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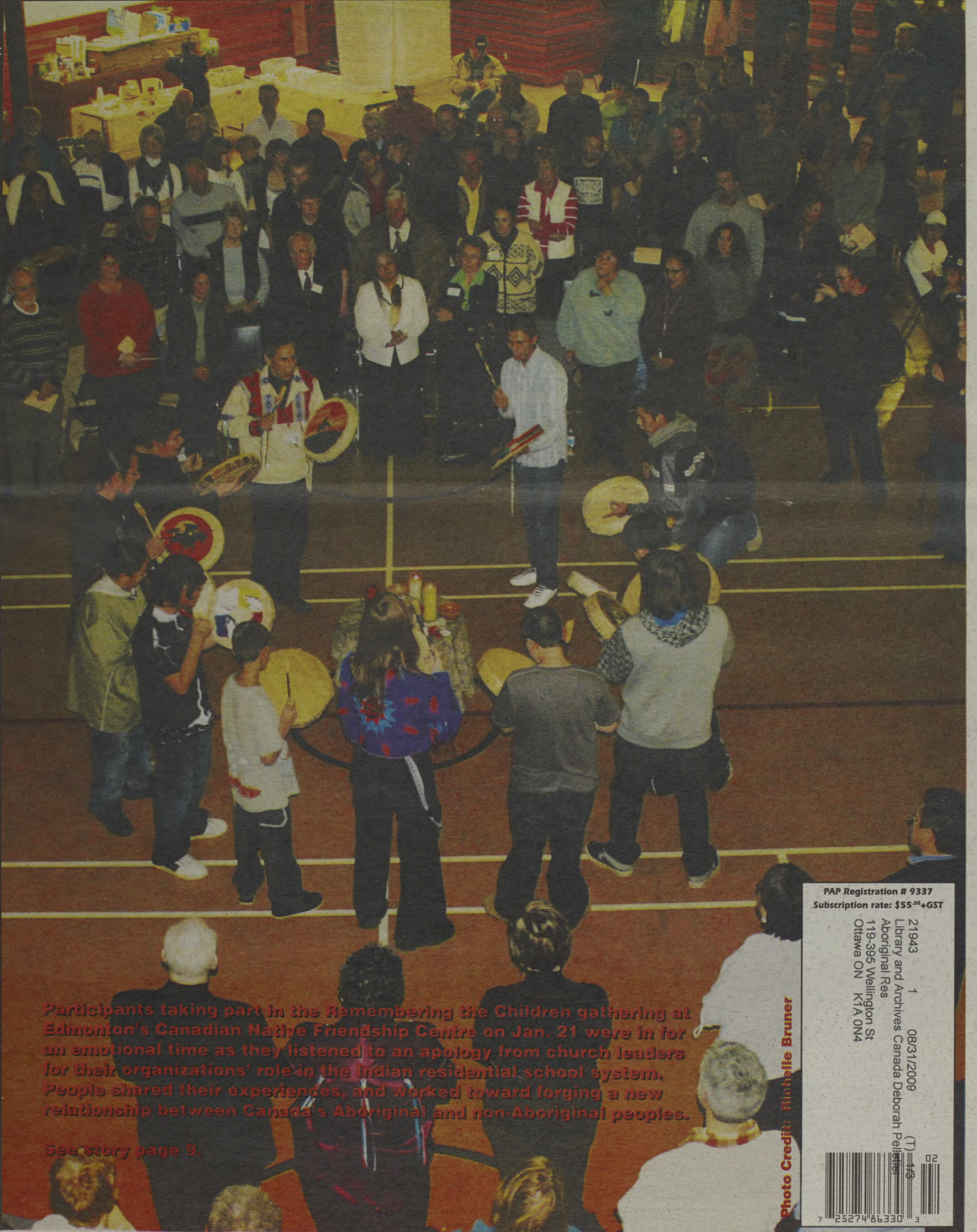
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Participants taking part in the Remembering the Children gathering at Edmonton's Canadian Native Friendship Centre on Jan. 21 were in for an emotional time as they listened to an apology from church leaders for their organizations' role in the Indian residential school system. People shared their experiences, and worked toward forging a new relationship between Canada's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

See story page 9.

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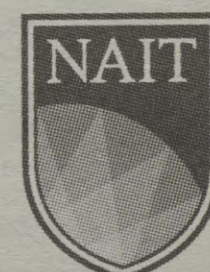
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Canada

Features

AFN hopeful, but remains vigilant in wake of new budget 8

The 2009 federal budget delivered on Jan. 27 has fallen well short of expectations voiced by First Nations leaders, and the result will be increased lobbying to get those needs met.

Canadians can overcome the past and the pain 9

The "Remembering The Children" gathering held at the Canadian Native Friendship Centre on Jan. 21 was intended as an opportunity to share, heal and walk together in a new phase of Canada's journey in the post-residential school system era.

Win in Manitoba should reach across the Prairies 10

On Jan. 8, Will Gooden, a Métis man from Manitoba, received a favorable judgment in a court case that involved an incident that has been hanging over his head for four years.

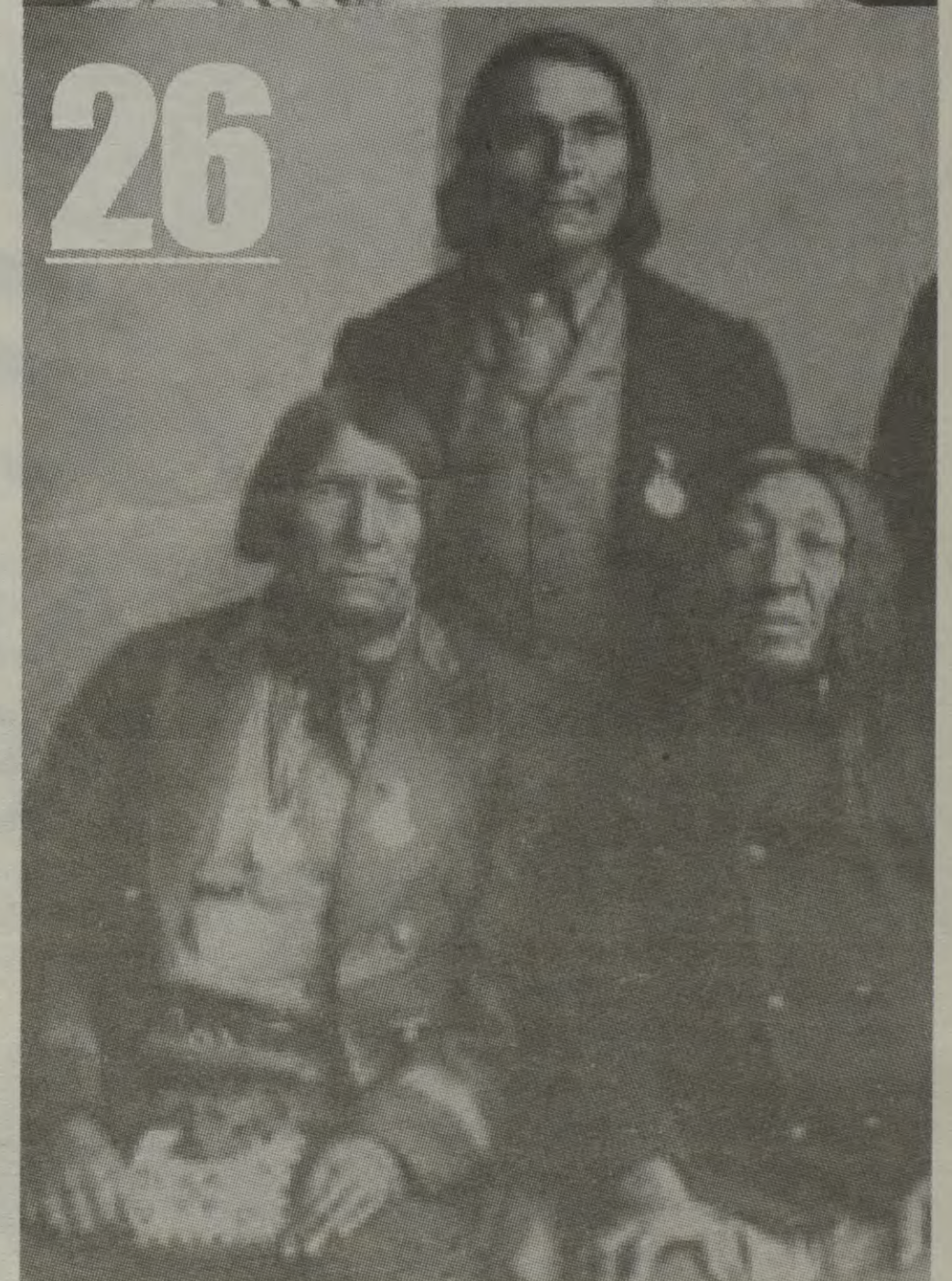
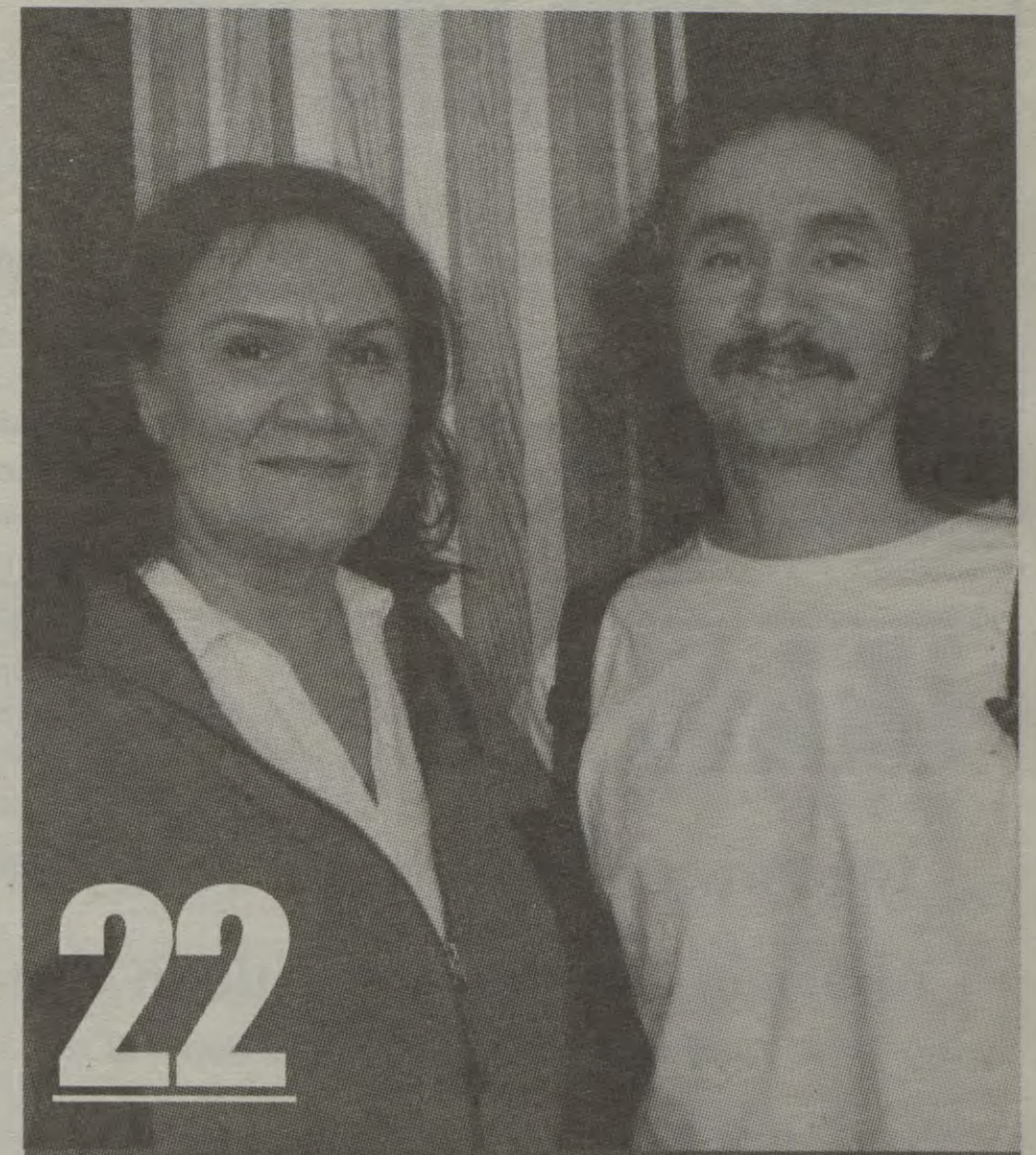
Timeframe too short to "refresh" claims 11

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) contends that a six-month window given to First Nations to "refresh" their specific claims for disputed reserve lands is a "fair offering," but the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) insists that the "arbitrary" timeline is not long enough.

Departments

- [rants and raves] 5
- [what's happening] 7
- [windspeaker briefs] 9
- [strictly speaking] 12
- [windspeaker confidential] 13
- [radio's most active] 13
- [education] 15 & 16
- [health] 17
- [provincial news] 18 to 21
- [careers & training] 22
- [sports] 23
- [careers] 24 & 25
- [footprints] Ahtahkakoop 26

In 1816, a boy was born on a night when the people said the stars blanketed the sky, more numerous and brighter than usual. He was given the name Ahtahkakoop, the Cree word for Starblanket and his mother wrapped him in a blanket sewn with pointed stars.



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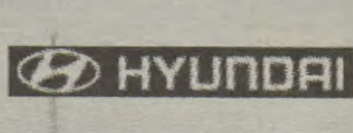


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Editorial: Loaves and fishes budget

The scatter-shot approach to federal budget making employed by the Conservative government on Jan. 27 has put a smile on the faces of many. There was something in the budget for everyone. Tax breaks for the middle class, some social housing for the poor, five extra weeks for those unlucky enough to have lost their jobs in this time of economic crisis, but lucky enough to qualify for employment insurance. Ditches will be dug, cement will be poured, buildings will go up, roads will be rolled out and, low and behold, on reserves there may be schools built. Everybody's happy. And why not? The entire nation came begging, and with the voting public's blessing, the Conservatives plunged into the icy waters of debt and came up showering the nation with gold coins.

'One for you, and one for you, and there's one for you.' But therein lay the trouble. One? One gold coin? How is that going to help?

The problem with scatter-shot is that it covers a wide area; fine when attempting to bring down a pheasant, but what about an elephant, and that's what is staring Canada in the eyes today, a big raging elephant tossing around the limp body of our economy like a cloth doll.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's attempt to quiet that elephant is akin to throwing a few peanuts about its feet, so unfocused is his approach, but what's important is that it has also put a smile on the face of his boss, Prime Minister Stephen Harper. There was something in the budget for him too. Time. New Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff dared not defeat this budget. Another few months, at least, in power for Harper; another few months to set traps for the Liberals, to work on the voters in Ontario, to figure out a recovery plan for vote-getting in Quebec.

But that's all he's got, because folks are already starting to notice that a gold coin doesn't go very far, and some, like the mayors of large cities, who begged for a stimulus package that

would jump-start their shovel-ready infrastructure projects, have begun to notice that their coins have strings attached.

For First Nations and other Aboriginal peoples, we're just happy to be finally included: \$515 million for infrastructure—schools and clean water. Such luxury. So happy are we with this nod to our needs (though we hoped for so much more), we didn't notice that many of the gold coins we were offered were pulled out of our own back pockets. Call us skeptical, but we think we are going to discover that the monies in the budget earmarked for Aboriginal peoples will be the only truly "green" thing about this document—they'll be recycled, repackaged and redirected.

To say that the Harper Conservatives have a credibility problem would be a gross understatement.

A-in-chut Shawn Atleo, the BC regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said it best when he said the devil is in the details. He was speaking about a previous promise of funding made to fight pine beetle devastation in British Columbia, only to see monies promised for that same disaster relief promised in this budget. Is this more money, or the same money flowing from a different tap?

"We have reason to be cautious as this budget appears to have abandoned previous promises that First Nations had been counting on," Atleo said.

In this loaves and fishes budget, it seems that Aboriginal peoples are again left getting the crumbs.

"I urge them to see this budget not as complete strategy, but rather as an initial phase that must be improved on quickly and effectively to ensure First Nations receive their full share," said Atleo.

Amen, brother, Amen.

Windspeaker

Letter: We will recover, and soon

Dear Editor:

I am writing on this very cool and historic Saturday, Jan. 17, with the Obama/Biden train about to leave Philadelphia enroute to Washington DC. It is getting unprecedented coverage on the TV news channels. Many Canadians, including ordinary Canadians, will be enroute from Canada via bus and taking other modes of transit. While we are going through difficult economic times all over North America, the promise of change in the United States has captured the attention and hope of millions.

Change was overdue for North America. The Security Exchange Commission (SEC) in the USA gave up its oversight of most all things financial and greed quickly took over resulting in this worldwide recession for many. As I write, steps are being taken to make the necessary changes to stop and prevent the unbridled greed. I'm not so sure that our federal government yet understands that rules need to be enforced and additional rules need to be put in place to avoid repeats. The Ontario Security Commission (OSC) and the federal banks regulator need to accept a great part of the blame for the hurt to our economy that has occurred in Canada.

There are those that want to establish a Federal Securities Regulator, similar to the SEC, but one has to question the wisdom of that for ordinary Canadians. The provincial regulators, with the exception of the OSC in Toronto, are not to blame for this crisis. It was the banks and part

of Bay Street that bought and sold toxic financial paper. And it is argued that our situation might be worse if the provincial regulators had not been in place. Federal regulation does not replace common sense.

