fashioned from yew tree wood and carved by using stone and shell tools. The club was given to Cook by the Mowachaht, a member of the larger Nuu-chah-nulth nation, during the explorer's third voyage to the Friendly Cove area of Nootka Sound in 1778. The club was the last privately-owned First Nation artifact of Cook's original collection and the first of its kind in Canada.

"This is the only work of its kind that was privately held left in the world," Audain explained. "No museum in Canada has one of these works specifically from Nootka Sound," he said.

During his speech at the repatriation ceremony on March 20, Audain told distinguished guests that two of his greatest

interests have always been the life and voyages of Captain James Cook and First Nations art of the Northwest Coast.

"It's a beautiful piece of art," said Audain. "I obtained the piece because I wanted to put it in a museum here," he explained.

"It's great to have a pre-contact piece," said Anthony Shelton, director at the Museum of Anthropology [MOA] in Vancouver. "It's a piece that speaks entirely of Aboriginal aesthetic and technology," he explained.

Shelton said it is important that the piece has found its way home, considering that a vast majority of historic First Nation pieces from the area have not.

"Eighty per cent of Northwest Coast art is on the East Coast or Europe," noted Shelton.

"There's not a lot available because so much of the works were collected in the 19th century by European and U.S. museums," Audain explained.

The artifact will be kept in the permanent collections area in what is known as the 'Multiversity' section of the museum.

"It's acted as a testament and a preserver of that [Nuu-chah-nulth] culture," Shelton said of the club's history.

"All First Nations tell me it is a way connecting with their culture and their past," agreed Audain. "I think it's very important that young First Nation artists see the work of the great masters of the past," he said, explaining why he repatriated the piece.

"I thank him," said Margarita

James of Audain's gift. "A lot of people wouldn't have done it. It's all about giving back," she said.

James, a member of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, represented the community during the repatriation ceremony.

"I was honoured," she said. "I thought it was a wonderful experience."

James said the club represents the generosity of her people and the reclaiming of a proud history nearly destroyed through colonization, potlatch prohibition and residential school tyranny.

"He [Cook] was a visitor to the area and that's just the way our people are. We host people, we give gifts," James said proudly.

"This item has meaning to us," explained James. "It has meaning in that we can learn about ourselves again," she said.

But if the Nuu-chah-nulth people want to see the artifact they will have to go to Vancouver.

"I chose MOA because I felt the museum was the best place to house the artifact," Audain said. "My preference would have been to donate it to a museum closer to where it came from in Nuu-chah-nulth territory but unfortunately there are a limited number of museums in First Nation villages," he explained.

James agreed and said she understands that the artifact must be held at MOA because her community doesn't have a designated museum or centre to hold the important artifact.

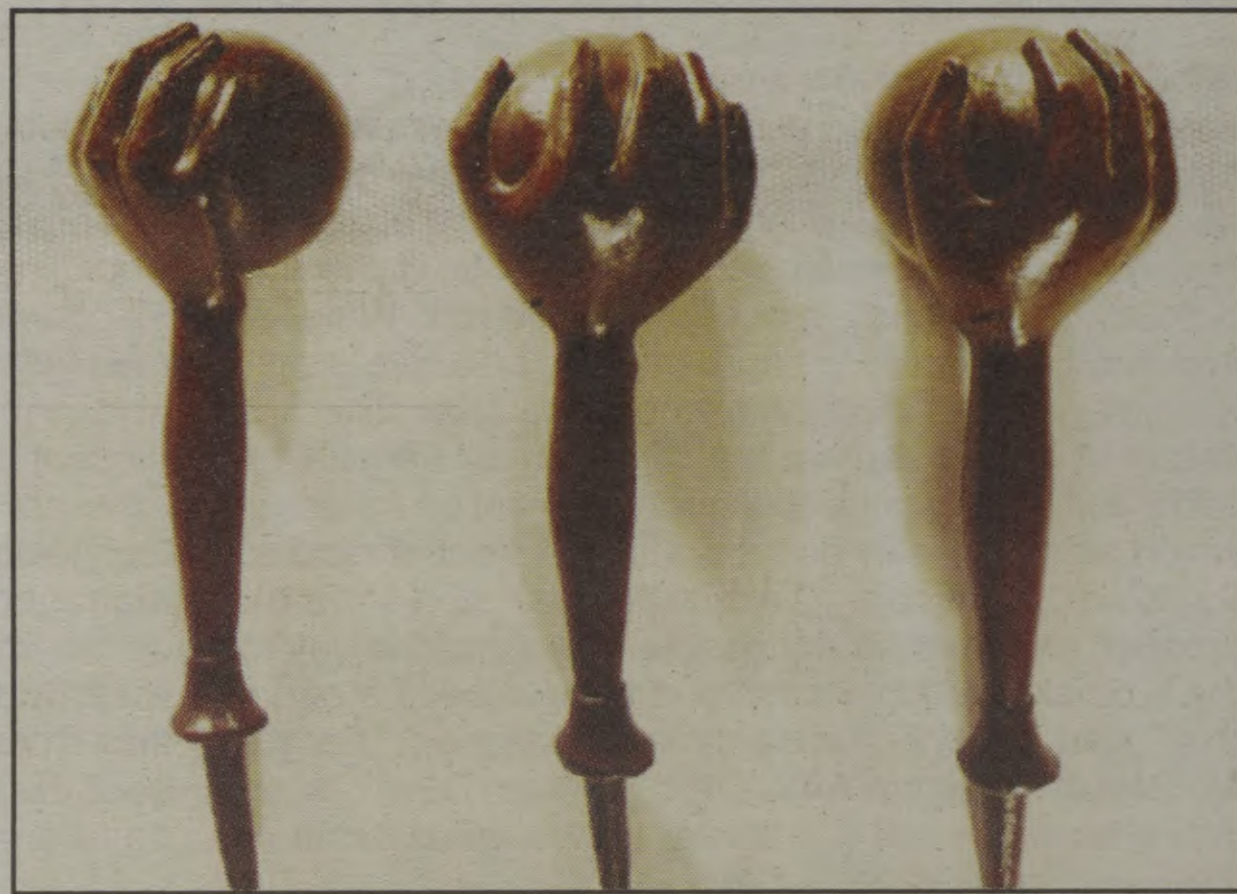


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

18th century pre-contact Nuu-chah-nulth artifact that once belonged to explorer Captain James Cook

However, James said the band has been trying to find a way to build a cultural centre so that someday they will be able to house and display their own history and tell their own story.

"That's our goal," said James of a cultural centre built on reserve. "That's what we want. That's what we've been working toward."

James said her community created the 'Land of Maquinna Cultural Society' in 1995 to encourage the band's cultural development and regain needed historic knowledge. But due to a lack of funding the volunteer-run society has been unable to build the cultural centre they desperately want.

James said she has made calls on behalf of her band to Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan to lobby for cultural development support to build a centre.

And while the band did

received \$50,000 from the Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Program coffers, James said those funds have been set aside for the creation of a welcome pole the community plans to raise this summer.

"We need support from the government of Canada," said James. "They create sports arenas, they should help us with sharing our history with the world and so that our kids can learn about our culture," she said.

"We want to have these [artifacts] to learn about our history," James continued. "We need to learn about who we are."

To date, Audain has repatriated and donated First Nations artifacts to the Royal BC Museum, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the U'Mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay. He said he hopes to donate to on-reserve cultural centres in the future.

Saints from Skidegate claim BC Junior Boys title

By LEE CODLIN
Raven's Eye Writer

Port Alberni

The Skidegate Saints of Haida Gwaii are this year's 2012 BC Junior All Native Basketball champions, beating the Heiltsuk Nation of Bella Bella in a hard-fought 66-62 match on March 23 in Port Alberni.

Heiltsuk battled hard against the big Skidegate squad, but the Saints took an early lead and never looked back, though

Heiltsuk did come within striking distance in the second half.

In girls' play it was the Mystic Sunz from Ahousaht in the final match-up with Gingolx Storm. The Sunz came from behind to take the title at the buzzer with a score of 51 points to the Storm's 47.

The games were the culmination of the week-long tournament that attracted almost 50 teams in both the girls and boys divisions. Tournament hosts were the Hesquiaht Nation and

the Homiss Wolves, last year's boys winners.

The Homiss Wolves were not the same team that took the 2011 championships held in Penticton last Spring Break. In 2012 they were bounced to the losers' bracket early and bounced out of the tournament all together on the second last day of competition.

The 2011 girls' champs Syilx, who had also won the previous year, could not put together a three-peat. The Syilx boys squad, however, came third in

tournament action.

The event began on Sunday March 18 with a grand procession of athletes showing their colors as they marched into Alberni Athletic Hall. Many of the juniors danced their way to their seats where they were entertained by a variety of dance groups from the Nuu-chah-nulth nations.

In his opening statement welcoming the teams into the traditional territory, Tseshaht Chief Councillor Les Sam

likened the excitement in the room to attending an AC/DC concert.

More than 500 youth took part in the tournament, bringing an estimated \$750,000 in benefits to the small coastal community.

MLA Scott Fraser said in all his years attending events on behalf of his constituency, the opening ceremonies was the coolest event he's ever been to, he said.

(See *Saints* on page 3.)

After a review and consultation process, British Columbia has approved the controversial Jumbo Glacier Resort Master Development Agreement, which gives the go-ahead to build North America's only year-round glacier-based ski resort, despite opposition from the Ktunaxa First Nation, which regards the area as a sacred valley and off-limits for any kind of development. The resort will be located in the Purcell Mountains in the Kootenay's on an old sawmill site. The completed ski resort will feature up to 23 lifts, a 3,000 metre-high gondola and spectacular views. "After more than 20 years of comprehensive and exhaustive reviews, it was time to make a decision," said Steve Thomson, minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. "I approved Jumbo Glacier Resort's Master Development Agreement after reviewing all of the relevant documentation, and meeting with both First Nations and the proponent." The company behind the development has requested that Jumbo Glacier Resort be designated a resort municipality. The ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development will review this application now that the Master Development Agreement has been approved. The up-to-\$900 million in private capital investment could create an estimated 750 permanent, direct jobs upon completion and provide 3,750 person years of construction employment. The Shuswap Indian Band has a benefits agreement with Glacier Resorts Ltd.

K'omoks Nation on Vancouver Island

has reached the agreement-in-principle phase of treaty negotiations, signing the document on March 24. The deal could see \$17.5 million in cash and more than 2,000 hectares of land transferred to the nation if the final hurdles in the treaty process are jumped. While an important milestone, the agreement in principle is still a long way from a treaty being a done deal. The final details in the agreement are still open for negotiation, and a community ratification process must be navigated which puts the treaty benefits still years out of reach of the K'omoks people. "This is the first step toward a prosperous future for my people. It is a historic day for the K'omoks Nation. I am proud to have been a part of this," said Chief Ernie Hardy in a statement. Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development John Duncan and B.C. Minister of Aboriginal Relations

Mary Polak also signed the agreement.


The Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (ICAB)

launched the BC Aboriginal Business Association (BCABA) in February in Prince George to foster capacity for British Columbia's Aboriginal business owners and entrepreneurs. "The Aboriginal business owner and entrepreneur sector is growing at five times the rate of self-employed Canadians overall, but one of the challenges individuals face is having the knowledge, resources and finances to develop their business," said Keith Henry, president of ICAB. "BCABA will help break down those barriers and strengthen Aboriginal business development by connecting individuals with corporate partners offering much-needed expertise in key areas such as accounting and financial management, business development, communications, Internet-based technology, legal, media relations and taxation." BCABA has established agreements with eight founding corporate partners: BCIT; Bull, Housser & Tupper; KPMG; Maggie Geiser & Associates; PR Associates; Suite-Apps Advisors; T.E. Wealth and Vancity. Each partner will deliver business development seminars and presentations to members of BCABA across the province. BCIT will introduce its Commercialization Assistance Program to help entrepreneurs in taking their products and services from the idea stage to the marketplace. Bull, Housser & Tupper will provide presentations focusing on contracts, project development, limited partnerships, impact benefit agreements, employment law, business structures and governance. KPMG will provide information on Aboriginal taxation and business advisory matters while Maggie Geiser & Associates will offer training on money management. PR Associates will deliver communication and community engagement strategies, media, presentation and negotiation skills training. Suite-Apps Advisors will introduce and advise on Internet-based technologies that help improve business productivity and management control. T.E. Wealth will develop and deliver investment and financial education seminars that will provide a foundation for sustainable business growth and Community Development while Vancity will offer seminars devoted to best practices in business development and management. According to the

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business report *Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey*, British Columbia has the second highest concentrations of self-employed Aboriginal people in Canada – 22 per cent of the 37,000 of self-employed Canadian First Nations people overall, or 8,140 businesses, operate in the province.

