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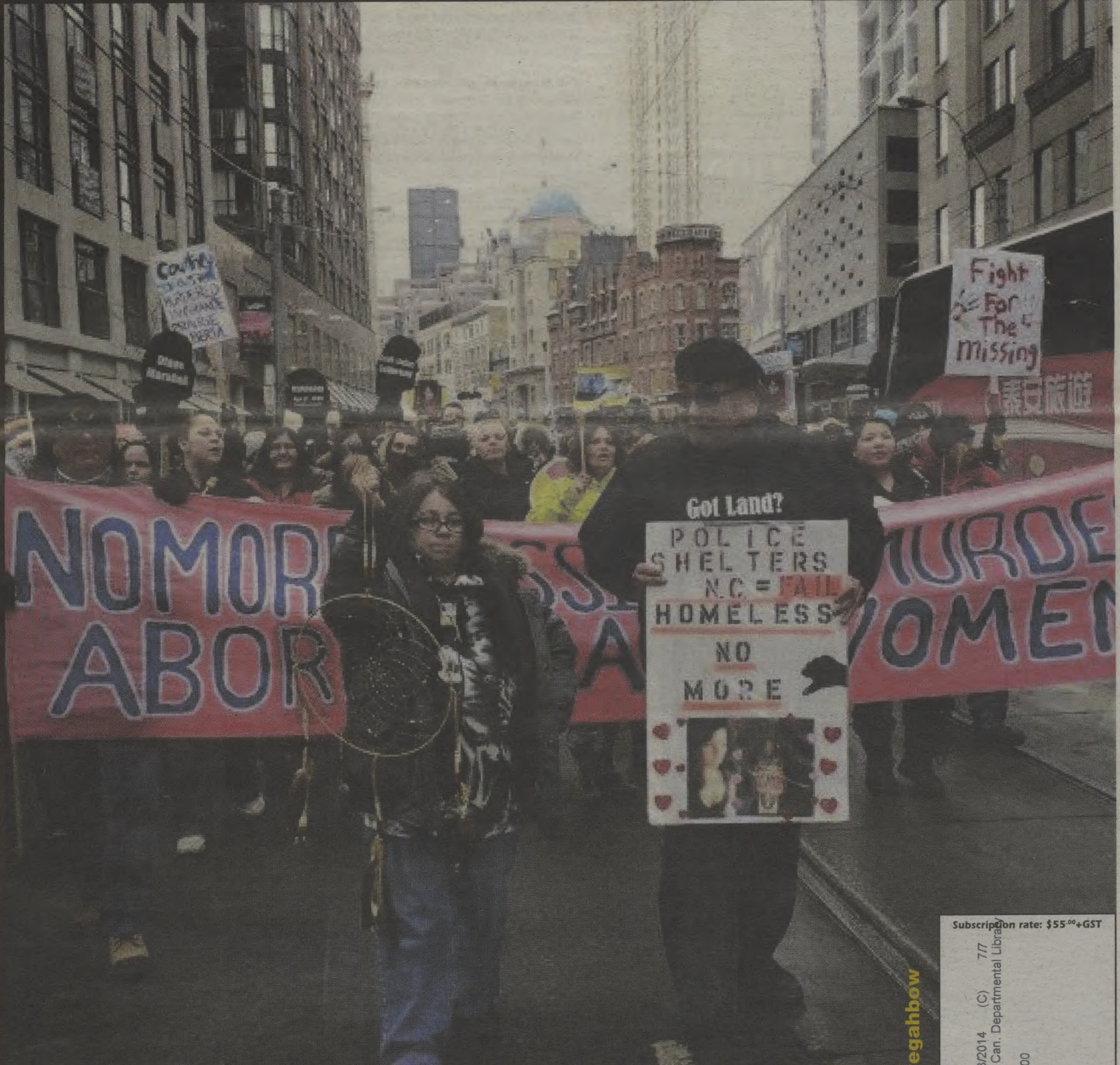
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Windspeaker • Established 1983

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Strawberry ceremony honours Aboriginal women

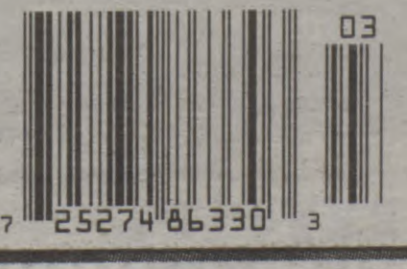
The Toronto march for the missing and murdered
Aboriginal women on Feb. 14.

Please see story on page 11.

Photo: Barb Nahwegahbow

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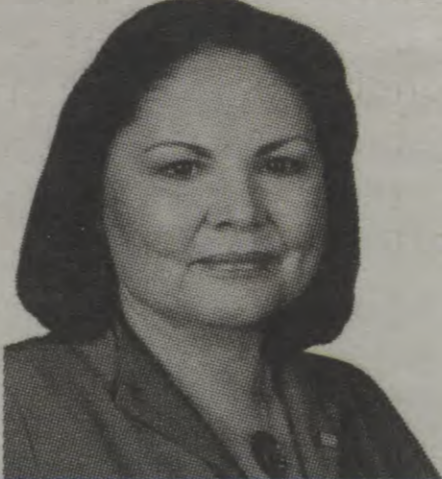
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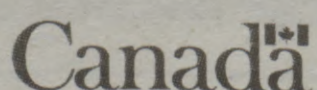


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Federal budget misses the mark on Aboriginal needs 8

The 2014 federal budget is a good start for Aboriginal peoples, but it's not enough according to Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo.

Changes to urban funding concerns Métis 8

Some friendship centres still have Native or Indian in their titles, but they have been serving the entire Aboriginal population in urban centres for decades. Now with a new agreement signed between the federal government and the National Friendship Association of Canada, that overall commitment has been stepped up.

Atleo receives pushback on education agreement 9

The First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, announced Feb. 7, has not received a better reception than its predecessor, the First Nations Education Act, proposed last October.

Regional chief co-chairs Liberal convention 10

Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould admits the Liberals still carry some unfortunate baggage in Indian Country — particularly a bitter taste from Jean Chretien's White Paper in 1969, when he was Indian Affairs Minister — but she maintains that a crucial way to change the system is still from the inside.

Strawberry ceremony honours Aboriginal women 11

About 500 people attended the Feb. 14 Strawberry Ceremony held in Toronto to honour the more than 600 Aboriginal women who are missing or have died violent deaths, and to seek justice for the women with calls for a national inquiry.

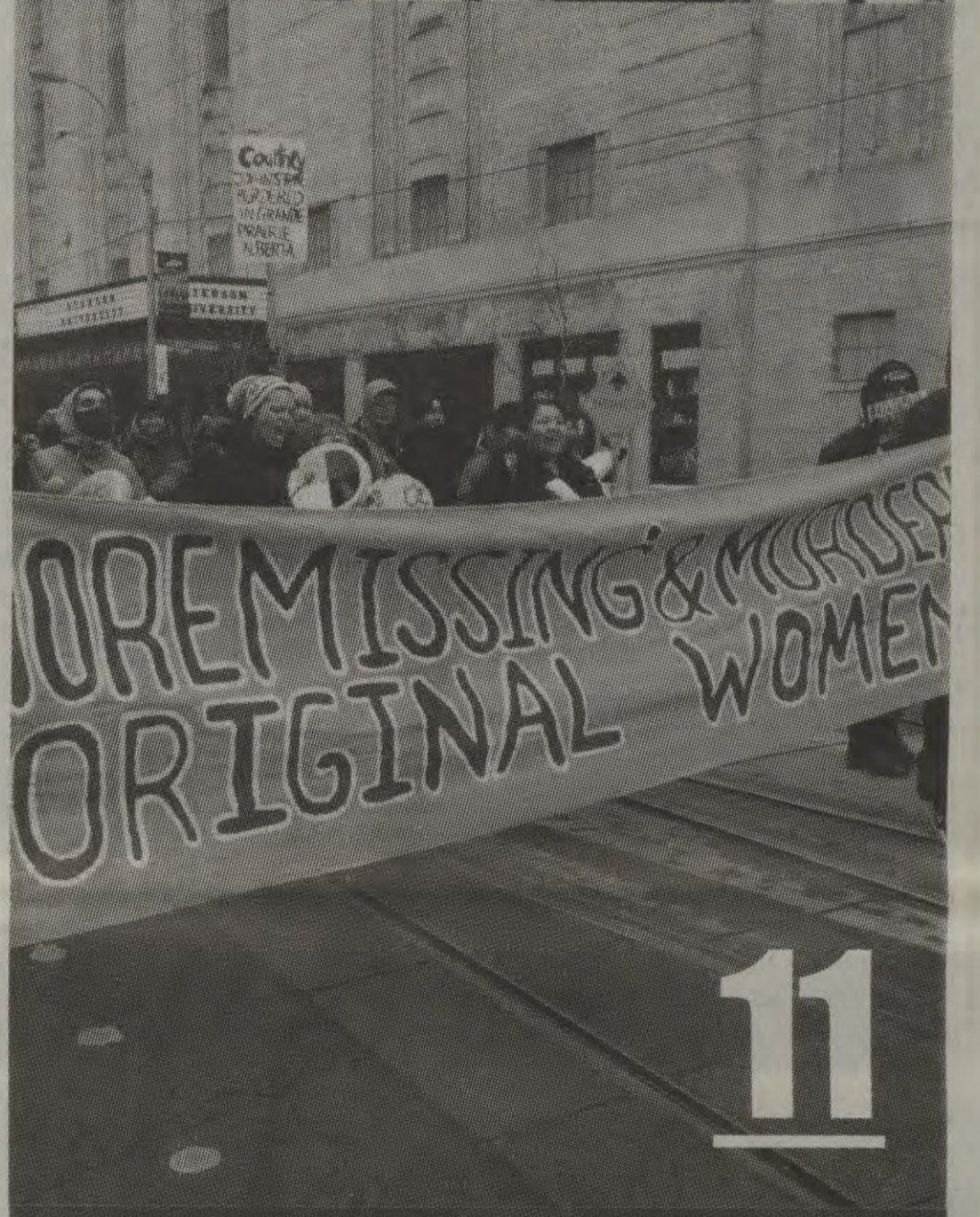
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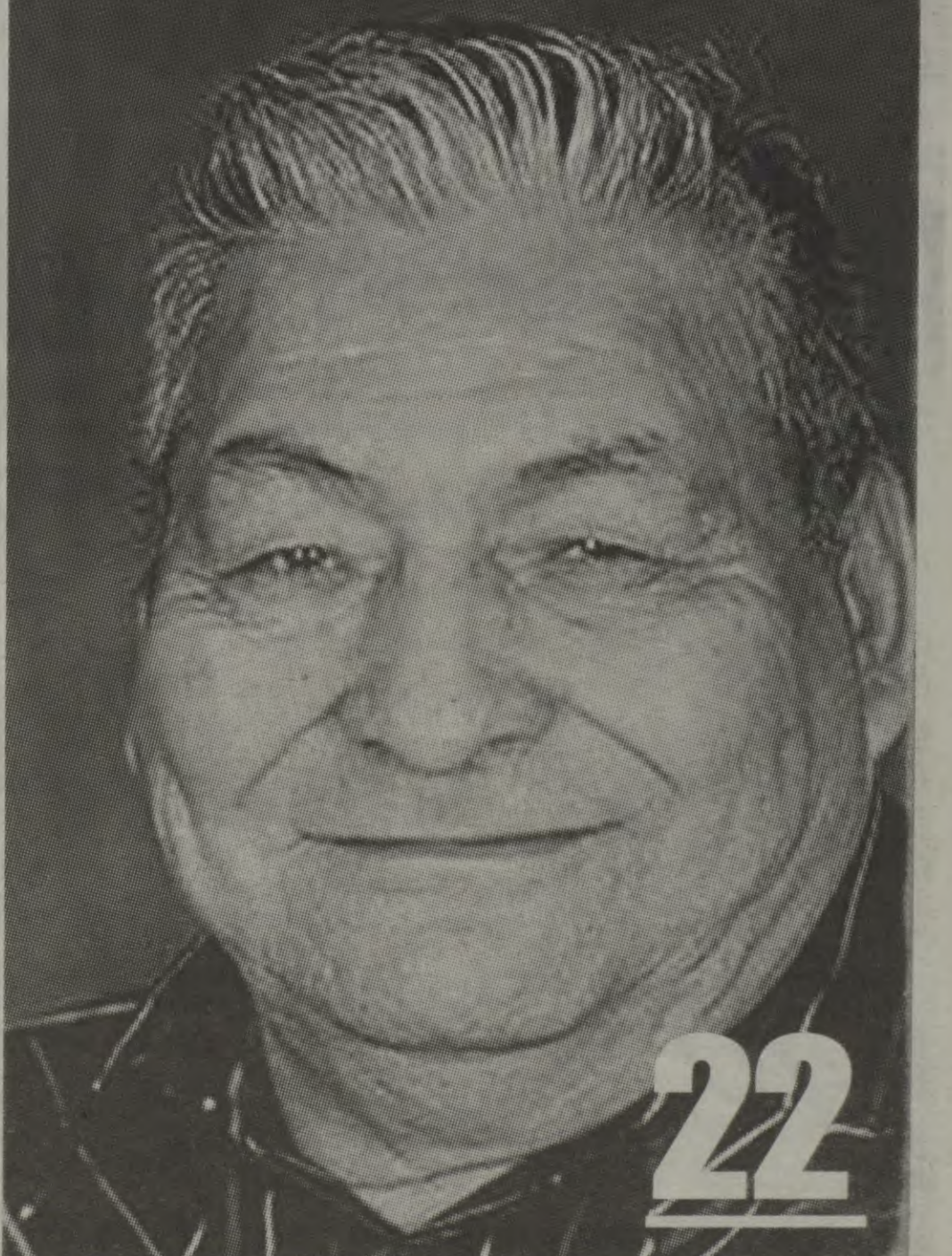
When the long-awaited Elders' care centre in Fort Chipewyan, Alta., opens this spring, the Mikisew Cree First Nation will dedicate it in memory of Willie Courtoreille. The facility's family room will be named after the long-time band councillor, who talked about his community needing the facility for the past three decades.



