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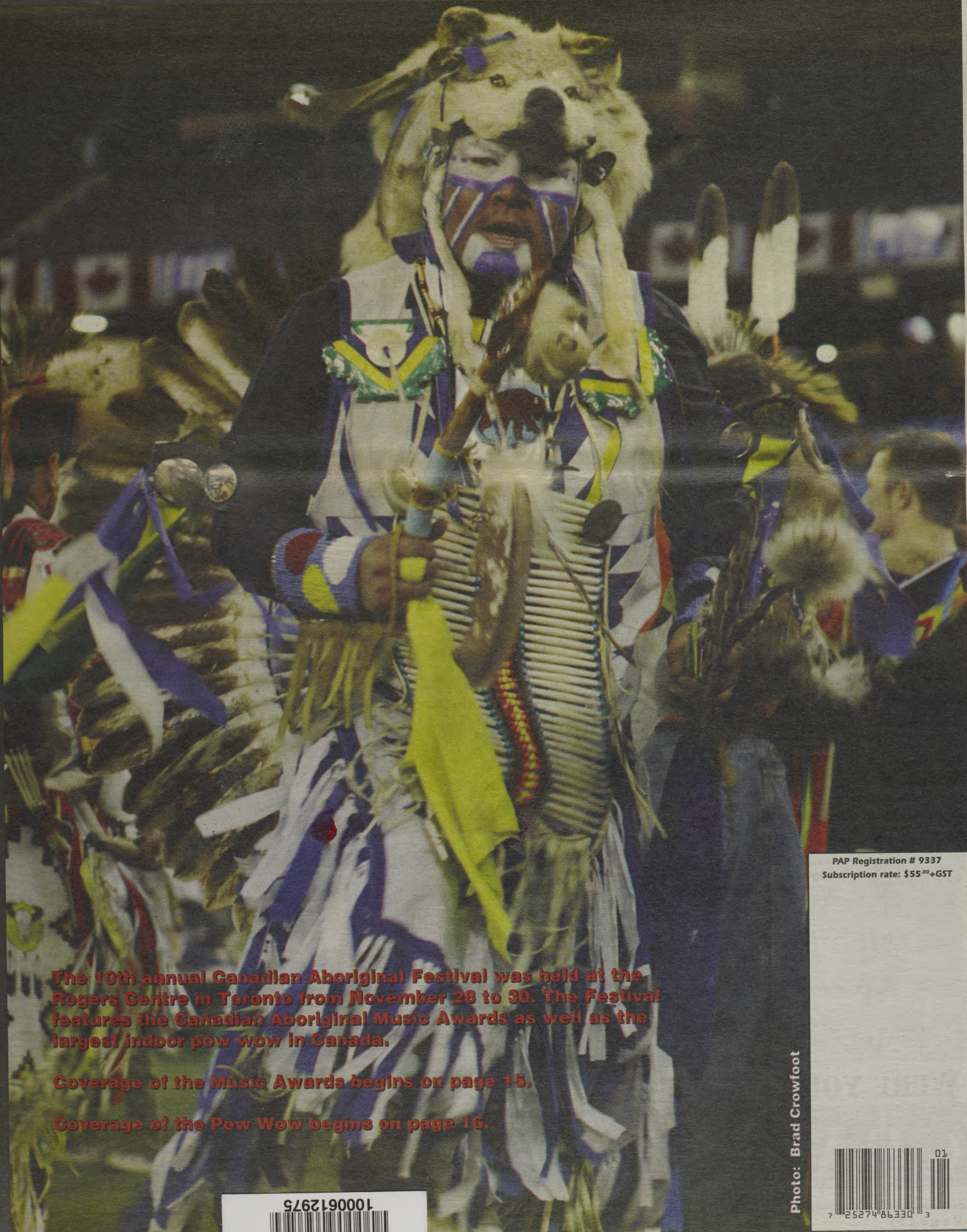
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The 10th annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival was held at the Rogers Centre in Toronto from November 28 to 30. The Festival features the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards as well as the largest indoor pow wow in Canada.

Coverage of the Music Awards begins on page 15.

Coverage of the Pow Wow begins on page 16.

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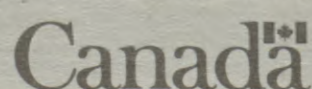
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The casualties of Olympic glory 8

Usually hosting the Olympics presents a nation with the opportunity to showcase the beauty of the homeland, but, as everyone learned with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it also presents those with complaints an opportunity to showcase a nation's flaws to the world.