The Vancouver Island Health Authority

has developed a new DVD educational tool that it hopes will increase cultural safety for Aboriginal people in the health care system. Speaking at a ceremony at the Quinsam Centre on the We Wai Kai Nation/Cape Mudge as part of the VIHA board meeting in Campbell River in March, VIHA President and CEO Howard Waldner said: "VIHA serves broad and diverse populations, and we are not always as knowledgeable as we would like to be around the cultural practices of Aboriginal people." The DVD provides an overview of traditional Aboriginal approaches to health care and medicine, and builds "understanding about how over 150 years of Aboriginal interaction with government agencies have shaped many Aboriginal people's views of the modern health care system," said Waldner.†The National Aboriginal Health Organization of Canada defines cultural safety as "what is felt or experienced by a patient when a health care provider communicates with the patient in a respectful, inclusive way, empowers the patient in decision-making and builds a health-care relationship where the patient and provider work together as a team to ensure maximum effectiveness of care." Aboriginal people have the same goal as everyone else when in the health care system, said Chief David Bob, co-chair of VIHA's Aboriginal Health Council. "The desire to be respected and understood. Culture is an essential part of who we all are as individuals. Without understanding the culture, you cannot understand the individual. And if you don't understand the individual, you cannot effectively care for and treat them." The DVD is called "Journey of Discovery." It explores misconceptions that exist about First Nations/Aboriginal cultures and perceptions, and encourages VIHA staff to reflect on their own cultural attitudes, considering topics such as respect for the patient, respect for family and the importance being self-aware, non-judgmental and compassionate.



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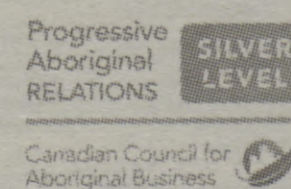
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Saints from Skidegate claim BC Junior Boys title



PHOTO: LEE CODLIN

The Mystic Sunz from Ahousaht played Gingolx Storm in the finals at the 2012 BC Junior All Native Basketball Championships and took a come from behind win to take the title.

(Continued from page 1.)

Martin Watts was joined by actor Justin Rain of Blackstone fame to co-emcee the event. Rain urged youth to embrace their culture and community.

There were also 450 athletes who attended a dance on March 21 designed to break down the lines of competition and let the young athletes get to know one another better.

Nicole Botting of the Mystic Sunz was selected Most Valuable Player for the girls' side of the tournament. Top scorer was Gabby Jeffery of Island Storm with 122 points. Latasha Brlecici of the Friendship House Islanders was Most Sportsmanlike girl. Amber John of Island Storm was selected Most Inspirational girl. Micita Barton of Gingolx Storm was selected Best Defensive player.

Joel Richardson of Skidegate Saints was chosen as boys' MVP. Nathan Vogstad, also of Skidegate, was top scorer with 151 points. Wayne Jules of Homiss Wolves was selected Most Sportsmanlike boy. Kyle Alexcee of Friendship House Beavers was Most Promising player. Graylon Martin of Heiltsuk Nation was Best Defensive player. Maaqtusiis Magic Dominic Thomas was voted Mr. Hustle.



PHOTO: LEE CODLIN

The Skidegate Saints took the lead early in the final game of the 2012 BC Junior All Native Basketball Championships and never looked back, but their opponents Heiltsuk Nation came within a few points of turning the tides against the Haida Gwaii boys.





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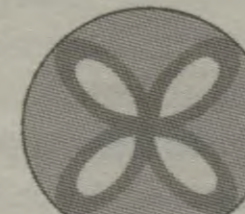
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Dark cloud hangs over missing women's inquiry

By SHAUNA LEWIS
Raven's Eye Writer

Vancouver

The independent lawyer appointed to represent Aboriginal interests at the inquiry into the Robert Pickton police investigation of murdered and missing women backed out of the hearing last month and has now been replaced.

Art Vertlieb, Commission Council for the inquiry being conducted in Vancouver, announced March 21 that Commissioner Wally Oppal has appointed lawyers Suzette Narbonne and Elizabeth Hunt as Independent Co-Counsel to present issues related to Aboriginal interests.

According to Vertlieb, Commissioner Oppal believes that this role of Independent Council is crucial to ensure that Aboriginal interests are presented at the inquiry.

"Both Narbonne and Hunt are respected, experienced legal professionals. Commissioner Oppal has every confidence in each lawyer's ability," Vertlieb stated.

"It's going to be incredibly challenging because I'm stepping into a case that's already in progress. But I'm completely confident I can do this," Narbonne told *Raven's Eye* over the phone.

"This role of independent council is an important and crucial one. I wanted to be a part of it because I knew I could do a good job."

"I really am just submersing myself in the file," she said.

Narbonne started her legal career as a staff lawyer with Legal Aid Manitoba in The Pas, Man. She was called to the Bar in Manitoba in June 1989 and in British Columbia in May 1995, when she moved to Prince Rupert. She lived in Prince Rupert until January 2011 and now lives in Gibsons, B.C. where she continues as a sole practitioner in the fields of criminal law and human rights.

Hunt is a lawyer and a member of the Kwakiutl Nation. She was called to the Bar in B.C. in 1995. Her practice areas include Aboriginal law, specifically treaty negotiations, residential school claims, corporate and commercial, intellectual property, wills and estates as it relates to Aboriginal interests.

The new appointments were announced two weeks after Robyn Gervais, the former independent council, had announced her resignation.

In a statement Gervais cited delays in calling Aboriginal witnesses, an apparent lack of panels on Aboriginal issues and the focus on police witnesses as



PHOTO: DAVID BALL

Lawyer Robyn Gervais, who represented Aboriginal issues at the missing women inquiry lead by Commissioner Wally Oppal, quit March 5 citing a lack of Aboriginal involvement in the hearings being held in Vancouver.

reasons for her March 5th resignation.

"This inquiry is fundamentally about missing and murdered women, a disproportionate number of whom were Aboriginal," said Gervais, who is Metis.

"As I leave, I regret that I could not find a way to bring the voices of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women before the commissioner," she added in her statement.

Allegedly Gervais attempted to address the commission early March 5, without hinting at what she would say, but later claimed inquiry Commissioner Wally Oppal told her there wasn't time. That prompted her to walk out of the federal courtroom where the inquiry is being held.

Gervais was one of two independent lawyers appointed by Commissioner Oppal last year.

Prior to the inquiry, which began last October, Oppal had granted status to a range of advocacy groups representing sex workers, drug users, Aboriginal people and residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and he recommended they receive government funding to hire lawyers. But the Christy Clark government rejected the funding request, prompting nearly all of those groups to pull their participation.

Oppal then appointed Gervais to represent the broad interests of Aboriginal people and another lawyer, Jason Gratl, to advance the interests of Downtown Eastside residents.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs [UBCIC] said he supported

Gervais resignation.

The UBCIC pulled out of the inquiry prior to it beginning last Fall.

"The Union of BC Indian Chiefs stands in solidarity with Robyn Gervais for taking the principled stand in relation to pulling out of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry," said Phillip.

"A whole variety of women's groups from the Downtown Eastside and Aboriginal organizations have fought and struggled for well over two decades to achieve a full public inquiry into not only the missing and murdered women of the Downtown Eastside but including the women missing from the Highway of Tears," he explained.

"We were elated when the government agreed to call a commission of public inquiry, however we were not included in drafting the terms of reference, nor were we involved in the selection of the Commissioner," Phillip said.

"Robyn Gervais struggled and made a real effort to work through the shortcomings in the inquiry," Phillip added. "The Aboriginal voice was completely marginalized and relegated to the sidelines. The inquiry was dominated by the police witnesses who were simply covering their backsides and utilizing the commission as their self-serving confessional," he said.

"As far as we're concerned, [finding a replacement for Independent Council] is an absolute act of desperation," said Phillip, adding the entire ordeal has been "tragic."

"The commission has

absolutely no credibility and it's been a complete waste of time," he said.

The First Nations Summit, which was the last Aboriginal organization to back out of the inquiry March 5, said it is puzzled as to what role the independent council overseeing Aboriginal issues will take in the inquiry.

"In the face of lack of Aboriginal participation what recommendations can they make?" asked Grand Chief Edward John.

"How do you represent Aboriginal issues without Aboriginal people being involved?" he asked.

In an open letter to Commissioner Oppal dated March 6, the Summit said their dropping out of the inquiry came down to a lack of First Nation input and consultation throughout the inquiry process and the blatant disregard shown to Aboriginal groups through the lack of funding support.

The FNS called the process "a systemic pattern of discrimination," before doubting the integrity of the inquiry.

"We feel the inquiry will not be able to fulfill a critical part of its mandate," the FNS stated.

John says the entire process has been unbalanced, leaving a "real missed opportunity," in its wake.

But commission lawyer Art Vertlieb is more optimistic.

"I think it has been a fair process," he said. Individuals and groups who have wanted to participate in the hearing have.

Vertlieb said Gervais' resignation came as a shock.

"We were surprised. We had no indication that [Gervais] was

having any issues," he said.

But when asked if he felt that the Aboriginal voice had been fairly represented throughout the six-month inquiry, Vertlieb didn't want to commit.

"Once we see the work that Narbonne and Hunt are going to do, I will be better able to comment on that," he said.

"The important part of it is that the commissioner is invested in having Aboriginal interests canvassed at the inquiry," he stressed.

"I think that the inquiry is only as good as its report and recommendations," said Vertlieb. "And at the end of the day the people of the province will decide if the recommendations are heard and then they'll judge the work of the inquiry," he concluded.

For her part, Narbonne said she plans to make the most of her opportunity.

"There are voices that need to be heard and I'm going to make sure they are," she promised.

Serial killer Robert Pickton was arrested in 2002, and the remains or DNA of 33 women were found on his farm in Port Coquitlam. He was eventually convicted of six counts of second-degree murder.

The inquiry is examining why police failed to apprehend Pickton between the early 1990s to the early 2000s when sex workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside began to vanish.

Commissioner Oppal is expected to issue a report by June 30 which will provide answers as to what went wrong during the police investigation and make recommendations for the future.

Family dispute could result in splitting of First Nation

By SHARI NARINE
Sage Contributing Editor

PHEASANT RUMP FIRST NATION

A family feud that carried from one reserve to another is threatening to split Pheasant Rump First Nation.

And a move by Chief Terry McArthur in late February to bring the two sides together for discussion resulted "in a very volatile atmosphere, a lot of tension" on the reserve.

McArthur said his decision to ask council to issue a Band Council Resolution calling for both sides to come to the table and either form an agreement in principle as to how they would work with each other in the future or decide on separation, was, in part, due to a letter received from Aboriginal and Northern

Affairs Canada in December. Based on that letter, McArthur came to the realization that ANAC would not grant the separation request because of "lack of documentation" on the part of Pheasant Rump.

"In that letter, they also detailed the process of what the separation needs to do. A lot of it is all avenues have to be exhausted... It's going to boil down to the minister saying, 'What did you do?' And if we don't have a documented process, he's probably going to say, 'No, it's not going to happen,'" said McArthur.

ANAC received the request from Pheasant Rump to separate a year ago, March 22, 2011. The Band Council Resolution came from outgoing Chief Olive McArthur, who didn't run for re-election. Her position was taken by her son

Terry in a close race last September. Olive is the spokesperson for the potential new First Nation and mother and son are on different sides of the fight.

"When I took on this position, when I was elected, I wanted to see all factions ... all families come together, work together, live together, do things together. Be positive, move forward because we're all doing it for our children in the end. I still continue to feel that way, the direction I want to move in," said Terry.

However, Terry holds little hope that decades of bitterness can be resolved. He knows the family history well and says it is painful. Members of the initial Pheasant Rump First Nation were forced on to White Bear First Nation in 1901. Bitterness grew between the

descendants of the sons and daughters of Chief Pheasant Rump as some had an easier life than others. Pheasant Rump First Nation was re-established in 1986 and members moved back. The internal fighting between the families carried on.

"It's been a long tough battle," said Terry. "It's not only challenging as a leader, but as a family member."

Terry said the majority of his family sides with his mother in wanting separation.

Pheasant Rump has 391 members, with 162 on reserve. Terry said there are approximately 100 members adamant about separation, another 100 who want to remain as a single nation, and the rest are indecisive.

Rod Desnomie, communications advisor with

the Saskatchewan region ANAC office, said should a new First Nation be created, a "split of assets (would occur) and that would also include the land. At this point in the process, it has not been determined how many acres would be divided and allocated to the new band."

The band's land base is slightly more than 20,000 acres and Desnomie said he is not aware of any additional land to be allocated in the case of separation.

The process for separation takes years. Along with negotiations between ANAC and Pheasant Rump First Nation, which would set the terms of separation, band membership needs to agree on those terms. Ministerial approval is then required to create the new First Nation.

Aboriginal distrust in Regina city police high

By SHARI NARINE
Sage Contributing Editor

REGINA

The findings of a recently-released survey on community-perception of the Regina Police Services do not surprise the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Almost 75 per cent of Aboriginal people living in the province's capital distrust the city police. Morley Watson, FSIN Vice-Chief, takes those results further.

"I think generally because of the residential school effects across this province, I think that generally (that percentage is representative) right from one end of the province to the other," he said.