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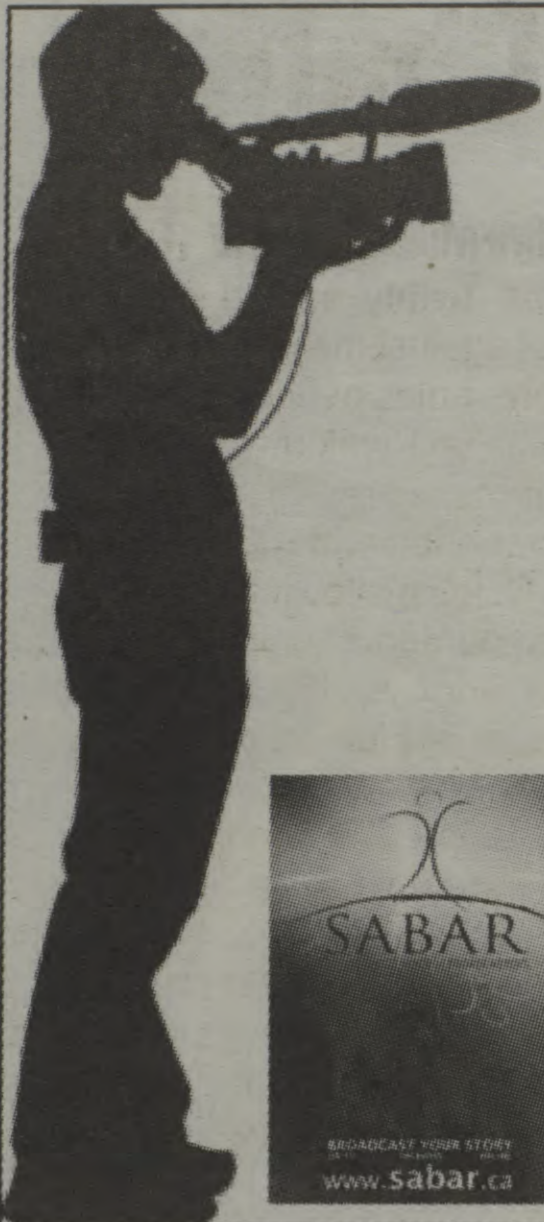
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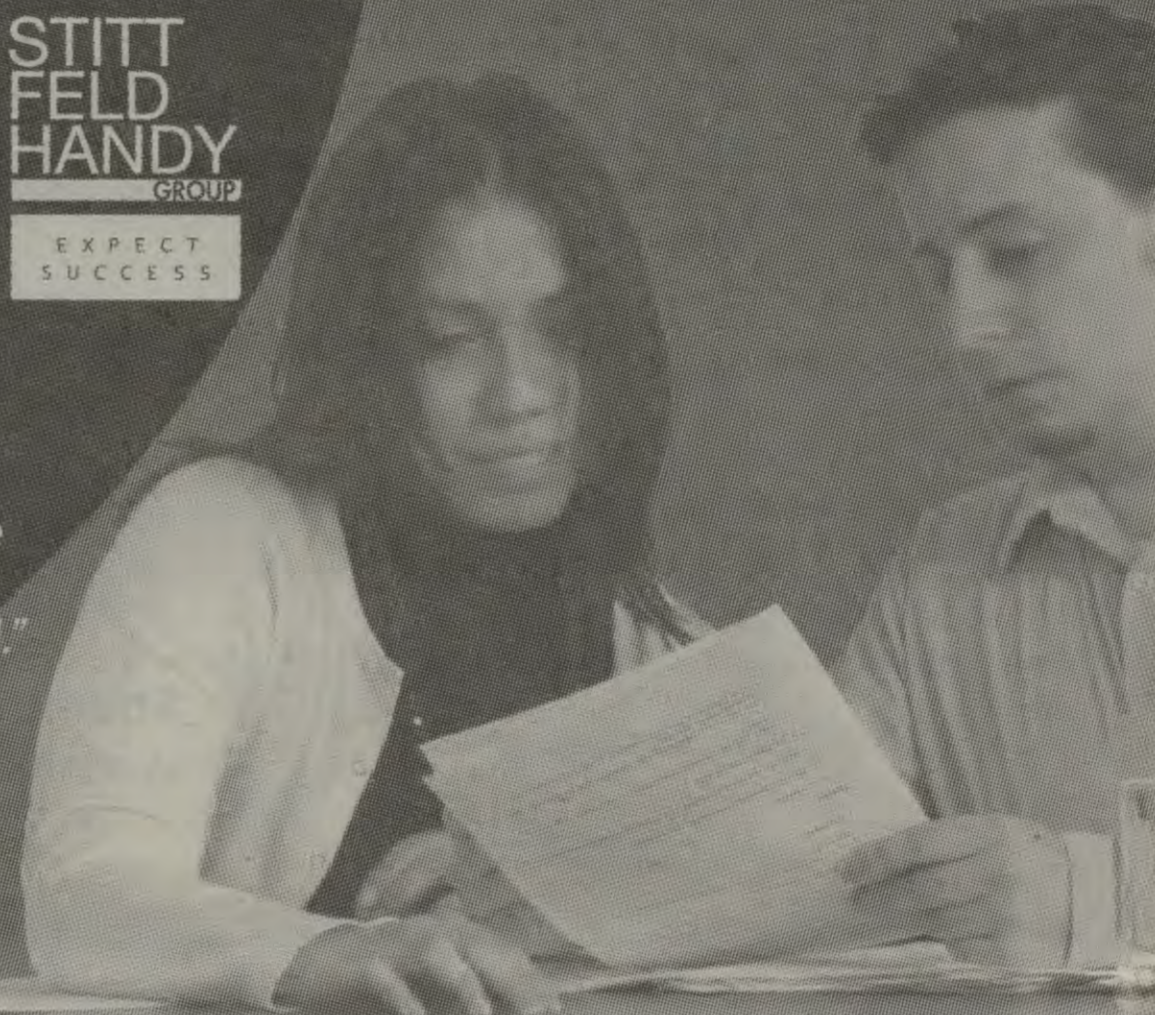
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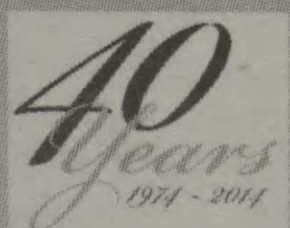
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Deadline for Abstract submission is March 31, 2014.

Deadline for early bird registration is May 1, 2014.



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Stomp your feet for our youth

The walls shook with their stomping feet, reads a message from Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth. Irwin Elman was writing about his experience at a Feathers of Hope Forum last March, where more than 100 youth from 62 northern First Nations communities had gathered to share their experiences of hopelessness and poverty and talk about the issues affecting their lives. They talked about their pain, frustration and anger. And as they spoke their peers watched and listened closely, encouraging them by stomping their feet on the ground when they heard a statement that rang particularly true. Making noise where they could to emphasize the importance of the words.

Well, they've been stomping their feet again, but this time symbolically with the release of the Feather of Hope: A First Nations Youth Action Plan. Elman said "First Nations children and youth want an opportunity to make things better, not just for themselves, but for the generations of children and youth who will come after them." They say they want better than neglect and marginalization, and why shouldn't they have better? Why shouldn't their hopes and dreams be realized?

What are they asking for? Schools, safe housing, clean water, affordable nutritious food. That they have to ask for such basic things should be our embarrassment. What are they asking us for? Services to deal with the intergenerational trauma of the residential school system, healthy adults free of addictions, good parents, good leaders and mentors. It's what we all should be wishing for them too.

They want to go to school in their own communities, so they don't have to be separated from their parents to get an education, away from all that is familiar to them; so they don't become isolated and fall into that deep well of despair, drug and alcohol addiction, and suicide.

And they want us to help them achieve it.

They are being realistic; they know there are no simple solutions, but these young people are telling us that standing still on one

spot, paralyzed to the prospect of change, is not an option. They want action. Change must begin to happen, step by step.

They release this report, said Elman, with a mixture of hope and trepidation, with a feeling of fear at what may happen to their ideas and thoughts and feelings, sent now out into the world. They want the adults to take their hands and walk with them, not re-interpret the report without their help. Inclusion is the watch-word. They want to include us, and they want reciprocity.

"Through writing the action plan, we want to drive home the point that as young people we want to be respected for our ideas and abilities, to contribute and work with our leadership, government, communities and allies to create solutions that improve the lives of young people and communities," reads a statement from the report.

Our young people feel disconnected, from their histories, languages, traditions, identities. So, they are taking it upon themselves to re-connect where they can and have put their best foot forward with this plan. It focuses on key issues, including residential schools, identity and culture, quality education, suicide, sport and recreation, opportunity and leadership, physical and mental health, drugs and alcohol services, and the funding that all of these things require to achieve success.

They want a five-year strategy to deal with these key issues. They set a 60-day timeline for a number of things to happen, including a statement of support from the province, federal government and treaty leadership and a commitment to create the real change they envision. And how could any government deny them?

They want the conversation to continue, and to respect the work these young people have done, the discussion must not be allowed to subside. Let's begin to stomp our own feet in support of their initiative. If we, as individuals, can do nothing else to contribute, let us insist that action is taken. Let them have the better lives they are seeking. There is no good reason not to let them have it.

Windspeaker

Letter: Circus comes to Kainai High School

Dear Editor:

Wow, what a day it must have been. We had clowns coming from the four directions. Some were dressed up in Kainai traditional attire, some came to see the buffoonery and the chicanery, while others thought maybe some candy apples, or cotton candy would be served.

What an embarrassment! The main clown (Harper) had a captive audience and nobody caught on to his act. He announces more monies would be handed over to support language and cultural retention and support. When he said that, he immediately receives not quite a standing ovation, but a big round of applause.

Wow, this is too good to be true. Yep, all First Nations are going to receive billions of dollars. Yep, billions of dollars. Wow.

This is too good to be true. How can he be so generous? And of all places, right in the heart of our academic community, right in the Kainai High School, the very same school Paul Martin was just at a few weeks ago.

There is, of course, a catch to all this. These mega bucks don't kick in until 2015, and the language and cultural cash comes into effect in 2016. A federal election occurs in 2015. He's already campaigning. Didn't anyone catch this? Wow.

Atleo, Chief Weaselhead, grand stand of course, endorsing the announcement, stating that this is a historic day. But didn't anybody tell them that they don't kick in until 2015, and the language and cultural support in 2016?

Harper hoodwinked the reserve again, and to add insult to injury, he does it at an academic center where we are supposed to have academics there. Nobody questioned it. We even had tribal members kicked out for trying to speak out.

Wow, what a sad day. Again, promises, promises, promises. White man with forked tongue catches Kainai asleep again.

**Keith Chiefmoon
Standoff, Alberta**

Do you have a rant or a rave?

Criticism or praise?

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[rants and raves]

Page 5 Chatter

ON FEB. 8, THE KWAKIUTL COMMEMORATED THE 163RD

anniversary of its 1851 Douglas Treaty as the First Nation entered into its 12th day of protest against the province of British Columbia, Canada and forest companies over the clear-cutting of cedar trees on lands with exclusive Kwakiutl Aboriginal title, rights and interests, and treaty rights, a press statement reads. "The people of Kwakiutl have been left with no choice but to protest and stop Canada and B.C. from allowing companies to cut and remove cedar trees from our land," said Chief Coreen Child of Kwakiutl First Nation. Cedar is vital to the Kwakiutl people, contributing to every facet of life—from ceremony to sanctuary, the release states. "As our respected ones taught us, the trees are the 'standing people'. They have the same energy as a bear, a salmon, a mountain, or a human being. The trees in the forest are like family," said Tom Child, Lands Manager and Band Member of Kwakiutl First Nation. The 1851 Treaty with the British Crown stipulates that lands and waters were to be set-aside for the exclusive use by Kwakiutl to maintain livelihood "Our people viewed the treaty as vital to protecting land, water, and a way of life," said Chief Child. "But treaty implementation never happened. It was denied. And by way of denial, natural resource-based industries sprang up around us and decimated our lands and waters. In June 2013, the BC Supreme Court found that BC and Canada had failed to implement and respect the Kwakiutl Douglas Treaty and challenged both levels of government to begin honorable negotiations with the First Nation "without any further litigation, expense or delay." The press statement said BC has decided to appeal the decision. Kwakiutl First Nation calls upon the federal and provincial Crown governments to cease their delay tactics, stop their denial of Aboriginal rights, title and interests, and acknowledge that the Treaty of 1851 exists and needs to be honored and implemented.

MANITOBA ATTORNEY GENERAL ANDREW SWAN CRITICIZED

Ottawa for cutting front-line policing on the province's reserves, saying it was part of a federal "line of attack" on First Nation communities. A CTV report state the 45-year-old program on First Nations policing that works in partnership with the RCMP will end in just over a year. "This is a continuing line of attacks on Aboriginal people by the federal government," Swan told a provincial NDP convention on Feb. 9. "The Conservative government tells us they're about law and order. They may be about law but they're sure as hell not about order." The report said Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney has offered cash to replace the program, but it would fund only about 15 new RCMP officers. Swan said they couldn't cover the same ground as the constables.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

launched a new web-based resource that assists Aboriginal people relocating to urban centres. NewJourneys.ca was two years in the making and targets both Aboriginal individuals and service providers. It includes practical tips and information on issues such as safety planning, registering children for school, and finding employment, housing and other services. It boasts more than 6,000 resources, programs and services, including government resources and listings for recreation, cultural, health, education, employment, and childcare programs and services that are offered in 119 urban centres across Canada. "We know that Aboriginal people move to urban centres for a variety of reasons," said Jeff Cyr, NAFC's executive director, in a press statement "They come in search of jobs and education opportunities, and in the case of many women and children, to escape violent and abusive situations. Research shows that the success of these individuals and families relies upon their ability to plan for their new lives while still living in their home communities. It also shows that early access to relevant programs and services, and making contact with community early on contributes to better long term outcomes."

INDIGENOUS LUMINARIES WILL GATHER IN WINNIPEG FROM

across the country for the 21st Annual Indspire Awards. The gala will be held March 21 at Winnipeg's Centennial Concert Hall. Organizers are expecting 2,000 guests. The show will be broadcast nationally by media partners Global Television and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network at a later date. "Each year, we bring together prominent and exciting Indigenous entertainers and presenters to make the evening a worthy tribute to all of the award recipients who deserve this national recognition and celebration," said Roberta Jamieson, president and CEO of Indspire. Co-Executive Producer with Jamieson for the gala evening is Jennifer Podemski, award-winning actress, director, and producer. Co-host is Tina Keeper, well known to audiences for her work on the hit series North of 60. Co-host is Kyle Nobess, a Winnipeg-based actor and presenter who has co-hosted the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards, and has appeared in hit TV shows, including Mohawk Girls.

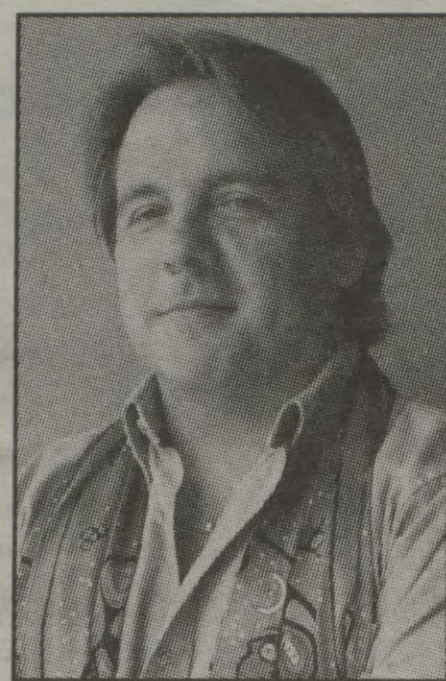
[strictly speaking] Humour is a very serious business

Ahneen, sago, tansi...
Namaste!?!?

By the time you read this I will be very far away, deep in India – an Indian amongst Indians you could say – once again spreading the gospel of Native culture. Perhaps I shall be explaining why wild rice is better than basmati rice. Why bannock is better than naan. Why I prefer a Big Mac instead of a McAlootika burger. (NOTE: Evidently it's difficult to slaughter and cook beef in a country where the cow is sacred, so you get a spiced potato patty at the golden arches instead).

The reason: I have been invited to a conference in Trivandrum called "Humour – text and context". Basically, I am going to have to explain the Aboriginal sense of humour. In less than an hour. To a bunch of foreign academics. Now that's funny!

At the best of times, exploring and explaining humour is difficult because even when you're successful in deconstructing the topic, the final result seldom ends up being funny. It's like that old saying, 'the operation was a success but



THE URBANE INDIAN Drew Hayden Taylor

the patient died.' There are some jokes they might get....

Why do Native people hate snow?

Because it's white, and all over our land.

... even though in tropical Trivandrum, there has never been any record of snow, but there has been, however, a historical influx of British and Portuguese colonizers during the last couple hundred years. So hopefully, the context will survive the explanation.

Still I am a full believer that true humour is universal. What makes the ladies sitting on the

reserve, sharing cups of tea at the kitchen table, laugh will no doubt make the ladies sitting in Jaipur having a cup of tea laugh also. Everybody and every culture has a funny bone. And when it comes to things like humour, metaphorically, there is no uniquely Native way to boil an egg.

There are cultural differences and influences that do provide a different perspective to some of the humour, but essentially, making fun of the government or a family member happens everywhere.

Tricksters are also quite

universal. Many cultures in India, Africa, Europe, China etc. have their own variation of our beloved Trickster, a character who teaches and entertains through mischief. Or at least the spirit of the Trickster.

My girlfriend tells the tale of going to the zoo in Delhi, on a previous trip to India. She is walking through the compound and sees this one enclosure. It's shaped like a rock cave, with chicken wire all around it, looking quite formidable and holding something dangerous. Curious to see what's in it, she approaches where a crowd of Delhian Indians were gazing in wonder at the occupant of the cage. A sign on the cage read "North American Raccoon", and this very confused raccoon was walking across the enclosure.

My first time in India happened to coincide with my mother's birthday. Being a good son, I managed to find an internet café and send her a birthday greeting via my aunt who worked at the band office. I said something like "I am here in exotic India, having a fabulous

time. There are elephants and camels in the streets, and monkeys in the trees. It's quite fabulous. Sorry I am missing your birthday and I hope you have a good time."

Several days later, I got an email back from my aunt, who while also marvelling at my proximity to monkeys, elephants and camels, told me mother had a very nice birthday. "We took her to dinner, then we went to the garbage dump and watched the bears."

As I said, many things are not that different between cultures, if properly translated through the funny bone. Of course this is the weirdest time for me to be travelling internationally. I have a friend at the CBC who was talking to their reporters covering the typhoon in the Philippines. It seems these poor, damaged and desolate Filipinos, when being interviewed, commented when they found out the reporters were from Toronto, "That's the place with that funny Mayor, right?"

I hope nobody asks me embarrassing questions about National Chief Shawn Atleo.

Four educated Aboriginal women talk about the deeper issues

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

REGINA

A TV show that was born at a backyard wiener roast in Saskatchewan is in the process of busting out.

"I never expected it to go big like this. I think the sky's the limit for this program. I see this as a national show," said Wade Peterson, community programming manager for Access Communications. A second season is already in the works.