That said business has not ground to a halt as the media would like us to believe. These first two weeks in my business is booming. People have decided to just get on with life and business. Schools, universities and community colleges will carry on. Food and health care will go on. Car and truck repair shops will go on. The oil and gas exploration will go on, at a reduced and more normal pace. Loans are available to non-risky persons and companies. And so on. We, the people, are getting on with our lives. It's a pity that "Ottawa" is so far behind the populace.

Americans are saving again. I hope that Canadians will do the same and will stop living on credit. Savings can be loaned to allow business expansion, can be loaned for mortgages and can be used in the future for retirement comforts.

The Norwegians have shown the world how to capture CO2 and store it deep underground. Now we can use coal for power plants to supplement wind and solar. The next few years will be good, sooner than you may realize. Sooner than the media will realize. Have a great year all!

Don Wilson

[rants and raves]

Page 5 Chatter

AUTHOR, EDUCATOR AND SELF-DESCRIBED

activist Gerald Taiaiake Alfred has posted a review of the book *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry* (Widdowson and Howard) on his Web site at www.taiaiake.com. Readers will remember this work as the hymnbook that columnist Margaret Wente was singing from when she wrote her notorious article that stated pre-contact First Nations were less than their European counterparts on the evolutionary scale. Alfred said in reading *Disrobing* he was prepared for a hard-hitting critique of the injustice of Canada/Indigenous relations in which white lawyers and consultants and "sell-out Aboriginals" get rich on the misery of the people they claim to serve. What the book delivered, however, was disappointment, Alfred contends. "[A] collection of distortions, omissions, and exaggerations... Widdowson and Howard get up in the morning and eat a dog's breakfast of outmoded communist ideology and rotten anthropological theories washed down with strong racial prejudices inherited from their own unexamined colonial upbringings." Alfred said *Disrobing* relies on a decade-old concept—the "Aboriginal industry"—that Métis writer Howard Adams (*Prison of Grass* published by Fifth House) and Alfred (*Peace, Power, Righteousness* published by Oxford University Press) both advanced in their books. In *Disrobing* however it is used to argue for the "dissolution of Indigenous culture and the assimilation of Indigenous people into the whitestream."

Alfred pulls no punches about the contents of the book ("[If] you're a person who rejects the notion of global warming and doesn't believe that the Holocaust ever happened, you'll really enjoy this book," he writes), nor about the writers, who he refers to as "ignorami." In fact, the skewering of the authors of *Disrobing* is so scorching that a Web reader comments Alfred did himself a disservice by "engaging in personal attacks." Not to be chastened Alfred responds "People need to know just what kind of racist haters McGill-Queen's is passing off as scholars and what kind of low-class right-wing stooge scholarship the federal government is supporting with its funding for academic research. I don't think it's a disservice at all; to serve back what they dish out is just what is needed more in Canada. People don't stand up for themselves and for what is right."

The Web review is long, but vitriolic, so well worth the time, even if one has no intention to pick up the book. N.B.: So reviled is the book that a protest against it was scheduled for Jan. 30 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre where the authors had been invited to speak.

ON JAN. 6, THE GLOBE AND MAIL

published a story about the "transformation" made by Stephen Harper in the days leading up to and after the June 11th apology he made in the House of Commons for the Indian residential school system. Quoting newly released internal government e-mails, reporter Bill Curry wrote the apology had a significant impact on the PM, changing his worldview regarding Aboriginal issues. Subsequent comments on the story from readers accuse the paper of printing Conservative spin that belonged instead on the shelf with the infamous blue sweater from the election campaign, saying the story was intended to portray Harper as having a warm and fuzzy side.

Peter Kells from Bytown wrote: "The Globe is so desperate for copy that they are now printing CPC spin-doctored material espousing the merits of our new 'touchy feely' Prime Minister."

Johanne Szpak from Fredericton said the article "is a total political spin," adding that Harper should have long been aware of the dark residential schools legacy.

Janfromthe Bruce writes Harper and his crew have learned nothing from the past, ignoring the plight of on-reserve First Nation schools, such as the fight for a school for Attawapiskat.

Kevin Desmoulin from TO said: Talk is cheap. Action speaks louder and is more practical. He went on to say that the Conservatives killed the Kelowna Accord. "Go figure, plenty of mixed messages from these people."

KT Ocean writes: Something is up if the PMO is digging through emails from six or seven months ago to see what they can get the Globe to publish.

The Wight writes: The entire point of this article is a PR piece for the PMO. They are attempting to sway the public perception of their guy in advance of Jan. 26 because they've seen the Ipsos poll that shows over half of Canada don't trust him and think he has a secret agenda."

David McLaren from Warton asks if Harper has had such a change of heart regarding the situation of Aboriginals in Canada, then why is his party right now looking at killing the funding for post-secondary education for Aboriginal students?

Now that's a good question, David.

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February 18-20, 2009, Niagara Falls, Ont. - 905-768-7107; partnershipsinsuccess09@yahoo.ca

FIRST NATIONS ANGER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
February 18-20, Prince Albert, Sask., February 25-27, Edmonton, Alta., March 3-5, Hay River, NT - 780-455-6229; www.fourdirectionsconsulting.com

CHIEF ATAHM IMMERSION SCHOOL LANGUAGE CONFERENCE
February 20-21, 2009, Chase, B.C. - 250-679-8837; www.chiefatahm.com; caschool@alib.ca

KSDPP TRAINING PROGRAM IN DIABETES PREVENTION
February 23-27, 2009, Kahnawake Mohawk Territory Near Montreal, QC - www.ksdpp.org; 450-635-4896 (see ad on page 26)

AFOA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - BUILDING OUR ECONOMY
February 24-26, 2009, Calgary, Alta. - 1-866-775-1817; www.afoa.ca/conference/2009 (see ad on page 26)

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND TITLE IN CANADA
February 26-27, 2009, Vancouver, B.C. - 1-877-730-2555; www.pbli.com/766 (see ad on page 4)

REGIONAL ABORIGINAL RECOGNITION AWARDS (RARA '09)
February 28, 2009, Fort McMurray, Alta. - 780-334-0416

GIRL POWER FACILITATOR TRAINING - FIRST NATIONS FOCUS
March 3, 2009, Saskatoon, Sask., March 5, 2009, Regina, Sask. - 250-514-1570; www.girlpowergroups.org (see ad on page 4)

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) NEGOTIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
March 3-6, 2009, Regina, Sask. - 1-800-318-9741; www.adr.ca

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
March 6, 2009, Winnipeg, Man. - naaf.ca

GRIEF SUPPORT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
March 8-13, 2009, Edmonton, Alta. - 780-473-6732; 1-866-473-6732; www.takingflightinternational.com (see ad on page 17)

AFN INTER-NATION TRADE & ECONOMIC SUMMIT
March 9-11, 2009, Toronto, Ont. - 613-241-6789, Ext. 203

FIRST NATIONS INNER CHILD WORKSHOP
March 10-12, Hay River, NT; March 24-26, Prince Albert, Sask.; April 1-3, Edmonton, Alta. - 780-455-6229; www.fourdirectionsconsulting.com

MINING IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES
March 11 & 12, 2009, Vancouver, B.C. - www.pbli.com/766; 1-877-730-2555 (see ad on page 4)

GATHERING OUR VOICES 2009 YOUTH CONFERENCE
March 17-20, 2009, Kelowna, B.C. - 1-800-990-2432; 250-388-5522; www.bcaafc.com (early registration until February 20, 2009)

CANADIAN NATIONAL COLLEGE FINALS RODEO
March 26-28, 2009, Edmonton, Alta. - Ticket on sale at Ticketmaster or farmandranchshow.com

"HONORING OUR SURVIVORS" COMPETITION POWWOW
March 28, 2009, Siksika Nation, Alta. - 780-734-5611; 780-901-5120

INCLUSION WORKS '09 (AHR)
April 6-8, 2009, Vancouver, B.C. - aboriginalhr.ca; 200grads@aboriginalhr.ca (see ad on page 16)

ANNUAL INIGENOUS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
April 10-12, 2009, Winnipeg, Man. - 204-925-5622, Ext. 1

ALL NATIVE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
April 10-12, 2009, North Battleford, Sask. - 306-445-8216; nbimfc@sasktel.net

TRAUMA RECOVERY CERTIFICATION TRAINING
April 14-23 and May 22-28, Edmonton, Alta. - 780-473-6732; 1-866-473-6732; www.takingflightinternational.com (see ad on page 17)

NATIVE MEN'S WELLNESS RETREAT
April 22-23, 2009, Edmonton, Alta. - 1-866-792-4844; www.visions.ab.ca/nmwr (see ad on page 17)

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE POWWOW
April 25, 2009, Virginia Beach, VA - 757-427-2990; dvick@vb.gov.com

ABORIGINAL HOUSING FORUM
April 27-28, 2009, Calgary, Alta. - www.insightinfo.com; 1-888-777-1707 (see ad on page 2)

THE AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION OF CANADA MEETING
May 10-13, 2009, Nanaimo, B.C. - 250-286-9939; www.aquacultureassociation.ca/oc09 (see ad on page 18)

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS - FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CONFERENCE
May 18-21, 2009, Victoria, B.C. - 780-481-7390, Ext. 231; anita@ytsa.ca (Deadline for presentations: February 13, 2009) (see ad on page 4)

LIGHTING THE FIRE CONFERENCE
May 20-22, 2009, Winnipeg, Man. - 204-940-7036; emailjoyk@mfncr.com; www.mfncr.org (see ad on page 6)

INCLUDE YOUR EVENT
Fax: 780-455-7639
Email: market@ammsa.com



Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Commission canadienne de sûreté nucléaire



PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has issued an official Notice of Public Hearing, available at nuclearsafety.gc.ca, announcing that it will hold a two-day public hearing to consider AREVA Resources Canada Inc.'s (AREVA) application to renew its operating licence for the McClean Lake Uranium Mine and Mill Operation located in northern Saskatchewan. AREVA has requested authorization to continue its activities and to include the ongoing care and maintenance activities at the Midwest Project site, currently authorized under a separate licence. AREVA has requested a ten-year licence term.

AREVA is also requesting the revocation of its Uranium Mine Site Preparation Licence for the Midwest Project.

Day One of the public hearing will be held on February 18, 2009 and Day Two will be held on May 7, 2009 in the CNSC Public Hearing Room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario and will be webcast live on the Internet via the CNSC Web site.

The public is invited to comment on AREVA's application on Day Two of the public hearing. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by April 6, 2009 at the address below and include a written submission; a statement setting out whether the requester wishes to intervene by way of written submission only or by way of written submission and oral presentation; and the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

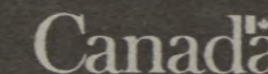
Hearing documents (submissions) are not available on-line and must be requested through the Secretariat at the address below. For more information, instructions on how to participate in this public hearing process or the complete text of the official Notice of Public Hearing, see nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2009-H-01, or contact:

L. Levert, Secretariat
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater St., P.O. Box 1046
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9
Tel.: (613) 996-9063 or 1-800-668-5284
Fax: (613) 995-5086
E-mail: interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca



Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Commission canadienne de sûreté nucléaire



PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) announces, at the request of Bruce Power Inc. (Bruce Power) pursuant to section 14 of the CNSC Rules of Procedure, the adjournment of Day Two of the two-day public hearings on the applications by Bruce Power for the renewal of the operating licences for the Bruce A and Bruce B Nuclear Generating Stations (NGSs), located in Kincardine, Ontario. Bruce Power has requested five-year licence terms for both facilities.

Hearing Day One was held in Ajax, Ontario on December 11, 2008.

Hearing Day Two: October 1, 2009 (location to be determined later)

Following Day One of the hearings, the Commission decided to adjourn Day Two, previously scheduled for **February 18, 2009**, to a later date to allow:

- more time for the Commission, the applicant and the public wishing to intervene at the hearings to consider and comment on the revised form of power reactor operating licence being proposed by CNSC staff for the Bruce A and B facilities;
- the consideration, at the same time as the licence renewal application, of Bruce Power's application for the refueling and the restart of Bruce A NGS Units 1 and 2, for which an Environmental Assessment Screening Report was approved by the Commission at a public hearing held on May 19, 2006 in Ottawa, Ontario; and
- the conduct of the hearing in the Kincardine area in order to facilitate public participation.

With the decision to adjourn Hearing Day Two, the Commission also decided to extend Bruce Power's current licences for a period of 7 months until October 31, 2009. The two licences were due to expire on March 31, 2009.

The public is invited to participate during Hearing Day Two and comment on Bruce Power's application for licence renewal for the Bruce A, Bruce B or both facilities. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission no later than September 2, 2009 at the address below and include (1) a written submission, (2) a statement setting out whether the requester wishes to intervene by way of written submission only or by way of written submission and oral presentation and (3) the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

Agendas and information on the hearing process are available at the CNSC Web site: nuclearsafety.gc.ca. CNSC staff's recommendations, including the proposed licences, and hearing submissions are not available on-line and must be requested through the Secretariat at the address below. Any supplementary submissions from Bruce Power or CNSC staff will be available as of August 4, 2009.

For more information, instructions on how to participate in this public hearing process or the complete text of the official Notice of Adjournment of Public Hearing, see nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Adjournment of Public Hearing 2008-H-21, revision 1 or contact:

L. Levert, Secretariat
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater St., P.O. Box 1046
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E-mail: interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca

AFN hopeful, but remains vigilant in wake of new budget

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The 2009 federal budget delivered on Jan. 27 has fallen well short of expectations voiced by First Nations leaders, and the result will be increased lobbying to get those needs met.

"It is hopeful, but it is missing two of the key ingredients needed to eradicate poverty and certainly improve the lives of First Nations people no matter where they live," said Angus Toulouse, Assembly of First Nations regional chief for Ontario.

The budget included a \$515 million infrastructure investment that is intended for school construction water quality, safety and police.

National Chief Phil Fontaine said that the federal budget provided a fair and helpful response in terms of First Nations infrastructure, "but we also need to build First Nations skills and First Nations economies."

He said that is where the budget falls short.

"Without those investments, First Nations will fall further behind and be forever in need of fiscal stimulus. Building schools is not an end in itself. We want our students to graduate from those schools. We want our students to have the opportunities to fully participate in the economy and society."

In mid-January, Fontaine presented his economic stimulus package to the first ministers of Canada, the provinces and territories during a dinner

meeting held in Ottawa. That package called for \$4.4 billion in expenditures to be divided among three areas: Infrastructure, education and repayable loans to provide support for partnerships between First Nations and the private sector.

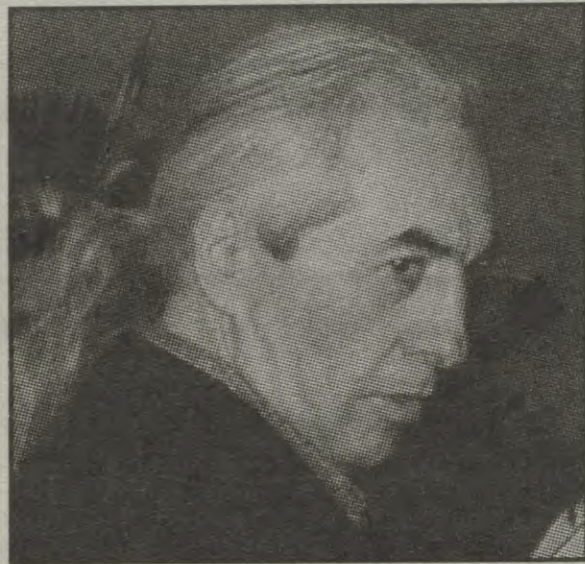
Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's budget earmarked only \$1.4 billion to meet Aboriginal needs. Identified in the budget is \$200 million to support Aboriginal skills and training; \$400 million to address on-reserve housing; \$515 million for urgent on-reserve needs, such as school construction and drinking water; and, \$325 million for the delivery of First Nations and Inuit health programs and child and family services.

Toulouse said the AFN is still analyzing whether the \$1.4 billion announced is on top of the \$10 billion the federal government invests annually on Aboriginal priorities or whether some of that money is simply "repackaged resources."

Either way, he points out, \$1.4 billion doesn't come close to meeting the basic needs identified in separate surveys carried out in Ontario and British Columbia earlier this year. First Nations in those two provinces identified close to \$4 billion would be needed to meet the needs of their communities.

Nor does the budget come close to meeting the needs of Aboriginal women, said Beverley Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

"It's really disappointing and frustrating. They talk about an action plan and I don't see any



Phil Fontaine



Beverley Jacobs

action for Aboriginal women," Jacobs said.

She met with Prime Minister Steven Harper and the first ministers to provide information as to why Aboriginal women needed to be a priority in the budget, but she says none of this was reflected on budget day.

"Within the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal women have taken the hits of colonization, of being marginalized. To be included in the budget would be to be included in society," said Jacobs.

While Toulouse is pleased that skills training and infrastructure work, such as building schools, has been included in the budget, Jacobs doesn't know if either

inclusion will benefit Aboriginal women. She points out that infrastructure and construction are usually work done by men. She would have felt better if specific training programs had been identified for Aboriginal women.

Both Toulouse and Jacobs agree that the work of their respective organizations is far from over.

"We will continue certainly to pursue (repayable loans) and continue to pursue the need for education," said Toulouse.

Jacobs said that with NWAC's limited dollars lobbying will continue in such areas as new shelters and transitional housing and skills training for Aboriginal women.

"It's more work we have to do and we don't have the resources to do more work," she said.

NWAC will start working with the opposition political parties to get them to carry forward the voices of Aboriginal women.

While "frustration" is a word used by both Jacobs and Toulouse, Toulouse said there is still reason to be optimistic with this latest budget.