Watson believes that distrust of authority began over a century ago when the

Northwest Mounted Police escorted Indian agents and school masters to homes to take children away to residential schools. Some of those children never returned home.

The survey was undertaken by the University of Regina's Department of Justice Studies over July and August of last year. Because a telephone survey resulted in limited Aboriginal participation, an additional 49 interviews were conducted with First Nations and Métis residents from the Central patrol district.

"Compared to the results from the random telephone survey, the First Nations and Métis respondents reported a lower level of trust and confidence in the police, had a greater fear of crime, and reported less satisfaction with the quality of services of the

RPS. Aboriginal respondents also reported having less positive perceptions of the RPS Community Service Centres located in the Central patrol district, and almost one-third reported that they would never use those services," the survey states.

Whereas, 20 per cent of overall respondents had trust issues with the city police, 73.5 per cent of Aboriginal respondents felt that way.

"The results from both the survey and interviews show that there are some significant differences in perceptions of the RPS held by residents of the Central patrol district compared to those living in the North and South patrol districts," says the survey.

Among those differences in perception is the number of crimes reported as well as why

crimes went unreported. Almost 31 per cent of Aboriginal respondents did not report victimization compared to 6.3 per cent of the city-wide respondents. Nearly 23 per cent of Aboriginal victims of crime say they did not report the crime because they lacked confidence in the police. Twenty per cent of the city-wide respondents gave the same reason. As well, the levels of satisfaction with the First Nations and Métis respondents who had contact with the police was much lower than the full city sample, with an average satisfaction of 2.11 compared with 3.88.

However, Watson believes that work undertaken by the RPS in recent years can help relieve some of that mistrust. He points to the fact there is a First Nations representative

on the police commission; that the police chief uses a group of Elders to guide him in First Nations issues; and to the increasing number of Aboriginals on the city police force.

"These three things tell us they're working very, very hard to make things better," said Watson. "Hopefully this good work will put some of the trust back in our people."

But 130 years of history cannot be wiped out in a few years.

"We've come a long way. We have a long way to go, but I think we're pointed in the right direction," said Watson.

He also noted that other police forces in the province could benefit from following Regina's example.

agreements
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GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

Métis Veterans Memorial Monument Project

The importance of Métis veterans to the Métis community cannot be understated. Our veterans occupy a point of honour at all Métis gatherings and cultural events. The Métis Veterans Memorial Monument will be a landmark for generations of Métis people to gather and pay homage to the servicemen and servicewomen who have served our country.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute has been chosen to oversee the building of the Métis Veterans Memorial Monument at Batoche, and is seeking donations towards the total project cost of \$300,000. Donations over \$10 are eligible for a tax receipt.

Donations over \$25 will receive the CD *Honouring Our Heroes: A Tribute to Métis Veterans*, featuring Métis performing artists ~ Donny Parenteau, Andrea Menard, Ray St. Germain, Jess Lee, Mike Gouchie, and Krystle Pederson.

Donations over \$50 will receive the CD above as well as the book: *Métis Veterans of Saskatchewan: 1914-1953* by Cathy Littlejohn.

Our goal is to ensure the monument recognizes and honours all of our Métis Veterans, past and present. If you know of a Métis veteran who should be recognized, please visit the website below for submission information.

For more information, please contact the Gabriel Dumont Institute toll-free at 1-877-488-6888 or visit the website www.gdins.org/veteransmonument.

Donations can be mailed to:
Métis Veterans Memorial Monument Project
c/o Gabriel Dumont Institute
917-22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9

GDI Mission: To promote the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and distribution of those materials and the design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.



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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Government of Canada, in partnership with the Regina Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Homelessness, is currently accepting funding applications from organizations interested in obtaining financial assistance to achieve the priorities established by the Regina CAB on Homelessness specific to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy – Designated Communities and Aboriginal Homelessness funding stream to meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Regina Homelessness Partnering Strategy Call for Proposals for Capital Investment Projects

Deadline for Applications:

Applications must be received at:
Service Canada Centre
1783 Hamilton Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2B6
no later than **June 1, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.**

An information session will be held on

April 16, 2012

1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Service Canada Centre – Grassland/Parkland Conference Room
1783 Hamilton Street
Regina, Saskatchewan

To register for the information session, to receive an application package or for more information, contact:

Robyn Edwards-Bentz at 306-564-5409 or
robyn.edwardsbentz@servicecanada.gc.ca

Canada

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60s Scoop child turns horrifying experience into strong advocacy

By SHARI NARINE
Sage Contributing Editor

SASKATOON

Forty-one years ago Lynn Thompson was stolen from off the Pine Creek First Nation in Manitoba.

"We were told by our grandparents, if white people come around, you run in to the bush," said Thompson.

But the three-year-old could not run fast enough and she and her two sisters, one of whom she carried on her back and the other she was pulling, were apprehended by social workers. Her eight-year-old uncle, who kicked the men who were taking her, was also grabbed. Thompson's three older brothers made it to the bush safely. Thompson would be 40 before she reunited with members of her biological family, but they still remain strangers to her.

Thompson was one of a conservatively estimated 20,000 children who were apprehended in the 1960s through to the 1980s. The "60s Scoop," as this action became known because the majority of children were taken in the first decade, was a government-sanctioned program entitled Adopt Indian/Métis children. These Aboriginal children were placed in foster homes throughout Canada and the United States. Thompson said the uncle who tried to rescue her was sold for \$500 to a family in the US. What ensued for Thompson were 25 foster homes in Ontario and Manitoba by the time she was eight years old and two failed adoption attempts. Like many of the children in her situation, she was abused. Eventually, she ended up being settled in a German Mennonite community in Manitoba. Seventy per cent of the children taken were placed in non-Aboriginal homes.

"I would have given anything to have been in a residential school, to have other brown faces around," said Thompson, who shot herself while in care.

The pain of Thompson's childhood, which she classifies as "pretty messed," followed her into adulthood.

Twelve years ago, Thompson accompanied a partner to Saskatchewan. Shortly after arriving in that province, she contracted HIV through intravenous drug use.

"I wouldn't say I was a regular user. It was just something I experimented with and I ended up contracting HIV," she said.

That was when she took control of her life.

"With HIV, it's either fight or flight. I chose to fight. I educated myself," said Thompson who spent two years learning all there was to know about the virus. She

turned away from modern medicine and treated herself with a traditional tea and is also under the care of a healer from Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation.

"I'm kind of the White Buffalo of HIV. I'm the only one I know of in Canada that uses traditional meds (for HIV)," said Thompson. "Instead of getting sicker, I'm getting better."

But she didn't stop there. Nine years ago, Thompson became an advocate for those suffering from the virus, fighting against the stigma and discrimination HIV-positive people experience every day.

Saskatoon, where Thompson lives, and Prince Albert have the highest cases of HIV in the country. Young women present the highest numbers, contracting the virus through intravenous drug use. But in the next few years, Thompson expects to see those figures skewed as a larger number of older men become HIV-positive through unsafe sex. Thompson said men are paying \$20 or \$30 extra to do the act without a condom.

Thompson has amassed an impressive resume. She serves as consultant for such organizations as Persons Living With AIDS Network and AIDS Saskatoon; has been an advisor for working groups such as All Nations Hope Network and Public Health Canada; has spoken in schools both in the Saskatoon Public School system and Saskatchewan First Nations; has participated in the documentaries "Positive Women" (for Canadian AIDS Law Society) and "Silent Epidemic" (Indigenous Circle); and has written articles and been interviewed for various television programs.

Thompson is also one of two women named in a class action lawsuit launched last year against the federal government in the Court of Queen's Bench in Regina. She and Valery Longman represent other First Nations and Métis children targeted in the "60s Scoop."

For the past 15 years, Thompson has been collecting information and stories from and about children taken from their homes in this manner. After she was reunited with her youngest sister, who broke her back after running away from a foster home in the US, Thompson and others realized something needed to be done. It was then that a lawsuit was discussed.

Thompson is hopeful that the lawsuit can lead to support similar to what residential school survivors have received through the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. She also hopes it makes Canadians aware of another dark part of Canadian history.

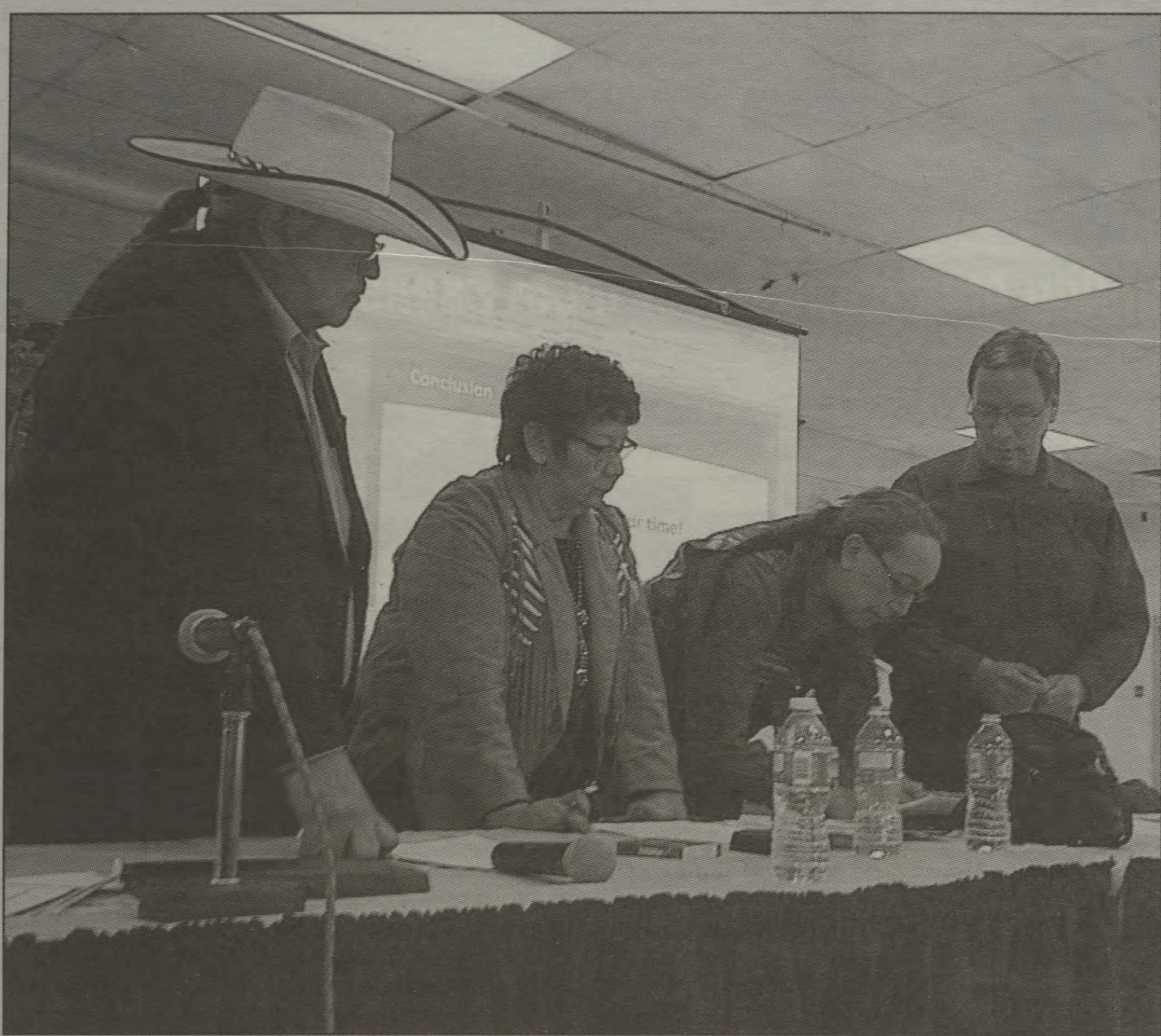


PHOTO: MUSKWA PRODUCTIONS & CONSULTING

(From left) Chiefs Wallace Fox (Onion Lake Cree Nation), Rose Laboucan (Drift Pile First Nation), Jim Badger (Sucker Creek First Nation) and Craig Mackinaw (Ermineskin Cree Nation) signed a memorandum of understanding in front of gas and oil industry partners and the government.

Wanska Energy Alliance created with four First Nations

The Wanska Energy Alliance has been formed between the Onion Lake First Nation and three Alberta First Nations, Sucker Creek First Nation, Drift Pile First Nation and Ermineskin Cree. The MOU will build capacity in the oil and gas sector, with Onion Lake, Canada's largest oil producing First Nation. Chief Wallace Fox said Onion Lake Energy has been leading the way for First Nations in the oil and gas industry and they look forward to helping the other communities do the same. †During the next year, the group will work as strategic partners and explore development opportunities for greater regional economic growth and wealth creation.