"The Four," which has almost reached its midpoint for shows aired, features long-time friends Shauneen Pete, Bevann Fox, Robyn Morin and Shannon Fayant, tackling a wide-range of topics. The women are all Aboriginal.

"The concept ... was a no-brainer for us," said Peterson, who received the proposal about a year ago. "Four educated ladies, well-spoken, who didn't really want to talk about the hot topic issues. They wanted to talk about life."

"We were having a conversation one evening... and we started throwing around some ideas," said Pete of how the show was developed. "We thought of all the topics we could imagine and I think we came up with 60. Just all those things we end up talking about anyway when we're visiting with one another."

Pete's partner recorded the discussion on his cell phone and the women decided to pitch the concept as a television show. Fox



PHOTO: ACCESS COMMUNICATIONS

Co-hosts of "The Four": (clockwise from seated) Bevann Fox, Dr. Shauneen Pete, Robyn Morin and Shannon Fayant.

began shopping it around, including contacting networks in the United States. Access Communications, which has as its mandate community programming, picked it up.

Twelve one-hour long episodes were filmed for the first season, with the first episode airing Jan. 21.

"We held a premiere viewing ... we had over 120 people here. We were really surprised. We kind of thought 30 or 40 people would show up. There were a

large number of people who were our colleagues, in our community and certainly our families were present, too," said Pete, who serves as an assistant professor in Aboriginal education at the University of Regina.

The show has garnered interest from the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population, women and men, some from the U.S. and some from other provinces. Responses have been positive and numerous through social media.

Peterson thinks "The Four" has

caught on because the topics are universal. There's a mix of humour and seriousness, the women have good chemistry, and the show is inspirational for all women.

"We're committed to digging deeper. We're really hoping we reach some folks in our community who might not have started to have those deeper conversations about what motivates them, or how they heal, or those kinds of things," said Pete.

It has been a growing experience, she says, especially learning to balance being who they are but setting boundaries.

"Our first show was really about fears and our own discussion about being our authentic selves on camera came out as part of that discussion," she said. "We set some boundaries, too, so that we aren't overly exposed in some ways. We're still professionals here, we're mothers and we have families, so we're still cautious about our own boundaries at the same time committing to be authentic."

The women, who range in age from their early 30s to their mid-50s, all have been single mothers at one point in their lives, and all have university degrees. Fox, who is a residential school survivor and in her 50s, just completed her undergraduate degree. All have connections in the Fort Qu'Appelle area. Pete is from Little Pine First Nation. Fox is originally from the Piapot First Nation and the Pasqua First Nation. Morin, who is Fox's daughter-in-law, and Fayant, are

both Métis.

"We're also very different personalities in a lot of different ways," said Pete.

But while they offer varying perspectives, the one view they share is that Aboriginal women are under-represented when it comes to leadership roles. Not only are they showing that women are capable by being able co-hosts, they show that leadership is there by showcasing an Elder and interviewing a young woman, who balances her university studies with her social activism.

"The Four" has gone on the road to film at powwows, on-reserves, and the First Nations University of Canada, as well as doing studio segments.

Pete says being in front of a camera is new for all of them. They now have a different outlook on the television industry in general and community programming in particular, being in charge of putting make-up on their guests, "mic-ing them up and getting them ready to go."

With community television, said Peterson, Pete and her fellow co-hosts/creators "have editorial control, the freedom to explore what they need... They shape and form the show... Ultimately, the content is the heart and soul of what these ladies want to talk about."

"It's exciting to think about a second season and with that original list we had of all the topics, there's so much more to say," said Pete. Season two is scheduled to air January 2015.

Nuu-chah-nulth win injunction in herring fishery case

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

VANCOUVER

Nearly 50 years after the collapse of B.C.'s roe herring fishery, five First Nations on the West Coast of Vancouver Island have scored a major court victory after they discovered the federal government was set to end an eight-year closure to the commercial harvest.

On Feb. 21 a federal judge granted five nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council an injunction against re-opening the commercial fishery after an internal memo revealed that Fisheries Minister Gail Shea had gone against the advice of her own ministry's scientists in her push to open fishing in three regions.

Herring have been off-limits since 2006 because of depleted stocks, and Nuu-chah-nulth long argued against commercial fishing because the population was still too vulnerable.

Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, attended the court hearing in Vancouver to show his support for the case, and told reporters that herring stocks should continue being protected. He said the injunction is the latest in a long chain of First Nations court victories that have reminded Canada "that our rights are real."

"First Nations up and down the coast are standing firm in their resolve to see that this commercial harvest not go ahead," Atleo told Windspeaker outside Vancouver's federal court.

The controversial document which bolstered the case against the government was penned by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' federal herring coordinator and signed by the ministry's associate deputy

ministry.

Minister Shea signed off on the document as well – but added in handwriting: "The minister agrees to an opening at a conservative 10-per-cent harvest rate for the 2014 fishing season."

It is not the first time a federal Cabinet member has overruled their staff at last moment. In 2009, disgraced international development minister Bev Oda came under fire for cancelling a funding approval for the church aid group Kairos — and was ridiculed in Parliament for ordering the word "not" to be interjected into her department's recommendation.

Shea's surprise reversal of the herring ban came on Dec. 23, 2013, and Nuu-chah-nulth launched their lawsuit on Feb. 9.

Tribal Council President Deb Foxcroft applauded Judge Leonard Mandamin's decision in favour of a continued commercial ban, claiming the minister had refused to discuss her nation's conservation concerns.

"I don't understand why she doesn't understand that 'no means no,'" Foxcroft said. "We do not want a commercial herring fishery in our traditional territories. She's not listening to conservation in terms of how the herring affects our salmon and [other] sea life in our traditional territories. She's totally rejecting that – she's not listening."

For Atleo, the case serves as a rebuke to the "unilateral" approach to First Nations territories, and he called on the government to change course towards recognizing tribal self-determination.

"It's part of a pattern of unilateral decision-making on the part of governments, in this case the Department of Fisheries and Oceans," Atleo said. "They must respect the rights of the Nuu-chah-nulth, the Haida, and other nations on the West Coast,



AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo

PHOTO: DAVID P. BALL

and listen to what it is we're saying: Protect the vulnerable stocks of herring. Let them fully recover.

"Our people have been saying this for a long time. We are urging the minister to listen, strongly. We should not have to repeatedly go to the courts."

In a statement, Foxcroft alleged that Shea's decision to end the commercial closure reflects a "short-sighted commercial fishing opportunity demanded by the herring industry."

The five Nuu-chah-nulth nations which launched the court

case said they don't oppose all herring fisheries, but suggested that commercial roe herring could be opened off the coast of Prince Rupert or in the Strait of Georgia, "where herring stocks are abundant."

The DFO has come under increasing scrutiny in recent months after scientists' allegations that troves of scientific data relevant to fisheries and waterway protection were being discarded and destroyed as the government shuts fisheries research libraries across the country.

The government says it is preserving the data digitally, but with no public records of what was saved or discarded, a number of researchers have raised alarms over what they likened to book-burnings.

Commercial herring fisheries have long been a source of tension in B.C. After the populations plummeted in the late 1960s, the government instituted a three-year ban starting in 1968. But stocks remained unstable and in 2006 another halt was imposed on the commercial fishery.

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Federal budget misses the mark on Aboriginal needs

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The 2014 federal budget is a good start for Aboriginal peoples, but it's not enough.

"First Nations have been working to lift the two per cent cap since it was brought in back in 1996 and it's not just education, it's across the full spectrum," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo.

But that didn't happen in this budget, although concessions were made in a number of areas. The budget included continued funding for the First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan; \$66 million to renew commercial fishing enterprises in the Atlantic and Pacific; and a two-year renewal of \$22.2 million for the Aboriginal Justice Strategy.

The budget also included funding for Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, and Skills and Partnership Fund, which the Congress of Aboriginal

Peoples called "key programs that will ... provide training-to-employment opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples living off-reserve."

The budget also commits to \$305 million in funding over five years to improve broadband in rural and northern communities, which, as part of the government's focus on the north was "both welcome and positive," said Terry Audla, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Audia said in a news release that the ITK would continue to work with the government on access to adequate housing. That is an area in which the Canadian Association of Social Workers has slammed the government for not doing enough in this budget.

Funding of \$1.7 billion for affordable housing operating agreements is set to expire and this latest budget did not commit more dollars.

Without this commitment, housing affordability will be lost for many Canadians, including seniors, single-parent households, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people,

new Canadians and the working poor, said the CASW in a news release.

This is "absolutely a concern," said Atleo, noting that an estimated 130,000 housing units are required for First Nations.

"I do think there is a major, major crisis in the area of housing in this country and there has to be a major response to it that matches the depth of the crisis," said Atleo.

The Native Women's Association of Canada said the "budget does not go far enough to address violence against Aboriginal women in general" as there is no commitment to undertake a national public inquiry. The budget does, however, commit another \$25 million starting in 2016 to reduce violence against Aboriginal women and girls as well as commits to creating a DNA database.

"We're going to keep pressing for (a full national public commission of inquiry)," said Atleo, who adds that the continuation of the all-party committee on the issue of

violence against Indigenous women and girls is "a welcome reflection that parliament is beginning to understand how important" the situation is.

However, NWAC president Michèle Taina Audette says there is not enough in the budget for Aboriginal women, noting that only \$150,000 was allocated to Status of Women Canada in 2014-15 to increase mentorship among women entrepreneurs.

The government has also committed \$40 million to on-reserve emergency management, although the dollars do not come through until 2015 and it is unclear as to whether the approach being entertained by the federal government is the provincial/reserve emergency management agreements that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Minister Bernard Valcourt announced last November. While the additional funding is welcomed, Atleo said the control needs to be put in the hands of First Nations and not given to the provinces. He gives a nod to the Alberta model used after spring flooding.

"What I witnessed was in some respects what I would hope would be the beginnings of it, when you have provincial ministers, federal ministers sitting with chiefs directly, face to face, talking about designing solutions that will work for the communities themselves," said Atleo.

That approach, he added, is also needed when it comes to resource development.

Although the federal government committed to supplying \$28 million over two years to the National Energy board to review pipelines, it did not offer any money to ensure consultation with First Nations was enhanced.

"Current initiatives or process, including the energy board, including the assessment review processes, do not meet the standard of the right to free prior and informed consent," said Atleo.

"The budget has to go so, so much further and not only the resources but the way in which governments' respond," he added.

Changes to urban funding concerns Métis

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Some friendship centres still have Native or Indian in their titles, but they have been serving the entire Aboriginal population in urban centres for decades.

And with a new agreement signed between the federal government and the National Friendship Association of Canada, that overall commitment has been stepped up with significant federal funding, said NAFC executive director Jeff Cyr.

Cyr met with Métis governments in British Columbia and Alberta following the federal government's announcement that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada had realigned its funding for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) program. With the new alignment, \$43 million of a \$50.8 million budget would be

distributed by the NAFC. The remainder will be dispersed by AANDC.

The announcement was not welcomed by the Métis National Council.

"In cities with the largest Aboriginal population in Canada, such as Winnipeg and Edmonton, the Métis are the clear majority of that population, yet once again we are being ignored," said MNC President Clement Chartier in a news release.

Métis delivery of UAS programming "should have been a consideration for the larger population of Métis in those urban centres," said Bruce Dumont, president of Métis Nation British Columbia, who adds there is some concern whether money will be meted out fairly to Métis economic projects.

"It's no different. We've had to compete for those dollars (with the federal government)," said Dumont. "It can't be any worse than it was."

Dumont, along with the provincial youth chair and youth director, met with Cyr to discuss the revamped UAS program, which includes a variety of Aboriginal youth-oriented programs and funding. Dumont said the MNBC, which has a strong focus on youth, regularly ran into problems with the federal government in getting approval in a timely manner. Dumont notes that MNBC already has a good working relationship with the BC Association of Friendship Centres and will continue to build on that.

The new UAS is comprised of two programs, Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support. According to a government news release, the new delivery model was developed in collaboration with the NAFC. This change "will result in more dollars going directly to supporting community organizations and projects."

The details of the revamped UAS are still being worked out, said Cyr, but once the program gets underway, he expects approval for applications to go faster than they would with the federal government.

"It isn't just about efficiency," said Cyr. "It's also about doing it better in terms of shared objectives."

Cyr points out that the NAFC already has memorandums of understanding with the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Manitoba Métis Federation and has decades of experience delivering a wide variety of services from coast to coast to all Aboriginal peoples. He also notes that many friendship centre boards have Métis members. He hopes to meet with all the Métis governments, including the MNC, as well as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Assembly of First Nations, and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples to discuss collaboration.

Regional input will be important in establishing programs, said Cyr.

"It will be very specific to the regions. The needs in Nova Scotia are different from the needs in British Columbia," he said. "We always allow room for that regional flavour to come in because you get basically more effective projects. It also allows you to spot opportunity and support opportunity."

Chartier was also critical of the federal government giving funding for an economic program to what he considers a "provider of cultural-based programs."

NAFC has a strong foundation of delivering economic programs, said Cyr, adding, "Culture can form a part of every part of your program. It is not necessarily the outcome... (but) culture becomes the method by which we do everything."

Funding under the new UAS will not be available until after April 1.

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Atleo receives pushback on education agreement



PHOTO: DARLENE CHRAPKO

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Bernard Valcourt (left) Blood Tribe Chief Charles Weaselhead (centre) and Prime Minister Stephen Harper announce the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act.

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

KAINAI FIRST NATION, Alta.

The First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, announced Feb. 7, has not received a better reception than its predecessor, the First Nations Education Act, proposed last October.

Even before Prime Minister Stephen Harper unveiled the new proposal at the Kainai High School, Treaty 7 grand chief and chief of the Kainai First Nation Charles Weaselhead was distancing himself from the announcement.

"We agreed to host this national announcement, but in no way endorse the proposed legislation in its present form," said Weaselhead in a communique to Kainai members.

Then less than two weeks later, the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador submitted a request for a judicial review before the federal court challenging the consultation process leading to the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*.

AFNQL says the Assembly of First Nations, which had come to an agreement to work with the feds on the Act, cannot sign agreements on behalf of the Quebec and Labrador First Nations. AFNQL leadership say they were not privy to discussions between AFN and the federal government.

Vocal opposition from First Nations about the new proposed legislation centres more on how the agreement came about than on the specifics of the agreement.

Response to an email issued by Atleo announcing that "tentative plans are underway for an announcement of (federal government) investment and a

framework to support First Nations control of First Nations education" was met with tweets of dismay, ranging from "I may head down to protest this" to the "AFN has no jurisdiction... to agree to any legislation on behalf of First Nations people in Canada. There is no democracy in the 'Top Down' approach to legislation inflicted on First Nations people."

When Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Minister Bernard Valcourt introduced the First Nations Education Act last fall, Atleo, chiefs and education advocates slammed the government for taking unilateral action and proposing a one-size-fits-all approach to on-reserve education.

The bill was also criticized for not including dollar figures and for giving the minister control over First Nations education.

Now, many are accusing Atleo, and select members of the AFN, of taking the same unilateral action on the second run at a First Nations education bill.

In an interview with *Windspeaker*, Atleo said Harper was moving forward on five conditions that "chiefs expressed in assembly.... The chiefs pushed back and said this has to be about true First Nations control of First Nations education."

Those conditions were outlined in an AFN resolution 21/2013 entitled, "Outlining the Path Forward: Conditions for the Success of First Nations Education," and adopted by consensus at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2013. The resolution calls for guaranteed funding, First Nations control of education, meaningful consultation, protection of Indigenous languages, and joint oversight of the program.

Said Atleo in the face of the criticism, "My commitment

stands firmly behind the resolution the chiefs passed in December."

What has been established now, he said, is a framework with dollars attached that allows First Nations to develop solutions that meet their own needs. Regional and provincial agreements that already exist will be enhanced by new federal legislation, which will provide funding to emphasize cultural and language development.

The proposed legislation will also commit new monies to First Nations education and does away with the two per cent cap on education funding. The 2014 budget confirmed the federal government's commitment to First Nations education establishing core funding of \$1.25 billion from 2016-18 with an annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent; \$160 million over four years starting in 2015-16 for an Enhanced Education Fund; and \$500 million over seven years beginning in 2015-16 for a new First Nations Education Infrastructure Fund.

Many chiefs have expressed cautious optimism about the figures.

"It is a positive that Canada has conceded to a significant funding component, however... an analysis will need to be conducted further to break down the allocation of dollars, then and only then will the First Nations be able to draw an informed conclusion," said Fort William First Nation Chief Georjann Morriveau in a news release.

The 2014 federal budget did not offer transitional dollars to fill the gap before the new funding kicks in.

"We did press for all these resources to be made available right now as we do every single year," said Atleo. "I'm not the one who writes up the language in the budget."