The \$1.4 billion committed to Aboriginal needs is "a hopeful sign in a budget tempered by challenges. It's a hopeful sign that there is recognition that these resources need to get to the communities and they need to get to the communities as quickly as possible."

BC regional Vice-Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo puts the \$1.4 billion for Aboriginal peoples into perspective.

It does not begin to approach

the \$5 billion that was promised and then cancelled under the 2005 Kelowna Accord.

It is not quite one-third of the \$3 billion in funding and \$1 billion in loans that the Assembly of First Nations presented in its budget submission.

It is \$200 million less than the \$1.6 billion that the BC First Nations Leadership Council identified as the minimum for First Nations in the province, never mind the country.

The budget provision for \$400 million for social housing on reserves Canada-wide amounts to only two-thirds of the \$600 million needed for 8,000 homes just in B.C., and does not include support infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewers.

The budget provides \$200 million for First Nations schools, but in BC alone \$250 million is needed.

It is unclear how much of the funding is actually new money, as opposed to redirected former commitments, he said.

For example, the new two-year \$1 billion community investment fund now includes unspecified money for communities affected by the mountain pine beetle disaster, which appears to mean the government's previous promise of \$100 million a year for 10 years to address that situation in B.C. has now been swallowed up by this new program.

"The devil is in the details, and we have reason to be cautious as this budget appears to have abandoned previous promises that First Nations had been counting on," Atleo said.

“ Investments in education would get more of our people working and help eliminate poverty. As well, our governments should have access to credit to spark their economies and develop partnerships with the private sector. Our request for the loan fund amounts to 0.5 percent of the \$200 billion that this budget puts into the credit system. We believe our request was reasonable and we will continue to pursue it because it will benefit both First Nations and Canada. ”

—Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine

“ First Nations must be included in the recovery of the Canadian economy. We hope this brings immediate action on infrastructure improvements that will create jobs, build safer, healthier communities, and help NAN First Nations increase their access to quality education while strengthening local economies. ”

—Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Stan Beardy

“ We cannot discount the tremendous need for social housing on-reserve. In reality, the majority of our citizens are unable to afford their own homes and have difficulty finding affordable housing. As far as I'm concerned, this investment is a good start and needs further consideration in future budgets. ”

—Grand Council Chief John Beaucage, Anishinabek Nation

“ While Aboriginal-specific infrastructure investments, including \$200 million for First Nations schools, are a positive sign, we are disappointed the federal government did not announce significant investments in operational education expenses such as teachers' salaries, computer equipment, especial education funding... The First nations youth of today will be a significant percentage of the Canadian workforce of tomorrow. Therefore we must ensure that Aboriginal learners not only have the schools to learn in, but are also provided with the instruction, technology and tools necessary for success. ”

—Grand Chief Doug Kelly of the First Nations Summit

Canadians can overcome the past and the pain

By Thomas J. Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

The "Remembering The Children" gathering held at the Canadian Native Friendship Centre on Jan. 21 was intended as an opportunity to share, heal and walk together in a new phase of Canada's journey in the post-residential school system era. It brought together members of the Aboriginal community, as well as ecumenical leaders from across Canada for a time of remembering, reconciling and celebration.

"I thought it was a great gathering and what made it very special was that there wasn't a political person to be seen there, so it wasn't a political show," said a co-emcee of the event, Lewis Cardinal. "What it was was a grassroots process."

Cardinal said that it was impressive watching the easy flow of the dialogue as church representatives offered their apologies for the churches' role in the residential school system.

"It allowed the Aboriginal communities to come face to face with non-Aboriginal people to hear these apologies and to have the testimony of some survivors and also the forgiveness from the survivors to be heard in a very public place," said Cardinal.

Cardinal said it was an emotional event.

"It was deeply moving. There wasn't a dry eye in the house I don't think at anytime during the whole event," said Cardinal.

With public apologies now offered by churches and the government—Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered Canada's apology in the House of Commons on June 11—Cardinal believes that the path towards healing is beginning to define itself, although the process is still young.

"As a Canadian society as a whole we are just walking up to the sobering reality of our past," said Cardinal. "As a society begins to acknowledge its own history it then begins to recover from it and then it begins the healing process and then it starts to build new relationships from that."

"I would say yes. It's a beginning process. I wouldn't say

it's well on its way but it's on its way," said Cardinal.

Reverend Cheol Soon Park, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, said "Surprisingly, not too many people know what happened," of the residential school experience. "They heard this somewhere down the road, but they don't have any factual aspects of the incidents and as a result they don't feel anything."

The Remembering The Children event was just one

reconnecting with that identity again and finding strength," said Cardinal.

"I believe that we are starting to see a lot of strength and resilience in our people and it shows we can overcome the darkest of tendencies," said Cardinal.

Cardinal added that some of the speakers acknowledged a sense of loss having told their stories, a common feeling that many will experience after releasing such a burden, especially since it has been either held on to or hidden away for so many years.

"We have left behind our innocence now because we are acknowledging this. We recognize through that feeling inside of us that there was pain caused. So that feeling is a normal part of healing, that sense of loss." Cardinal attributed that lesson to one of the elders.

Both Cardinal and Park said that in post-apology Canada, juxtaposed with events like the Remembering The Children conference, the path towards healing is becoming more evident.

"The whole purpose is not just pinpointing who is liable and who is going to pay. That is not the purpose of this gathering," said Park. "The purpose of this gathering is for educating people and learning about the past, our failure, our mistakes, so we won't repeat the same tragic mistakes again."

"Aboriginal people want to move on with it. They do want to move on with it, but this is the part where we have to learn from it first and (we) have to go through all these feelings and emotions first until we come to peace with it," said Cardinal. "Then we move on to the next phase of our lives."

"It's a necessary step, absolutely. If we don't take it we'll never be able to surpass it."

Cardinal went on to say that the process, if it follows in the same healthy vein as the conference, would help not only Aboriginal people, but Canada as a whole.

"I think Canadians will learn and become stronger and more tolerant and more respectful and gain strength from that as a nation."

“ But this is personally the darkest chapter of Canadian history, the saddest chapter of our history, which we have to learn a very painful but precious lesson and by then we are going to be a better people, better country, ”

—Reverend Cheol Soon Park,
Presbyterian Church of Canada

component of a two-day conference held at King's College entitled Truth and Reconciliation: Healing the Legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

Park admits he was troubled by some of the young participants' initial sentiments towards the plight of Canada's Aboriginal people and found they bunched the issues around the residential school experience with the numerous and ongoing land claims.

"Many people I met they responded like, 'So where is this going to end? What else do they want?' kind of attitude," said Park.

"But this is personally the darkest chapter of Canadian history, the saddest chapter of our history, which we have to learn a very painful but precious lesson and by then we are going to be a better people, better country," said Park.

Cardinal also stressed the importance of facing the residential school experience, and suggested the scars, whether they are physical or emotional, are tools for the future.

"We're coming out of a very dark time. We're coming out of a time where our identities were taken away from us. But we're returning to them and we're entering into an age where we're

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Windspeaker news briefs

SOME WISE INVESTMENTS AND THE

prudently timed sale of said investments has netted a windfall for northern First Nations in Saskatchewan. They have sold their interest in a number of hotels and commercial properties in Prince Albert for almost \$20 million.

The bands of the Prince Albert Grand Council had pooled their money to invest in real estate, and when the market peaked last year, they sold, turning the initial buy in of \$39,500 each into \$500,000. Over a year-and-a-half, the group sold the Prince Albert Inn, the Marlborough Inn, Best Western hotels in Prince Albert and Saskatoon, two Ricky's restaurants and office buildings.

The sales, made when real estate values peaked last year, netted a huge profit for the member bands of the Prince Albert Grand Council. The bands' investment fund began in 1993 with a contribution of \$39,500 from each band to buy the Prince Albert Inn. Each received \$500,000 last month from the recent transactions. The 12 bands retain partial ownership of Westwind Aviation and some Super 8 Hotels.

DENE LEADER GEORGES ERASMUS IS

being awarded the Northern Medal by Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, for his work promoting Aboriginal rights and improving living conditions in northern communities. He helped found the Dene Nation, and served as its leader. He went on to head the Assembly of First Nations from 1985 to 1991. Erasmus was co-chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and is currently president of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The Northern Medal was created in 2005 by former governor general Adrienne Clarkson as a way to honor citizens who have contributed to the evolution and reaffirmation of the Canadian North. Previous recipients have included environmental activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier, former N.W.T. premier Nellie Cournoyea and Bertha Allen, an activist for social change and the advancement of Aboriginal and northern women.

DOROTHY GRANT AND ANGELIQUE METATY LEVAC

were honored on Jan. 27 in conjunction with the presentation of the inaugural BC Aboriginal Business Awards, a juried competition celebrating and showcasing Aboriginal business.

"Dorothy Grant and Angelique Merasty Levac are outstanding contributors to the province's business sector and serve as examples of achievement to Aboriginal business people and all British Columbians," said Premier Gordon Campbell. "They have both demonstrated a lifelong pursuit of excellence and are very deserving of this prestigious award." Grant has established a successful manufacturing, retailing and wholesaling business featuring highly acclaimed Haida fashion and accessories sold across North America. Métis artist Levac opened Angelique's Native Arts to retail her work in birchbark biting and has expanded to offer a wide variety of Native crafts made locally and across the country.

SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER BRAD WALL

said a revenue-sharing deal that would see First Nations get a cut of natural resource money isn't likely. "The sort of direct revenue-share, percentage revenue share, is not something the government of Saskatchewan is prepared to move on," Wall said after members of the provincial cabinet met with officials from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph said First Nations are looking for their "fair share" when it comes to natural resource revenue. "If there's a political way to actually hammer out a deal based on treaty principles, if there's political will there, well I haven't seen that yet. I think if people want to really examine that, we have to look at all options," said Joseph.

THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION

announced that Great-West Life has agreed to develop financial support for Aboriginal students totaling \$150,000 over the next three years. Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life will contribute \$50,000 annually over three years to fund bursaries supporting students enrolled in post-secondary studies or training and development programs of at least one-year duration. These bursaries fill a gap in financial support available to Aboriginal students interested in upgrading their education or taking part in one- or two-year vocational programs.

"The foundation is very excited to welcome Great-West Life as a new partner in our education program," said President and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Roberta Jamieson. "I am delighted to commend Great West Life as a company that has taken such leadership in supporting the development of our youth through education."

Win in Manitoba should reach across the Prairies

By Thomas J. Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Brandon, Man.

On Jan. 8, Will Gooden, a Métis man from Manitoba, received a favorable judgment in a court case that involved an incident that has been hanging over his head for four years. When Gooden shot and killed a duck near the Turtle Mountains, he never believed it would be an issue with Manitoba Conservation on account he was carrying a Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) harvester's card.

But he was charged with unlawful possession of wildlife contrary to s.19 of the Wildlife Act that required him to have a license to hunt.

Much to his relief, and following a lengthy and expensive court battle, Justice John Combs decided that Gooden did in fact have a right to hunt.

"Obviously, I'm very happy with the outcome and the decision that the judge made on the case here in Manitoba," said Gooden. "It's been a long time coming."

MMF President David

Chartrand echoed those sentiments in a press release, as did Métis National Council (MNC) President Clément Chartier and Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras, who is currently attempting to tangle with the province of Alberta over harvesting rights as well.

"It was a long, long time. Time I had to take away from my family. Time I had to take away from my work. It was not something I took lightly," said Gooden, adding that the MMF was an integral part of the process.

"They're the ones who made it happen. Without the MMF, there's no way anyone could afford to go through this process," said Gooden.

On that same note, Métis leaders, along with their lawyers, such as Jason Madden, said taxpayers should be upset about the amount of money being put towards the cases when the outcome is inevitable.

"The province made it impossible to do anything else. They wanted us to go to court," said Gooden. "In my opinion, they abdicated their responsibility and forced the

“ In my opinion, they abdicated their responsibility and forced the courts to make policy for them, which is wrong on so many levels. ”

—Will Gooden, Métis hunter

courts to make policy for them, which is wrong on so many levels."

Gooden believes it was worth the effort, and added that he thinks Chartrand was disappointed in the route that the province chose to take.

Premier Gary Doer said he plans to re-evaluate that path taken and intends to be more assertive to find a way to accommodate the new ruling.

"When we entered into Confederation, we did so with our Métis rights intact. Today, we have yet another recognition of those rights. We trust and hope that Premier [Gary] Doer will do the right thing and work with us on implementing our MMF

Métis Harvesting Initiative that respects our rights while also respecting the fish and wildlife resources that are being harvested. The Métis have offered this for years, but we hope now the province will do the right thing," said Chartrand in the press release.

"I guess I'm a little suspicious. I really do hope they come forward in good faith," said Gooden.

"Up until this point, the minister has not shown a willingness to move forward from his position at any point."

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this decision is the future implications that it may bring. Many Métis leaders

gathered at Edmonton's Legislature grounds on Dec. 2, 2008 to announce a historic lawsuit against Alberta in regards to their recent dealings with harvesting rights.

Poitras has consistently maintained that she would rather go back to the bargaining table to come to some resolution on hunting rights, rather than go to court. Currently, 29 Alberta Métis are charged with unlawful hunting.

The province could look at the Manitoba case and save itself some money, and the implications of the court decision could go deeper than anyone perhaps imagined. In a CBC report, University of Manitoba law professor Karen Busby said that the ruling might alter the relationship between Canada and her Métis people so drastically that Métis may have to be consulted before development occurs on what is understood to be traditional hunting territory.

"This case isn't really just about hunting rights. Métis people have the right to preserve their hunting rights into the future, and that's the really important aspect of this case," said Busby.

Cold Lake First Nations

DIRECTOR OF FIRST NATIONS OPERATIONS

Summary:

This position is part of the executive management team responsible for the operation, growth, and development of Cold Lake First Nations. He/she is responsible for the daily management and delivery of the First Nation's administrative services. Specifically, the incumbent will liaise between the executive director and departmental managers to ensure that the executive director's vision is being carried out and that the issues and concerns of management are being addressed.

Minimum Qualifications:

- University education in Finance, Commerce, or Business Administration or a related field;
- A minimum of 2-5 years experience in an upper-level management position, or an equivalent combination of education and experience;
- Demonstrated administrative skills, including leadership, coaching and team building, financial management, policy development, and project management;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and strong interpersonal skills with the ability to work closely with department directors and the Executive Director;
- Meticulous attention to detail and the ability to meet deadlines;
- Demonstrated teamwork, judgment, diplomacy, tact, and decision-making skills;
- Knowledge and understanding of the aspirations of First Nations people for self-determination and an understanding of Northern Alberta's First Nations' political, government, governance, socio-economic, and community issues.

Salary: \$55,000 to \$65,000 per annum, plus an attractive pension and benefits package

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Timeframe too short to refresh claims - chief

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

VANCOUVER

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) contends that a six-month window given to First Nations to "refresh" their specific claims for disputed reserve lands is a "fair offering," but the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) insists that the "arbitrary" timeline is not long enough.

In an open letter sent to INAC Minister Chuck Strahl, UBCIC Grand Chief Stewart Phillip called the six-month deadline "unreasonable, unfair, and unworkable, and it is contrary to the spirit of the "Justice at Last" initiative which promises to 'help restore confidence in the

integrity and effectiveness of the process to resolve specific claims'."

Ralph Brant, director general of the specific claims branch of INAC, said the only negative response to the timeline, which was announced in letters mailed out in late November 2008 to 292 First Nations with claims in assessment, was received through Phillip's open letter.

Brant notes that First Nations are not obligated to update their claims and he adds that the majority of First Nations he's received feedback from are remaining with their original claims.

Brant points out that INAC, in consultation with the Assembly of First Nations, recognized that claims had been sitting on average seven or eight

years to be considered and with the changing legal landscape and the possibility of new evidence coming forward in that period of time, it was thought beneficial to allow First Nations to be given time to resubmit their claims.

"We thought we were being fair by offering them an opportunity to refresh that claim," said Brant.

There are presently 535 claims that are eligible for resubmission. Under the Specific Claims Tribunal Act, which was passed into law in mid-October of last year, the government has three years to give a response to the present claims (as of the date the legislation came into effect). For any new claim, that three-year timeline kicks in from the date those claims are received. After claims are deemed to have met

the requirements, the government has a further three years to negotiate a settlement. If a settlement cannot be negotiated in that time, then the claim goes to the Specific Claims Tribunal. Justices for that tribunal have yet to be chosen and rules and regulations have yet to be established.

The six months given to update the claims is not part of the legislation.

"If we want to incorporate revisions, such as changes in the legal landscape or new information, we can't do it within the six-month time frame," said Phillip.

He said the council didn't become aware of the timeframe until member First Nations started calling the office with letters they had received from

INAC. And by the time those calls were made, anywhere from one to two months of that timeline had already slipped by.

The issue of revision is particularly important to First Nations in British Columbia, points out Phillip, as close to one-third of the 660 First Nations in Canada are in B.C. and the majority of the larger land claims come from BC First Nations.

"If we choose not to make amendments then we suffer the consequences, because the only reason to amend a claim is to take advantage of new evidence or changes in the legal landscape that would buttress your claim," said Phillip.

Brant agrees that First Nations would want to put forward the best claim possible and notes that the federal government would be "prepared to discuss" with any First Nation a situation where they find that six months is not sufficient time to refresh their claim.

Phillip contends that the six-month time frame established by INAC is a means to "dispense with these claims as expeditiously as possible. (The government) is not concerned with just resolution."

Brant anticipates a number of the outstanding claims in assessment to be bundled for consideration and others to be surrender claims, which will go to the Department of Justice for legal opinion.