Oil, gas located on Ochapowace, Muskowekwan First Nations

Sundance Energy Corporation has finished exploratory test wells on its 40,000 acre Ochapowace First Nations Lands and on its 58,000 acre Muskowekwan First Nations Lands. The two exploratory test wells indicate oil and gas and Sundance has determined that the reservoirs present are capable of supporting potential hydrocarbon production. Sundance holds federal oil and gas permits on First Nations Lands within this area and as a result, is able to drill its federally governed lands within the provincially designated potash belt. Sundance has selected six additional vertical drilling locations, three on each First Nation. Results from this multi-well drilling program will assist Sundance in defining the potential of these reservoirs and what steps to take next.

Métis MLA considers NDP leadership

Buckley Belanger, a longtime NDP MLA representing northern Saskatchewan, is considering a run for leader. "If one of us aspires to be a leader, then I think that'll prompt a lot of discussion, it'll prompt a lot of thought and in a long way I think it will empower a lot of aboriginal people to think about politics and to think about the possibilities," Belanger, who is Métis, told CBC News. Five of the NDP's nine members who won in the last provincial election say they are considering running for the job of party leader. Joining Belanger as possible

contenders are MLAs Cathy Sproule, Trent Wotherspoon, Danielle Chartier, and Cam Broten. The leadership convention will be held in February or March of next year in Saskatoon. Similar to the last two conventions, the NDP will use a one-member, one-vote process to select the next leader. Party members will also be able to participate in the leadership selection process by voting online, by phone, mail-in-ballot. Anyone with a valid 2013 NDP membership will be able to vote for the new leader.

Muskowekwan gives go ahead to potash development

Muskowekwan First Nation voted on Feb. 25 to approve a proposal from Encanto Potash to expand designation of mineral rights. Eighty per cent of band members who voted cast their ballots in favour of the development. Just over half of eligible band members turned out. "This vote is a clear mandate from our membership to continue with our work to develop Canada's first potash mine on our First Nation lands," said Muskowekwan Chief Reginald Bellerose in a news release. The result of this vote is the same as an earlier vote held. However, the earlier polling was deemed invalid as less than half of eligible members voted. If developed, the mine on land northeast of Regina would be the first of its kind on a First Nation reserve.

Cowessess receives health Accreditation Primer Award

Cowessess First Nation is the first band to receive accreditation status for providing quality health care to the community. The designation comes with acceptance of the Accreditation Primer Award in November 2011. Chief Grady Lerat said becoming accredited is about providing better services and being a guide for other First Nation communities. Accreditation is the nationally and internationally recognized process used to ensure quality in the planning, management and delivery of health services. Thunderchild First Nation and Piopat First Nation are also working to achieve their accreditation..

Prominent law firm adds Aboriginal-law expert

Renowned negotiator of First Nations legal issues and

business-law expert W. Thomas Molloy is one of four new appointees at Miller Thomson, the nationally known business-law firm. Molloy will be based in the Saskatchewan office, where he will form part of its Aboriginal law team. Aboriginal law is a fast-growing field as potash and oil and gas development require meaningful consultation with First Nations. Among Molloy's accomplishments are negotiated treaties with the Nisga'a of British Columbia as well as lead negotiator of the team that helped create Nunavut.

U of R sets Indigenization as priority

The University of Regina is looking for someone to facilitate the development of a strategic plan for indigenizing the institution. The executive lead would take advice from the Aboriginal Advisory Circle and work closely with the Human Resources Aboriginal and Diversity Consultant and the Manager of the Aboriginal Student Support Centre while providing advice to the president. An Aboriginal candidate is preferred. Indigenizing the university is in keeping with U of R's motto, "As One Who Serves."

New vice-president announced for FNUniv

A national search has resulted in Juliano Tupone, member of the Sweetgrass First Nation, named as the new vice-president, finance and administration for the First Nations University. Tupone most recently served as the director of operations for the Star Blanket Cree Nation. His background includes working with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. In his new role, Tupone's focus will be on engaging the executives, students, Elders and other stakeholders to help build and grow the institution while managing the administrative and finance functions in conjunction with senior staff to ensure effective services are provided to the university in these areas.

Survey shows lack of understanding for Aboriginal plight

Results of a University of Saskatchewan telephone survey undertaken prior to the November 2011 provincial election are disturbing. Nearly 1,100 people surveyed were asked about their political and social beliefs, including five questions specific to Aboriginal attitudes and policies. More than 58 per cent of people agreed with the statement, "generations of discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Aboriginals to work their way out of the lower class." However, 53.1 per cent disagreed that "governments should do more for Saskatchewan's Aboriginal peoples." Another 71.9 per cent agreed with the statement, "German, Ukrainian and other immigrants to Saskatchewan overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Aboriginals should do the same without any special favours." Willingness to fund Aboriginal initiatives varied by how the survey respondents voted: 64.4 per cent of Saskatchewan Party voters disagreed governments should do more for Aboriginal people. Meanwhile, 67 per cent of NDP voters wanted government to do more for Aboriginal people compared to 73 per cent of "other" party voters and 31 per cent of Sask. Party voters.

Partnership prepares students for careers in agriculture

A nine-week training course pilot project, a partnership between Parkland College, Lakeland College, Keeseekoose First Nation, and Inroads to Agriculture funded through the provincial and federal governments, recently graduated more than two dozen First Nations students into entry level employment in the agriculture and agri-business sectors in the Yorkton-Kamsack area. Participants of the "Introduction to Agriculture" course spent two months learning the basics of agriculture with local farmers and agri-business operators as their instructors. "A lot of local businesses in this area are having challenges finding people with the right qualifications to fill open jobs," said Darrell Landels, Parkland College's manager of trades, industrial and agriculture, in a news release. "Also, a lot of First Nations people on reserves or in nearby communities are looking to fill the jobs that are available in the local labour market."

Compiled by Shari Narine

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Trust, relationship need to be rebuilt
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Aboriginal people account for almost
three-quarters of new HIV cases
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Special section providing Aboriginal news from Saskatchewan



Artist rendition of the overall Touchwood Area camp that will house close to 2,600 workers for the Jansen mine.

PHOTO: ATCO STRUCTURES AND LOGISTICS

Partnership for camp construction to provide employment

By SHARI NARINE
Sage Contributing Editor

GEORGE GORDON FIRST NATION

Temporary housing for BHP Billiton Jansen potash mine workers will provide construction and long-term service jobs for three First Nations in the region.

George Gordon, Day Star and Kawacatoose First Nations have formed a partnership with ATCO Structures and Logistics to build the camp which will house approximately 2,600 mine workers. But employment opportunities for the three First Nations members will go beyond initial construction to long-term jobs in services such as catering and housekeeping. ATCO is also bidding on shared-support services for the entire mine site, including maintaining roadways, which could provide additional employment opportunities for First Nations members.

ATCO initially approached George Gordon First Nation about the partnership. Through discussion with them, said

Cole Crook, senior manager, business development-Aboriginal, it became apparent that other First Nations in the region should be included. George Gordon Chief Glen Pratt spoke to Day Star and Kawacatoose First Nations about their potential involvement.

"This partnership with ATCO will improve the skills and training of our people and increase our capacity to gain meaningful employment," said Pratt, in a news release.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for us. It's a benefit for all the First Nations involved," said Lorraine Demarais, band administrator for Day Star. "For a small band like ours, being part of this has huge benefits."

This partnership is one of many that ATCO has with First Nations throughout the country, said Crook, noting that ATCO's history is built on such relationships.

"It makes a great deal of sense (to partner). They're an excellent source of labour because typically they're underemployed and there's

generally a lot of capable people in the region," said Crook. "It's part of our commitment to be a responsible operator and to engaging people from the communities and areas in which we work."

This camp "is a very big one, in terms of build and operate," said Crook, adding that it is unusual to have something this large outside of oil sands operations. The Touchwood Area camp will consist of two pre-engineered buildings, lodgings for 2,580 beds in 160 sq. ft. bedrooms with private washrooms, an outdoor arena, a 200-seat movie theatre, dining hall, a 20,000 sq. ft. sports complex with a gymnasium, library, convenience store, and medical centre.

The agreement between ATCO and the First Nations does not set a figure as to the percentage of First Nations employed on the site.

"If we could draw from the communities 100 per cent of our labour force that would be delightful. But reality is, I don't know if we'll be able to do that.

But we're going to maximize it, so initially we're hoping for 30 per cent or better. The target is better," said Crook.

The initial phases of employment will be for construction, which is expected to get underway this spring. The first phase of construction will comprise 500 rooms, which is to be operational by October 2012. Completion of the accommodations and facilities is scheduled for mid-2013. Construction is expected to employ between 100-150.

Crook said ATCO is committed to providing training for the on-going jobs that will be available once the camp is up and running. Discussions have already begun with the Saskatchewan Indian Institution of Technologies about offering programs that provide the necessary skills to service the camp, such as catering, housekeeping, and managing the recreational facilities. Other institutions will also be approached. An employment and training centre will be established on First Nations territory. Crook said the

operations of the camp will employ upwards of 250.

Demarais said Day Star is in the process of taking an inventory of the skills members already have and where training will be necessary. The First Nation has 470 members.

"More people will get trained, whether they will go work at the (camp) site or not," said Demarais.

ATCO's multi-million dollar contract with BHP Billiton is to design and construct the Touchwood area camp as well as three years of operations.

BHP Billiton could put the operations out for tender after the three years or ATCO's contract could be extended, said Crook.

The camp could be in operation for 60 years.

"We're certainly looking forward to continued work with our partners in the potash belt in Saskatchewan. We see this as a long term play and we're hoping that our partnership will last 10, 20 years or better. We could chase a number of opportunities and we're hoping this is the first of many," said Crook.

AFN charter will guide Jack in position as head

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

Joan Jack says leadership of the Assembly of First Nations means following the organization's charter, which is "very clear.... The office of the National Chief is to function as a spokesperson and a facilitator of the vision of the Chiefs."

Being National Chief is not about setting her own priorities, she says, and is not about one issue.

The purpose of the AFN, according to the charter, Jack says, is to "empower the Indigenous governments in their own lands. The charter is based on respect for the principles of diversity, tolerance, trust. Those words are actually used in the AFN charter."

Jack established her legal practise Joan Jack Law Office in 2003 in Winnipeg. Her legal areas of expertise include Indigenous and Aboriginal law; the Independent Assessment Process through the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement; Constitutional law; land claims; and treaty land entitlement.

She has also launched a class-



PHOTO: PROVIDED

Joan Jack wants to go from the boardroom of her law office to the head of the AFN.

action lawsuit for day school survivors.

Jack has served on council for Beren Rivers First Nation since January 2012. She was nominated by Beren Rivers Chief George Kemp as a candidate for the position of National Chief.

Jack, who is married to a First Nations man and a mother of six (including three foster children), considers herself a "very well-

rounded" candidate.

"I'm educated in traditional knowledge," said Jack, pointing out she knows how to make a fire in the rain, "and on the European side I have an education degree in business and I have a law degree."

It's this combination of the two worlds that Jack believes prepares her for the position of National Chief.

Jack contends that the position of National Chief is different than being head of a political party, where the person at the top "basically dictates or sets the course." The National Chief does not set her own agenda and then lead with her own priorities. With that in mind, Jack says she will not be running an issues campaign.

"Rather than the AFN being a hierarchal system ... the office of the National Chief is similar to a facilitator and a speaker, to work as part of the executive of all the leaders that have been put in place by the Chiefs in their own provinces," said Jack, who pledges to ensure that everyone who comes to the table has a voice.

She holds that it is important to work within the system and plans to do so by "creating

situations in where people are listened to and heard and have opportunity to dialogue and debate and disagree with dignity."

Jack would like to return to the practice of the 1990s when first ministers' conferences were regular occurrences.

"We do need to get back to really looking at the Constitution of this country and how it's implemented in our context as Indigenous people," she said. "The Chiefs have been calling for similar such substantive initiatives to be pursued."

Jack would also like to return to the basics of educating not only the general public but politicians about who First Nations people are and what their place is in Canadian society.

"In my own life, I think there's great need for us to educate the general Canadian public about who we are. We live in Canada and there are still many people ... if I were to walk up to them and ask them who the National Chief is right now, would anybody really know?" she asked.

Doing outreach and public education campaigns would be two ways to reach the general public. Jack points out that the AFN's charter states that there "is

an onus on (First Nations people) to ensure that we are halting colonization." Jack would like to raise the issue with the chiefs and see what ideas they present for getting the message out.

Jack says today's atmosphere has a "lot of toxicity.... That's something that needs to be addressed.... Something I'm very good at is sitting in discomfort, staying in the love, and move through so that we all come out the other end feeling that we belong."

Being part of the First Nations community and also operating in the larger context, Jack says gives her an advantage in the role of National Chief.

Jack admits she has never led at this level before and doesn't presume to know what it involves entirely, but she does "have an idea" of what it would be like and how she would function in the role.

"I think it's a new kind of leadership I'm bringing," she said. "I think that traditional leadership or participatory democracy ... it's about inspirational leadership, it's about visionary leadership. My vision is that we have a country where we all prosper today while protecting tomorrow."