(See Atleo on page 24.)

Windspeaker News Briefs

WITH 1,700 KM AND 49 DAYS BEHIND THEM,

the Omushkegowuk walkers arrived at Parliament Hill Feb. 24 with a message for government: Take action on treaties. Danny Metatawabin led the group. He stood with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence last year as she went on a hunger strike to bring attention to the concerns of First Nations peoples. "The time to reconcile Aboriginal issues is now," Matatawabin said. "...from lack of infrastructure, housing, missing and murdered women and girls, the list goes on and on. We have to reconcile those now to live in harmony on a nation-to-nation basis." Walker Brian Okimaw, who took part in the trek, said the journey was a spiritual one. "Our grandfathers signed those treaties," Okimaw said. Broken treaties have led to an Aboriginal population that is poorly educated, poorly housed, and a disrespect for Aboriginal women who are going missing and are murdered in astounding numbers.

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ALBERTA AND THE NORTHWEST

Territories have apologized to First Nations people who attended residential schools. "We also express our apology and regret for Catholic participation in government policies that resulted in children being separated from their families, and often suppressed Aboriginal culture and language at the residential schools," reads the letter. The letter was read out at Ben Calf Robe School in Edmonton Feb. 24. Archbishop Richard Smith said "We've come here, in the presence of these children, so that they see that we take these words seriously. And we do want to reach out to them, and to those who've gone before them, and to work with them in the future to continue the process of healing and reconciliation that has, in fact, been going on for some time."

IF YOU'VE BEEN SEEING PHOTOS SHOW UP ON SOCIAL MEDIA

sites with a blue dot on them, you are being invited to join the Blue Dot Movement. The blue dot is a symbol of protest against exclusion, and was inspired by a "historic" event held at Kainai in southern Alberta, where Prime Minister Stephen Harper and National Chief Shawn Atleo jointly announced a new agreement on education. At the event, those who were invited to attend the announcement were led into one room while those who arrived at the event without an invitation were given a card with a blue dot on it and moved into a different room where the announcement could be watched on television. The blue dot on photos has come to represent those who are being sidelined by government and First Nations leadership. It is also an extension of last year's Idle No More protest movement. Artist Christi Belcourt began to post old photos of vocal historical figures with a blue dot on them to represent the voices and opinions of people who disagree with government being silenced.

GRAND CHIEF STEWART PHILLIP IS WARNING OTTAWA THAT

funding cuts to Aboriginal Affairs' specific claims research may create a similar environment to the one that sparked the Oka crisis. The cuts come as the federal government works to "identify efficiencies and streamline departmental operations" and has resulted in some First Nations claims research organizations seeing upwards of 60 per cent funding loss. "These massive funding cuts signal clearly the Harper government's intent to walk away from specific claims," said Phillip, who is president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. "These are the same circumstances that preceded Oka: Canada walked away from the federal duty to address specific claims and was dismissive of First Nation grievances."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN

Chiefs is no stranger to making news on the political stage, but a frightening incident during his travels in mid-February saw him making news of a different kind. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip was travelling alone outside of Hope, B.C. when his vehicle slid on black ice and snow, left the highway and crashed into the rock face. The Chevrolet Tahoe was flipped onto its roof. Phillip was transported to Fraser Canyon Hospital where he was admitted with non-life threatening injuries. He was later transferred closer to home to Penticton Regional Hospital and now has been released home to further convalesce.

MANTO SIPI CREE NATION AND MATHIAS COLOMB CREE NATION

in northern Manitoba have stated their opposition to mineral exploration in their traditional territories. In a press release Feb. 18 Manto Sipi said it would block mineral exploration and work permits and will not consult with the provincial government until land disputes are addressed. "I have been given a strong mandate to initiate legal, political and defensive action against outside encroachment," said Manto Sipi Chief Michael Yellowback. He said the nation had exhausted all avenues in dealing with Mineral Resources Minister Dave Chomiak. Manto Sipi has a land claim on an expired mineral claim and the nation refutes the minister's legal position and opinion on the Godslith Claim. Manto Sipi will be taking the issue to court. On Feb. 19, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation issued its own press release proclaiming its moratorium against mining activities on its traditional territory was still in effect. "The sovereign nation of Missinippi Nehethowak, as represented by Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, has always and continues to assert our full sovereignty, jurisdiction, rights and responsibilities over our extensive traditional territories," said Mathias Colomb Cree Nation Chief Arlen Dumas. "We have ongoing legal, political and cultural obligations to protect our water, land, plants, and animals within our territories on behalf of past, current and future generations and we will live up to that obligation."

[news]
Regional chief co-chairs Liberal convention

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

MONTREAL

Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould admits the Liberals still carry some unfortunate baggage in Indian Country — particularly a bitter taste from Jean Chretien's White Paper in 1969, when he was Indian Affairs Minister — but she maintains that a crucial way to change the system is still from the inside.

Invited to co-chair the party's national convention in Quebec in late February, the We Wai Kai Nation councillor (also known by her Kwakwaka'wakw name, Puglaas) downplayed media reports that she would run as a 2015 Liberal candidate, telling *Windspeaker* she hasn't yet decided.

"I know the media are reporting that I'm running as a candidate in the next election," she said, chuckling quietly, "but to be honest I haven't made any decision if that's going to happen or not."

"I haven't ruled out the potential of running for federal politics. If and when I make such a decision, I'll certainly have to have a conversation with my chiefs back home."

Other First Nations leadership sources, however, told *Windspeaker* it's highly unlikely she would choose otherwise. One direction she hopes the party will take — and which gained support from convention delegates after being proposed by the Liberals' Aboriginal caucus — is to recommit to the principles of ex-Prime Minister Paul Martin's Kelowna Accord, a multi-billion dollar funding agreement with First Nations which was scrapped as soon as the Conservatives took office.

On the thorny matter of the White Paper, a proposal passed on the convention floor symbolically distancing the party from Chretien's attempt to solve the "Indian problem" by dissolving the Indian Act and absorbing Indigenous peoples into the Canadian politic four decades ago. That initiative led to massive resistance from First Nations across the country, including galvanizing protests and the founding of most of today's Aboriginal advocacy organizations.

Wilson-Raybould said that today's protest movements, such as Idle No More, have reinvigorated such activism for Indigenous rights, but she hopes people will also engage in changing the political landscape itself.

"For me, what Idle No More means is that our citizens are demanding change," she said. "There's always time to protest."

"But with the huge challenges we have in this country, it's time to translate the victories we have won, to translate protest into

actions on the ground, and to rebuild our nations as Aboriginal peoples."

She said she felt complimented to be invited to co-chair the convention by Liberal leader Justin Trudeau, whose father was Prime Minister when the White Paper was introduced. Asked about the current party head's policies on Aboriginal affairs, Wilson-Raybould said she believes "in him as a strong leader" with a "strong vision" for the country. She said she has heard him speak about "the need to hear from Aboriginal communities and to be inclusive—to ensure that our Aboriginal people are dealt with appropriately and with respect."

First elected AFN's regional leader in 2009, the former provincial Crown prosecutor and treaty negotiator was re-elected two years ago.

Although Trudeau has spoken little publicly about Aboriginal issues, his support for two controversial pipelines from Alberta's oilsands has irked many First Nations vowing to resist them being built through their territories.

In a Jan. 22 interview with *Metro Calgary*, Trudeau said one of the Prime Minister's most important jobs is "to make sure we can get our resources to market" — but that it must be "sustainable" and have community "buy-in."

"Because of that I have been a strong promoter of the Keystone XL pipeline," he said. "For similar reasons, I'm not a proponent of the Northern Gateway Pipeline ... which runs through the Great Bear Rainforest, which has spectacularly failed at getting community buy-in from First Nations communities and from local communities that could be potentially affected by it."

"I am, however, very interested in the Kinder Morgan pipeline, the Trans Mountain pipeline that is making its way through. I certainly hope that we're going to be able to get that pipeline approved."

Wilson-Raybould told *Windspeaker* she saw the Liberal convention as "a tremendous opportunity to highlight the issues and challenges that we as Indigenous people across the country are facing," but also to showcase efforts at nation-building in many First Nations.

"My approach to political office is I want to be where I believe I can make a difference," she said. "To put more emphasis on Aboriginal issues into a mainstream political party and convention is a huge opportunity not only for aboriginal people but for Canadians in general."

Speaking by phone from the convention as it kicked off, she said many there were discussing the idea of improving a "partnership" between government and First Nations. But while divisions simmer within the AFN itself over how



Jody Wilson-Raybould

PHOTO: DAVID P. BALL

to deal with Ottawa, and Idle No More ponders its next steps, Wilson-Raybould said Indigenous peoples should not dismiss "public service" in Canadian politics outright.

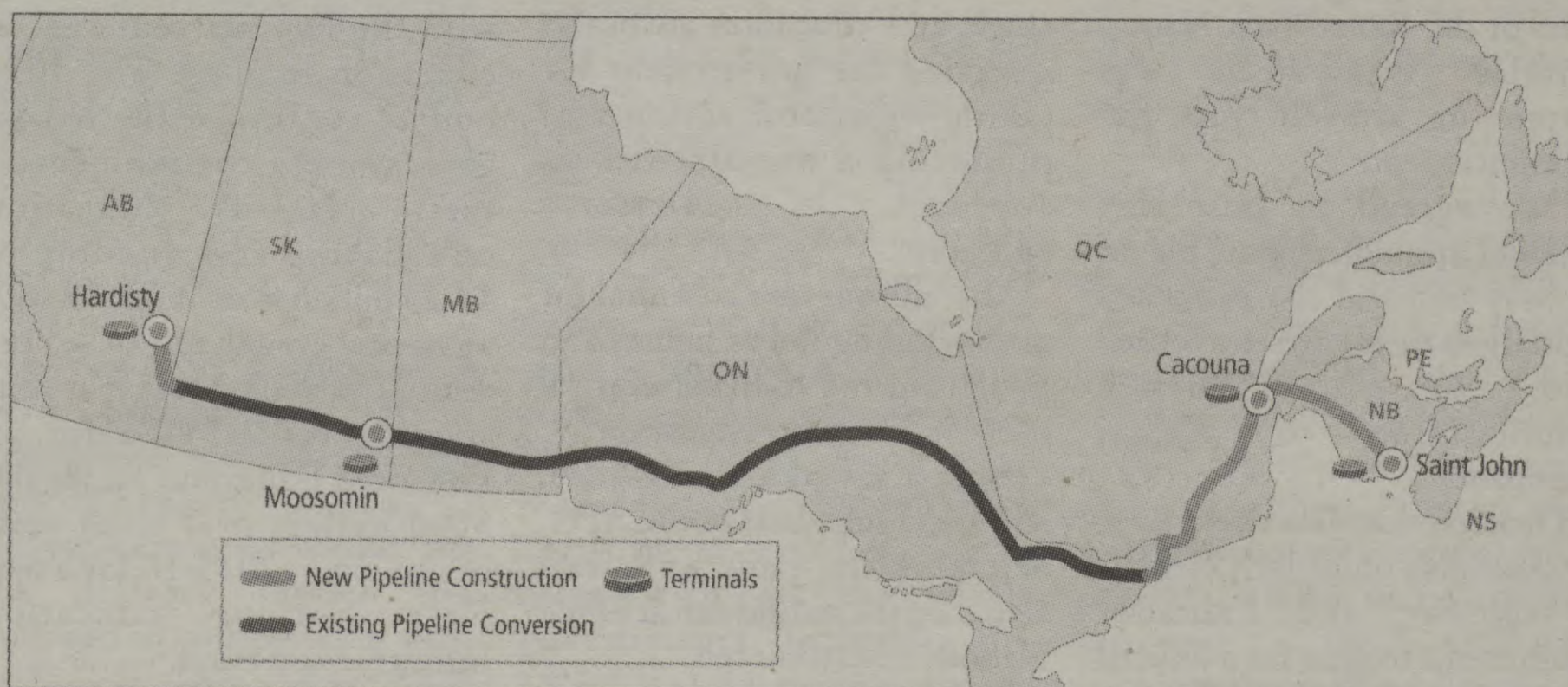
"It's a challenging endeavour, but we need to have young people, old people, and every type of person engaged in our political discussions," she said. "I got involved because I wasn't happy

with the way things are.

"If you're not happy with the way government is running, you have to get involved. Your voice is important and needs to be heard."

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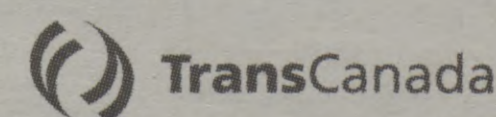
Wednesday, March 19
 Brandon Royal Canadian Legion #3
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 Brandon, Man.
 Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

Thursday, March 20
 Royal Canadian Legion # 81
 712 Main St.
 Moosomin, Sask.
 Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25
 G Marconi Canadian Italian Club
 2148 Connaught Street
 Regina, Sask.
 Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

Thursday, March 27
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 Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

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Strawberry ceremony honours Aboriginal women

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

About 500 people attended the Feb. 14 Strawberry Ceremony held in Toronto to honour the more than 600 Aboriginal women who are missing or have died violent deaths, and to seek justice for the women with calls for a national inquiry.

UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, James Anaya, who toured Canada last year, said the federal government should set up a national inquiry into the "disturbing phenomenon" of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The Harper government has so far not heeded the call.

It was the ninth year for the ceremony, which took place in front of Toronto Police Headquarters on College Street. Signs with photographs and names of the women printed on them were a bleak reminder of the vulnerability of Aboriginal women.



PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

The Toronto march for the missing and murdered Aboriginal women on Feb. 14.

"We're here in love, not anger," said Elder Wanda Whitebird to those gathered, as strawberries and water, the women's medicines, were given out.

For 63-year-old Joyce Carpenter, the ceremony marked the first time she spoke in public since the death of her 14-year-old daughter Trish 21 years ago. Her

daughter's body was found on a construction site, stuffed headfirst into a hole where she died of asphyxiation. Holding up a picture of her daughter, Carpenter said, "She had just given birth to a beautiful little boy, now 22, and was only with his mother for six weeks."

A coroner's inquest ruled her daughter's death an accident. Carpenter doesn't accept this. The system, "...just wrote her off," she said. If there had been a proper investigation, Carpenter said, they would have ruled the death a homicide.

It was the violent and suspicious deaths of three young Aboriginal women in Toronto within the space of three months last year that prompted Carpenter to share her story.

"I said to myself, 'I gotta speak up and say something because this is totally uncalled for, shouldn't be happening...I gotta speak for them because they can't speak for themselves now.'"

The ceremony gave special honour and recognition to the three Toronto women who died.

Twenty-five year old Bella Laboucan-McLean plunged to her death from a 31st floor Toronto condo last July. A recent graduate of Humber College's Fashion Arts program, she was going to study for a year in London, England before embarking on a career. Her family is confident she didn't commit suicide. The police are investigating it as a suspicious death. Laboucan-McLean was a member of the Sturgeon Lake Cree First Nation in northern Alberta.

Terra Gardner was just 26 years old when she was killed by a train in Toronto the night of May 14 in 2013. The police ruled there was no foul play in her death. Gardner, a member of Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation near Fort Frances, Ont. was homeless in Toronto, living on the streets and in shelters. She had reportedly talked to friends

about receiving death threats because of her impending role as a witness in a murder trial.

John Fox, the father of the late Cheyenne Fox, led the march from police headquarters, along Carlton Street to a feast at 519 Church Community Centre. More than 200 people stopped traffic as they marched and paused to drum and round dance at two major intersections. Fox carried a sign with a picture of his 20-year-old daughter, Cheyenne, that also contained his sentiments about how the system failed her.

Fox describes Cheyenne as, "a very, kind, caring, loving person." On the evening of April 24, 2013 she fell to her death from a 24th floor condo in Toronto's Don Mills. Fox is not satisfied with the police conclusion that his daughter committed suicide.