Presently there are 140 claims in negotiation. The legislation sets a cap of \$150 million per settlement. It has a 10-year budget of \$250 million annually.

"The budget is ludicrous. Quite often specific claims settlements are in the neighborhood of \$100 million," said Phillip.

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[strictly speaking]

An act of Olympic proportions

This should brighten up next winter's blues around here. The International Olympic Games fever has officially come to my Rez. A couple of weeks ago my community got the word that on Dec. 16, the Olympic Torch will wind its way through our sleepy little First Nation on its journey west.

Somehow, on its way from Greece, the original home of the Olympics, to Vancouver for the February 2010 Games, it has to pass through Curve Lake. The International Olympic Committee may want to get a new travel agent. Still, it's caused quite a bit of stir at the local coffee shops... if we had coffee shops.

It will be an interesting event for sure. There are pros and cons to the idea of welcoming the torch. First the cons: It wasn't that long ago when the idea of some person, more than likely a person of non-Native heritage, running through our village waving a flaming torch might not have been so thoroughly welcomed.



THE URBANE INDIAN
Drew Hayden Taylor

There's also the issue of Curve Lake being a peninsula. There is only one road in and one road out. The flame might have to be waterproofed. In theory, the Band Office has said, if the lake has frozen sufficiently, the runner could possibly run across the frozen water, as would all his support vehicles.

I'm not sure how much he or she will like that idea.

Around here December is still a little early to be out on the ice, with or without a flaming object. Local legends talk about the bottom of our lakes being piled high with abandoned snowmobiles, evidence of White cottagers eager to take their new Christmas presents out.

So I suppose one little torch wouldn't hurt.

Of course, there is talk about

the possibility of taking the torch across the lake in a boat. It would give the runner a chance to catch his or her breath I suppose. It would surely be an odd sight. I doubt the Greeks would have foreseen the torch, a symbol of the Games that started in 776 BC, being carried across the lake in an aluminum boat powered by a 10 horsepower Evinrude motor steered by an Ojibway.

It would kind of take the romance out of it for them I think, but it is very Canadian.

The pros to such a visit are more interesting. It might get people thinking more and more about the benefits of sports. I have thought for many years about joining the world of professional sports, but, alas, my opportunities for such a career are severely limited. The official motto of the

Olympic Games is "Citius, altius, fortius," which translates as faster, higher, stronger. Unfortunately, my "faster days" are long gone. In fact, there's talk about them actually never existing. I just prefer to think of them as being lost in the mists of time. "Higher" what? Blood pressure? Blood sugar level? Weight? Many of us already have all those, so it's not as if we have to train for it. "Stronger"... that's a possibility. I have been working out... pushing my car out of the snow. Pushing myself off the couch. Lifting the turkey during the holidays. Wrestling with moral dilemmas. Lifting my spirits. Fighting temptation. I do that all the time, but I don't think they are considered official sports.

Actually, I have been contemplating what sport would be good for me to attempt, should I ever work up the nerve. It would have to be a winter sport, of course, in honor of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Can't ski. Not that good a skater. The only thing that I could think of was

that event I think is called the luge. That's the sport where you go sledding. I always thought that sounded fun. I have done that before, non-professionally of course. And the best part of it is you lie down while doing it.

In fact, you can't win unless you are lying down. Of course, those incredibly tight costumes look a bit... revealing. And I don't think all the spandex in the world would make me aerodynamically desirable. I may have to rethink that option.

Still, the torch will be stopping at many Native communities across Canada as it journeys to the actual Olympic Games. I believe it will be coming from the Mohawk community of Tyendinaga before it hits our shores, which adds an added element of concern. Whoever will be carrying the torch will be surviving on a diet of corn soup, bannock/fry bread, Indian tacos etc?

Good luck with all that running, buddy. You're going to need it.

Youth need role models to keep it real

By Chris Tyrone Ross
Windspeaker Contributor

There's a big problem with some of today's supposed Aboriginal role models that is hidden and no one dares to talk about. It is more than a problem, it is a contradiction in their message to the youth when they say, "Don't drink, don't do drugs, stay in school, and you too can be somebody!"

In reality, the alleged role model does all of the above, but makes a living by lying about it.

It is not the National Aboriginal Role Models or the recipients of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards or other prestigious groups I'm referring to. I'm simply referring to the fake role models that hide behind their culture and supposed clean lifestyles. They get paid to tell their life stories and tell the kids to say no to

everything that is bad under the sun. And then when the conference or event is over, the fake role model is out partying with their speaking engagement cheque. Hey, it's okay because the kids are not of age. They can't get into the bar so they won't see you, right? Wrong!

Well, unfortunately this kind of thing happens all the time at various conferences and events. And who is to blame? The fake role models or the people that hire them?

It's more the blame of the fake role models, because they're the ones who fill their bios and press kits with 'positive messages,' 'lists of their achievements' and 'cultural lifestyles' saying they have the message that will empower the youth. Bull!

The people that hire these fake role models are, to some degree, just as responsible, because not all 'super role models' are hired

because of their credentials. They're hired because they know someone on the committee.

Most Aboriginal conferences that are well organized will do back-up checks to see if these role models are legitimate and they understand the responsibility they have as adults to the Aboriginal youth. Unfortunately, these fake role models can't seem to understand this logic.

Most people don't realize that "keeping it real" still means something to youth. These phony role models don't know when to turn it off and just be honest with themselves and to the youth. Every time they open their mouths to a bunch of high school kids and preach the "good word," they're lying to them straight in the face. And kids truly hate hypocrites.

You could even say RezX is a hypocrite, because we're covering this subject and more than likely

throwing a big party next month. But the difference is, we're not going around to communities and Aboriginal conferences telling the kids that, "drugs and alcohol is bad" and then partying the same night with our per diems. We would rather tell the kids like it is because no one is being true to them anymore.

We live in a society that portrays a fake image for Aboriginal youth, pretending that every single Aboriginal person who was ever successful is a super clean role model that should be held in high esteem, only because they achieved something 'rare' and 'great'. When in reality, they're just like everyone else.

But what exactly is a role model anyway? The problematic answer could persist in what the older generation has set out for what a "super role model" is supposed to be: one who doesn't drink, doesn't do drugs, doesn't smoke, finished

high school at 16 and is now a lawyer or doctor at 25! News Flash: Kids just don't relate to these role models anymore because they accomplished so much that the dream seems so unattainable, which is why youth reach for lower goals that are more attainable. Or in the worse-case scenario, end up in a life of gangs, drugs, alcohol and crime because the only role models they see are gang members, drug dealers, alcoholics and criminals on the corner.

So don't blame everything on the fake role model either because they're just trying to fit a perfect description so they can get hired at various conferences and events. And the thing is, they shouldn't have to fit a description. They should be able to just be themselves because not every one is a bad person.

(See Keeping on page 24.)

Reconciliation is the church's responsibility

By Keith Knight
Reprinted with permission
from the Anglican Journal

Truth and reconciliation. Those words hold considerable promise as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) begins its work this year.

There is a lesson to be learned from a similarly titled commission in South Africa that was charged with dismantling apartheid. It's one thing to pursue the truth by capturing those heart-wrenching stories of abuse and injustice; it's quite another to bring about reconciliation between peoples.

It seems like yesterday when this scribe sat in a hotel room in Ottawa with a small group of

South African church leaders, listening to a theological defense of apartheid. It was 1982 at a meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches where an informal process of reconciliation was just under way to bring black and white church leaders together. Apartheid has always been a theological issue.

On a recent trip to Cape Town, South Africa—a decade after the dismantling of apartheid—the separating barriers have come down on city buses and in shops but the townships still exist, home to thousands of black and colored folk living in wooden shacks, their communities oozing poverty, high unemployment and rampant HIV/AIDS. White folk still live in their middle class

neighborhoods. Reconciliation, I was told, is still an elusive dream, perhaps a generation or two away.

The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission has an impressive mandate: To "create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS (Indian Residential Schools) system and legacy." The commission is determined to record the truth by capturing stories from former students, their families and the teachers.

In fact, it is this very point that led to the resignation of TRC chair Justice Harry LaForme. He wanted to focus on reconciliation while the other two commissioners wanted to focus on truth.

What happens once the stories

have been told? Who needs to be reconciled to whom? What is the process of reconciliation? Those questions continue to plague South Africa, and they also need to be addressed in the Canadian context. A quote from the residential schools commission is both noble and vague: "Reconciliation is an ongoing individual and collective process, and will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian residential school students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. Reconciliation may occur between any of the above groups."

Governments cannot mandate reconciliation. Reconciliation is a spiritual journey so it is therefore the Church's task. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 that "God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors." Christmas is all about being reconciled to God through Christ.

A truth and reconciliation commission by its very nature can only attempt to capture "truth." Reconciliation is a painstaking, time-consuming process that will require generations of conversation and interaction. The Anglican Church of Canada has a significant role to play in that process.

(See Church on page 25.)

Stephen Kakfwi — [windspeaker confidential]

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

Stephen Kakfwi: I really appreciate a friend who has a positive attitude.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

S.K.: Bullies who wear suits who pretend that they like themselves.

W: When are you at your happiest?

S.K.: When I'm alone with my wife, my children, and my grandchildren.

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

S.K.: Sullen and dark.

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

S.K.: My grandfather. He was unilingual, never went to school or ever spoke English, but was a successful trapper and hunter who started and owned his own fur trading business and general store.

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

S.K.: Learn how to forgive.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

S.K.: Being more at peace with myself.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

S.K.: Though, as I said in my last answer, I have found more peace within myself, I still don't have the kind of inner peace — that pure tranquility — that many Elders become blessed with at advanced stages in their lives. I'm getting there, but I'm definitely not there yet.

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

S.K.: Writing a book of poems and stories.

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

S.K.: Don't wish or pray for what you don't need. Everything you need is there. You just have to learn how to see it. This came from my grandfather in a dream.

W: Did you take it?

S.K.: Yes.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

S.K.: As a man of a few little gifts who saw opportunities and seized them in the moment.

A former premier of the Northwest Territories, Stephen Kakfwi quit more than 25 years of politics in 2003 to realize his lifelong dream of writing and performing music. Born in a traditional Dene bush camp on

Yelta Lake near Fort Good Hope, Kakfwi spent his early years on the land, learning the customs of his people and developing a life-long respect for the wilderness and its resources.

He survived residential school and went on to pursue a teaching degree, but returned home to become involved in securing Aboriginal land and self-government rights. He organized Dene, Métis, and southern support groups to respond to increased oil and gas exploration in the north. Aboriginal involvement in the Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline inquiry resulted in Justice Tom Berger recommending a moratorium on development until land claims were settled and measures were in place to protect the fragile Mackenzie Valley and Beaufort Sea environment. The ruling became a model for the future regulation of mega-projects in Canada.

Between 1983 and 1987, Kakfwi headed up the Dene Nation, and was elected to represent the Sahtu constituency of the Great Bear Lake region, and then acted as N.W.T. premier between 2000 and 2003.

Kakfwi quit politics abruptly, saying his life had become a battleground. When he took some time to work on himself and heal old hurts, many stemming from his childhood in residential school, words to songs began



PHOTO BY TESSA MACINTOSH

Stephen Kakfwi

pouring out of him and he put guitar music to them. To date, he's released two CD's:

In the Walls of His Mind and *Last Chance Hotel*.

Kakfwi continues to be active regarding a variety of initiatives, including the promotion of conservation in the N.W.T. and

as an advisor to the World Wildlife Foundation. He's also working with his home community, government and other organizations to ensure benefits and revenue from the development of a newly proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. He's also a sought-after public speaker

[radio's most active]

OUR PICK

Artist—Don Amero
Album—TBA: Feb. 27, 2009
Song—My Lovely
Label—TBA
Producer—TBA

Much anticipated album to be released in February

To be young and in love is something to be appreciated and be forever remembered. Like a warm summer night driving endlessly with no place in particular to go, the scent of blooming flowers and the warm summer air pressing against your hands as they stick out of the car window. You have no sense of time or place just as long as the one you adore, admire and love with all of your heart is sitting next to you. This describes the single from Don Amero, a singer/songwriter from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

His album which is due to be released in February 09' is yet to be titled but very much anticipated. With his stunning performances on numerous stages and endless nominations, Don is a force to be reckoned with. The power of a man and his guitar is something that we are all familiar with, but its bringing into consideration the talent and feelings that pour out of a piece of rosewood and the deep content and feeling of trust, admiration and true love that Don Amero so much illuminates in this song. The bongo's and beat of the drums is just the thing to add to the fire and desire of "My lovely", and it is just that! The sweet yet light sound of the guitar gives a high degree of control over the musical dynamics, texture, volume and timbral characteristics which are complemented by Don's meaningful and talented voice.

For more info on Don Amero go to: www.donameromusic.com

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ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Art Napoleon	Addiction	Siskabush Tales
Holly Vee	One Kiss	Love, Spurs & Rock N Roll
C-Weed	Black And White	Redemption
Nadine Gagne	My Moccasins	Aboriginal Children's Songs
Sierra Noble	Try Anything	Possibilities
Mark Jacob	The Sweetest Thing	Can U Believe It
Fara Palmer	Blah, Blah, Blah	Phoenix
Andrea Menard	Sparkle	Sparkle
Farrah Meade	Tell Her Goodbye	Single Release
Darrellyne Bickel	Eddie's Got A Mustang	M.I.A.
Star Nayea	Railroad Bible	Single Release
Don Amero	I'm Just Me	Single Release
Tracy Bone w/JC Campbell	No Lies	No Lies
Nadjiwan	Close My Eyes	Philosophy For The Masses
Wayne Lavalley f. Holly McNarland	Jealousy	Rock n Roll Indian Cowboy
Ron Loutit	Close The Gate	Mine To Discover
Buffy Sainte-Marie	No No Keshagesh	Running For The Drum
Indigenous	Still Remember	Broken Lands
Crystal Shawanda	My Roots Are Showing	Dawn Of A New Day
Little Hawk	I Want To Cry	Home And Native Land

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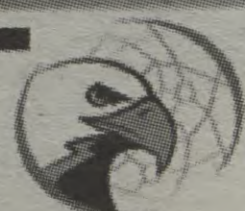
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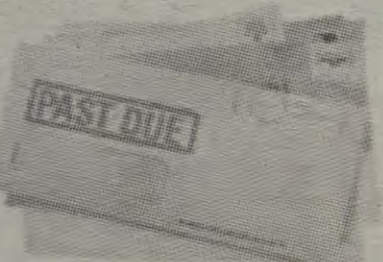
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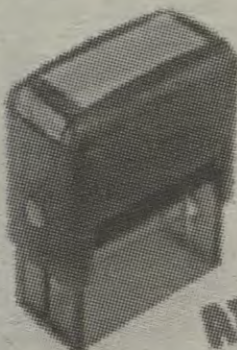
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Post-secondary funding program to be reviewed

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Gilbert Whiteduck agrees with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) that the post-secondary student support program that gives grants to First Nations and Inuit students needs to be reviewed.

But the Kitigan Zibi First Nation chief doesn't hold out much hope that the direction he would like to see the program move is more grant money available to students is the direction INAC will take it.

"My experience over the years is that a review means that the government will be reducing (the dollars in the program) or offloading it to the provinces in one way or another," said Whiteduck.

Review of the post-secondary student support program was announced in the 2008 budget, but what that review will look like and who will be involved in it is yet undetermined.

"We're still in the preliminary stages. It's too early in the process to determine when it will be done," said Patricia Valladao, INAC spokesperson.

Whiteduck notes that he was a First Nations representative taking

part in a similar review the government undertook two or three years ago. Although he thought the review committee was making valuable progress, INAC pulled the plug without warning and without recommendations being made.

"If we had been allowed to continue, I think we would have had an acceptable resolution for both sides and for the next decade or so we would have had a much stronger program," he said.

At this point, Whiteduck insists, the present review does not include First Nations representatives.

Rodney McLeod, president of the Aboriginal Student Council at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, is concerned that the program may be converted from grants to loans.

"If I have to pay back the money, it wouldn't necessarily influence me to go to school," admits McLeod, a member of Frog Lake First Nation in Alberta. "Instead I would get a high paying job out of high school instead of getting a low paying job and having to pay back a loan."

McLeod is in his fourth year at the U of A in the Faculty of Native Studies. There are approximately 1,000 students at the Edmonton university who identify themselves as First Nations.

Valladao confirms that the

review will look at the "better co-ordination" of the post-secondary student support program with other federal programs, such as the Canada Student Loan (CSL) program and the new Canada Student Grant program. A range of options will be considered, she said.

Whiteduck is concerned that if the post-secondary student support program becomes part of CSL, not only will fewer grant dollars be made available, but fewer First Nations students will apply because they will be unfamiliar with the process.

"A number of families in the community don't have the means of (getting a Canada Student Loan) because they don't have money saved," said Whiteduck.

Whiteduck wants to ensure that First Nations members have a say, before the government makes a decision.

Working with the Quebec-based First Nations Education Council (FNEC), Whiteduck was instrumental in getting Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine to sign a petition launched by FNEC, which, in part, urges the government of Canada to not only make the post-secondary student support program permanent, but to "fully shoulder its responsibility in adequately funding the right to

post-secondary education for First Nations.

The petition, both available in hard copy and online, has garnered more than 20,000 signatures. Whiteduck hopes to have the opposition parties present the petition in Parliament this month.

"We need a strong stand to make it a permanent program, to assure funding every year," said Whiteduck.

In 2008-2009, INAC has committed \$336 million in funding through the program. Of that, \$314 million is going directly to an estimated 23,000 students. Funding from the program is also used to support Aboriginal post-secondary institutions and programs.