Economics is the key out of poverty, says Nelson

By Jennifer Ashawasegai
Windspeaker Contributor

LETELLIER, MANITOBA

Terrance Nelson is known for his shoot-straight-from-the-hip style, and he certainly doesn't mince his words. The former chief of Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation has thrown his hat in the ring in the race for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Nelson ran for National Chief in the last election. His platform for 2012 is similar to his campaign in 2009. He has a strong focus on economics, which he says means taking control of resources along with dealing directly with Americans for business ventures.

"As a person that has studied economics, I'm well aware of how powerful our people are. We don't have to be the 72nd level in the United Nations living index. Poverty in our communities can be done away with if the First Nations take action," said Nelson.

As far as the AFN as an organization is concerned, Nelson proposes, "replacing the lawyers at AFN with economists and proving to the First Nations that

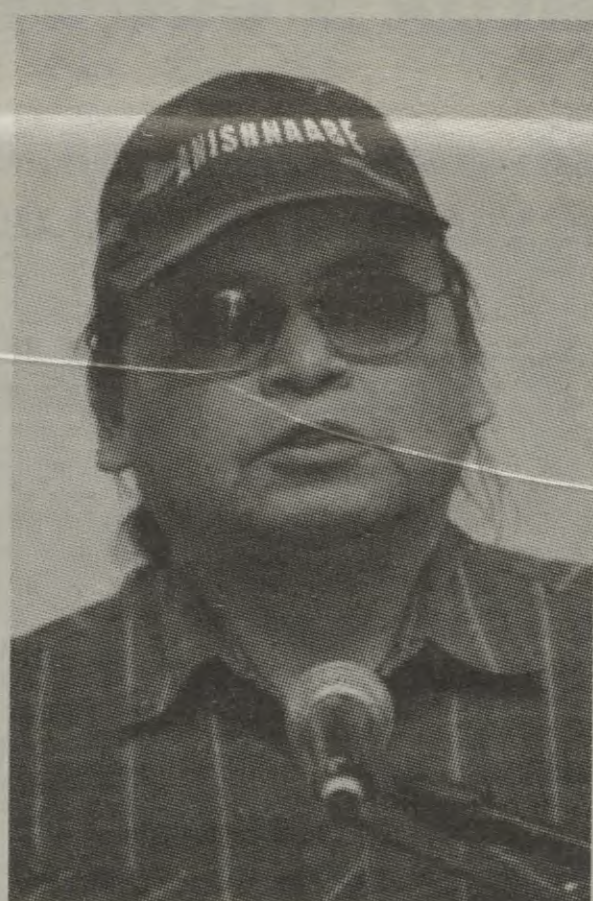


PHOTO: JTURTLE ISLAND NEWS

Chief Terrance Nelson is adamant about the need for Indigenous people to control their resources.

they are the owners of the land and owners of the resources. The AFN is not a treaty organization, only the First Nations are the land owners that have entered treaties and agreements with the Crown, are the real property owners and have the power to change the system."

Nelson doesn't think the AFN has been steered by strong hands in the last few years. "I'm not in

any way against (present National Chief) Shawn Atleo. I believe he's a very good person, he's proven that over the last three years. But I really do feel that Shawn is not able to handle the situation as far as the cuts that have come back onto the First Nations across the country."

First Nations have been decrying the cutbacks to health and social welfare. Another point of contention is Bill C-38. The piece of federal legislation is an omnibus budget bill which impacts First Nations as it changes the environmental review process and pipeline approvals.

"We are the Indigenous people of these lands. We own all 3.83 million square miles of Canada. We own all the 60 different metals and minerals mined in Canada. We are the richest people in the world but we have been robbed of our wealth. We are occupied Nations living under the Canadian *Indian Act*. We cannot afford to wait for the immigrant governments to resolve our situation. Our people suffer. We must take action, but it must be constructive action."

Nelson has already begun those actions. People may remember Nelson was under fire earlier this

year when a meeting he held with the Iranian ambassador made headlines. Nelson was looking for a deal with Iran to garner support in his quest for better oil, gas and mining revenues for First Nations in Canada. As part of that deal, he also wanted to provide Iran with food grown on First Nations land. That meeting didn't go over well with federal government officials since Iran is blanketed under numerous international sanctions, including Canada. That wasn't the first time Nelson has sought deals with other countries. In 1998, he visited Iraq.

Nelson also doesn't believe in the *Indian Act*.

"In order to break the *Indian Act*, the system that has been in place since 1876, First Nations not only have to ignore immigrant legislation, they have to seek international foreign investments."

Such investments, he proposes, would go into First Nations to develop natural resources.

In the area of education, Nelson is not a fan of the proposed First Nations education legislation put forth by the federal government and the Assembly of First Nations.

"I think it's crock," he said. "As long as First Nations continue being dependant on the government of Canada we will continue to have no funding. We should be paying for our education ourselves."

In a blog article written by Nelson last year, he stated, "If Indigenous people got 10 per cent of the wealth generated from their historical lands, they could pay for their own housing, their own schools, their own health centers and they could look after themselves without the immigrant governments telling them how to live."

Nelson said education funding must come from what First Nations already have.

Concluded Nelson in the 2011 blog, "Unless we all try to understand the underlying reasons why Indigenous people in this country are in the situation they are in, we are headed to a drastic confrontation, one where it is not so clear who will win. Housing on reserve is only a symptom, it is not the problem. The problem is undeclared economic sanctions and if Indigenous people want a solution, they are going to have to think outside the box."

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Stanley ready to take next step to lead organization

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

FROG LAKE FIRST NATION

Alberta Regional Chief George Stanley understands the importance of treaty and says it should not be buried among other items on the national agenda.

Stanley comes from five generations of chiefs and when the treaties were signed in the 1800s his family was the keeper of the sacred bundle that was used. Today, Stanley's family remains the keeper of the sacred bundle, something he is proud of.

"I'm very deep-rooted in treaties. I understand the sacredness and the power of treaties," said Stanley, who is hoping to trade in his position as Regional Chief in Alberta for the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. "I'm very concerned as how our treaties are eroded by the federal government.... As our Elders say today, treaties are non-negotiable. So I am standing beside that word of our Elders."

Stanley contends that National Chief Shawn Atleo's lack of understanding of the importance of treaties was obvious at the First Nations-Crown gathering which

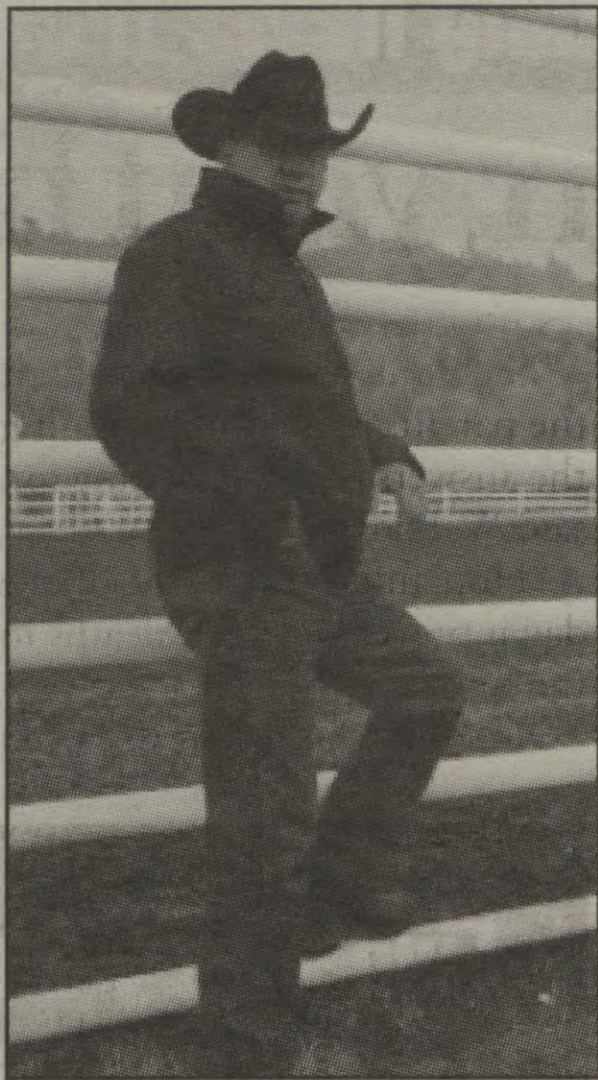


PHOTO: PROVIDED

Alberta Regional Chief George Stanley: Prairie chiefs stand with him on the importance of treaty.

took place in January.

"We were hoping that our National Chief would prioritize our treaties, how we want to implement them. It was very upsetting, and many leaders that I went with, from Alberta, even from the Prairies, said (Atleo's) message wasn't that the (treaties) were the first priority," said Stanley, a former Chief and band

councillor with Frog Lake First Nation, in eastern Alberta.

"Their main concern is how I could bring about this priority as National Chief," said Stanley. He points out that he was asked by 15 chiefs to seek the leadership of the AFN.

"This is something I'm very deeply concerned about. How we protect our rights not today, but for the younger generation and also the unborn," said Stanley. "We have to pave the way for them, for today and for tomorrow."

Treaties, coupled with natural resource sharing, are the first of four pillars that make up Stanley's platform.

The second pillar is economic development, something Stanley has years of experience with. After leaving a 10-and-a-half-year career with the RCMP because of health issues, Stanley became a self-employed small businessman, undertaking consultation work with First Nations to develop their economic base. From that work, Stanley realized the importance of partnerships in the development of the oil and gas industry on his First Nation as well as the need to invest profits for the future so revenue is available in times of hardship,

including federal funding cutbacks.

"When I got elected as Chief (of Frog Lake), we developed a more strategic plan toward governance, where we could seriously take this and test it and test it and once we see that we could advance ourselves to invest with great partners... we see that's the only way we can move forward with our business," he said. Money through economic development can be used for education and to meet other needs on the First Nation.

The second pillar also includes First Nations jurisdiction in gaming.

The third pillar is mineral, energy and pipeline development on traditional lands.

"There is much, much concern... in the eyes of Canadians" over Bill C-38, says Stanley. The omnibus bill pushes the development of the land without regard to treaty rights.

The fourth pillar is a myriad of national issues such as crime, youth, education, safe water and adequate housing. Stanley notes that he has held the justice portfolio for AFN, which includes advancing the cause of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and his experience with the RCMP

allows him to "speak the language" to help negotiate what is needed by First Nations.

Stanley says he is "grounded to the community issues," which gives him understanding and allows him to advocate more strongly for what is needed. He says he has been told that he is a "visionary leader. I have a plan to put into practise."

Stanley says he was raised by a chief to be a chief.

"I was born with politics, exposed to politics. My dad taught me about politics. What is a leader and what does a leader do?" he said. "I hold my shoulders up when I know I have to present and represent my people in a certain area."

Stanley is critical of what he sees as the AFN's role as a reactionary organization.

"We need the AFN to be more proactive. We need it to take action," he said, noting that as far as he is concerned the AFN is spread "too thin," taking on too many issues and "the capacity is not there."

"We're not making any headway as promised by our National Chief. I'm always looking forward every day to when it's going to be happening, what actions are going to be taken," he said.



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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

Inquiry will look at seven youth deaths

By Shari Narine
Birchbark Writer

Thunder Bay

The Chief Coroner of Ontario will be conducting a joint inquest into the deaths of seven teenagers who left their remote communities in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory to attend secondary school in Thunder Bay.

Terry Waboose, deputy grand chief for NAN, is pleased that the coroner has responded favorably to NAN's request to broaden the scope of the inquiry to include all the students' deaths, which occurred between 2000 and 2009. Initially, the coroner's office was to conduct only a single inquest, examining the death of Reggie Bushie, 15, from Poplar Hill First Nation, who died Nov. 1, 2007.

"The students ... have perished over the last number of years under similar circumstances so we wanted to ensure that the inquest would be broadened in the sense that all the students would be investigated separately under one inquest," said Waboose.

Under the Coroner's Act, said Cheryl Mahyr, spokesperson for the chief coroner's office, Dr.

Andrew McCallum, as chief coroner, has the option to consider requests to broaden the scope of inquiries. The similarities were such that McCallum agreed to the joint inquest.

The Bushie inquest was scheduled to begin in January 2009. However, concerns about the validity of the selection process for the jury caused delays. NAN also requested that the inquest be postponed until McCallum ruled on a joint inquest.

"There's a lot of questions, lot of concerns also from the communities, the families, the relatives of these young people that have perished. So there's a lot of apprehension and fear in us under the circumstances as why these young people perished. It doesn't make sense," said Waboose.

The new inquest will look into the deaths that preceded Bushie's, as well as the two that followed. The inquest includes Jethro Anderson, 15, from Kasabonika Lake First Nation, who died on Nov. 11, 2000; Curran Strang, 18, from Pikangikum First Nation, who died Sept. 26, 2005; Paul Panacheese, 19, from Mishkeegogamang First Nation,

who died on Nov. 11, 2006; Robyn Harper, 19, of Keewaywin First Nation, who died on Jan. 13, 2007; Kyle Morrisseau, 17, of Keewaywin First Nation, who died on Nov. 10, 2009; and, Jordan Wabasse, 15, of Webequie First Nation, who died on May 10, 2011.