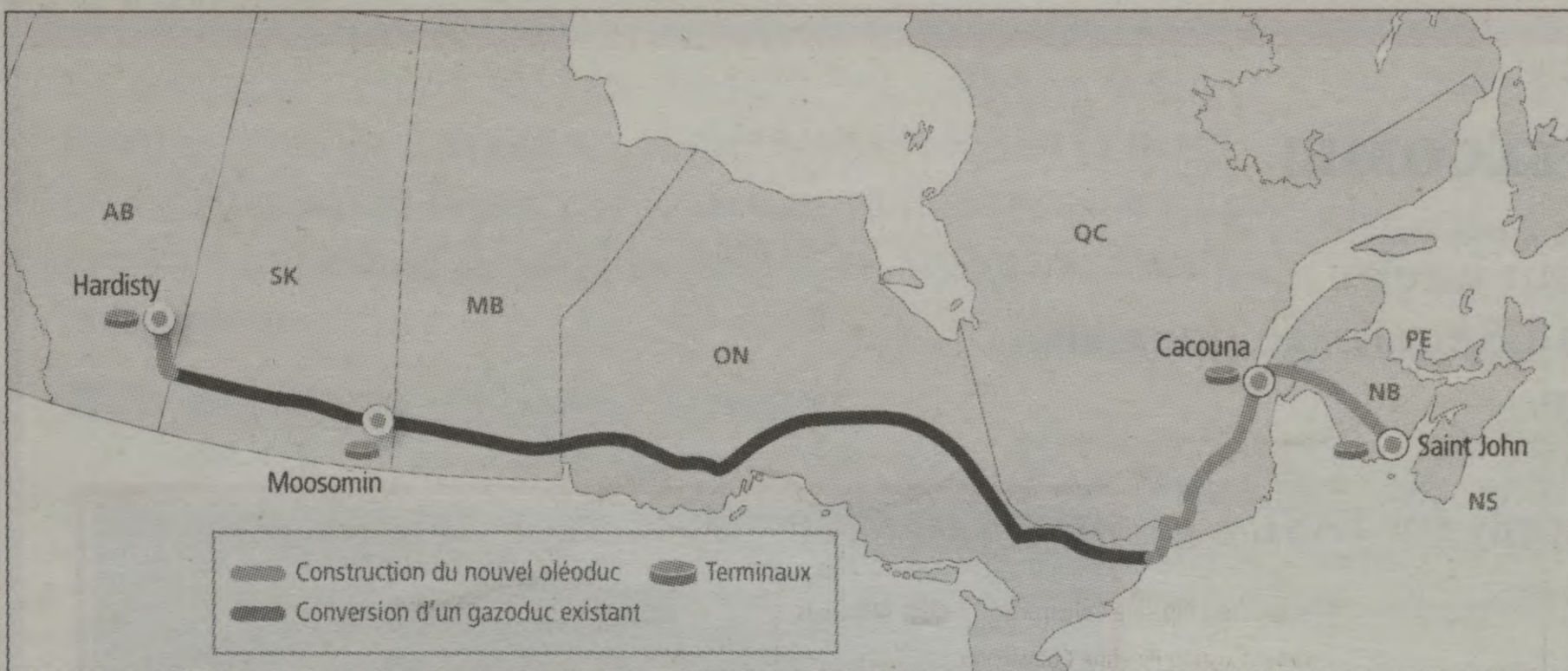
What Fox knows, without a doubt, is that the system, including the police, failed his daughter. The police admitted as much when Fox met with them last November. At a meeting with Fox and supporters on Nov. 21, Staff Inspector Tony Riviere of 33 Division said, "What's going on with Aboriginal folks, is not just in the city of Toronto. It's part of a larger problem."

Audrey Huntley is co-founder of No More Silence which coordinates the event. She's pleased that the numbers of people attending has grown from about 100 in the first year to over 500 this year. It's a sign of growing awareness and concern. "I thought this year's event was the most powerful yet," she said, "maybe because the spirits of Cheyenne, Terra and Bella are still so close. I just felt surrounded in so much love. It was really special."

More than 60 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups endorsed this year's event, including colleges, universities, unions, religious groups and community agencies.

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Mardi 25 mars
Club canado-italien G Marconi
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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

FSIN delays decision on funding for organization

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations has delayed its decision to deal with funding of the organization. The issue was debated and a number of options put forward at the Winter Legislative Assembly, but a decision put off. FSIN has experienced nearly \$2 million in funding cuts in the past two years. Among the options discussed were to use contributions from Saskatchewan's First Nations, using casino profits from the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority or diving into the FSIN treaty protection fund. "There will always be an FSIN, but its structure and shape will evolve," said FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde. The issue will be discussed again at a special chiefs assembly in March.

SIGA unable to purchase casinos

The Saskatchewan government will not be selling Casino Regina and Casino Moose Jaw to the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority despite a memorandum of understanding that SIGA buy the two casinos.

Past offers to purchase the casinos have been met with government rejection. However, recently Premier Brad Wall started considering the option, stating that revenue from the casinos would provide economic opportunities for First Nations. The Crown Ownership Act sets out conditions before a Crown corporation can be sold and was voted in unanimously. The NDP say they're not opposed to looking at selling the casinos to First Nations, but they will not support amending the act to allow this particular deal to be exempt. "Basically, I'm extremely disappointed and disheartened in the way that the leader of the NDP has approached this. There was no secret, backdoor deal. Everything was transparent and open," Chief Perry Bellegarde told Global News.

Aboriginal representation in Saskatchewan Book Awards

Aboriginal writers and Aboriginal topics are well-represented in this year's list of Saskatchewan Book Awards nominees. Lisa Bird-Wilson leads the way with five nominations for her first fiction

book *Just Pretending*: Book of the Year, the Fiction Award, Saskatoon Book Award, Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award and Aboriginal Peoples' Publishing Award. Métis Soldiers of Saskatchewan: 1914-1953 by Cathy Littlejohn is also nominated for Book of the Year, Aboriginal Peoples' Publishing Award, and Award for Publishing in Education. Marie Battiste's *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* is nominated in the Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award category and Aboriginal Peoples' Publishing Award, as well as for the Award for Scholarly Writing. Leah Marie Dorion, *Michif Translation by Norman Fleury* The Diamond Willow Walking Stick: A Traditional Métis Story About Generosity was nominated in the Children's Literature Award. *Breathing Life into the Stone Fort Treaty: An Anishinabe Understanding of Treaty One* by Aimée Craft was nominated for the Aboriginal Peoples' Publishing Award. James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* was nominated for the Non-Fiction Award, First Book Award, Regina Book Award,

Award for Scholarly Writing, Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport Publishing Award and Publishing in Education.

Transfer of community pastures land concern First Nations

By the end of March, the federal government will have transferred all land held under the Community Pastures Program to the province and First Nations are concerned that the history of that land will be lost to ranchers who will buy or lease it. Tomasin Playford, executive director of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, is worried that the loss

of federal protection will compromise historical sites and artifacts that document how First Nations groups lived. She said the land contains burial sites, tipi rings and buffalo jumps, among other historic items. "The way the pastures were managed in the past had potentially less impact than there may be in the future because we don't know what the future holds," Playford told Postmedia News. The land was not made available for First Nations to acquire through land settlement agreements, said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron.

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The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The healing continues.

Since 2007, almost 80,000 former students have received a Common Experience Payment ("CEP") as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. CEP recipients are now eligible to receive non-cash Personal Credits of up to \$3,000, for either themselves or certain family members, for educational programs and services.

What are Personal Credits? Personal Credits may be used for a wide range of educational programs and services, including those provided by universities, colleges, trade or training schools, Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning, or which relate to literacy or trades, as well as programs and services related to Aboriginal identities, histories, cultures or languages.

How much are Personal Credits?

Adequate funds are available for each CEP recipient to receive up to \$3,000 in Personal Credits, depending on your approved educational expenses.

Which educational entities and groups are included?

A list of approved educational entities and groups has been jointly developed by Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit representatives. If an educational entity or group is not on the list, please consult the website for more information.

Will I receive a cheque? No. Cheques will be issued directly to the educational entity or group providing the service.

Who can use Personal Credits? CEP recipients can use the full amount themselves or give part or all of their Personal Credits to certain family members such as a spouse, child, grandchild or sibling, as defined in

the terms and conditions. Personal Credits of multiple CEP recipients can be combined to support a group learning activity.

How can I get Personal Credits? Each CEP recipient will be mailed an Acknowledgement Form. If you do not receive an Acknowledgement Form by the end of January 2014, please call 1-866-343-1858. Completed Acknowledgement Forms should be returned as soon as possible and must be postmarked no later than **October 31, 2014**.

How do I redeem my Personal Credits? Once approved, you will be sent a personalized Redemption Form for each individual using Personal Credits at each educational

entity or group. Once the Form is received, provide it to the educational entity or group listed. The educational entity or group must then complete and mail back the Redemption Form postmarked no later than **December 1, 2014**.

What happens to unused Personal

Credits? The value of unused Personal Credits will be transferred to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund and Inuvialuit Education Foundation for educational programs.

For more information, including how Personal Credits can be redeemed by certain family members of CEP recipients that are deceased, visit www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca or call 1-866-343-1858.

The IRS Crisis Line (1-866-925-4419) provides immediate and culturally appropriate counselling support to former students who are experiencing distress.

CEP recipients have the option of sharing their Personal Credits with certain family members, such as:

- Children
- Spouses
- Grandchildren
- Siblings

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

JOHN RUSTAD, B.C.'S MINISTER OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONSHIPS

and Reconciliation, was in Fort St. John to talk about the progress made at the First Nations LNG Summit. He said liquefied natural gas provides a big opportunity to the province and there is a chance for First Nations to participate in the industry. "There's been a series of summits to discuss what liquefied natural gas is and to answer some basic questions, get into details, and create networking opportunities," Rustad said. The minister said government wants to hear from First Nations about their concerns and to encourage sensitivity to issues regarding heritage and the environment. "We are very interested in engaging with First Nations. We have been now for quite some time. It's about building that respect and finding out the issues that need to be taken into consideration and trying to encourage the proponents to be sensitive to cultural heritage and environmental concerns that are brought forward," Rustad said. "In British Columbia we are probably the envy of many jurisdictions in the world. We have some of the highest standards anywhere with regards to natural gas extraction and our environmental standards and we're very proud of that." Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo spoke to the summit on the final day. He said he supports First Nations leaders however they decide to proceed on LNG. "For far too long, industry and government have been ignoring our rights and exploiting the resources in our traditional territories," said Atleo. "Our nation and our rights are a reality. They present unlimited opportunities, if we get this right."

THE FORMER LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, STEVEN POINT,

has been appointed as a judge in Abbotsford in the Fraser Valley Region. He was one of two judges to be appointed to the British Columbia Provincial Court to help alleviate caseload pressures and improve access to justice, Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton said. Judge Point's appointment is effective March 3.

THE THIRD ANNUAL MOOSEHIDE CAMPAIGN TO END VIOLENCE

against Aboriginal women and children took to the steps of the BC legislature Feb. 20. Men from both the Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal communities came together to denounce the violence and pledge to speak up against violence in their communities. The event was organized by the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Men wore moosehide patches and many fasted for one day to show solidarity. "All of us in this room love our mothers, our sisters and our daughters," said executive director Paul Lacerte. He said Aboriginal women are five times more likely to see violence towards them than non-Aboriginal women, and five times more likely to be murdered. "I carry an incredible sadness in my heart to know how much suffering there has been for women in our community," Lacerte said.

FIRST NATIONS LEADERS ON THE SUNSHINE COAST

are calling for Ottawa to study the impact of Fukushima radiation on the West Coast fishery. A March 2011 tsunami in Japan resulted in a catastrophic failure of the Fukushima nuclear site and radiation has been detected (barely) in BC coastal waters, said an ocean science division manager with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The federal government has tested fish species in 2011 and early 2012, but Canada's Food Inspection Agency reports that "further testing of imported or domestic food products for the presence of radioactive material is not required." In a letter last month to Assembly

of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo, Tahltan Central Council President Annita McPhee wrote "We cannot sit by and watch and wait to see what the full impacts of the Fukushima disaster will be on our salmon and our way of life. To date, we have not seen or heard of Canada taking this issue seriously and working in a real way to address it." Tla'amin (Sliammon) First Nation Chief Clint Williams is also pushing for the testing. "Our people really cherish salmon. It has always been part of our culture... We want to make sure our food is safe. And it's not just salmon either. It's clams, geoducks, sea urchins."

THE HAISLA FIRST NATION WANTS OTTAWA TO DELAY

a decision on the Northern Gateway pipeline because a quick approval "would be illegal," without meaningful consultation with Aboriginal groups. A decision on Gateway is expected by July, following a report last year that found projected economic benefits from the project outweighed environmental risks. Environmental groups and First Nations — including the Haisla — have challenged that decision in federal court on grounds the report ignores the adverse effects of oil sands development. The federal government now wishes input from First Nations about the potential impact of the pipeline which would connect Alberta's oil sands with Asian markets.



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National Energy Board

Notice of Public Hearing GH-001-2014

NOVA Gas Transmission Ltd. (NGTL) Application for the North Montney Project (Application)

NGTL has submitted an application to the National Energy Board (NEB or the Board) indicating its intent to construct and operate new pipeline facilities in north-east British Columbia.

The proposed project includes the construction and operation of approximately 305.9 km of pipeline in the Peace River Regional District, along with 15 new meter stations, and three new compressor stations. The proposed 42 inch nominal pipe size natural gas pipeline, referred to as the North Montney Mainline, will consist of two sections, Aitken Creek and Kahta. It will connect with the existing Groundbirch Mainline (Saturn Section), located about 35 km southwest of Fort St. John, and will continue about 187 km north-west of Fort St. John.

If approved, the proposed pipeline would transport sweet natural gas from the North Montney area in British Columbia to the NOVA Inventory Transfer market hub and through the NGTL system and interconnected pipelines to markets in Alberta and North America.

Public Hearing

The Board will hold a public hearing regarding NGTL's Application, which will include an oral portion. The issues the Board will consider are the need; the economic feasibility; the potential commercial impacts; the appropriate tolling methodology; standards for determining NGTL's opportunity for the recovery of incurred costs to provide service on the applied-for facilities as part of the NGTL System revenue requirement; the potential environmental and socio-economic effects, including those to be considered under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*; appropriateness of the general route and land requirements; the engineering design and integrity; the potential impacts on Aboriginal interests; the potential impacts on landowners and land use; contingency planning for spills, accidents or malfunctions, during construction and operation of the project; as well as the terms and conditions to be included in any approval of all, or any portion of the project that the Board may recommend in its report to the Governor in Council.

Application to Participate

Pursuant to section 55.2 of the NEB Act, the Board will determine who may participate in this hearing. If you wish to participate in this hearing **you must fill out and submit to the Board, an "Application to Participate" form**, a link to which is located on the Board's home page, www.neb-one.gc.ca, click on "Major Applications and Projects" located on the left hand side of the main webpage, then click on "Nova Gas Transmission Ltd. – North Montney Project", then click on "Application to Participate". The application to participate form will be available from 18 February 2014 to 19 March 2014.

Participant Funding

The National Energy Board (NEB or the Board) is making available \$250,000 under its Participant Funding Program to assist landowners, Aboriginal groups, incorporated non-industry, not-for-profit organizations, and other interested persons to participate in the regulatory process relating to this application.

Interested persons are encouraged to review information on the Project and the Board's List of Issues in the Hearing Order GH-001-2014 before submitting an application for participant funding.

Process Advisor

The NEB has assigned Ms. Katie Emond as the Process Advisor for this project. The Process Advisor's role is to support the public (e.g., landowners, concerned citizens, environmental non-governmental organizations) and the Aboriginal groups that are participating in public hearings.

If you are thinking about applying to participate in the Board's hearing for this Project, Ms. Emond can provide you with assistance.

Ms. Katie Emond
Process Advisor
National Energy Board
E-mail: NorthMontneyProject@neb-one.gc.ca
Telephone (toll free): 1-800-899-1265
Facsimile: 403-292-5503
Facsimile (toll free): 1-877-288-8803
TTY (Teletype): 1-800-632-1663

Documents and Information

Hearing Order GH-001-2014 provides important information on the hearing process, including procedures to follow and a timetable of events. All Application-related documents, including the Hearing Order, are available online, on the Board's Internet site at www.neb-one.gc.ca, click on "View" under "Regulatory Documents" box on the right hand side of the NEB's webpage. Then, click on "Quick Links" and scroll down to NGTL North Montney folder. Hard copies of these documents can be found at the following locations:

- NGTL's Office (450 – 1 Street S.W., Calgary, Alberta);
- NEB's Library (Main Floor, 444 – 7th Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta);
- Chetwynd Public Library (5012 – 46th Street, Chetwynd, British Columbia);
- Fort St. John Public Library (10015 100 Avenue, Fort St. John, British Columbia); and
- Hudson's Hope Public Library (9905 Dudley Drive, Hudson's Hope, British Columbia).