The program has come under review for a number of reasons, said Valladao. Available data indicates that fewer First Nations and Inuit students are using the program; there's no assurance that students who need the support are receiving the funding; and because there is an overall lack of information regarding this funding program and other dollars available to all post-secondary students.

Funding for the post-secondary student support program goes directly to First Nations bands to distribute. However, the funding is not locked into supporting

students, and Whiteduck notes that some First Nations may choose to use the money to cover emergencies.

But this has never been the case for Kitigan Zibi First Nation, located one and a half hours north of Ottawa, in Quebec, said Whiteduck. The band is in its second five-year agreement for post-secondary student support program funding, distributing just over \$2 million annually to approximately 175 students.

Whiteduck believes that the post-secondary student support program is "one of the better programs to come out of INAC to support First Nations and Inuit students."

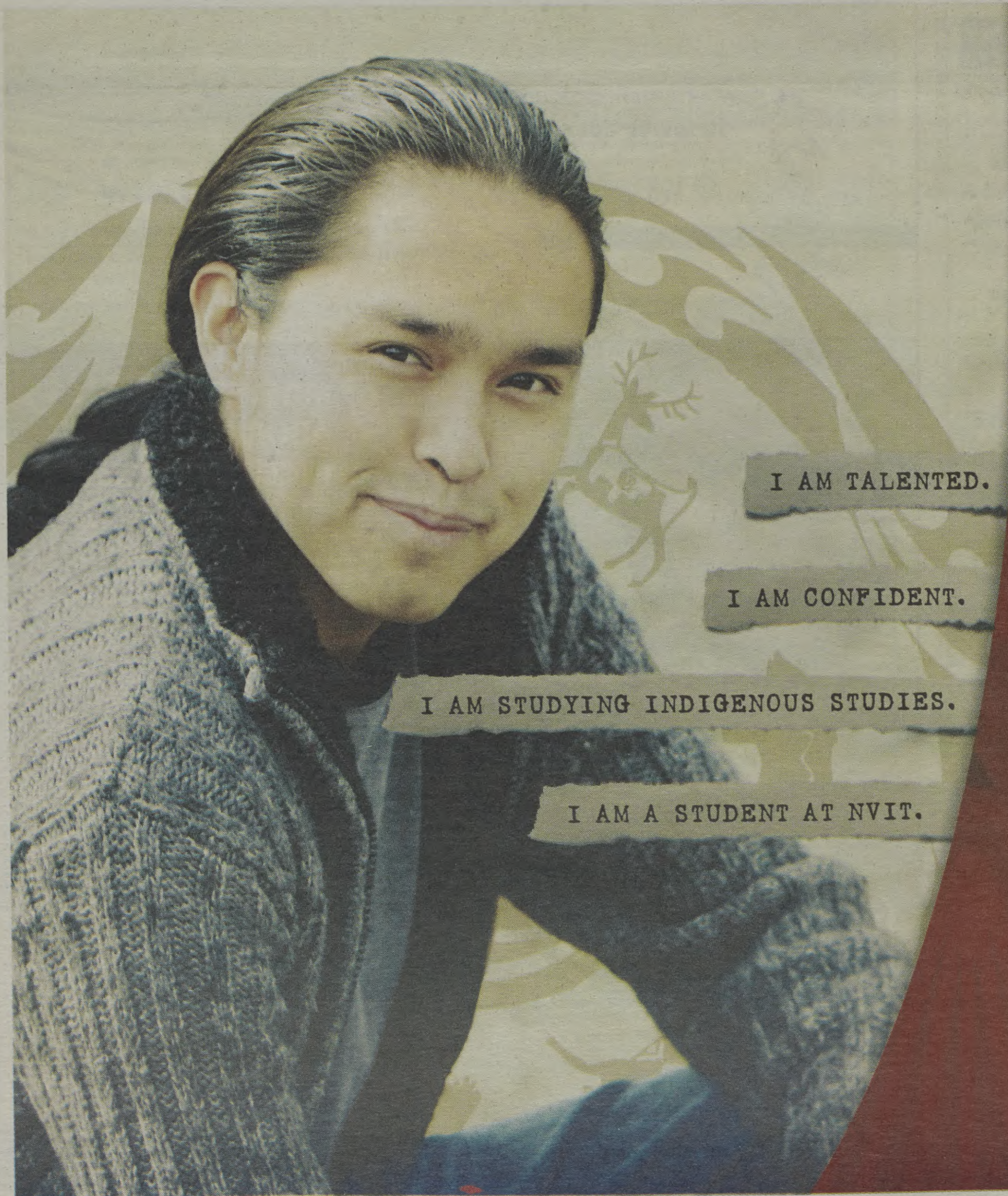
McLeod agrees.

"It's very important to the survival of our students. It's important that we receive an adequate education. I can't say that enough."

McLeod and Whiteduck both contend that post-secondary education is a treaty right.

But the government of Canada says differently.

"The government feels post-secondary education is an important part of Canadian society and economic policy. Although post-secondary education is not a treaty right, it's key to Canada's future. We know the importance of it," said Valladao.



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Mother-tongue language education promoted

By Shaunna Grandish
Windspeaker Contributor

Fredericton N.B.

A New Brunswick Native Studies professor wants Canadian governments to live up to their obligation to provide the option for First Nations youth to have school courses taught in their mother-tongue language.

Prof. Bear Nicholas of Fredericton's St. Thomas University said governments and educators are obligated to follow international standards around linguistic human rights.

By not providing an option for Mother-Tongue medium education, governments and educators are denying basic linguistic human rights and creating all sorts of consequences that are now understood as contributing directly to the denial of these rights, added Bear Nicholas.

Bear Nicholas said research points out students who are taught their mother-tongue

language from an early age do better academically than students who are only immersed in English.

"Research is now telling us that young people who get the chance to be educated in their mother-tongue actually learn English better, and they also do better in school," said Bear Nicholas.

Bear Nicholas believes that the percentages of Aboriginal students entering and graduating from university would improve if the students were educated starting from an early age in their mother-tongue language.

Government officials need to look at Hawaii and Northern Norway — two regions that grant students the right to be educated in their mother-tongue language. As a result of these laws, new universities and programs have opened that conduct classes entirely in Mother-Tongue Medium. Students at these schools seem to be doing better academically, according to Bear Nicholas.

An additional benefit of the

teaching of mother-tongue languages would also be their preservation, said Bear Nicholas.

"It makes it a win-win situation, especially when you add that our languages may survive — which is not happening now. Our languages are disappearing so rapidly that a lot of people are throwing their hands up in the air and thinking we just need to do more of what we've been doing. However, what we've been doing hasn't been working," she added.

Recently, the issue about having more Aboriginal content in schools has been getting some media attention.

Also, New Brunswick Education Minister Kelly Lamrock met with First Nations chiefs and educators early December to discuss policies needs for Aboriginal education.

He will bring his findings to a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) held in Saskatchewan in February.

Lamrock wasn't available for comment by the article's

deadline.

Chiefs and educators need to see the benefit of bilingualism, according to Bear Nicholas.

Bear Nicholas said she is troubled that the issue of bilingualism is still being looked upon as an add-on in education, and nobody until very recently has been taking the government to task about this issue.

The issue hasn't been fully address because we have been all indoctrinated into thinking that only English should be taught in schools. When both levels of governments and educators understand the multiple benefits of mother-tongue education is when changes will occur in the educational system, she added.

Students have expressed interest to Bear Nicholas about having some of their university courses taught in their mother-tongue language.

However, linguistic programs need to start in early primary school and then progressively through the grades, according to Bear Nicholas. Currently, many children do not come to school

speaking their mother-tongue language.

"But it is still their mother-tongue, and everybody in the world has the right to their mother-tongue language," said Bear Nicholas.

Bear Nicholas, who is Maliseet First Nation, said she currently has to learn her mother-tongue language as an adult and believes that has been one of the driving forces behind her push.

Many people believe parents should be taught their mother-tongue language before their children. However, adults do not learn the language as quickly in part because they are not a captive audience like children are in school, according to Bear Nicholas.

She added that parents often express interest in learning the language when their children come home knowing it.

Also, it is more effective to start teaching children first because they are the best ones to carry on the language into the future.

"The children really are the answer," said Bear Nicholas.

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Med students consider Aboriginal perspectives

By Chris Phalen
Windspeaker Contributor

CALGARY

The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary is implementing curriculum that will help contemporary doctors meet Aboriginal healthcare needs better.

Through an interactive approach of applying "cultural sessions" in the existing curriculum, future physicians will

be able to narrow the gaps perpetuated by cultural misunderstanding between contemporary doctors and Aboriginal populations, according to the Department of Family Medicine.

Sally Goodstriker, the Aboriginal liaison at Calgary's Children's Hospital, said there are already many parallels in treatment, but the majority of doctors have a hard time accepting the traditional Aboriginal approach to treatment

and healing.

"We at Children's have doctors who are very in tune with that (traditional practice), and we also have doctors who still think we are pagan worshippers," Goodstriker said.

While Goodstriker thinks adding a cultural aspect to medical school would help, she said, after 10 years in her field, a few classes won't make a huge difference, but also admitted it was a step in the right direction.

"It's like putting your foot in

the water if you're afraid to swim. At least a good start is going over there and getting your feet wet, Goodstriker said.

Goodstriker said gaps would always exist because institutionalized knowledge is much different than applied learning, such as is traditional medicine handed down through the generations.

"Students have university knowledge and skill, and that's good, but they will never have the other," Goodstriker explained.

The current condition of health among Aboriginal people in Canada is impacted by the experiences inherent in historical, political, economic and social inequalities, according to the University of Calgary, Department of Family Medicine.

"One of the many gaps present in the healthcare system is the differences in perspectives and explanatory model for the cause of illness and disease held between Aboriginal patients and non-Aboriginal physicians," reads their Web site.

Dr. Kim Zapf, a professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, said he strongly supports the idea of medical students participating in cultural immersion experiences.

"I think that Western/contemporary medicine has much to learn from Aboriginal notions of balance and wholeness," said Zapf.

"My hope would be that the resulting practice perspectives would improve care, not just for Aboriginal people, but for all people. This is very different from saying, 'Aboriginal spirituality should be a subject matter to be addressed by Western/contemporary medicine,'" Zapf said.

The project is an ongoing research initiative which aids curriculum development concurrently, said Anh Ly, a research associate and project coordinator.

"We have done research with local Aboriginal participants, like focus groups where questions about health and wellness are asked. And from those findings develop curriculum," said Ly.

Ly said response from the student body and fellow faculty members has been, for the most part, positive concerning the cultural immersion aspect of the

curriculum, including a cultural camp where students spend a couple of days in tribal territories and engage elders, healers and spiritual practices such as sweats and smudging.

The point of the camp is not to teach students specific details of traditional healing, and the department contends it would not be appropriate to even attempt that. Instead it is meant to serve to allow people to begin to explore other ways of thinking about wellness and health, and possibly to explore a little about how their patients' culture may impact their understanding of what is going on in their bodies.

"Sessions provide students with an opportunity to think about these issues," Ly said.

"Ultimately our aim is to improve health outcomes and health experiences for Aboriginal patients, by providing trainees and future physicians with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to provide competent care to Aboriginal patients."

According to Ly, some universities offer core Aboriginal courses, but the one at U of C is more discreet and focused.

"It is to the advantage of the department to integrate sessions into courses that students are already being evaluated for," Ly explained.

Goodstriker sums it up with a story.

She said awhile ago an Aboriginal boy who had had an accident on a motorized scooter faced the possible amputation of his foot due to an infection.

The doctors thought amputation was the only way, but the boy's parents employed a medicine man from "up north" to come and render service to the boy to the dismay of the doctors.

Goodstriker said the healer used bear grease, traditional song and prayer, and the foot began to heal within a week.

After doctors thought cutting it off was the only way to stop the spread of infection, Goodstriker said it was the combination of traditional medicine and Western antibiotics that saved the boy.

When asked if the skeptical doctors might have a new perspective on treatment after the shamanistic experience, Goodstriker emphatically replied, "I should think so."

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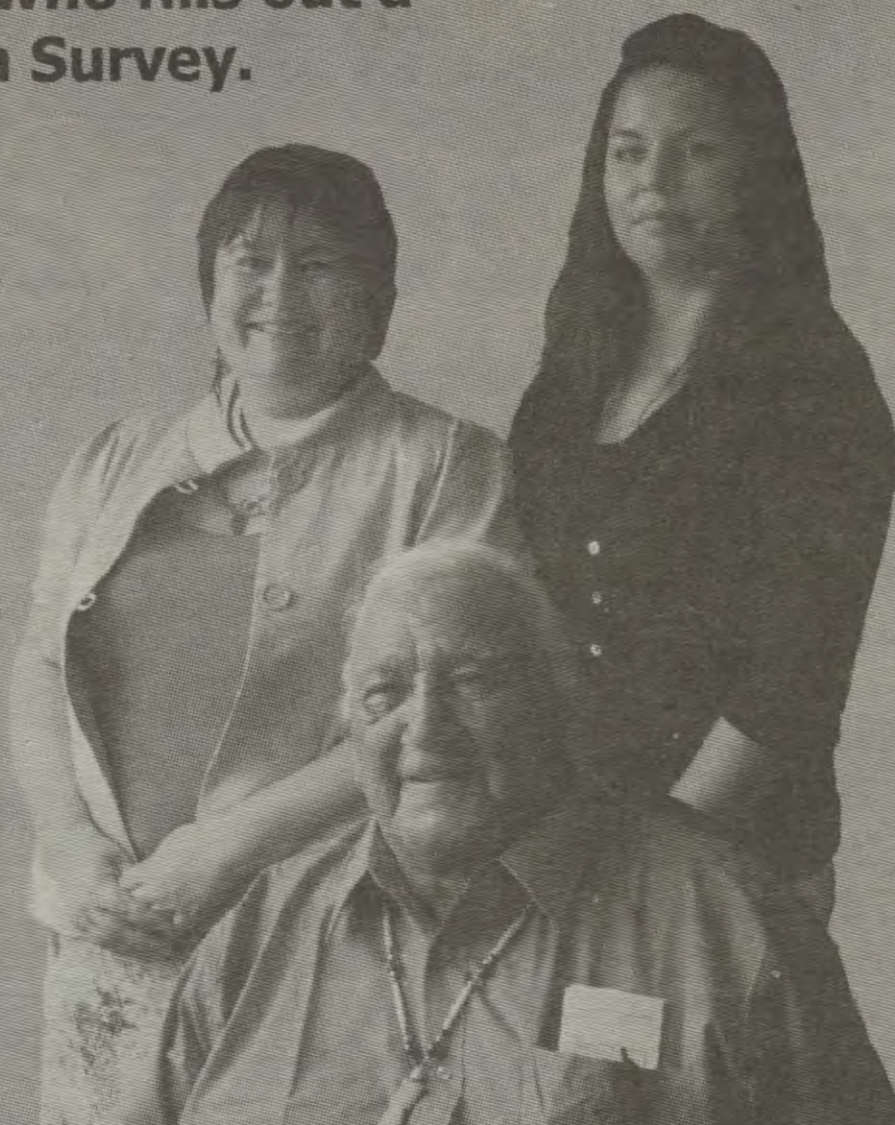
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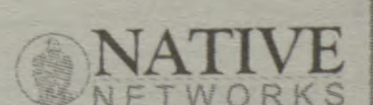
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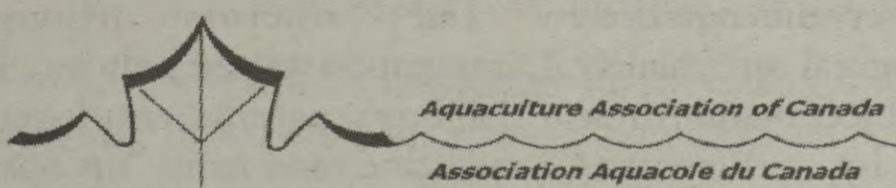
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The fight for Fish Lake

By Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

FISH LAKE, B.C.

One of the largest undeveloped gold and copper deposits in Canada is at the centre of a very large controversy.

The developers of the Prosperity Mine Project claim that it is an environmentally-sound endeavor, and could, in fact, be a boon to the local economy, but as far as one Aboriginal community is concerned, they are opposed.

"We need to review and look back at 1864," said Chief Marilyn Baptiste of the Xenigwet'in First Nation. "Our war leaders put a stop to an invasion of our territory on the west side. They were after gold back in those days, but now they're after gold again, but it's on the east side of our territory."

The territory is known as Teztan Biny, or Fish Lake, and is not only considered sacred ground by the Tsilhqot'in Nation, it is one of the area's best fishing locations.

"Fish Lake will be compromised as part of the mine development plan," confirmed Brian Battison, vice-president of corporate affairs for Taseko Mines Ltd.

"As part of our fish compensation plan, we're

proposing to develop a new lake, a lake that's slightly larger and slightly deeper than Fish Lake. So that will be home to rainbow trout and we think it's quite a thoughtful, ingenious plan," said Battison.

The proposed new lake, which will be called Prosperity Lake, is said to be an improvement over Fish Lake.

"Fish Lake is overpopulated and the fish are starving there and have been for a long time. That is why they only grow small. They're small fish, torpedo shaped (and) there's not enough room for them to grow larger," said Battison.

Battison claims that the new lake will host larger, healthier fish, however, Baptiste believes Taseko is missing the point entirely.

"Our people have a name for the lake in our language and they also have a name in our language for the fish."

"Not only is it destroying a lake, it's destroying an enormous area and it's not only impacting that specific area, it'll be impacting the whole Chilcotin," said Baptiste.