The bodies of Bushie, Anderson, Strang, Panacheese and Morrisseau were all recovered from the McIntyre River, while Wabasse's body was recovered from the Kaministiquia River. Harper, the only girl, died of asphyxiation. Six of the seven students attended Dennis Franklin Cromarty School. Wabasse attended the Matawa Learning Centre.

The five-member inquest panel is tasked with determining the answers to five questions: who died, when, where, how, and by what means or manner.

Manner of death, said Mahyr, means determining homicide, suicide, natural causes, accident or undetermined.

"If appropriate, the jury makes recommendations that if implemented... may prevent deaths in similar circumstances," said Mahyr. However, a jury's recommendations, which are formulated through listening to

testimony, are not binding.

The inquest is not only about the parents and families finding the answers they are looking for, said Waboose.

"Hopefully at the end of the day it prevents similar deaths in the future."

No date or location has been

set for the inquest. Waboose is anticipating a late fall or early winter start.

Mahyr said it will be difficult to determine how long the inquest will take. She noted that three weeks had been scheduled for the inquest into Bushie's death.

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Gains are being made in language and culture retention

Windspeaker Staff

The national report on First Nations Health, released June 14 by the First Nations Information Governance Centre, said little has changed in such health indicators as housing over the last five years since their last report.

Mould and mildew still plague First Nations housing, with 51 per cent of households dealing with the nasty stuff, as compared with 44 per cent in 2003.

Further to that, the First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) has found that two-thirds, or 70.8 per cent, of First Nations adults report that their household was in need of some type of repair, compared to 25.7 per cent of the general Canadian population. Of those repairs, 37.3 per cent were considered major.

Housing was just one of the health indicators looked at in the study, which gathers information every four years about health, wellness, health determinants, and about the concerns and issues of First Nations living in First Nations communities across Canada.

Overcrowding was another concern, with 23.4 per cent of First Nations adults reporting they were living in conditions with more than one person per habitable room. This is an increase from the 2002/03 report which put that number at about 17 per cent.

The main water supply in First Nations communities was found, in 35.8 per cent of adults surveyed, unsafe to drink year round.

Jane Gray, the manager of the RHS, said "This is the unfortunate reality for many First Nations reserves across Canada."

The Regional Health Survey began in the mid-1990s after the federal government commissioned seven national surveys on health and living conditions which excluded First Nations.

First Nations decided to take the initiative, develop their own surveys with the support of Health Canada and regional partners, and the RHS process was born 17 years ago.

Language revitalization is also an indicator of healthy First Nations communities.

The RHS reports that 86 per cent of youth 12 to 17 years old living in nearly every First Nation and northern community felt that learning their own Indigenous language was "very important" or "somewhat important."

The good news is that 56.3 per cent of First Nations youth across Canada reported speaking or understanding their own languages, with more than one-third of First Nations youth speaking their own languages sometimes during each day.

"Our survey shows that First Nations youth seem to have a hunger for, a longing to learn their own languages," said Gray. "Young people have been telling us this for some time now at meetings and gatherings. Our health survey shows that this isn't just wishful thinking. It's a reality, and it's being driven by those First Nations youth."

The majority of adults surveyed believed cultures on reserve and in northern communities had either improved or stayed the same.

This is encouraging news the centre reports after decades of government policies that sought to eradicate First Nations languages and cultures.

About 67 per cent of First Nations adults "sometimes" participated in cultural events in their territories. The RHS found that adults who frequently participated in community cultural events "were less likely to be depressed, more likely to perceive control over their lives, more likely to perceive greater social support, and less likely to use licit and illicit substances."

Four out of five First Nations adults considered traditional ceremonies or spirituality at least "somewhat" important, although young adults were less likely to feel the same way.

"We've seen a lot of hard work on the part of First Nations to stop the erosion and rebuild their languages and cultural practices over the years," said Grey. "Our health survey shows that First Nations have made some gains but questions remain whether



PHOTO: FILE

Habitat for Humanity volunteers help construct housing for Native families in many Canadian communities.

the support will be there for language programs to introduce another generation of youth to their own ceremonies and beliefs."

A minority of respondents (21 per cent) said they had visited a traditional healer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Despite the low numbers, said Gray, "these figures are up from 15 per cent in our previous RHS in 2003. It shows that First Nations are making progress to revive their own cultural practices despite the almost constant pressures to give them up."

But with the good news comes a lot of bad.

"Nearly 50 per cent of children on reserves live in poverty – a significant increase," said Gray. "There are more people reporting an annual income of less than \$10,000 a year in this survey than our previous one. Poverty on-reserves is getting worse."

The RHS is the most extensive and accurate snapshot of on-reserve health and living conditions anywhere. The RHS has also become a worldwide model for Indigenous research.

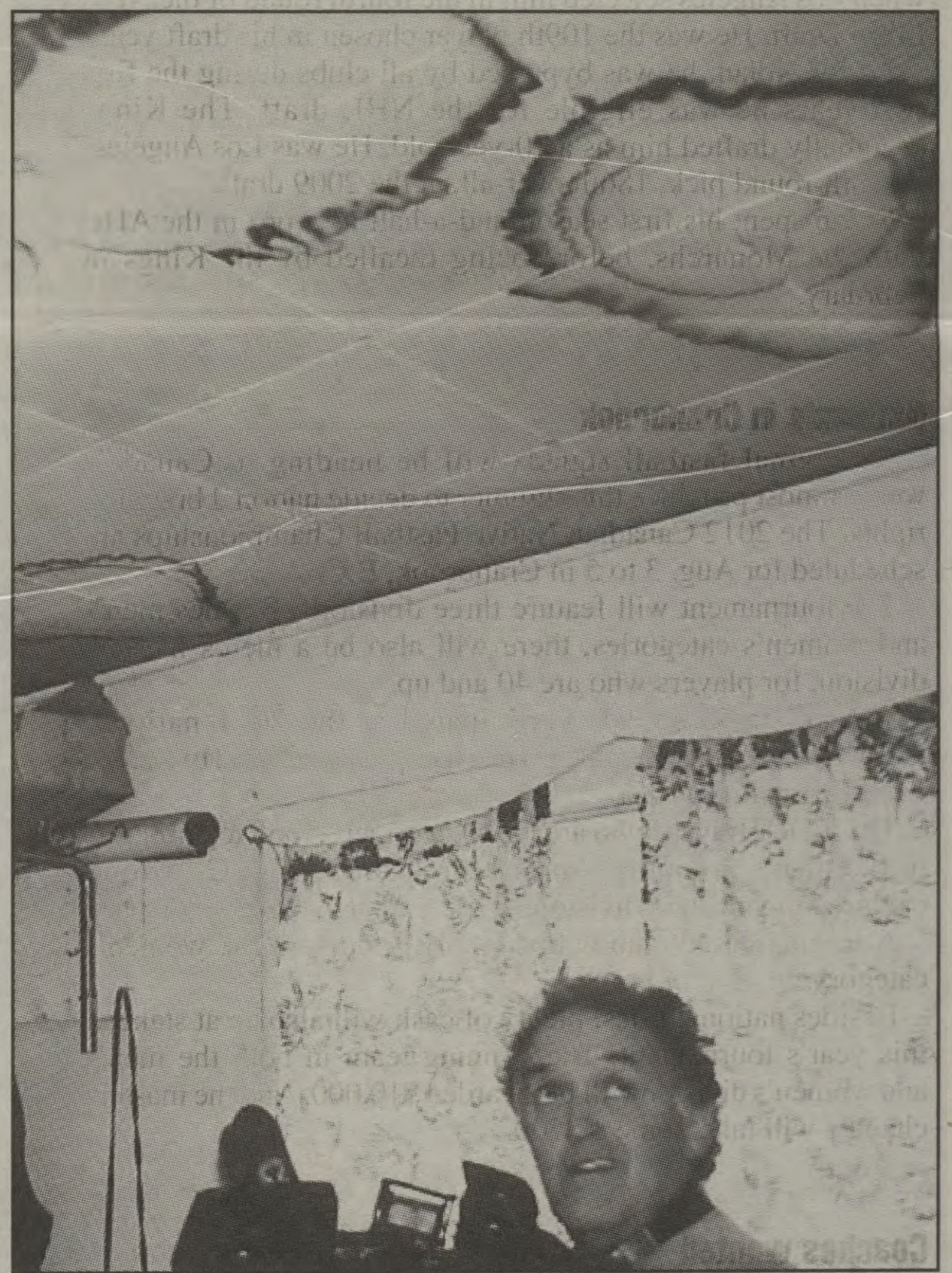


PHOTO: FILE

Leaky roofs lead to damp ceilings and mould.

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By Sam Laskaris

Cup champs

Collectively they have played less than 100 National Hockey League games, yet a pair of Aboriginal athletes, Dwight King and Jordan Nolan, has accomplished what most hockey players only dream of, hoisting the Stanley Cup.

King and Nolan were both members of the Los Angeles Kings, who captured the NHL's top prize this season. The Kings won the Stanley Cup on June 11 on home ice with a 6-1 victory over the New Jersey Devils. Los Angeles defeated the Devils in six games in their best-of-seven championship final series.

Both King, who is Metis, and Nolan, who is Ojibwe, had started the season in the minors, with Los Angeles' American Hockey League affiliate, the Manchester Monarchs. They were both called up to the Kings this past February and managed to stick around for the remainder of the regular season and throughout LA's lengthy post-season run.

Both King and Nolan appeared in all 20 of the Kings' playoff matches.

King, who is 22 and hails from Meadow Lake, Sask., also suited up for 27 regular season games. He earned 14 points, including five goals in those matches.

King then added eight points (five goals, three assists) in the playoffs.

Nolan, who is also 22 and from Ontario's Garden River First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie, appeared in 26 regular season contests and collected four points, including a pair of goals. The youngest son of former NHL player and coach Ted Nolan also scored once and added an assist during the Kings' playoffs.

King, who has been a pro for three seasons now, also appeared in six games for Los Angeles during the 2010-11 season.

As a result, the two Aboriginal players have combined to appear in a total of 99 NHL games thus far.

The fact both have managed to make it to the NHL is a feat in itself since they were considered somewhat longshots to do so.

King had been hoping to become an NHL regular since 2007, when Los Angeles selected him in the fourth round of the NHL Entry Draft. He was the 109th player chosen in his draft year.

As for Nolan, he was bypassed by all clubs during the first two years he was eligible for the NHL draft. The Kings eventually drafted him as a 20-year-old. He was Los Angeles' seventh-round pick, 186th over-all, at the 2009 draft.

Nolan spent his first season-and-a-half as a pro in the AHL with the Monarchs, before being recalled by the Kings in February.

Nationals in Cranbrook

Aboriginal fastball squads will be heading to Canada's westernmost province this summer to decide national bragging rights. The 2012 Canadian Native Fastball Championships are scheduled for Aug. 3 to 5 in Cranbrook, B.C.

The tournament will feature three divisions. Besides men's and women's categories, there will also be a men's masters division, for players who are 40 and up.

A total of 55 squads participated at the 2011 national tournament held in Winnipeg. The champions included two clubs from British Columbia.

The KDC Braves, who are from Invermere, took top honours in the men's grouping. And a team called the B.C. Arrows captured the masters division.

A Regina-based club dubbed AMI Pride won the women's category.

Besides national titles, plenty of cash will also be at stake at this year's tournament. The winning team in both the men's and women's division will be awarded \$10,000. And the masters champs will take home \$7,500.

Coaches wanted

Applications will be accepted up until July 6 from Aboriginal people in Ontario seeking a coaching apprenticeship role for the 2013 Canada Summer Games.

Two Aboriginal coaches will be selected to be part of the Ontario contingent for the games, which will be held in Sherbrooke, Que.

A total of 20 sports will be contested at next year's games, which will run from Aug. 2 to 17.

They are athletics (track and field), baseball, basketball, beach volleyball, canoeing/kayaking, cycling, diving, fencing, golf, mountain biking, rowing, sailing, soccer, softball, swimming, open water swimming, tennis, triathlon, volleyball and wrestling.

Aboriginal coaches from Ontario in any of these sports may apply for the apprenticeship positions. Those that are eventually chosen will be partnered with a mentor coach.

Besides being a part of the multi-sport competition in Sherbrooke next summer, the apprenticeship coaches will also have the support and guidance of not only a mentor coach but the governing body of their provincial sports association for the duration of the program.

Looking for a team to continue a career with

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Writer

ASTON, PA.

Following a successful university career, Marlon Gardner is now hoping to become a professional hockey player.

Gardner, who is from the Eagle Lake First Nation in northwestern Ontario, has spent the past four seasons toiling with the Neumann University Knights.

The NCAA Division III squad is based out of Aston, Pennsylvania.

Gardner, a centre, led the Knights in scoring this past season, averaging just more than a point per game. He collected 26 points (11 goals, 15 assists) in 24 games for Neumann, which competes in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) West.