Any correspondence to the Board should be addressed to:

Sheri Young
Secretary of the Board
National Energy Board
444 Seventh Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2P 0X8
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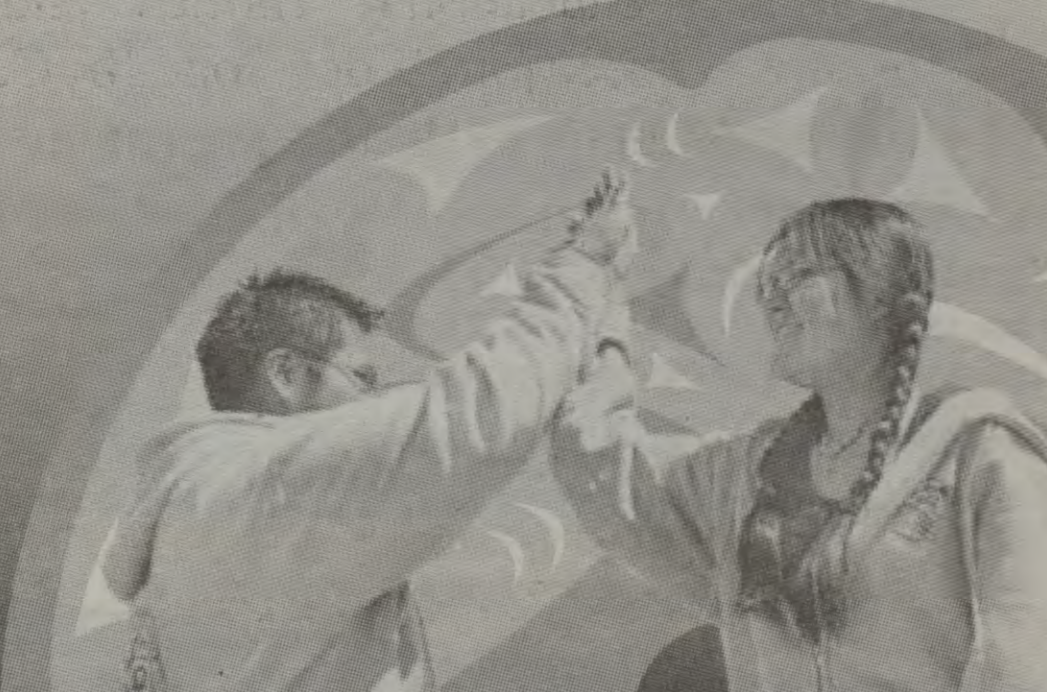
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What are Personal Credits? Personal Credits may be used for a wide range of educational programs and services, including those provided by universities, colleges, trade or training schools, Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning, or which relate to literacy or trades, as well as programs and services related to Aboriginal identities, histories, cultures or languages.

How much are Personal Credits? Adequate funds are available for each CEP recipient to receive up to \$3,000 in Personal Credits, depending on your approved educational expenses.

Which educational entities and groups are included? A list of approved educational entities and groups has been jointly developed by Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit representatives. If an educational entity or group is not on the list, please consult the website for more information.

Will I receive a cheque? No. Cheques will be issued directly to the educational entity or group providing the service.

Who can use Personal Credits? CEP recipients can use the full amount themselves or give part or all of their Personal Credits to certain family members such as a spouse, child, grandchild or sibling, as defined in

the terms and conditions. Personal Credits of multiple CEP recipients can be combined to support a group learning activity.

How can I get Personal Credits? Each CEP recipient will be mailed an Acknowledgement Form. If you do not receive an Acknowledgement Form by the end of January 2014, please call 1-866-343-1858. Completed Acknowledgement Forms should be returned as soon as possible and must be postmarked no later than **October 31, 2014**.

How do I redeem my Personal Credits? Once approved, you will be sent a personalized Redemption Form for each individual using Personal Credits at each educational

entity or group. Once the Form is received, provide it to the educational entity or group listed. The educational entity or group must then complete and mail back the Redemption Form postmarked no later than **December 1, 2014**.

What happens to unused Personal Credits? The value of unused Personal Credits will be transferred to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund and Inuvialuit Education Foundation for educational programs.

For more information, including how Personal Credits can be redeemed by certain family members of CEP recipients that are deceased, visit www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca or call 1-866-343-1858.

The IRS Crisis Line (1-866-925-4419) provides immediate and culturally appropriate counselling support to former students who are experiencing distress.

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

New book authentic and inspiring

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Birchbark Contributor

TORONTO

Honouring Indigenous Women: Hearts of Nations, Vol. 2 was launched Feb. 12 at the Toronto Birth Centre in the city's Regent Park. The book is a celebration of Indigenous womanhood – the joy and strength, the pain and sadness, and the challenges. The launch was presented by Muskrat Magazine, the Toronto & York Region Metis Council, and The Sound of My Heart Collective.

The book features a collection of stories, poetry, essays and visual art by more than 60 artists from across Turtle Island. Many of the contributions tell of the journey to recognize how Indigenous women have been shaped by colonialism and the continuing and enduring struggle against its insidious and tragic effects.

Rebeka Tabobondung, publisher of Muskrat Magazine, is from Wasauksing First Nation near Parry Sound, Ont. She was thrilled when Muskrat was asked to present the launch because "I see the power that writing holds for the individual, to help them deal with difficult stuff, but also to express love and strength," she said. "It's very symbolic to hold this launch in a birth centre," she added, "because what we are doing is re-birthing a healthy nation."

Pei-ju, co-founder of The Sound of My Heart Collective, said she started learning about Aboriginal people and colonialism when she moved to Canada from Taiwan a few years ago.

"I had no idea of the Indigenous struggle here," she said.

One of the issues that touched Pei-ju was the extent of the violence against Aboriginal women and how the media contributes to this by reinforcing negative stereotypes.

"I wanted to create a tool to raise awareness and where the women could speak for themselves," she said. "I wanted to help create something to show the strength of Aboriginal women to counter what the media does." She received more than 100 submissions when she put out the call, a sure sign that Indigenous women are anxious to tell their stories.

Faith Turner, a member of the Moose Cree First Nation in Ontario, drove eight hours, one way, to be at the launch. The suicide rate among the youth in her community was so high, she



Rebeka Tabobondung, Publisher of Muskrat Magazine speaking at the Feb. 12 Toronto book launch of Honouring Indigenous Women: Hearts of the Nations-Vol.2.

told the audience, that a state of emergency was declared. She read An Indigenous Woman's Prayer, that says in part:

"We are looking to the dark clouds to subside.

Many of our lives have been shattered, broken and bent...please build us up stronger."

The care and concern for family and the collective in Turner's poem resonates throughout the selections, both in the written pieces and the visual art selections. These come from women who aren't concerned just about themselves. They're working towards the survival of Indigenous nations and Indigenous culture.

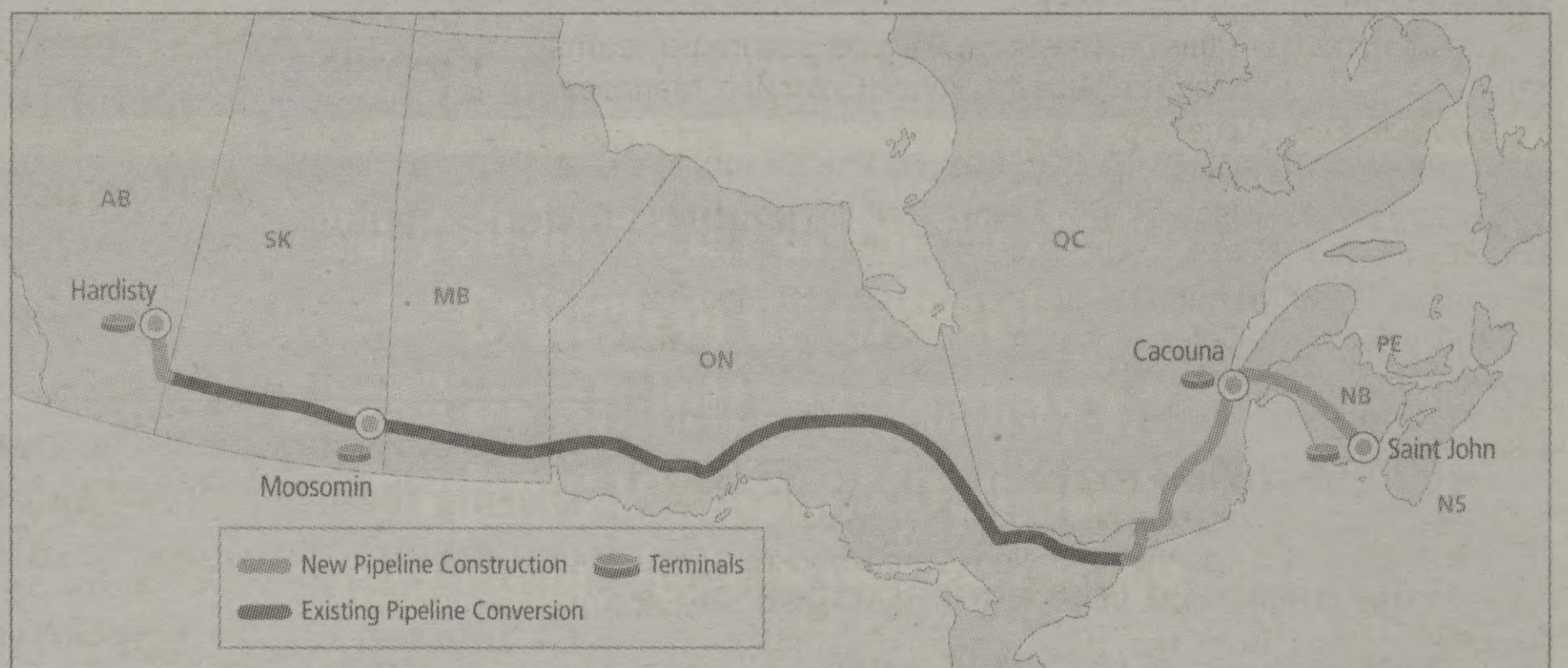
The authenticity of the voices is breathtaking in its bravery and its beauty.

Special guest Audrey Huntley, co-founder of No More Silence, spoke about the community data base she's developing, primarily for Ontario of women who have died violent deaths or are missing. Out of 70 females who died between 1970 and 2013, the oldest was 72 and the youngest was two years old. About 18 were from the 1970s to 1990s. The bulk of the names were after 2000, "so it's not decreasing," Huntley said, "even though the silence is broken. We all really need to keep talking about this."

A free copy of the book may be downloaded at: www.ipsmo.wordpress.com. It is also available for \$10 to \$20 (sliding scale based on income) by emailing: ipsmo@riseup.net. Proceeds from sales will go towards printing more copies.

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Best Western
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Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

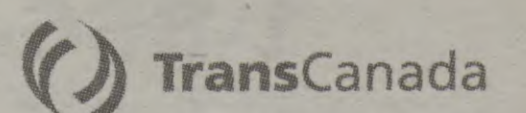
Thursday, April 3
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Pembroke, Ont.
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Tuesday, April 8
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Community Hall
2 Mille Roches Road
Long Sault, Ont.
Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

Wednesday, April 9
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Hours: 4 – 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 10
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Sports Briefs

By Sam Laskaris

Award winners announced

The Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council has announced its top Aboriginal athletes and coaches for 2013.

Christie Lavallee, who won her share of medals at archery events, was chosen as the top female athlete. Braeden Boschman, a talented volleyball and hockey player, was selected as the top male athlete.

Also, Trisha Wilson and Farron Cochrane were named as the top female and male coaches, respectively.

Lavallee, who is from St. Ambroise, had her share of impressive results this past year and was also named Manitoba Archer of the Year. Her highlights included winning a gold medal at the national indoor championships and a silver medal at the outdoor nationals. She also captured gold medals at Manitoba's indoor and outdoor championships and racked up 11 gold medals at regional competitions.

As for Boschman, he was a member of the men's volleyball squad at Alberta's Olds College. Later in the year the Brandon native cracked the roster of the Lundar Falcons, a Junior B squad that competes in the Keystone Junior Hockey League.

Boschman was one of the team's scoring leaders and competed in the league's all-star game.

As for Wilson, who lives in Winnipeg, a highlight in her coaching career occurred this past year as she was a wrestling coach at the Canada Summer Games held in Sherbrooke, Que. Wilson took part in the Games as she was part of the Aboriginal Apprentice Coach Program. In 2013 she was also named as the grassroots co-ordinator for the Manitoba Amateur Wrestling Association.

Cochrane coached his hometown team, the Peguis Juniors, to a Keystone Junior Hockey League championship during the 2012-13 season.

The Peguis side finished atop the regular season standings of its nine-team league after winning 33 out of its 36 matches. The club then won all 11 of its playoff contests en route to capturing the league title. Cochrane has coached the Peguis Juniors since 1994.

Kahnawake hosts nationals again

The Quebec Mohawk community of Kahnawake will once again host the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC). The 13th annual NAHC will begin on April 27 and continue until March 3.

Kahnawake also hosted last year's tournament as well as the 2006 championships. As was the case a year ago, the 2014 event will feature 16 participating clubs, eight in the female division and eight in the male category.

The tournament primarily features bantam- and midget-aged players. But teams in the female division are allowed to carry some overagers as well. The host Quebec squads are called Eastern Door and the North (EDN).

Also taking part this year will be female and male teams representing the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.

And there will also be clubs representing Team Atlantic, from the Maritime provinces, and Team North, representing the country's territories. The host EDN female squad will be seeking its third consecutive national title at this year's tournament.

And the British Columbia entry will be hoping to defend its crown in the boys' category.

Police investigate youth game

Winnipeg police were called in to investigate following some ugly incidents at a recent Aboriginal youth hockey game. The match, held at the Southdale Community Centre on Feb. 16, featured teams from the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and Sagkeeng First Nation competing in the annual Southeast Aboriginal Tournament.

Following a skirmish on the ice, a 12-year-old player incurred various injuries, including a broken wrist, when a referee apparently slipped and fell on top of the youngster while attempting to break up a fight.

A video of the ensuing melee, which was uploaded to YouTube and had received more than 130,000 views in less than a week, showed a coach running onto the ice and attacking the referee who fell on top of the youth.

The video also shows a handful of other adults from both benches coming onto the ice and pushing and shoving near the ref who was attacked. A player also whacks the ref from behind with his stick. No charges were laid immediately following the game but police were continuing their investigation.

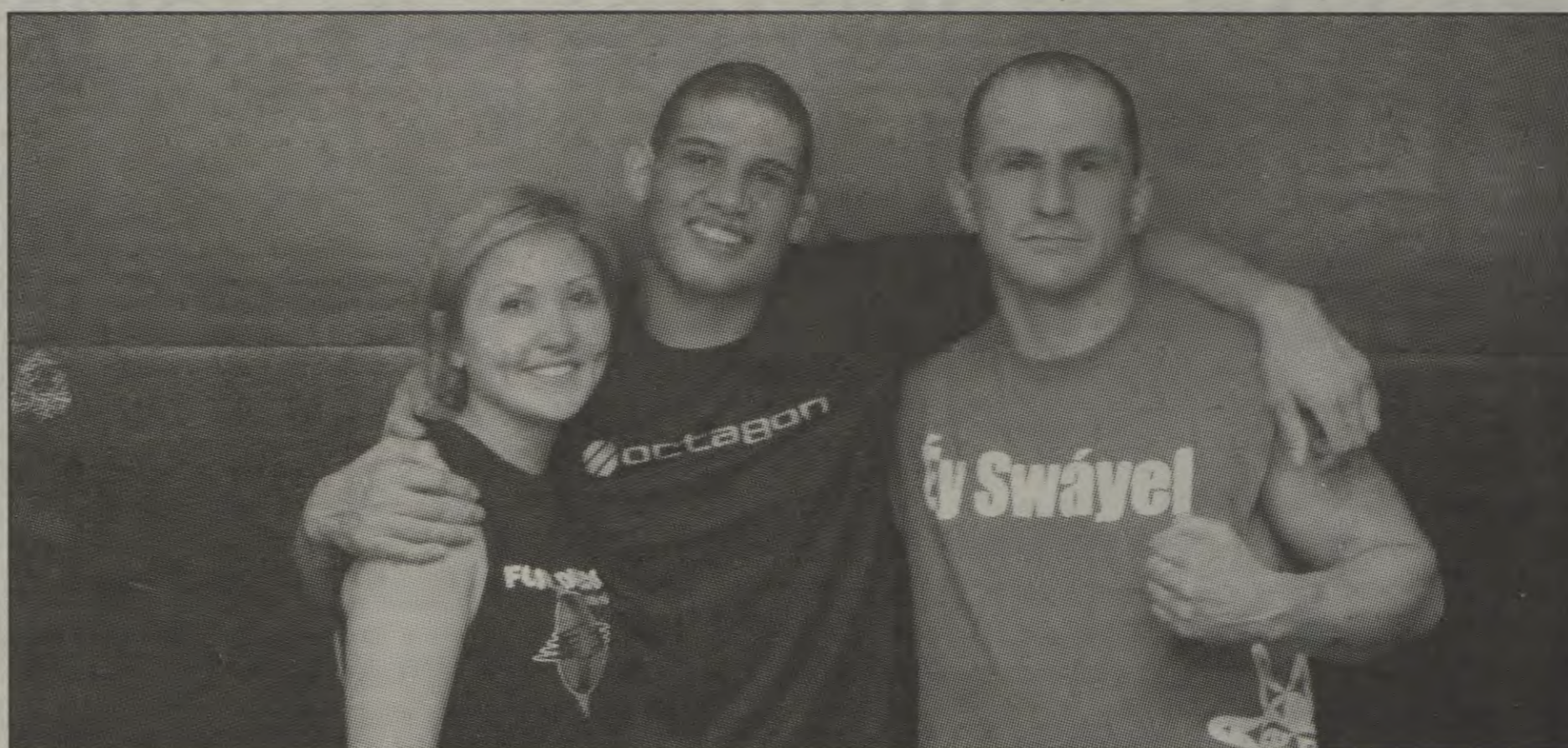
Bear stars for T-Birds

Despite being one of the team's youngest players, Ethan Bear has been more than holding his own in his rookie Western Hockey League season. Bear, a 16-year-old defenceman from Saskatchewan's Ochapowace First Nation, is a member of the Seattle Thunderbirds.