Another concern that was raised about Prosperity Mine, this time by Joe Alphonse, the director of government services for the Tsilhqot'in Nation Government, is that creating a new lake would expose acid-producing rocks that would then make the new lake unable to sustain life. It is a worry

that Battison believes is unsubstantiated.

Battison explained that there are rocks that, when exposed to a certain combination of moisture and oxygen, can change the Ph balance of the water that runs into the lake.

"The best way to deal with that and the best practices to avoid that situation is to put the rock under water. So if you deny the rock oxygen, it's just a regular rock that's not harmful to anybody," said Battison.

"They may have a number of different concerns. So if acid rock drainage is one of them, we have to provide a plan, a scientifically proven, scientifically and technically defensible plan for the management of potentially acid generating materials."

Battison went on to explain that Taseko has gone to great lengths to address the many concerns brought forward by the Aboriginal organizations, and said that they will soon submit their environmental assessment report.

"This is a massive set of documents; 3,000 pages of scientific documents and technical data information, which explains the project, what we want to do, why we want to do it, and what's the value to the public interest that will result from this work," said Battison.

Baptiste, along with other First Nation people, believes that

Taseko will attempt to move forward on the project by exploiting a loophole found in a former court judgment.

Two years ago, after a 15-year battle in court, Tsilhqot'in Chief Roger William was victorious proving that the Tsilhqot'in Nation had the right to hunt, trap and trade on roughly 400,000 hectares of the territory.

Nowhere in this judgment does it say that the Tsilhqot'in have the right to specifically fish on the said 400,000 hectares of land.

"I guess the focus was hunting and trapping," said Battison. "Why it didn't include fish is beyond me, because the clear-cut logging has impacted fish barren waters everywhere, all over. You'd think it would have been a bigger part of it."

Battison said rather than try to exploit that oversight in the judgment, the company intends to leave the matter between the Xenigwet'in and the provincial government. Battison said Taseko is not disputing whether or not they have an Aboriginal right to fish.

"It's a fight over who has management and control over the resources. The Xenigwet'in say they should have management and control over the resources on behalf of their people and the provincial government says they have management and control over the resources on behalf of all the people of B.C.," said Battison.

"And so we're caught in that crossfire," Battison added.

Baptiste suggested that Taseko should have done its research before engaging this project and does not believe that it's simply a company caught between two quarreling governments.

"Taseko Mines Ltd has been suggesting to the media that they're caught between the two governments. In our fight, they need to do the right thing and step aside," said Baptiste.

To help ensure Taseko steps aside, Baptiste has launched a lawsuit on behalf of the Tsilhqot'in Nation to declare an Aboriginal right to fish in Fish Lake in hopes that it will delay the project, and may even halt the project entirely.

Battison, however, does not believe the lawsuit will have any bearing on the progress already made, nor will it alter the plan already in place.

"I think the lawsuit is tactical, designed to achieve a bargaining position. That bargaining position has not yet been defined. So it's not a serious lawsuit in that context. It's a tactical lawsuit," said Battison.

According to Taseko, the project will begin development in the summer and begin production in 2012. It would create well over 1,000 full-time and part-time jobs and generate nearly \$500 billion in its 22-year life span.



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Nations want "in" to new energy initiatives

By Kate Harries
Birchbark Contributor

OTTAWA

This time, John Beaucage of the Anishinabek Nation vows his people won't be shoved aside as Ontario develops new ways of meeting the energy demands of the highly-populated southern part of the province.

"We foresee that within the next 10 to 20 years, energy production and transmission of energy are going to be a very big business," Beaucage, grand council chief and leader of 42 Anishinabek nations that comprise about one-third of Ontario's Indigenous population, said in an interview.

"Within the Anishinabek Nation, we are uniquely situated to take advantage of some of these opportunities."

Projects will be fostered through federal and provincial loan guarantees and long-term agreements under which the province undertakes to purchase power from proponents.

Beaucage is pushing for full participation by First Nations in new endeavors ranging from wind farms to high-voltage transmission lines.

"We've got hydro lines, we've got railroads, we've got highways, we've got pipelines running all through our territories which we don't get one single nickel out of," he noted.

"We agreed to share the territory and share the benefits, and yet nothing has ever been shared with us in the way it should have been after we signed the treaties.

"Now there are Supreme Court decisions saying you've got to involve the First Nations, so now they're coming to our door and knocking, and we will not let that knock go unanswered."

Ontario is working on a 20-year Integrated Power System Plan (IPSP) to address the anticipated energy shortfall. The plan, developed by the Ontario Power Authority over the past four years, must be approved by the Ontario Energy Board.

First Nations have complained of a process that paid only cursory attention to their concerns.

"Getting called at the last minute to sit in on an IPSP presentation is not meaningful consultation," industry expert Arnold May of Nipissing First Nation complained in a written submission to the Ontario Energy Board last July.

"Questions were put forward to the presenters at these IPSP presentations and there was no response to these questions until eight months after the presentation. This is not meaningful consultation."

In September, shortly after the board had started hearings into the plan, the whole process was abruptly interrupted by newly-appointed Ontario Energy Minister George Smitherman, who ordered his officials to include more renewable resources in the energy mix, and undertake more consultation with First Nations.

The hearings are to resume in March.

For Beaucage, Smitherman's intervention was an indication it's time for the First Nations to step up to the plate. As a result, the Anishinabek Nation has organized a series of focus sessions to allow its member communities across the province to bring forward their ideas and make recommendations.

Taking care of Anishinabek community needs will be a top priority in the development of any proposals, Beaucage said.

"Whenever a community has some kind of power project, that power is brought back into the community in some way with our own power company so that we set the rates for our own community members before it's sold onto the grid."

Greg Plain, executive director of the Anishinabek Nation Management Group, chaired the first session in Thunder Bay. Others are being held at Garden River near Sault Ste. Marie, Alderville near Peterborough, Aundeck Omni Kaning on Manitoulin Island and Aamjiwnaang near Sarnia, concluding on Feb 11.

Many of the communities are already seriously involved in energy generation, Plain said.

Pic River First Nation, on the shores of Lake Superior near Marathon, is considered a trailblazer, with three run-of-the-river hydro-electric projects. Run-of-the-river is less damaging to the ecosystem functions of a river than the dams that were built in the last century and resulted in the flooding of many important First Nations sites.

Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island—the world's largest freshwater island—has identified some promising wind farm sites. A lack of capacity in the island's distribution grid is presently stalling development.

Among the speakers who will address the focus sessions are: Arnold May, owner of the consulting firm Beedaubun Enterprise, who worked in the electrical industry for 31 years, retiring from Ontario Hydro in 2002; Roger Peltier, energy planner for Wikwemikong and the First Nations Energy Alliance; Joe Gaboury, CEO of Five Nations Energy Inc., Ontario's only Aboriginal-owned and -operated electricity transmission

"We foresee that within the next 10 to 20 years, energy production and transmission of energy are going to be a very big business,"

—John Beaucage, Grand Council Chief

company, which serves the communities of Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan, and the De Beers Victor diamond mine.

There are situations for remote communities that pose a particular challenge. One such nation is Gull Bay, with about 1,000 residents on Lake Nipigon. Like many Northern Ontario communities, it relies on expensive diesel-powered generators, which produce greenhouse gases.

Beaucage said a proposed Manitoba-Ontario transmission line would run past Gull Bay, but

the cost of building a station to change the direct current carried by the line to the alternating current needed in the community would be prohibitive.

So Gull Bay is looking at a run-of-the-river project.

The \$1.5 billion Manitoba-Ontario high-voltage transmission line is one of the most significant power developments being considered by the province. It would take electricity from the Conawapa hydro dam, to be built on Manitoba's Nelson River, to southern Ontario.

The proposal is controversial. It is opposed by environmental

groups because it will increase fragmentation of the boreal forest, endangering survival of species like the woodland caribou that require vast undisturbed areas.

Opinion among affected Aboriginal communities is divided.

The Anishinabek Nation, one of several tribal organizations whose territories would be impacted, has taken a position in favor of the transmission line

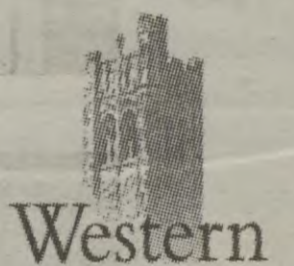
Mitigating the environmental effects should be part of the province's consultation, Beaucage said.

"We are concerned about a negative effect on the environment, but then we also must be very pragmatic. This will probably go ahead—whether we're involved or not—because of the hunger for power in southern Ontario.

"We're saying 'Let's be part of it and let's do it in a way that is well thought out, well planned and looks after as many of the environmental difficulties as we possibly can. We would like to be involved as a partner.'"

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Timmons tackles family literacy

By Thomas J. Bruner
Birchbark Writer

TIMMONS

Being able to read is viewed in many circles as key to a person's development. In other circles, however, the importance of reading is often less valued and the result is an individual's inability to take full advantage in a world that advances rapidly.

Jan. 27 was Family Literacy Day, so the Timmins Native Friendship Centre wanted to ensure that families appreciated the act of reading.

"I wanted to put a lot of emphasis on family literacy," said Kristen Murray, Akwe'go high-risk worker at the Timmins

just giving a kid a book, but reading to your child."

In order to make that happen, Murray created the Friendship Centre's first active participation in Family Literacy Day.

"I just said 'Hey it's Literacy Day', because a lot of my clients - because they're high-risk - I find a lot of them don't have any basic literacy skills. They're not reading and they should be because they're between the ages of seven and 12," said Murray, adding the lower reading skills were the main reason why she created the event. It's a unique event that involved the mayor of Timmins and was sponsored by Timmins Honda.

"Well, basically, all of Honda Canada is the major sponsor of

of that, as a Honda dealership, we try and take part in any events to promote family literacy," said Ryan Taylor, general manager of Timmins Honda.

"We're holding a book drive where we're trying to fill a CRV in our showroom with donated books, new or used, that we're going to donate throughout the community," said Taylor. Taylor added the support has been "not bad," explaining that the rear cargo area of the car was nearly full.

"The whole vehicle isn't going to be full unless some sort of miracle happens," said Taylor, adding that he intends to keep the book drive going past Family Literacy Day until the end of the month. Murray said the message

books themselves.

"It's just pretty much awareness of the issue is what I was trying to focus on, not so much the book drive," said Murray. "But because we have Honda there, which is a big name, the mayor, those things tied together bring awareness."

"It's not even that we can't afford the books. It's so that we can promote literacy because most of our families don't actually take the time to sit down and actually read to a child and that's what I'm trying to get at," said Murray.

Murray explained the unique ABCs of family literacy that ranged all the way from A - Ask your child about the story you are reading to ensure

the TV and pick up a book instead.

"There's a list that goes all the way from A to Z. They are just tips and hints," said Murray. With many children picking up an X-Box or PS3 controller in lieu of a book, Murray said one way to meet that challenge is to offer the child relevant reading material.

"Picking up something that the kids like to read, not picking up a boring novel. If they need to have a visual, then picking up a book with pictures in it," said Murray.

"I know Arthur is a television show, so maybe try reading books that have a TV component so they can picture that."

Murray even suggested that the children, in lieu of sitting in their room all day and playing video games, could read a book about a kid that plays video games. Aside from the book drive, planned events included games with game show themes and a literacy relevant menu.

"We're doing 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire.'" We're also doing 'Family Feud' to keep in mind it's a family kind of thing," said Murray, adding the mayor, Tom Laughren, threw in his support as the celebrity game show host.

"There were free draws throughout the day. At lunchtime they had Alpha-Bit soup and we're going to have salmon sandwiches," said Murray, explaining that salmon has DHA, which helps brain development.

"It's a great tool for learning. And the whole basis for Family Literacy Day is to get the family together, which always helps children's education beyond just a matter of learning to read," said Taylor. "It makes you feel a little more secure. It creates a home, family type of environment." Taylor said that, even in the adult years, it's important to keep up the reading.

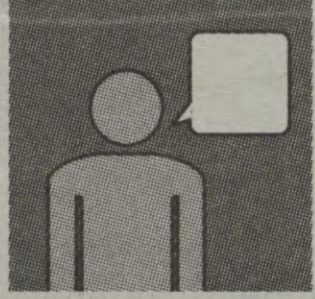
"It can be a stress reliever. [It] helps the imagination skills that we tend to lose as we get older," he added.

"It's difficult going through life not knowing how to read. You need reading for pretty much everything, so it's important," said Murray.

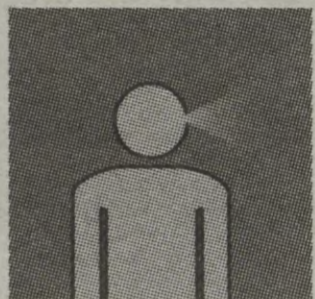
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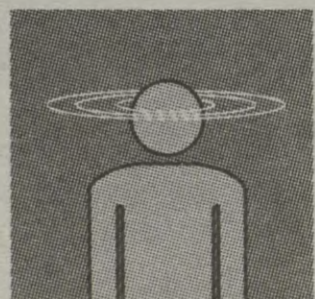
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Weengushk Film Institute nurturing First Nations screenwriters

By Margo Little
Windspeaker Contributor

Manitoulin Island, Ont.

It has taken five years of patience and perseverance, but all the hard work and networking has paid off for M'Chigeeng First Nation film-maker Shirley Cheechoo. The long held dream of establishing a film industry training institute on Manitoulin Island has finally been realized.

Cheechoo, an award winning actor, writer, director and producer, received the National Aboriginal Award for her work in theatre, film and fine art in March 2008. She was also honoured with a lifetime achievement award for her contributions to Aboriginal filmmaking in June 2008.

The launching of a series of educational workshops in 2009 is ample evidence that the fledgling Weengushk Institute is serious about its mandate. The goal of the Northern Ontario facility is to nurture First Nations actors, script writers, producers, directors, editors and animators.

On the weekend of January 24-25, 2009 Cheechoo invited her long time colleague and collaborator Phyllis Ellis to share her expertise in screenwriting with an eager group gathered at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation (OCF) in M'Chigeeng. Ellis, an accomplished writer/producer, has earned the distinction of being the only Canadian to premiere two feature films at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000. In addition, she was recognized as New Producer of the Year for her productions *Women: Scenes From Life* and *Detective Fiction*. Most recently, she directed a documentary on Wikwemikong success story Crystal Shawanda and created a comedy series called *Three Chords From the Truth* aired on Sundays on Country Music Television.

Currently, Ellis serves as a

consultant to Weengushk Institute and works with Cheechoo to attract First Nations students to a variety of training opportunities. In her view, the institute is a very important addition to Canadian resources.

"It's fantastic to have a place where Aboriginal youth can take these courses and be together. There's something special about being where people get you, where people understand you. The fact that Weengushk exists at all is out of the ordinary because it is here specifically for Aboriginal students. These training opportunities are not as commonplace as you would like to think," she stressed.

During the "Introduction to Storytelling" workshop, co-sponsored by Weengushk and the OCF, Ellis offered tips on script grammar, character analysis, narrative point of view, plot, dialogue and scene development.

"Everyone here is capable of writing a screenplay," she said. "Storytelling is in every one of us. We just have to provide the vehicle for them to tell it. I will introduce the method and the process, but the important thing is for you to believe in yourself and believe that you have a story to tell."

She acknowledged that many unique stories can emerge from the setting of Manitoulin and the North, however, she suggested that students broaden their horizons and not limit themselves to local narrative.

"When you start writing, it's good to write what you know," she said. "But sometimes it's good to just let your imagination play a role and create a new world you have never seen."

She encouraged participants to find their own voice and to express themes that have universal appeal. "Be believable in your storytelling," she advised. "Tell the truth, yet don't be afraid to let your characters have faults. Let your characters be vulnerable,

let them have an Achilles heel."

Throughout the session, she emphasized that character development is the key to a powerful script. "It starts with a great character, a character that sweeps you away and makes you feel something or care about them. The character should always be aspiring to achieve something and to overcome obstacles along the way."

Above all, she underscored the reality that film-making is a collaborative art and that writers need to master the skill of thinking visually. After all, actors, directors, producers and editors will all be adding their interpretations to the screenplay.

Students had an opportunity to practise co-operative storytelling during the two day workshop. Ellis led them through a practical exercise on creating back story for a character. The budding screenwriters threw out ideas fast and furious as Ellis recorded the character traits and points of conflict on two flip charts. Slowly a collaborative storyline emerged featuring many of the ingredients of riveting drama: friendship, romance, betrayal, accidents, disfigurement, guilt, secrets, loss and eventual redemption.

Ellis will lead a course on producing techniques February 28, 2009. Similar workshops are scheduled for March, April and May.

The future looks bright for this organization brave enough to start an ambitious enterprise during bleak economic forecasts. The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation has agreed to provide space and equipment for the workshops. And the institute received a welcome financial boost of \$35,000 last fall. The funding provided by CTVglobemedia is being used to support the organization's administration and marketing costs.

Contact 705-377-6011 or 705-377-4902 for further information.