The Knights posted an overall record of 15-8-3 this season. They were the runners-up in the ECAC West.

After Neumann's season came to an end in early March, Knights' coach Dominick Dawes said some officials from minor professional clubs had inquired whether Gardner could join their team for the remainder of their campaign.

But Gardner, who was majoring in Education at the Pennsylvania University, opted to stay put to finish off his schooling.

"He didn't have the ability to pick up and leave for two weeks and go play somewhere else," Dawes said.

But now that he has completed his studies, Gardner is hoping to launch his pro career, starting with the 2012-13 season.

Dawes is uncertain where Gardner, who is 25, will end up playing this coming season.

"It's a little bit early in the process," he said.

Dawes said a handful of other former Knights' players in recent years have gone on to play pro hockey.

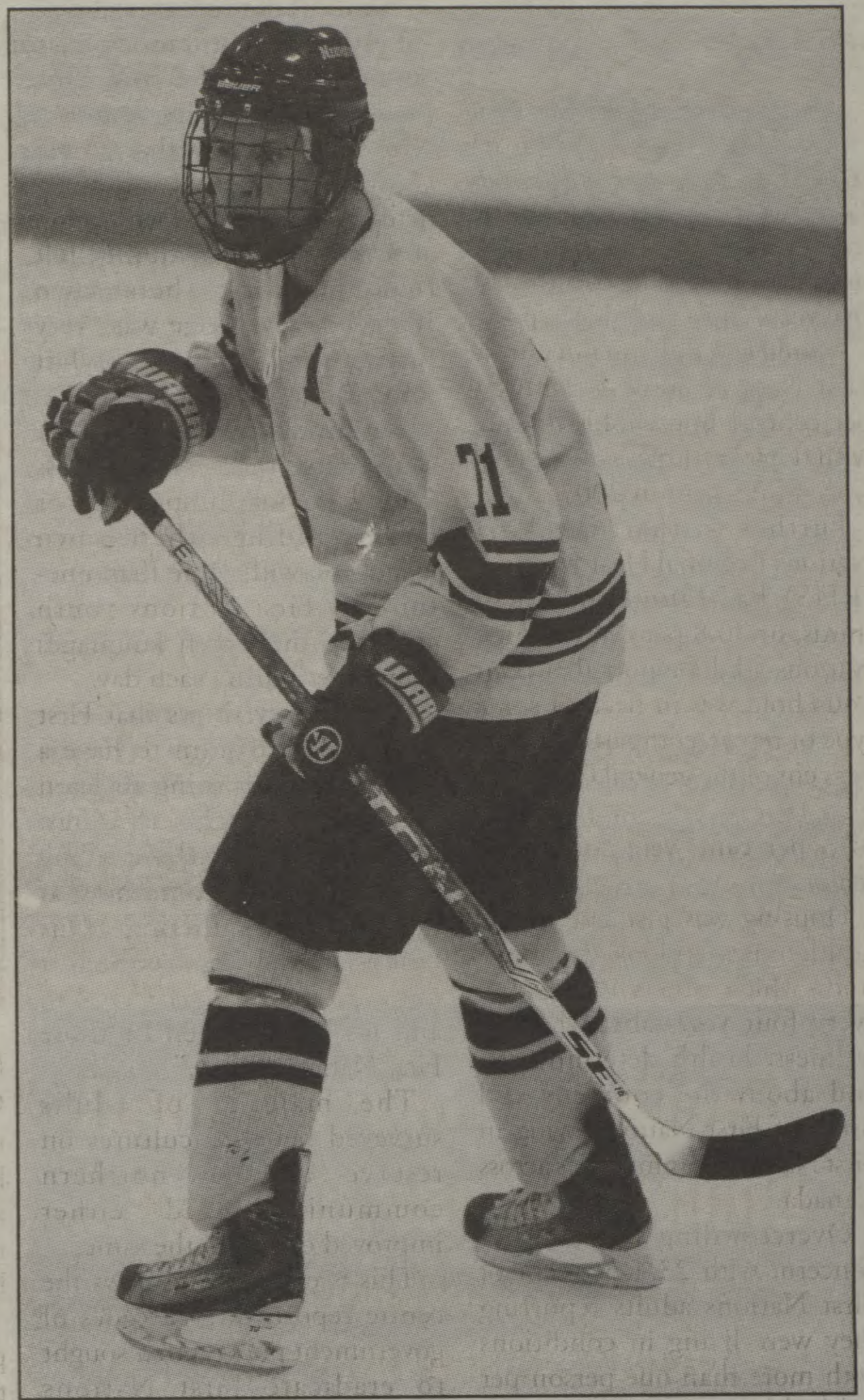
And he's confident Gardner, who was an assistant captain with the Knights this past season, can make the jump to a minor pro franchise.

"He's an extremely talented player offensively," Dawes said. "And he can shoot the puck with anybody out there."

Dawes does not feel the fact Gardner played Division III hockey, instead of toiling at the higher profile Division I level, will be a hindrance.

"We're more like a low level Division I team," Dawes said of the Knights, who split the two exhibition contests this past season that they played against Division I squads.

Dawes believes Gardner's best chance to start his pro career will



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

Marlon Gardner

be with a club in the Central Hockey League (CHL), which includes 12 franchises, all in the United States.

In terms of the hockey ladder, the CHL is arguably the third best minor pro circuit in North America, behind the American Hockey League, which is a step down from the National Hockey League, and the East Coast Hockey League.

"He might get a chance somewhere else but I think the Central Hockey League is league-wise the best chance for him for the type of player he is," Dawes said of Gardner.

As for Gardner's most memorable moment with the Knights, that occurred during his rookie season. That's because Neumann captured its national title in 2009.

Though it was his freshman season, Gardner was a valuable member of that squad. He finished fourth in team scoring, collecting 32 points, including 16 goals, in 30 contests.

Prior to joining the Knights, Neumann suited up for a pair of junior squads in two different leagues over a four-season span.

He began his junior career during the 2003-04 season with the Southeast Blades, a franchise which competed in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. He ended up playing about two and a half seasons with the Blades.

Following a couple of relocations, that organization is now called the Steinbach Pistons.

Gardner also played portions of two seasons with the Dryden Ice Dogs, who participate in the Superior International Junior Hockey League.

Meanwhile, for the past three seasons the Knights' roster has also featured another Aboriginal player, defenceman Harley Garrioch, who is Cree.

Like Gardner, Garrioch, who is from Manitoba's Cross Lake First Nation, was an assistant captain with the Neumann squad this season.

Garrioch, a 6-foot-3, 216-pounder, is a player best known for taking care of business in his end of the rink. He appeared in 25 games with the Knights this season and had three points, including one goal.

After one more season of university hockey under his belt, Dawes believes that Garrioch will also be looking to turn pro after that.

Another thing that Garrioch, 22, also has in common with Gardner is that he played in two junior leagues before coming to Neumann.

Garrioch split his four-season junior career between the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Waywayseecappo Wolverines and the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League's Flin Flon Bombers.

Traditional knowledge the subject of research project

By Shauna Lewis
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge into managing Canada's fisheries is just one research project recently funded by Ottawa, announced May 25 by Gary Goodyear, Minister of State (Science and Technology).

Social sciences and humanities researchers at various post-secondary institutions across Canada will form research partnerships among the academic, private, public and not-for-profit sectors due to a \$70 million federal provision through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The SSHRC is the federal agency that promotes and supports post-secondary-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences.

The funds are expected to assist 92 different research

projects over a span of seven years.

Some of the money will go to SSHRC for an interdisciplinary project on fisheries governance and decision-making known as the Fisheries-Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems project [Fish-WIKS] project.

Nova Scotia's Dalhousie University and the Assembly of First Nations along with their partnership organizations—the First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia, the Government of Nunavut, the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, and researchers from University of Guelph, University of Toronto, and Vancouver Island University—will benefit from the funds.

The fisheries management research project theme, "Exploring distinct Indigenous knowledge systems to inform fisheries governance and management on Canada's coasts" is a community-led project that considers the improvement of

fisheries management regimes in Canada by incorporating Indigenous traditional knowledge systems for enhanced decision-making within the context of climate change.

The project, which is expected to take place over five years, will train multiple doctoral, masters and undergraduate students and is expected to be a model for future partnership projects between universities and Indigenous communities.

"Fisheries and Oceans Canada believes the proposed research... will offer useful insight into understanding the contributions Aboriginal traditional knowledge systems can provide to federally managed fisheries in Canada," Keith Ashfield, minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

"These multisectoral research partnerships are key to innovation and to building knowledge for Canada's future," said Dr. Chad Gaffield, president of the SSHRC.

"With this funding support,

we are gaining insight about, and developing innovative solutions to today's social, economic and cultural issues, while training the next generation of researchers and leaders," he added.

Minister Goodyear's announcement of the funding into fisheries research comes weeks before he voted with his Conservative Caucus in favor of the omnibus Bill C-38.

The omnibus Bill C-38, which passed without amendment in the House of Commons June 13, is being widely criticized by environmentalists and First Nations leaders for its mandate to slash currently implemented legislation that protects air, water and the Nation's most vulnerable wildlife.

But despite legislative agendas, Ottawa maintains that research funding should always provide benefits to Canadians and that support for specific research programs has nothing to do with political interests.

"Our government believes that research funding should always have the potential to provide benefits to Canadians and this project is no exception," said Goodyear. "It is very important that these projects do get funded so that Canadian research can lead to new jobs and new economic growth. We would never jeopardize that by doing anything that would call the decision-making process into question," he added. "I have no hand in choosing which projects get funded or rejected," Goodyear explained. "That way, Canadian taxpayers can rest assured that projects are chosen because of merit, not because of any political interests.

The minister's office also stressed that decisions regarding scientific grants are made by independent panels of scientists through a rigorous peer-review process.

A full list of the grant recipients is available on the SSHRC website.

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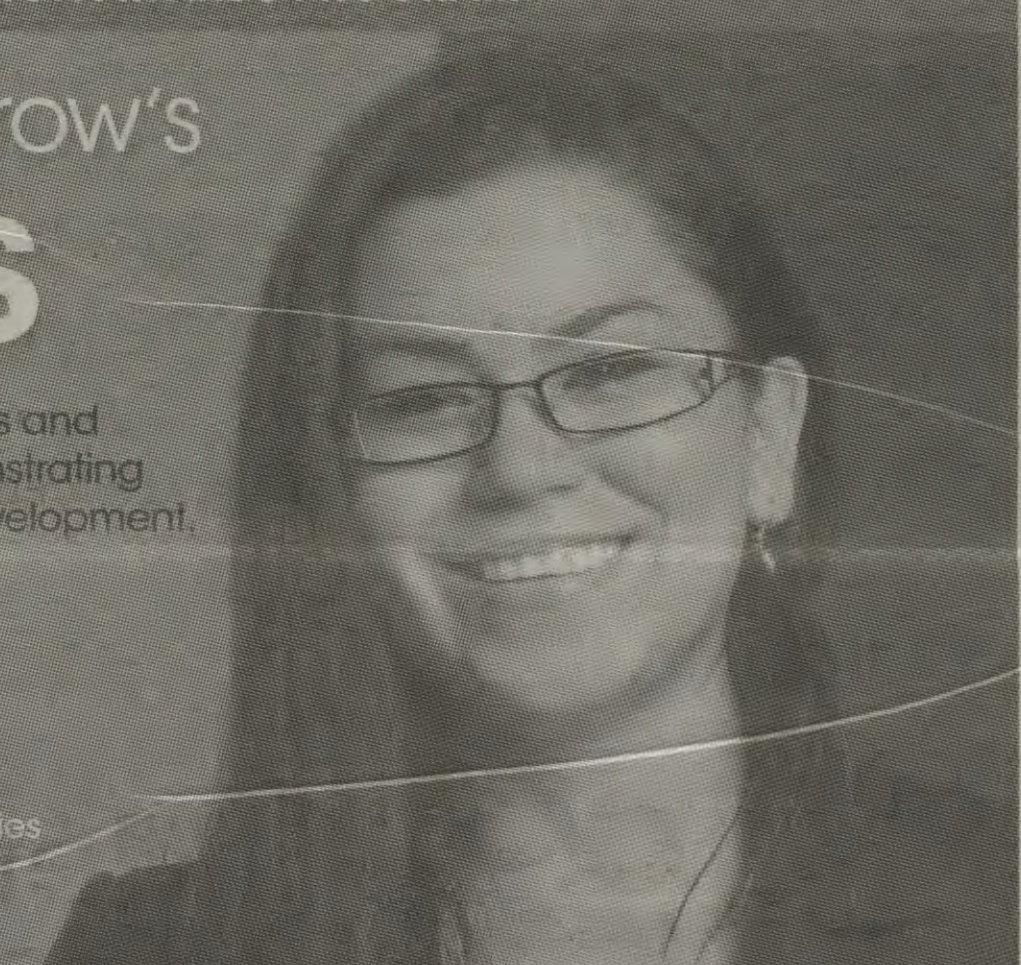
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[education]

Canadian geese and corrections

(Continued from page 12.)