Bear was third among blueliners in team scoring, having collected 18 points in his first 46 contests with the T-Birds. He was also third in scoring among rookies for the Seattle club in addition to being the top-producing first-year defenceman.

[sports]

Discipline and balance the key to fighter's success



Francine Douglas, Kajan Johnson (middle) and Darwin Douglas Sr.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

CHILLIWACK, B.C.

And you thought you were busy. Well, it takes several breaths to list the various jobs and responsibilities of Darwin Douglas.

The 41-year-old, a member of

the Sto:lo Nation who lives in Chilliwack, B.C., is probably somebody you don't want to mess with. Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is something he does professionally.

Douglas and his wife Francine also own the Four Directions Martial Arts Academy in Chilliwack. Besides owning and helping run the gym, Douglas

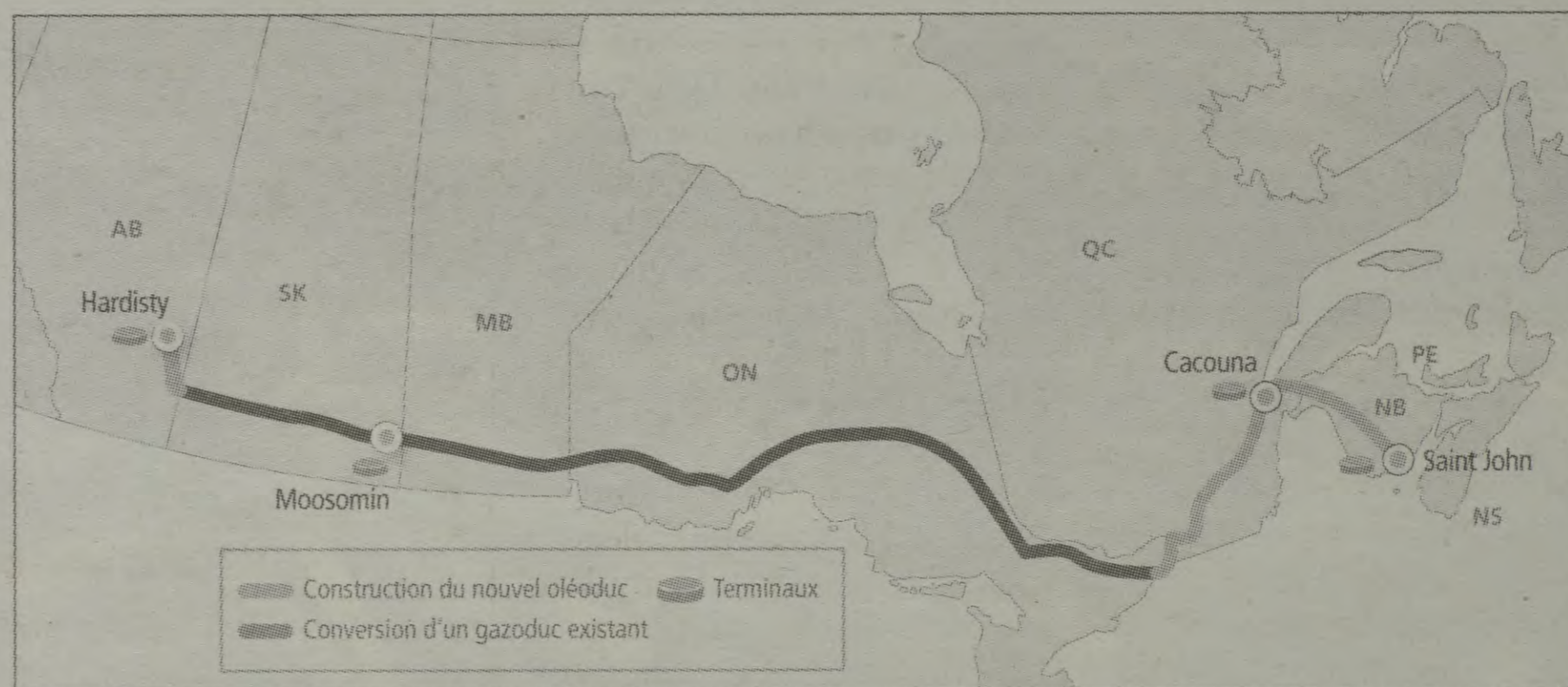
also frequently visits various Aboriginal communities where he spearheads a MMA Youth Leadership Program.

The husband-and-wife duo also organize MMA events. And the couple recently started Cheam Trading Inc., a salmon and seafood company.

(See *Discipline* on page 24.)

Journée portes ouvertes

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[education]
**Federal inmates
 constructing homes
 for First Nation
 communities**



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

A unique partnership trains inmate for re-entry into the labour force, and provides much needed housing on reserve.

By Martha Troian
Windspeaker Contributor

**MUSKEG LAKE CREE
 NATION, Sask.**

For decades, housing problems have plagued First Nation communities across the country. In 2001, the Auditor General of Canada reported a shortage of 8,500 units on First Nation communities with about 44 per

cent of existing units in need of repairs.

Since then, the Indigenous population has ballooned to 1.4 million, up 20 per cent since 2006, according to the 2011 National Household Survey.

But a unique partnership between Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and First Nation communities is helping to alleviate some of these housing shortages. (Continued on page 21.)

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**Geraldine Bear, Councillor
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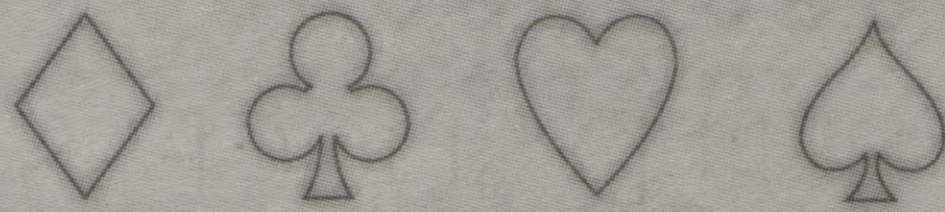
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Canada



[careers & training]
Constructing homes for First Nation communities

(Continued from page 20.)

The community is getting prison inmates, many of them First Nation people, to construct badly needed houses.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, located 130 kilometres northeast of Saskatoon, is one First Nation community benefiting from this house building partnership.

And it couldn't come at a better time.

"A lot of people want to move back home, but we're short on housing," said Chief Clifford Tawpisin Jr.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation has 2,000 members, but only 130 homes on-reserve.

"It [also] made it a good opportunity to provide low, affordable housing for low income." All community members pay rent on-reserve.

The construction is part of Corcan, a rehabilitation program of the CSC. Corcan provides offenders with the employment skills to reintegrate into the labour market.

Offenders can benefit from manufacturing, construction, textiles, and services through on-the-job training and third-party certification.

Operating within 39 federal penitentiaries and community-based operations across the country, Corcan employs more than 2,000 offenders every day.

The first house building partnership between Corcan and First Nations was in 2010. Inmates at Riverbend

Institution built a two-storey house for La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan.

Learning from La Ronge Indian Band, Muskeg Lake took it upon themselves to become part of this unique partnership.

This is the first time for Muskeg Lake Cree Nation to work with Correctional Service Canada, a 'win-win' for everyone, said Chief Tawpisin.

"These inmates are about to be released so picking up a training program so that they have opportunities when they're released, it's that much more successful," Tawpisin said.

[And] the quality of the housing is fantastic."

To date, Corcan has built a total of four houses for First Nation communities: one for La Ronge Indian Band Reserve, two for Muskeg Lake Reserve, and one for the Mohawk Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga) community.

In addition, two houses are in the process of being built inside Saskatchewan Penitentiary for Muskeg Lake Reserve.

Corcan is also building a two-storey duplex at Frontenac Institution and a bungalow at Beaver Creek Institution for the Ojibwas of Whitefish River First Nation, Ontario.

Both units are scheduled to be shipped to the Ojibwas of Whitefish River First Nation this fiscal year.

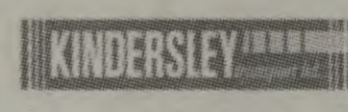
CSC said other partnerships are currently being explored.



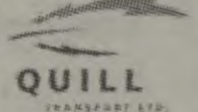
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[footprints] Willie Courtoreille

Band councillor

loved life on the land

By Dianne Meili

When the long-awaited Elders' care centre in Fort Chipewyan, Alta., opens this spring, the Mikisew Cree First Nation will dedicate it in memory of Willie Courtoreille.

The facility's family room will be named after the long-time band councillor, who talked about his community needing the facility for the past three decades.

Sadly, Willie was killed in a vehicle accident before he could see his dream come true. He lost his life on Dec. 10, 2013 Highway 63 about 40 kilometres south of Fort McMurray, a route many say should be twinned because so many have lost their lives travelling it.

"My dad was headed to Edmonton on council business, as he did so often, when his truck was hit head on by an armoured vehicle," said son Peter Courtoreille. "He was always on the go, either for the band or for his family, even though he was 73. I don't know where he got his energy."

The driver of the armoured car was also killed, and his passenger was injured.

Peter said it was also typical of his dad to want the best for others – in this case for the Elders of Fort Chipewyan to be comfortable and to be able to stay in their own community as they aged.

"He was very dedicated to his family and community," said Steve Courtoreille, chief of the Mikisew Cree First Nation and Willie's brother, in an article published in the Northern Journal.

"This centre is the perfect way to honour him. He was very knowledgeable in our traditional knowledge and culture, which

lives in our Elders," Steve said, adding his brother was his mentor and friend, often advising him in leadership matters with wise words.

In earlier years, Willie's knowledge of the land and water was invaluable to Wood Buffalo National Park's fire response team. He also worked for Parks Canada giving interpretive tours and revelled in sharing his familiarity of the natural world with visitors.

"He knew which portages were grown in, and which were still open, stuff like that," explained Peter. Willie grew up on the land at Birch River, about 70 kilometres west of Fort Chipewyan, and trapped for a living as a young man, he added.

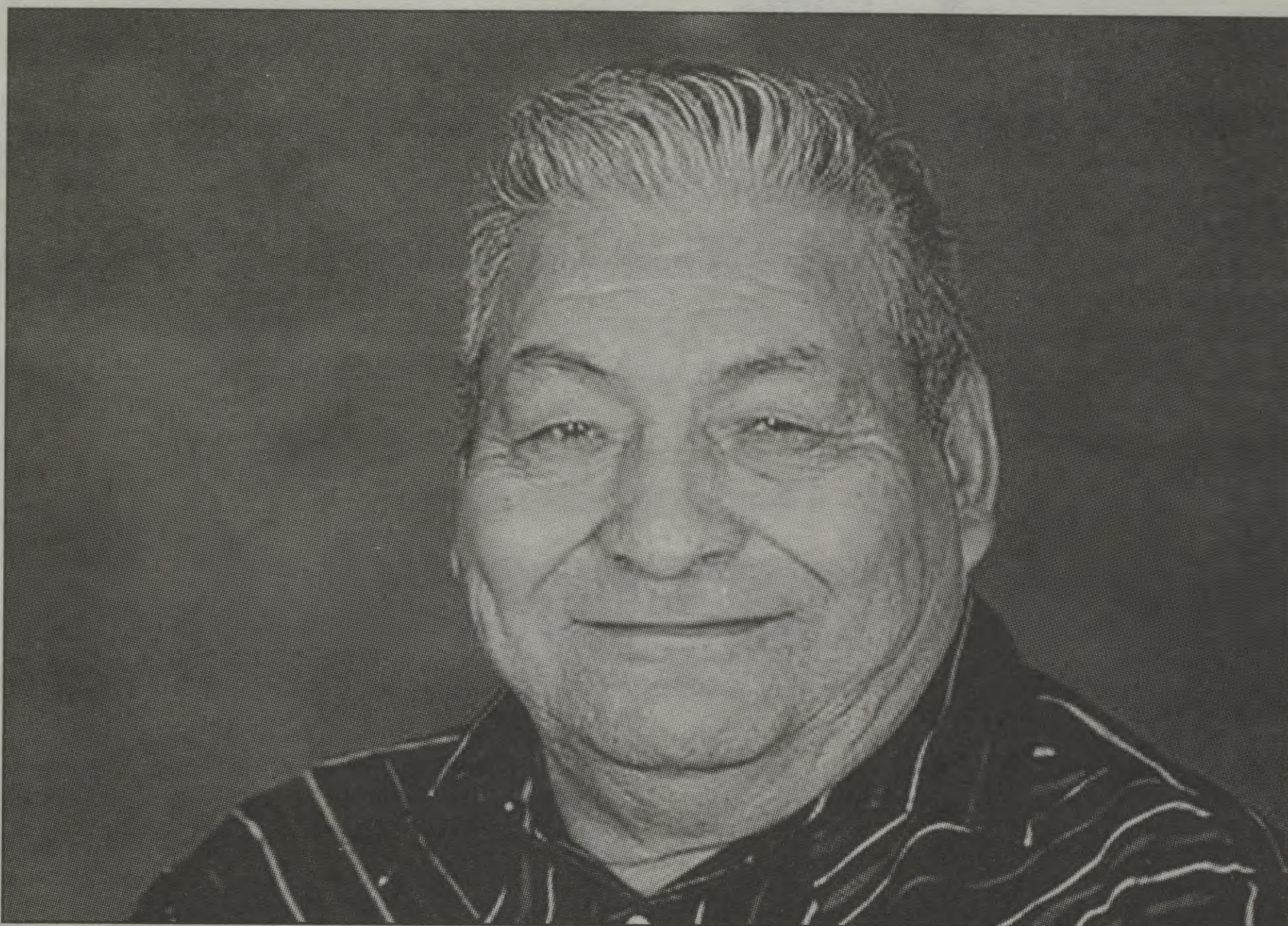
"Even after he started working, his free time was spent hunting, hiking and fishing. He was the best trapper in Fort Chip and he wanted to teach that knowledge to all of us. He wanted our family to keep the traditions alive. Even though I work at Shell, I try to honour what he inspired in us."

Jumbo Fraser, a friend of Willie's, told Peter an anecdote about his father's lack of faith in modern inventions.

"They were hunting around Uranium City, west of here quite a ways, and it got a little late. A couple of the guys had a GPS tracking system to find their way home, but Willie said 'I don't need that, my GPS is in my head'. Well, sure enough, he pulled back into Fort Chip a good two hours ahead of those other two."

David Poitras, who attended Fort Chipewyan's Holy Angels residential school with Willie, shared an amusing story about their youth.

He told the Northern Journal



Willie Courtoreille

that one year, a visiting priest issued the students a challenge: the boy or girl who could write "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us" the most times would win a pure white sled puppy he had been breeding.

"We were all writing in every spare minute we had. We all wanted that puppy," Poitras recalled.

When it was announced that Willie had won the puppy, disappointment descended on the other students who had been writing their fingers to the bone. But, 40 years later, when Poitras met up with Willie around a camp fire in Wood Buffalo Park, he asked him what it had been like to own the puppy everyone wanted to take home.

Willie's response startled Poitras. "He said, 'It didn't do me

any good to win it,' and so I asked him, 'How come?' He said, 'It died a month after I got it because I cheated. I had two other guys writing for me, too!'"

Despite his childhood deceitfulness, from all accounts, Willie grew up to be an upstanding community member.

"He was an awesome father and he phoned me just about every day. People, not just our family, went to him when they had a problem. And he'd give you the last dollar he had in his pocket if you needed it," said Peter.

"He was outspoken, but he knew a lot about life in a spiritual way. He was only one person, yet he shared his big heart with everyone."

An acquaintance from Toronto told a story about Willie at his

funeral, attended by about 600 people, demonstrating the band councillor's intolerance for bullying, according to Peter.