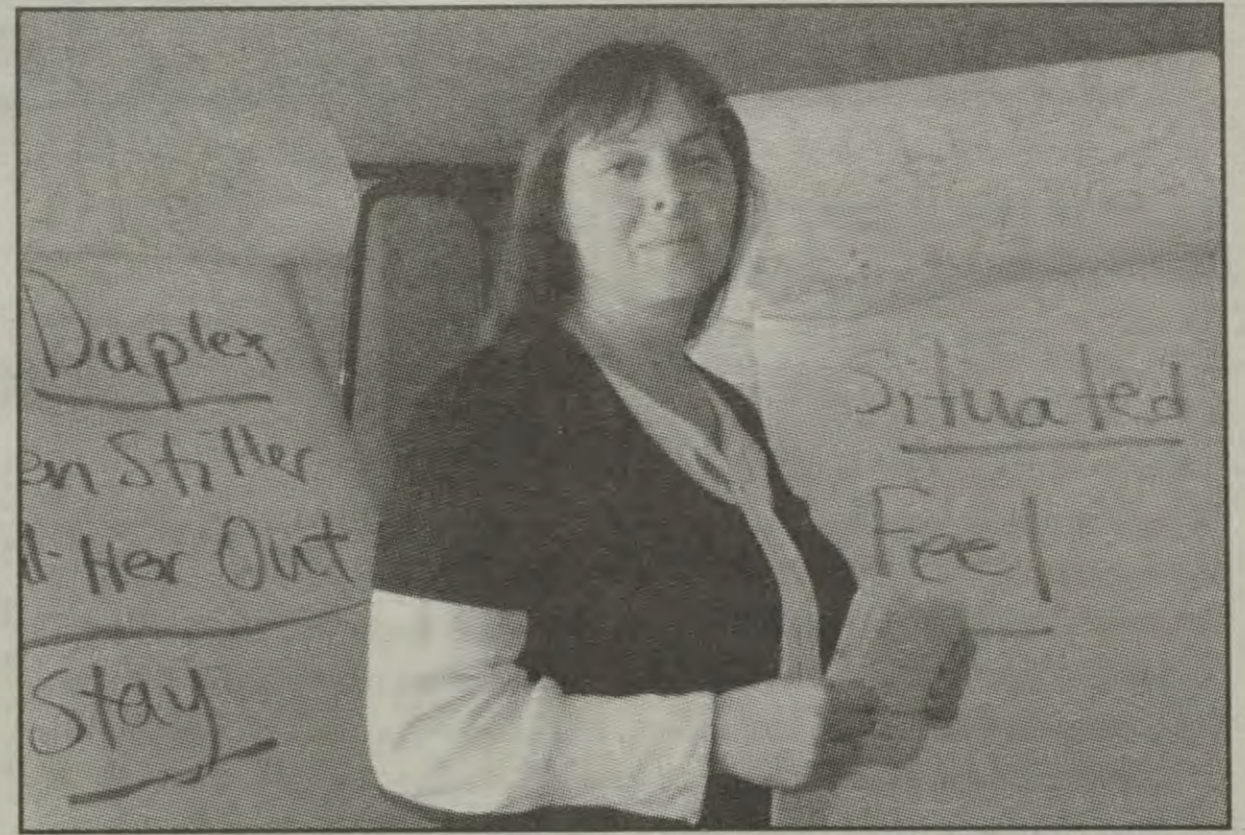


PHOTO: MARGO LITTLE

Producer, director, writer Phyllis Ellis taught the basics of screenwriting at the Weengushk Film Institute.

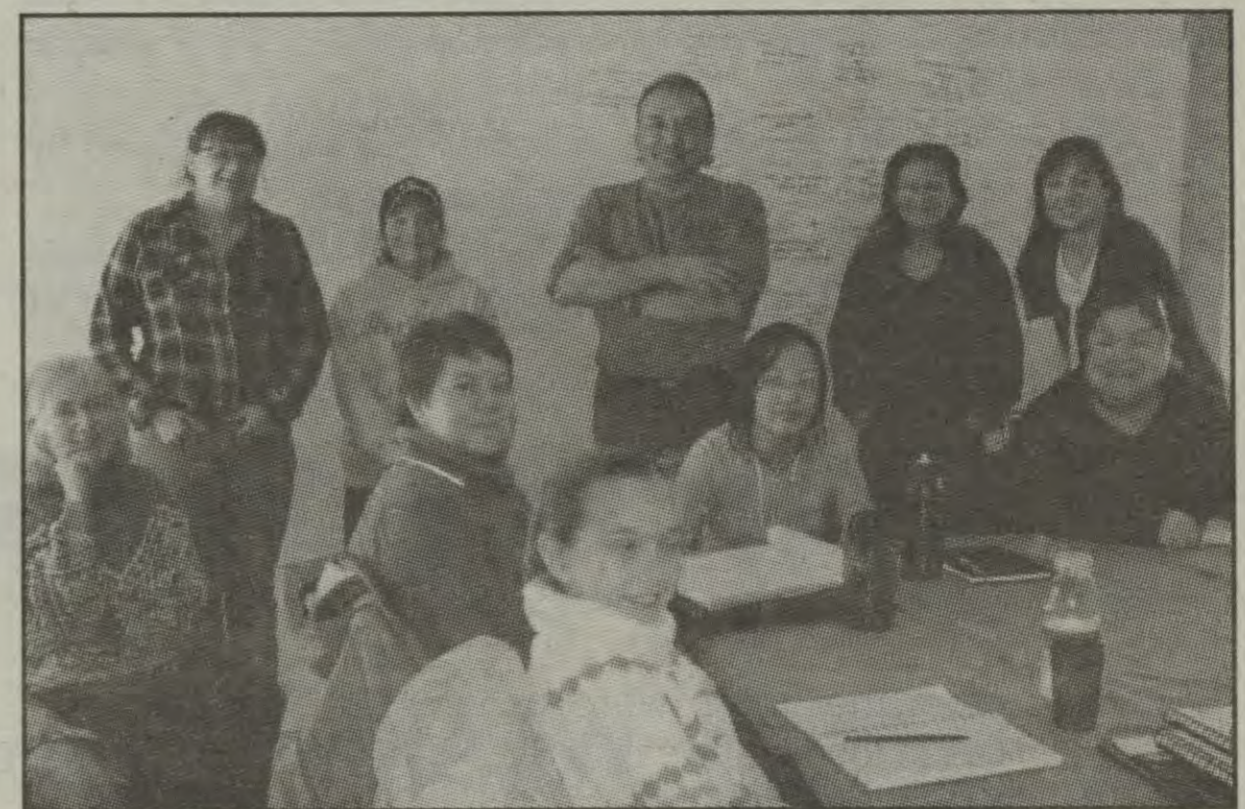


PHOTO: MARGO LITTLE

A group of aspiring screenwriters learn tips from industry experts at Weengushk Institute January 24-25, 2009.

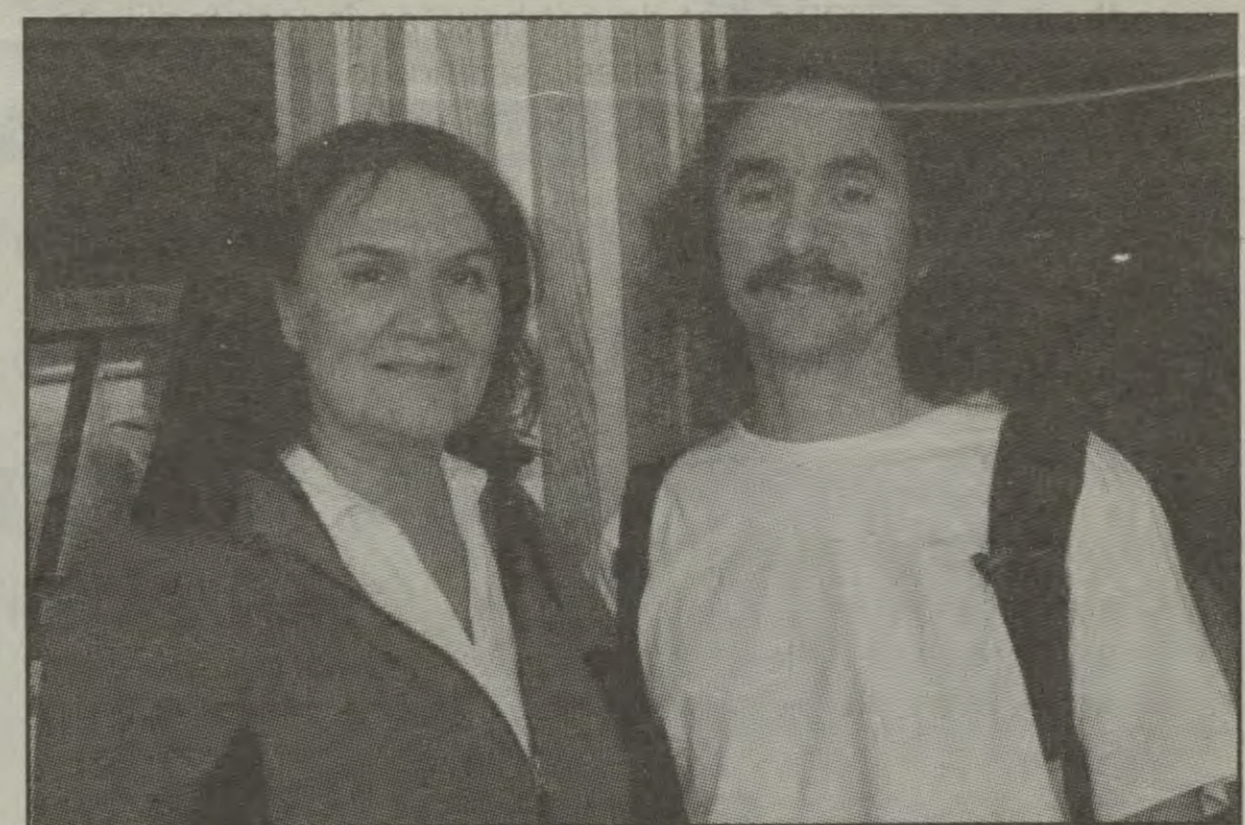


PHOTO: MARGO LITTLE

Film maker Shirley Cheechoo (left) and husband, artist Blake Debassige (right) have established Weengushk Institute to train Aboriginal youth in writing, directing, producing and filming.

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Windspeaker Sports Briefs

By SAM LASKARIS

PETITION GATHERS SUPPORT

More than 1,800 people have signed an online petition to get former National Hockey League star Reggie Leach into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

The petition can be found at www.petitiononline.com/TheRifle/petition.html

It was created by Steven Anthony Taylor, who lives in Leach's hometown of Riverton, Manitoba. He was also the first person to sign the petition, adding a simple comment:

"Great memories, Reg, Thanks."

Leach played his minor hockey in Riverton. He then went on to become a high-scoring forward in the junior ranks with the Flin Flon Bombers.

Leach then graduated to the pros where he became one of the best Aboriginal NHL stars ever. Between 1970-83 he played in 1,028 NHL games and racked up 735 points, including 428 goals.

Leach played for four different NHL teams: the Boston Bruins, California Golden Seals, Philadelphia Flyers and Detroit Red Wings.

He's best known for his days with the Flyers. He scored a career-high 61 goals with Philadelphia during the 1975-76 campaign.

Leach also represented Canada in international play. He was a member of the winning Canadian squad at the 1976 Canada Cup tournament.

Leach is still involved in hockey today. He's coaching the Manitoulin Islanders, members of the Northern Ontario Junior A Hockey League.

FUN ON ICE

An indoor facility is not a requirement to enjoying some hockey action.

That's obviously one of the main messages in the Fun on Ice program organized by the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Western Arctic.

Reps from the group were expected to travel to 10 communities in the Northwest Territories during January and February that do not have indoor arenas. Once there, they'll introduce the Fun on Ice program, which teaches basic skating and hockey drills.

The program is designed specifically for those in remote northern communities that do not have an indoor facility to skate on. The program teaches aspiring hockey players to make-do with what they do have — ice outdoors.

At each of the program venues, ASCWA officials will be providing free skate sharpening as well as hockey sticks for all of the youth participants.

The following communities were expected to have the Fun on Ice program; Kakisa, Jean Marie River, Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Gameti, Wekweti, Lutsel K'e, Wrigley, Colville Lake and Trout Lake.

SPORTS FORUMS STAGED

Alex Nelson, the president and CEO of the Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of BC (ASRA) will be hosting six regional forums throughout British Columbia during February and March.

Aboriginal sports, recreation and physical activity leaders are urged to attend a forum.

Events will be held in Nanaimo, Vancouver, Kamloops, Terrace, Prince George and Fort St. John.

The forums are being held to gather feedback on the province's Strategy on Aboriginal Sports, Recreation and Physical Activity.

Officials are hoping to discover priorities and how to respond to the needs of Aboriginal communities as well as their coaches and athletes.

PRICE PLAYS TWICE

As it turned out, Montreal Canadiens' goaltender Carey Price was one of the busiest players at this year's National Hockey League all-star festivities.

For a while it appeared an ankle injury would prevent Price, Montreal's star sophomore puckstopper, from taking part in the all-star activities.

But Price, who was voted by fans as the starting netminder for the league's Eastern Conference all-stars, returned to action from his injury a few days before the showcase match, staged Jan. 25 in Montreal.

Price played the first period of the contest. He stopped nine out of the 11 shots he faced.

The Eastern Conference stars went on to edge their West Conference counterparts 12-11, in a match decided by a shootout.

Besides the league's main all-star game, Price also participated in the NHL's Young Stars contest held one day earlier. He was a member of the league's Sophomore squad that was downed 9-6 by the Rookies team in a condensed game, which featured a 3-on-3 format.

From Inuvik to Boston for goalkeeper

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Writer

BOSTON

One might assume a teenager from one of Canada's northernmost towns would have a difficult time adjusting to life at a big-city American university.

But that certainly has not been the case for Leah Sulyma.

The 19-year-old, who was born in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, is in her sophomore year at Boston's Northeastern University. She's also a star goaltender for the Northeastern women's hockey squad.

The population of Sulyma's hometown is about 3,500. Northeastern's enrolment alone is more than four times this figure.

Sulyma, whose father Dan is Inuit, said her most difficult transition occurred three years before she started university.

That's because she left home at 15 and moved to Edmonton, primarily to further her hockey career. For the next three years she played for elite girls' teams in Leduc, Spruce Grove and St. Albert.

"Then, going from Edmonton to Boston wasn't that bad," she said.

Sulyma, who is studying business at Northeastern, accepted a full athletic scholarship offer from the school, valued at \$44,000 (U.S.) per year.

Though she wasn't sure what to expect during her first collegiate season, things turned out well for Sulyma.

The club struggled but she ended up being its Number 1 goaltender and was selected as Northeastern's most valuable player.

"That was pretty cool, especially since I was a freshman," she said.

Sulyma also picked up several other accolades last season. She was named to the Hockey East (the league Northeastern competes in) all-rookie squad and was a finalist for the league's rookie-of-the-year award.

She was also chosen as the

Hockey East rookie of the week five times.

As for this season, Sulyma has continued to excel. She's already been named as the league's defensive player of the week twice.

Sulyma is now splitting the Northeastern netminding duties with rookie Florence Schelling, who for the past five years has also been a goalie with the national women's squad from Switzerland. (Sulyma doesn't mind sharing her club's puckstopping duties, especially since Northeastern is enjoying more success this season.

A year ago the squad had an overall record of 7-24-3. But this season Northeastern had a 10-12-2 mark following its first 24 contests.

"This year is a lot better," Sulyma said.

And Northeastern coach Dave Flint said his Aboriginal goalie is one of the main reasons for his team's fortunes.

"She's been a big part of our success this year," said Flint, who is in his first season of coaching the Boston-based squad. "Every time she's in net, she gives us a chance to win."

Flint said he is a bit surprised someone from a small, remote Canadian town is now shining at the U.S. collegiate level.

"You wouldn't think that's where you'd be getting your goalie from," he said.

But he's obviously happy to have Sulyma on his roster.

"She's definitely established herself as one of the top goalies in the league," he added.

Besides winning team MVP honours again, Sulyma also has a couple of other goals for this season.

"Making it into the playoffs and hopefully winning our conference," she said.

Six of the eight Hockey East teams advance to post-season play. The league also includes Boston College, Boston University, Providence, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont and Maine.

With a league record of 5-8-0,

Northeastern was occupying sixth place in the league standings in late January.

As for her future, Sulyma said she'd love to crack the roster of the Canadian women's team some day. But she hasn't been involved with any of the country's national team programs yet.

"That's not to say she can't develop into a national team goaltender," Flint said of Sulyma.

And even if she doesn't go on to represent her country in international play, Flint believes Sulyma would be able to suit up for women's elite teams in Canada.

"Or she might be able to play overseas," Flint said, adding there are women's leagues in countries including Germany, Switzerland and Russia. "You're not going to be able to get rich or make a living at it but it's an opportunity to do it for a couple more years."

Before she went to Northeastern, Sulyma also played in three National Aboriginal Hockey Championships.

Though her Northwest Territories squads did not have much success at those events, Sulyma stood out. Twice she was named to the tournament all-star team.

Sulyma also represented the Northwest Territories at the 2007 Canada Winter Games.

She was peppered with shots at that tournament. She made 104 saves in one game and 90 saves in another match.

"It's like a walk in the park for her now," said Flint, adding Sulyma sees between 20-30 shots during most games at Northeastern.



PHOTO: JON LITCHFIELD

Leah Sulyma



PHOTO: JIM PIERCE

Leah Sulyma was in goal for Northeastern University's Jan. 8 game at Boston University — a 2-0 win for NU in which Leah had 31 saves and the shutout.

[careers]

Keeping it real for youth

(Continued from page 12.)

Maybe Aboriginal conferences and organizations need to simply lower their standards so these fake role models could come right out and say, "Hey kids I drink moderately, I smoke, I did drugs. What's up? Let's talk issues!" Then at least they wouldn't be lying to the youth and the youth could make their own informed decisions from there.

Until that happens, it is truly the youth that will suffer in the end. Not because they had to sit through an hour-and-half of bull, but because some of them really believed it.