The fact that geese are over-represented in federal prison yards is a national outrage and says a lot about the state of our nation. What can we infer when one of our proud national symbols is institutionalized? What does it say about us as a people when we create structures that allow our geese to forget their wild ways?

Let us not forget that our Canadian geese are indigenous to this land too.

To address this wildlife inequity created by the prison yard system, I propose the following recommendations be implemented by all Prison Maintenance and Grounds Crew Departments across the nation:

- National Geese Programs which are sensitive to their traditional wilderness culture and traditions (i.e. implementing ponds and swamps in all prison yards and flying lessons for all geese).

- Cultural sensitivity training for all staff (i.e. mandatory classes on geese mating calls and

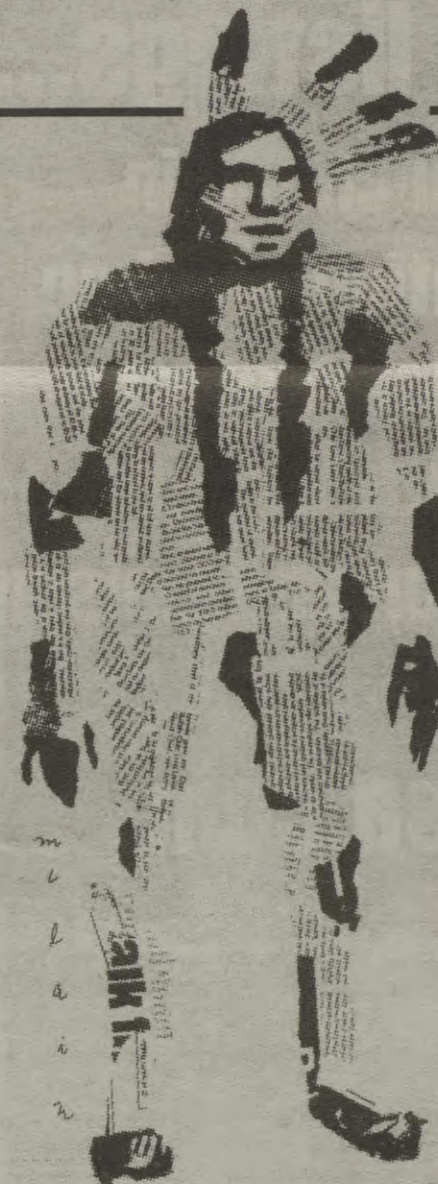
mandatory Canadian Geese History told from a traditional geese perspective).

- A national Ombudsman for Geese who is responsible for implementing a Strategic Plan for Geese Corrections

- Greater vertical collaboration with wildlife geese communities that guarantees they have an active input in the release planning of their institutionalized winged relatives.

These recommendations will help to alleviate the systemic discrimination faced by Canadian geese in our prison yards. I urgently call on all Canadians to ensure the Correctional Service of Canada responds to the unique needs of our incarcerated geese.

For those Canadians who think these geese initiatives will take too much out of the public purse, I leave you with this final fact: Canadian geese are the fastest growing demographic in the national bird population. Think of it as an investment. The time is now Canada. Our geese are desperately honking for help. Honk.



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Missing and dead residential school children

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

So far there are 120 cases identified by Ontario's Coroner's Office of missing and dead children from the province's Indian residential schools, and it's said this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Ontario has taken the lead in the search for information that might help families learn what happened to their children, removed from them and sent to the schools, never to be seen again. The province's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs provided \$20,000 to the coroner's office to hire staff to carry out a search of the records. That work began earlier this year.

Using an electronic search, 5,000 cases were chosen from 250,000 coroner's files. Each of those files was read through in light of information presented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and 120 files were pulled for final examination by the TRC.

"When we look at the number of schools and survivors who went to school in the West, we can just imagine what's out

there in the West. Ontario didn't have as many schools as Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba," said Kimberly Murray, executive director with the TRC.

Murray met with chief coroners and chief medical officers at their national annual meeting in Quebec in early June to discuss the role their offices could play to bring closure to families who still do not know the fate of their children.

"I called on them to do their own searches in their own records... I think they're all committed to trying to help us," said Murray. "They need to go back and look at their resources and see how they can do this."

Murray noted that most coroners' offices have not been in operation for the entire time period residential schools ran.

In 2007, the Missing Children Working Group was formed to prepare recommendations for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the students who died or went missing while in attendance at Indian residential schools. The research recommendations included an examination of the number and causes of death, illnesses and disappearances of

children at the residential schools, as well as the location of burial sites.

Murray said the TRC is in the process of gathering information from church and government records, as well as residential school survivors themselves. But another avenue that was identified was that of coroners' records.

"If it looked like the case could reasonably be a residential school death, we pulled it out," said Dr. David Eden, who led the records search on behalf of the coroner's office.

The files were examined with a number of factors in mind, he said, including age of the deceased, if he could be identified as Aboriginal, links to communities, how he died, where he died, information from police reports, where he was interred and where the investigation of the death took place. Web sites with information on residential schools were consulted.

"I would describe it as a combination of art and science," said Eden.

Eden said there are still approximately 2,000 paper files to go through, which are pre-1965. Many of them are from

northern Ontario so he expects they will yield more missing residential school children.

The coroner's office only has files of deaths that were investigated by the office and after 1965. The rest of the files fall under the purview of the Attorney General.

Eden noted that his office has also confirmed suspected cases of missing residential school children based on information provided by the TRC. Those figures are not part of the 120 files that are being given a second look.

"It's a moving target. (The TRC is) integrating all the information they have, sending us new cases on a regular basis, still having families coming forward and still finding things in files," he said. "I certainly expect to find more cases."

Eden has spoken with his counterparts in Quebec, British Columbia, Nunavut and Nova Scotia and has offered his office's expertise in pulling files and gathering information. Murray also noted that preliminary discussions have taken place with B.C. and the Northwest Territories.

The next step, she said, will be to send official letters to the

appropriate government departments and hope that, along with support, provincial or territorial funding will be made available to conduct the necessary research.

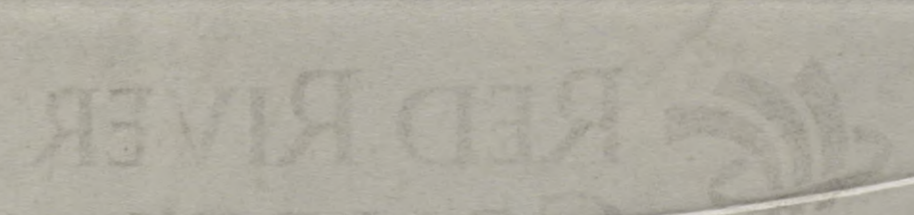
Murray said that the coroners and medical officers suggested other areas the TRC could examine in order to find more records of missing and dead residential school children, including vital statistics offices and burial ground records.

Records from sanatoriums will also be accessed, she said.

"Everywhere we go we're going to have to look at provincial regulations and see who is in charge of what," said Murray.

The TRC will use the information to create a registry of the children who went missing or died while attending residential schools. Some died on the premises while others died after running away. Murray is hopeful that the registry will continue to be added to after the TRC's mandate ends in 2014. That registry will be kept at the National Research Centre.

"We'll never know really how many deaths there were, but we will do our best to find what we can," said Murray.



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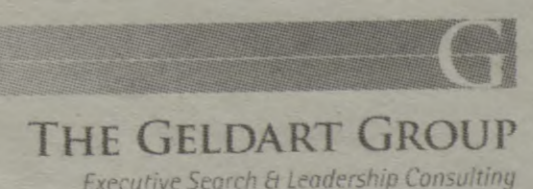
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[footprints] Lillian McGregor

Life devoted to healing and higher learning

By Dianne Meili

Morning sun highlights the clustered flower-heads and feathery leaves of the wild yarrow seven-year-old Lillian selects from hundreds of other plants hanging in her grandmother's back porch. The little girl bursts with pride realizing Miigwas (Little Feather) trusts her to identify the herb on her own, and to help process it into a tonic for stomach disorders.

As the chosen recipient of her grandmother's traditional knowledge, the late Lillian McGregor may have had such a childhood memory. At any rate, she would go on to parlay those years learning about natural medicine with her grandmother into a 40-year career in healing.

"I used to tag along when my grandmother picked her medicines, listening to her talk about what to pick and when, how to prepare them and store them. She kept them all in a little back porch in her log home. It was like a pharmacy," Lillian recalled, quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article published after her death on April 20.

Before attending nursing college, she would become one of the first Aboriginal children, along with her cousin Florence, to graduate from Grade eight on Manitoulin Island in Ontario. She studied earnestly throughout fall and winter, and worked summers as a chambermaid at a tourist lodge close to her home of Whitefish River Reserve on Birch Island.

One year she met Torontonian George Gale, an affluent guest who would become chief justice of Ontario. He and his wife hired Lillian as their nanny in 1939 when she was 15; her father, Angus McGregor, agreed to let her leave the reserve if she promised to further her education.

She did, and after graduating from nursing college she took a job with the Victorian Order of Nurses, travelling around Toronto all day in streetcars with her medical bag as she visited

patients. Next, she worked in a city nursing home, staying there until her retirement in 1990.

As a young Anishnaabe woman and single mother of three sons, Lillian knew the challenges her people faced in the outwardly racist society of the mid-1900s. Out of coffee meetings in a downtown Toronto restaurant, she helped form the North American Indian Club, which later morphed into the Native Canadian Centre in 1962.

Born in 1924, Lillian was the third of 10 children. Her father was chief and ran a store and post office; inspiring her to experience the world outside her community while keeping up her language and culture. Her grandmother on her mother's side, Miigwas, was a Potawatami midwife and healer born around 1882; her people were driven out of the United States and fled to Canada via Sault Ste. Marie. Lillian observed her grandmother successfully treating "conditions ranging from serious injuries to post-partum psychological disturbances, as well as delivering babies," wrote Krista Maxwell in her thesis *Making History Heal: Settler-Colonialism and Urban Healing in Ontario, 1970's-2010*.

"Krista spent a lot of time with my mother talking about stories of her life and the people back on her reserve while she did her doctorate research," said David McGregor, Lillian's son. "She'd bring food and the two of them would talk into the afternoon."

Lillian commented to Maxwell that she knew of only one other old woman still living in Whitefish River who had the kind of traditional healing knowledge that her grandmother did.

"I've been back to where she used to pick medicines, now there's a highway, electrical and telephone wires ... there's not much medicine left, I only found a couple," she said, indicating environmental degradation of



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Lillian McGregor

the land blocked traditional healing practices today.

David explained his mother's job as the University of Toronto's first elder-in-residence at First Nations House was her second career, but it wasn't really "work".

"She was so drawn to all of her nieces and nephews and grandchildren - she liked to have them sit in her lap even if they were too old - and it was natural for her to be a loving grandmother to all the students she helped at the university.

"Her door was always open and it wasn't just Aboriginal students who went to her for advice. There were lots of non-Aboriginal people, too, including faculty and staff."

Lillian was a vital member of Ontario's Aboriginal community and participated in many committees and boards across Toronto, including the Elder Council at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, Nishnawbe Homes Incorporated, and Native Child and Family Services. She served as an Elder for Ontario's Aboriginal Healing and Wellness

Strategy and participated at many civic events over the years, including Human Rights Day celebrations and Toronto's Olympic bid. She was also selected as a Torch Carrier for the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

McGregor received many awards, including National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Order of Ontario, the William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations and the Leading Women Building Communities Award (given by the Province of Ontario).

"My mother was forever going to different functions. I was blown away to see all of the things she was involved in as I read articles written about her after she passed," said David.

In a University of Toronto news magazine, Johnathan Hamilton-Diabo, director, Office of Aboriginal Student Services, First Nations House, said: "Lillian was an important member of the university community ... as the Elder, she relentlessly emphasized the

importance of education. She also possessed an incredible knowledge of traditions and language, which she was always ready to share, but the traits that stood out were her sense of humour, her caring for the students and above all, her dedication and love for her community and family. At First Nations House, although 'retired' since 2008, her presence never left us."

In 2002, she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University, and last year she was honoured at an unveiling of a trophy for the Dr. Lillian McGregor Aboriginal Award of Excellence. Every year, Aboriginal students apply for the Lillian McGregor Award, visit in-house Elders and traditional teachers, and learn about their peoples and cultures through programs in a space which owes its beginnings to people like McGregor.

Lillian is survived by her three sons, four grandchildren and one great grandchild.

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A young Aboriginal child is the central focus, wearing traditional ceremonial regalia. The child has a large, circular, multi-colored beaded headband with a central blue and white design. Their face is adorned with white paint around the eyes and red paint with white dots on the cheeks. They are wearing a blue and white patterned garment with a yellow and red floral design on the chest. The background is dark with green and blue elements, possibly representing a natural setting or a stage.

**Every day
is Aboriginal Day!**

Photo: Bert Crowfoot