"He said he was in a meeting with my dad when a lawyer hired by the government started to use big words and speak in a condescending way to the Aboriginal people in the room. Apparently my dad just stared this lawyer in the eyes and then he stood up. That's all. He just got up from his chair. My dad was not a small man and I guess the lawyer just shut up and never said another word."

Willie was born on Feb. 16, 1940 and is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mary, seven brothers, nine children, 39 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

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Health Watch

Sinclair's family pulls out of inquest

Brian Sinclair's family and Aboriginal groups have pulled out of the second phase of Judge Tim Preston's inquest, which has narrowed its scope to look at wait times in emergency rooms and not the treatment of Aboriginal patients. The inquest is the result of the death of Brian Sinclair. The man was left unattended in the Health Sciences Centre's emergency room in Winnipeg on the afternoon of Sept. 19, 2008. Thirty-four hours after he arrived at the hospital he was found dead in his wheelchair after midnight. He had not been triaged and he did not receive any care during his time there. Aboriginal Legal Services and Ka Ni Kanichihk have also withdrawn leaving only the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the Manitoba Nurses' Union as participants. The second phase of the inquest was scheduled to last three weeks.

Girl's suicide death underscores problems in federal, BC services

A report by Children and Youth representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond on the 2011 suicide death of a 14-year-old Aboriginal girl on reserve slams the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development for its failure to protect the child. "This tragedy might well have been prevented had we at least tried to provide some service to a child in distress," Turpel-Lafond writes in the 110-page report, *Lost in the Shadows*. Turpel-Lafond said the ministry's regional office was in disarray and the local Aboriginal agency did not have funding to go on-reserve and support the girl with mental health services. "A situation developed where no one reported abuse and no one investigated it," the report said. "This dangerous situation occurred during the period of highest need of this child." Turpel-Lafond also criticized the federal government for ignoring its legal duty to deliver services to on-reserve children with special needs and mental health issues.

Study shows contaminants found in game meat

A study undertaken by the University of Manitoba has found high levels of mercury, arsenic, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in organs and muscle tissues collected from moose, beavers, muskrats and waterfowl near Fort Chipewyan, Alta. Contaminants found in the organs of the animals traditionally eaten by First Nations people were high enough to be dangerous for regular consumption, although muscle tissue was low enough to be relatively safe, said lead researcher Stephane McLachlan. The correlation between the oilsands industry and heavy metals found in the animals is strong, considering "the oilsands is the largest emitter of arsenic and mercury" in Alberta, he said. The study is part of a holistic research project analysing First Nations in northern Alberta and incorporating local traditional environment, food sources and health.

Test project sees increase in cancer screening

The Under/Never Screened test project, out of the cancer centre in Sudbury, encouraged people in more than 20 First Nations to be screened for breast and colorectal cancer. About 1,700 people took advantage of the screening program during the past three years, increasing rates of breast cancer screening 13 per cent and colorectal screening eight per cent, said Natalie Aubin, a director with the Northeast Cancer Centre. Through collaboration among Aboriginal health organizations, the communities, and the cancer centre, officials said the project identified barriers to cancer screening, such as lack of transportation and culturally appropriate materials and came up with solutions that directly addressed those barriers. "This project represents a major step in ensuring that our citizens are afforded the opportunity to be screened much earlier, and with resultant better outcomes," said Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee of the Union of Ontario Indians in a press release.

N.W.T. commits to anti-poverty action plan

The government of the Northwest Territories will invest \$2.6 million in actions that are being taken now or will be taken to address poverty, including supporting day shelter programs in Yellowknife and Inuvik, building new housing in small communities and providing nutritious food directly to children and youth through established programs. "Government alone cannot eliminate poverty," said Minister of Health and Social Services Glen Abernethy, in a news release. "The GNWT is committed to continuing our work in partnership with non-government organizations, community and Aboriginal governments, business and industry and other partners towards the development of a multi-stakeholder N.W.T. action plan. I am confident that working together will bring us closer to our goal of eliminating poverty in the Northwest Territories."

MOU focuses on midwifery care for the marginalized

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives that will improve access to midwifery care amongst younger parents and marginalized members within their networks, like people who are incarcerated, within the criminal justice system or child welfare system, HIV-positive, Two Spirited, Trans and gender non-conforming. Among the goals is to help bridge the gap between culturally safe sex education and midwifery care. The team will mutually support increasing education and the sharing of skills, while collaborating to jointly offer workshops to their communities.

Indigenous women filmmakers celebrated with festival screenings

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

VANCOUVER

Two Indigenous filmmakers feature prominently in this month's Vancouver International Women in Film Festival.

But despite their documentaries' strikingly different topics – one a profile of Gemini-winning actor Michelle Thrush, the other about the history of a B.C. First Nation – both spoke to Windspeaker about the importance of honouring their subjects' stories.

The festival's March 9 screenings include Shannon Kaplun's film *Michelle Thrush* about the Arctic Air Cree star, and Lisa Jackson's *How a People Live* about Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw nation. The ethics of documentary filmmaking also emerged as common themes in the work of both.

"It is a huge responsibility," Kaplun told Windspeaker. "It's a huge trust relationship, and I always try to honour the people whose stories I help facilitate in a way that honours their true spirit."

"In my whole career, any time I could, I try to find inspiration about women. Indigenous women are the most vulnerable in our society, but they're also some of the strongest. But you don't hear the strong stories; you hear the sad and tragic stories."

Kaplun's profile of the Calgary-based Cree actor – who has appeared in films with Johnny Depp and Benicio Del Toro, and currently stars in Aboriginal People's Television Network's *Blackstone* – is part of a series of women's profiles soon to air on APTN, but premiering in Vancouver.

"I wanted to put these women up to show the world," she said. "I'm proud to call them my friends."

"But I really felt Michelle [Thrush]'s story was one of the strongest. She gave all of herself to me in our interviews. I have a huge admiration for her. She made herself vulnerable to me and her audience."

Thrush's story follows her path after a childhood surrounded by poverty and stereotypes. Kaplun's film addresses the actor's struggles to believe in herself before discovering her talents. But even then, Kaplun said, "she didn't go down the traditional

Hollywood route" but "carved out her own path."

"Michelle is not just an amazing Aboriginal actor," she added, "she's an amazing actor."

"We all know about the despair, downfalls and struggles that people have. But we wanted to inspire our audience."

The film is part of a series Kaplun has directed about some of the most high-profile Indigenous celebrities – including musician Buffy Sainte Marie, model Ashley Callinbull and hockey player Jordan Nolan.

Another Indigenous-made film screening at the festival is *How a People Live*, which uses oral story-telling and archival documents to explore the history of the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw, a remote First Nation in B.C. who were forced to move in 1964.

But today the community continues to honour and reclaim their history, and celebrate their coastal culture. As the film's director, Jackson said that water emerged as the film's central metaphor and is featured throughout, and helps frame the powerful narrative.

"These people have been through incredible adversity," Jackson told Windspeaker, "but there's such a joyfulness about them."

"They're such great story-tellers, there's such a family love. That was one of the most amazing things. They're still struggling with so many things as a community, but there's so much strength and love among them."

The film's screening will be attended by members of the First Nation, including its chief negotiator Colleen Hemphill and Port Hardy councillor Jessie Hemphill. But despite being commissioned by the band to document their history, Jackson insisted she had the freedom to tell the community's harrowing story in her way.

"Technically, it was a commission," she said. "But, in a lot of ways, I had the most creative freedom I've ever had. They just said, 'We're on board with what you're trying to do, we totally trust you.'"

The end result is a documentary that deftly weaves together contemporary footage of Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw life, story-telling Elders, archival footage and primary documents, including diaries of the government's Indian Agent.

One of the challenges of historical films is ensuring that what she called "colonial documents" aren't given more weight that oral stories and traditions.

"One of the things that I am proud of in the film is the interweaving of historical narrative and the traditional lifestyle," she explained. "There's sometimes a sense (in documentaries) of privileging historical documents."

"The importance of oral history was on my mind. It's always been others saying what their culture was like. It was clear these people were amazing story-tellers themselves... Very often historical archive materials are seen as the colonial view. But I thought, 'How can these images be used in a way that is appropriate to help tell their own story?'"

Jackson's film also discusses the devastating 1862 smallpox epidemic, which historians believe killed one-third of the B.C. Indigenous population.

Asked about her documentary filmmaking influences, she cited two celebrated National Film Board of Canada directors: Donald Brittain, whose 1965 film *Memorandum* followed a Holocaust survivor's journey back to a concentration camp; and Abanaki director Alanis Obomsawin, whose 1993 film *Kanesatake: 270 Years of Resistance* drew widespread acclaim for telling the story of the Oka Crisis.

"She tells people's stories in a particular way – with respect," she said of Obomsawin. "She has such an abiding respect for her subjects and the people she deals with."

Jackson also credited the ImagineNative festival with nurturing many Indigenous women directors.

"There's always the statistics from the industry about how there are so few female filmmakers," she said. "But in the Indigenous filmmaking community it's more than 50 per cent, and in general documentaries have a lot more women – I don't know why."

"The film industry, by necessity, is quite military in style. You have to pull off a lot of big things, it has to be structured... I've been inspired by filmmakers who are able to bring different styles to their filmmaking."

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University opens Office of Indigenous Medical Education

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

The primary focus of University of Toronto's newly-opened Office of Indigenous Medical Education (OIME) is "to provide a welcoming home for Indigenous medical students," according to Mark Hanson, associate dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Finances.

At the opening on Feb. 3, Hanson admitted "our numbers are small right now." When pressed for numbers, he said they have just more than five Indigenous students in their medical school. This isn't at all surprising considering the high drop-out rates among Aboriginal youth, combined with the well-known deficiencies in funding provided by the federal government for First Nations education, and the lack of Aboriginal physician role models.

Not only does U of T want to change this, but they also want to ensure the provision of a higher quality of health care to Indigenous people.

They've staffed the OIME with four Aboriginal people, including elder Cat Criger. Rochelle Allan, a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, is the Indigenous Peoples Undergraduate Medical Education Program Coordinator. Dr. Jason Pennington is working with Dr. Lisa Richardson as Curricular Co-leads for Indigenous Health Education. Richardson is Anishnawbe from



Spirit Wind sings at the Feb. 3 opening of U of T's Office of Indigenous Medical Education (OIME). Rochelle Allan, Indigenous Peoples Program Coordinator for the OIME is second from the left.

Killarney, Ont. Pennington is a member of the Wendake First Nation in Quebec and a graduate of U of T's medical school. He's also a general surgeon at Scarborough General Hospital.

"We're introducing Indigenous health and experiences," said Pennington, "including the social determinants of Aboriginal health. We're giving a little bit of a history lesson, talking about residential schools, poverty, poor water quality. We're also talking about what is probably the largest factor that affects all these things - the lack of self-determination and treaties not being honoured."

"We also want to bring in Aboriginal health concepts like the medicine wheel," Pennington continued, "that can be incorporated into medicine." He believes that Aboriginal people have a lot to teach western medicine about healing and about

treating the whole person, rather than the disease. The administration is very open to this, he said.

A session on cultural safety is being introduced to teach medical students, "how to provide care in a culturally safe manner, recognizing their biases to the patient's background or religion or race or sexual orientation, being aware of it so that their interaction with the patient can be much more therapeutic. Make the patient feel much more safe in their interaction with the doctor."

Pennington acknowledges that the school drop-out rate and the poverty among Aboriginal people needs to be addressed. Outreach to the communities to show young people the possibilities for a career in medicine is imperative and "that's one of the things our office wants to do," he said. But, "it takes time and a lot of hours

and a lot of people to do that. It's going to be a long process." What he hopes is that physicians trained at U of T will take action to fight for social change once they become aware of the issues facing Aboriginal people.

The Summer Mentorship Program in the Health Sciences is another way, said Mark Hanson, that U of T tries to level the playing field. A four-week program for students of Aboriginal or African ancestry, it includes job shadowing, lectures and hands-on activities in Dentistry, Medicine and Nursing. Applicants have to be at least 16 years of age and are required to have completed a Grade 10 or 11 Science course, or a Grade 10 or 11 Social Sciences and Humanities course.

There are also a number of bursaries and scholarships available to Indigenous students.

The OIME, said Hanson, will make sure Indigenous students are aware of these opportunities, as well as the financial aid available to all students with high financial need.

Pennington said there are no plans to teach specific Indigenous healing methodologies. "It's good for the students to learn about Indigenous healing concepts," he said, "but actually to make them think they're going to be traditional healers? No, I don't think so!"

Music for the opening was provided by the Metis Fiddler Quartet and women's hand drum group, Spirit Wind.

For more information about the OIME, contact rochelle.allan@utoronto.ca. To apply for the Summer Mentorship Program, visit www.ohpsa.utoronto.ca/smp.

Discipline and balance the key to fighter's success

(Continued from page 19.)

And not to be forgotten is the fact Douglas is also a councillor for the Cheam First Nation. He's in the first year of a two-year term, having made a return to politics after an absence of about a decade. He had previously served three terms as a councillor for his First Nation.

Douglas believes the reason he can juggle his numerous duties is because of what he's learned from his athletic pursuits.

"The greatest thing about martial arts is the discipline and the balance," he said. "We're incredibly busy but I give a lot of credit (for the juggling I can do) to the training."

Though he had dabbled in kickboxing and Muay Thai (Thai kickboxing) in his teen years, it was less than a decade ago that Douglas became involved with MMA.

"Some people would think it's a little late to be getting into it in my early 30s," he said. "But I've always been athletic. I've always done other sports. And it didn't take me long. I was training for about a year-and-a-half before I had my first fight."

Douglas was victorious in his first pro event back in June of 2008. His pro record currently stands at 4-6.

Douglas' most recent fight was on Jan. 18 at the River Rock Casino Resort in Richmond, B.C.† He defeated Bill Fraser of Comax, B.C.† in that three-round bout.

With that victory, Douglas, who competes in the light heavyweight category, was also able to avenge a loss he had suffered against Fraser in August of 2011 during a bout in Vernon, B.C.

Douglas' next fight is expected

to be May 29, also at the River Rock Casino Resort. But an opponent for his bout has yet to be announced.

Despite his age, Douglas is hoping to continue fighting for a few more years.

"My body is in good shape," he said. "There are younger guys in their early 20s and mid-20s who are way more banged up than I am."

Though he coaches and trains others in the gym and passes on wisdom through the MMA leadership programs, Douglas does not hide what he enjoys doing most.

"I like the fighting," he said. "There's nothing quite like the excitement of getting in a cage and fighting. It's a good exercise. It builds character and you learn a lot about yourself."

Not surprisingly, both of Douglas' children spend some

time at the gym as well.

Darwin Jr., who is 10, is into Muay Thai. He has already been part of various demonstration events.

"It's really nice to pass down some knowledge and to see him fight," Douglas said.

His five-year-old daughter Ava is also a regular at the gym. She practices jiu-jitsu.

"The gym is a big part of our lives," Douglas said. "It also gives us a healthy lifestyle. Fighting is only part of it."

Even a few years ago Francine Douglas didn't think the gym would play such a huge role in her life as it does now.

Her husband had been spending countless hours at the gym.

"Eight years ago when he started training at the gym I never saw him," she said.

She didn't hesitate though

when the opportunity arose to buy the gym about three-and-a-half years ago. At the time it was called Revolution Martial Arts.

When they took it over the Douglases changed the name.

"Four Directions means balance," said Francine Douglas, who handles the scheduling and bookkeeping at the facility. "That's what this gym does for us."

As for her husband, he said these days he's finding he is having to defend his sport less and less.

"It's gotten a lot better in the last two, three years," he said of the MMA awareness. "Even five years ago there was a very bad stereotype of the sport. More and more people though are looking at it and realizing MMA fighters are the best conditioned athletes in the world."

Atleo receives pushback

(Continued from page 9.)

He said he will continue to advocate for transitional funding as there are a number of First Nations that are ready to move ahead now with changes to their education systems. However, he also noted that some First Nations have indicated to him that they

need time to hold roundtables with membership to get guidance.

That the federal government's funding commitment doesn't kick in until after the next election is not a concern to Atleo.

"Now we've got this budget commitment and I see it as an important commitment. I believe

the opposition leaders have expressed support for this announcement as well... so you would expect then going forward, regardless of what happens in the next election, this announcement of this budget will be honoured by the federal government," he said.

"That's what I would expect and continue to press for."

Reform of First Nations education came under the title of "Training the workforce for tomorrow" in the 2014 budget and not under the budget section entitled "Supporting families and communities."

Atleo said that while the government may view education of First Nations people as a means to fill workforce shortages, "our people recognize this as being multi-faceted. We want our kids to be educated and not just to feed a labour force, but to receive the language and culture."