So the next time you're at a

conference or event and you spot the fake cultural phony role model, don't give in to everything they say or do, because chances are, you'll see them in the lounge when it's all said and done doing everything they professed not to do.

And one last message to the fake role models out there making a living off lies to the youth; maybe you should start thinking about cleaning up your act because the jig is up. The first warning shot has been fired! And to the conferences that hire them, fire them!

In the end, it is not reputations or egos that should be at stake. It

should be the responsibility to the youth, because these days, Aboriginal youth are more intelligent. They are not to be underestimated and they can tell if someone is real or not. And that's as real as it gets!

Rizzo Out

Chris Tyrone Ross is the publisher & editor-in-chief of RezX, an Aboriginal arts and entertainment magazine. He is also pursuing his post-secondary education through the Indian Communication Art (INCA) program offered through the First Nations University of Canada in Regina.

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Au début du mois de février, Service Canada organisera une série de séances d'information sur Emplois d'été Canada 2009. Ce sera l'occasion idéale d'en apprendre plus sur cette initiative et sur le processus de présentation des demandes.



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Church role in reconciliation

(Continued from page 12.)

The creation of a province of Indigenous peoples will help that process.

(The Anglican Church of Canada is divided into provinces or regions. When a General Synod meets in 2010 there may be created a province of Indigenous ministries that would not be geographic but would stretch across the country and include all Indigenous ministries, parishes, etc.)

One can argue that reconciliation around the

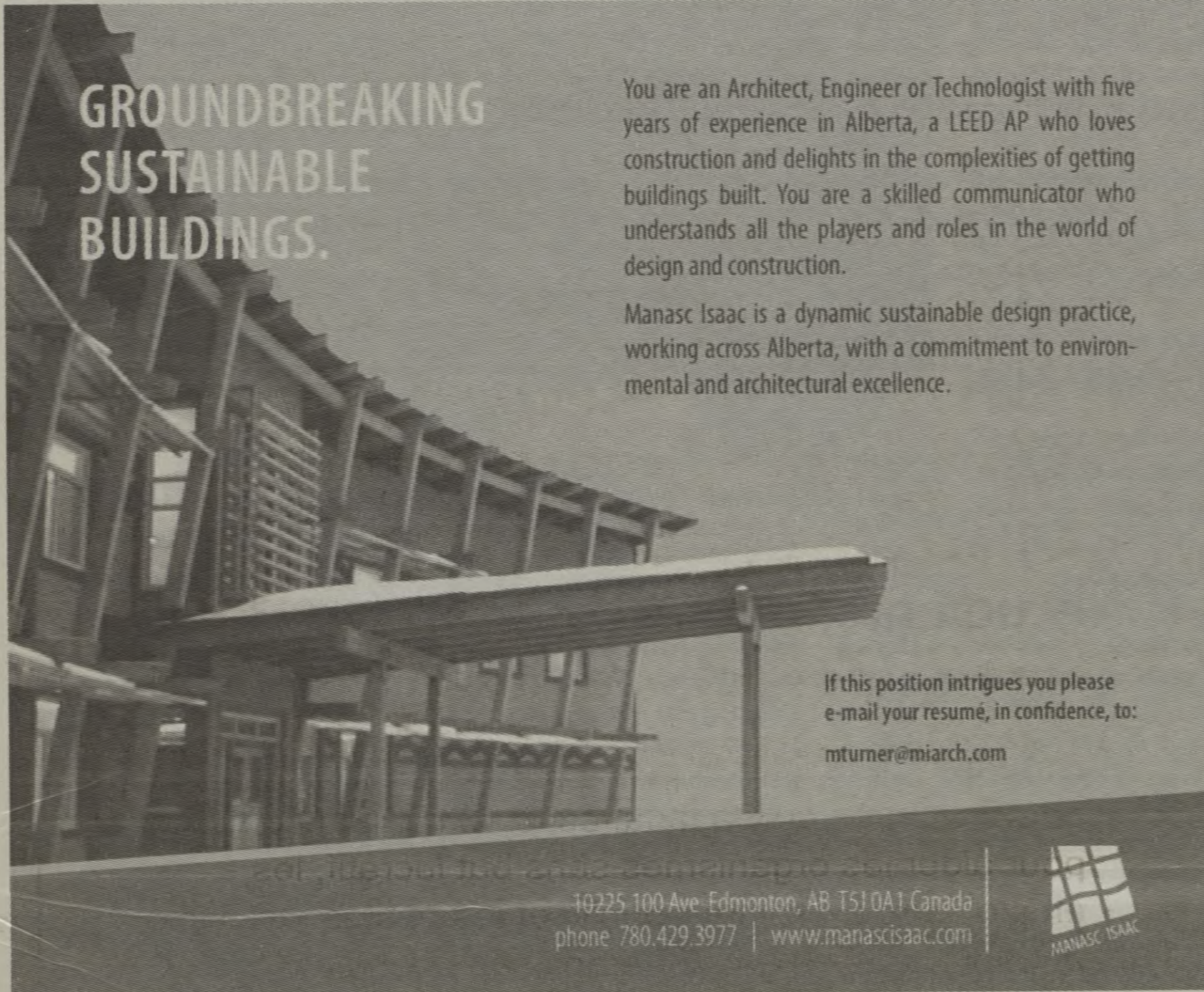
residential schools issue is just a starting point when it comes to bringing about a healing relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. We need to understand each other's communities, values and spirituality. We need to be reconciled around issues such as stewardship of land, employment, education, marriage, clergy stipend and interpretation of scripture.

The Anglican church's

relationship with Canada's Aboriginal community did not conclude with the appointment of an Indigenous bishop (Mark McDonald), nor with the creation of the TRC.

Indeed, it has just begun.

We have an obligation to engage in something that no government commission can accomplish: reconciliation. That is both our task as individuals, as well as the collective task of the Anglican Church.



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To Make A Difference!

— Résumés will be received until February 23rd, 2009 —


Alberta's Future Leaders'— Arts Camps 2009
Summer Arts Mentors
Employment Opportunity

Do you want to make a difference this summer?

We are currently accepting applications for positions available as Summer Arts Mentors for Arts Camps 2009, a component of the Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL). All positions will be located in participating communities for the summer. This program is co-sponsored by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

- If you have experience in the visual, media, performing (theatre, dance, music) and/or traditional arts disciplines
- Are currently registered in the Fine Arts/Arts Education/Training, or Native Studies
- And have previous experience working with/teaching youth, please forward a letter of application and resume, in confidence to:

Geraldine Manossa
Arts Camps Program
Arts Branch
10708 - 105 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 0A1
Tel: 780-415-0481 • Fax: 780-422-9132
Email: geraldine.manossa@gov.ab.ca



Application deadline: Applications will be received until **February 23, 2009**, with interviews taking place in March. All applicants will be notified of their status.

Communities: Communities involved in this year's Arts Camps program may include: Morley (Bears paw First Nation), Beaver First Nation, Meander River (Dene Tha First Nation), Conklin Métis Settlement, Kikino Métis Settlement, Sunchild First Nation, Saddle Lake, and Heart Lake with other communities yet to be determined.

Salaries & Accommodation: The salary is \$10,800 for the summer term. Accommodations and predetermined travel expenses will also be provided in all communities for the summer.

Terms: Summer work term: April 28 - August 29, 2009 (INCLUSIVE), with irregular and occasional long hours, including evenings and weekends as required. Summer Arts Mentors are contract employees of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Training: An orientation/training program for all youth workers & mentors and community leaders will take place at Camp Health Hope and Happiness in early May. You will also participate in a mid-term workshop, a final evaluation retreat, and a Community and Sponsor Recognition Day.

Astute chief navigates new world

By Dianne Meili

"Nehiyawak oma kiyānaw. We are Nehiyaw, Nehiyawak. We are the Plains Cree."

The old man telling the children gathered around him about their proud ancestry and the spirits who worked for them now leaned forward to check their faces for signs of understanding.

Some were asleep, others yawned. He sought out the boy who had caught his attention earlier. This child had luminous eyes. This child was already showing wisdom beyond his years and the old man knew he would grow to be a great leader.

Years earlier, in 1816, this boy had been born on a night when the people said the stars blanketed the sky, more numerous and brighter than usual. He was given the name Ahtahkakoop, the Cree word for Starblanket and his mother wrapped him in a blanket sewn with pointed stars.

There were at least five brothers in Ahtahkakoop's family. The third brother, Sasakamoose, was a natural leader and a more respected shaman than Ahtahkakoop, but he was a small man and quick in both speech and temper. A beard and hunched back were his most notable features. The youngest brother, Nāpeskis, was dashing and handsome and favored by the Hudson Bay Company to the point he was given credit across Rupert's Land.

It was Ahtahkakoop, however, who emerged the leader of the people. By the 1830s he had grown into a superior young man, standing six feet, three inches in height. Capturing attention wherever he went, he had the intellect to go with his looks.

He had also listened well to his elders and learned from their sacred stories and teachings. Transitioning from boy to man, he had spent time alone in the hills with nothing to eat and drink, waiting for a vision and

hopeful that the spirits would pledge to help him in his life.

He must have been successful. His prowess was in hunting, horse stealing and warfare. He became a Worthy Young Man early in life, and then was asked to join the warrior society. People noticed he had an extraordinary ability to know the best places to camp, and where to find buffalo. When he went on raids in Blackfoot territory, he generally returned home with the same number of warriors he left with, and many horses.

To round out his leadership grooming, Ahtahkakoop was also made a member of the midewiwin, the highest order of individuals devoted to healing and sacred ceremonies. They strengthened communication with the Creator and his Helpers to maintain health and harmony amongst the people.

Ahtahkakoop soon became chief and was adept enough to know he would have to make shrewd decisions if his people were to survive in the world quickly changing around them.

Stories told by his youngest brother, who travelled to Ottawa and Montreal with (it is thought) George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, concerned him. Nāpeskis related troubles eastern tribes were having with encroaching settlers, miners, and soldiers on their lands. Railways, large towns full of buildings made of wood, stone, and brick had astounded him, not to mention the fenced farms harbouring cattle and ox.

Ahtahkakoop knew it would not be long before he would be seeing the same kind of rapid development in the west. He spent long nights in his lodge with Mistawasis, a close friend and chief of another northwest band, talking about the future. They knew about the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion

of Canada, and that the Canadian government had sent troops to the Red River Settlement to intimidate the Métis to ensure the orderly transfer of jurisdiction. Their people were dying from either drinking the liquor given them by the traders, or from the violence that usually broke out during drinking binges.

In 1870, Ahtahkakoop's people cried as they buried family members who had died from a smallpox epidemic. At Fort Carlton, where

Ahtahkakoop had established good relations with the traders, exchanging meat and hides for European knives, axes and dry goods, 28 of 70 people living there died of the dreaded disease. Anger flared; after 200 Indians died near Fort Pitt, survivors brought their dead and threw them against the stockades to infect the whites.

Ahtahkakoop went on a hunting trip and, saddened by the decimated buffalo herds, fasted and prayed to the Creator for guidance and help. Irreversible changes were coming and he had to find someone who could teach his people how to survive in this new world.

His prayers were answered in the person of Anglican missionary John Hines, who would teach his people to farm, and the children to read and write. He invited Hines to settle at Sandy Lake, a traditional camping ground of his Plains Cree.

Even though it was difficult to exchange the old ceremonies and spiritual supplications for

Christian baptism and the Bible, Ahtahkakoop embraced white religion. After long discussion with Hines, the chief finally accepted this new way of worship as just another way of having a relationship with the Creator.

Hines established a missionary school for the children, and soon some students were going on to study at Emmanuel College in Prince Albert to become teachers and ministers.

On Aug. 23, 1876, Ahtahkakoop joined a dozen other chiefs and 44 headmen in signing Treaty Six. Ahtahkakoop received land around Sandy Lake and his people prepared to trade exciting days on the hunt for long hours of toiling in the field sowing seeds.

The first planting years were frustrating as early frosts and delays in receiving seeds and equipment conspired to ruin crops. Hunger, cold, sickness and death amongst his people weighed heavily on the chief's mind, but he felt he had no choice but to continue urging his people

to have faith in the treaties and white man's ways.

Ahtahkakoop remained loyal to the government during the North West Rebellion of 1885, even though some of his peers joined the resistance.

By the mid-1890s, Ahtahkakoop's patience and optimism paid off. His band was the largest in the area and was attracting new members. The people had prosperous farms and many of their children travelled to study at the new Battleford industrial school.

Prolonged satisfaction was not to be his, though, for on Dec. 4, 1896 he died of a heart attack while walking with his grandson on the way to a feast.

But his aspiration of paving the way for his people in the new world lives on in the first school built on the Ahtahkakoop reserve. Named after the great chief, the school boasts a mural memorializing Ahtahkakoop in his glory days, riding a swift horse and hunting buffalo.



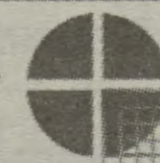
SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES PHOTO

Back row, left to right: O'Soup (Chippewa Chief) and Peter Hourie. Front row, left to right: Ahtahkakoop (Starblanket), Kah-kiwistahaw (Flying in a Circle), Mistawasis (Big Child). Photo taken on October 16, 1886, on their visit for the unveiling of the Brant Memorial, October 18, 1886.

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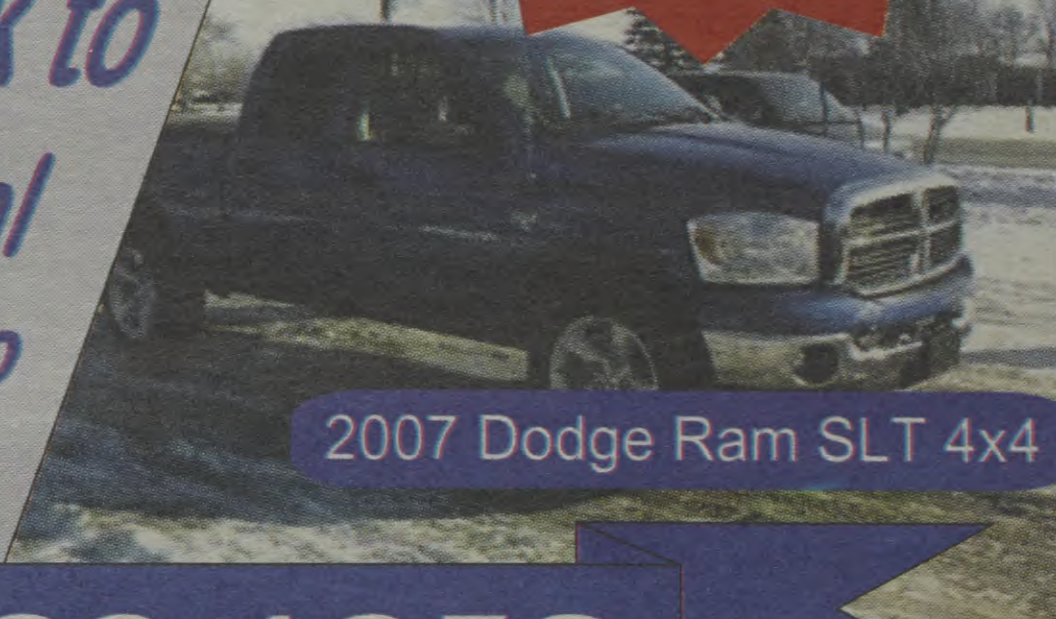
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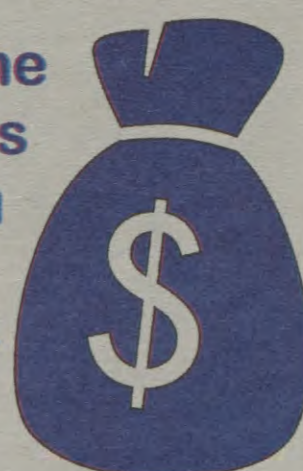


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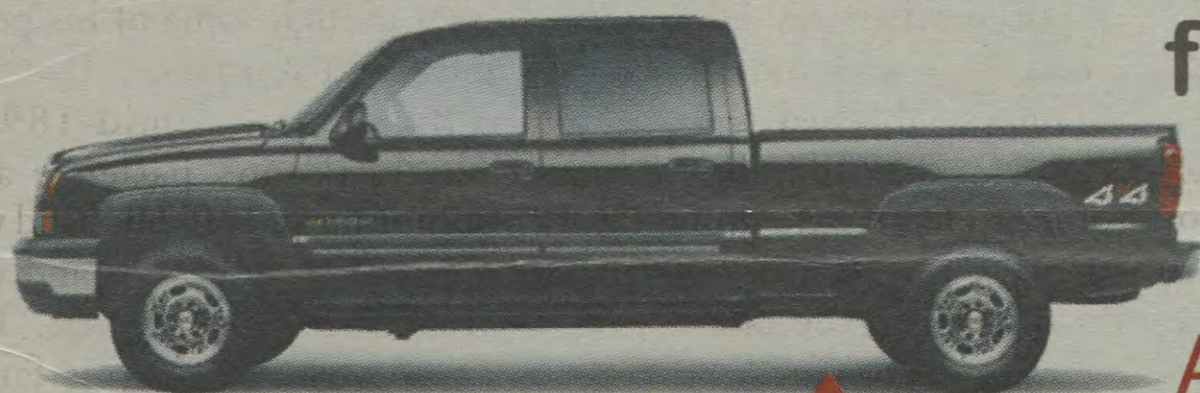


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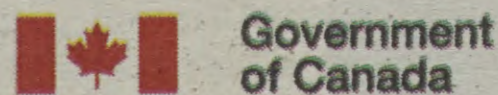


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