War of words and whales 9

In late November a large group of more than 500 Narwhal whales became trapped in ice as they attempted to migrate. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) decided that with the nearest icebreaker a week away and the Narwhals lacking in both food and oxygen, the only choice was to orchestrate what the DFO refers to as a "humane hunt."

CAUT censures the First Nations University 10

The First Nations University of Canada faces pressure to change its governance structure after being censured in late November by the 65,000-member Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

Let the survivors have a say 11

Willie Blackwater is not pleased with reports that a panel of "very high-level people" have shortlisted a couple of lawyers and a negotiator to fill Justice Harry LaForme's position as chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

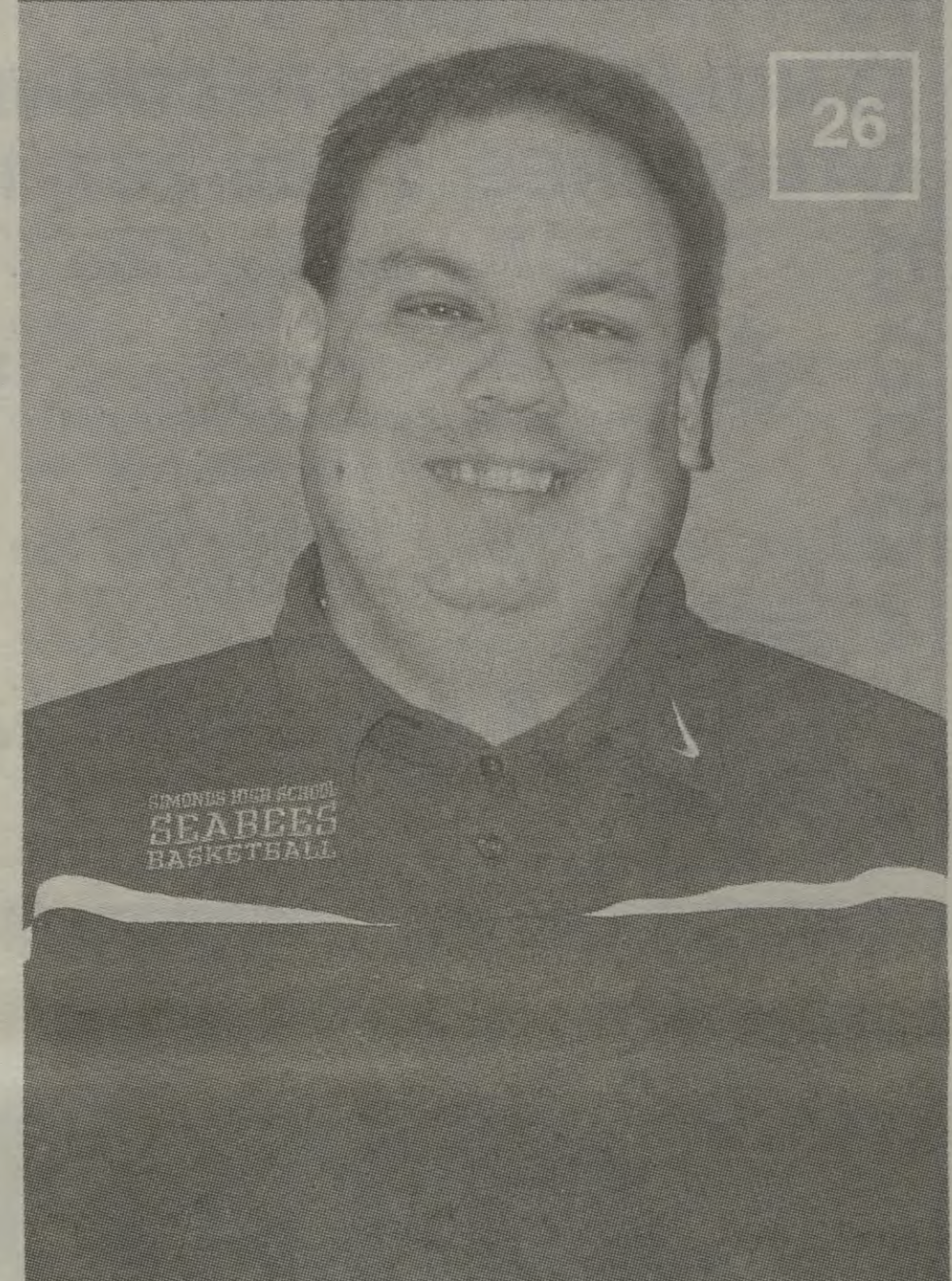
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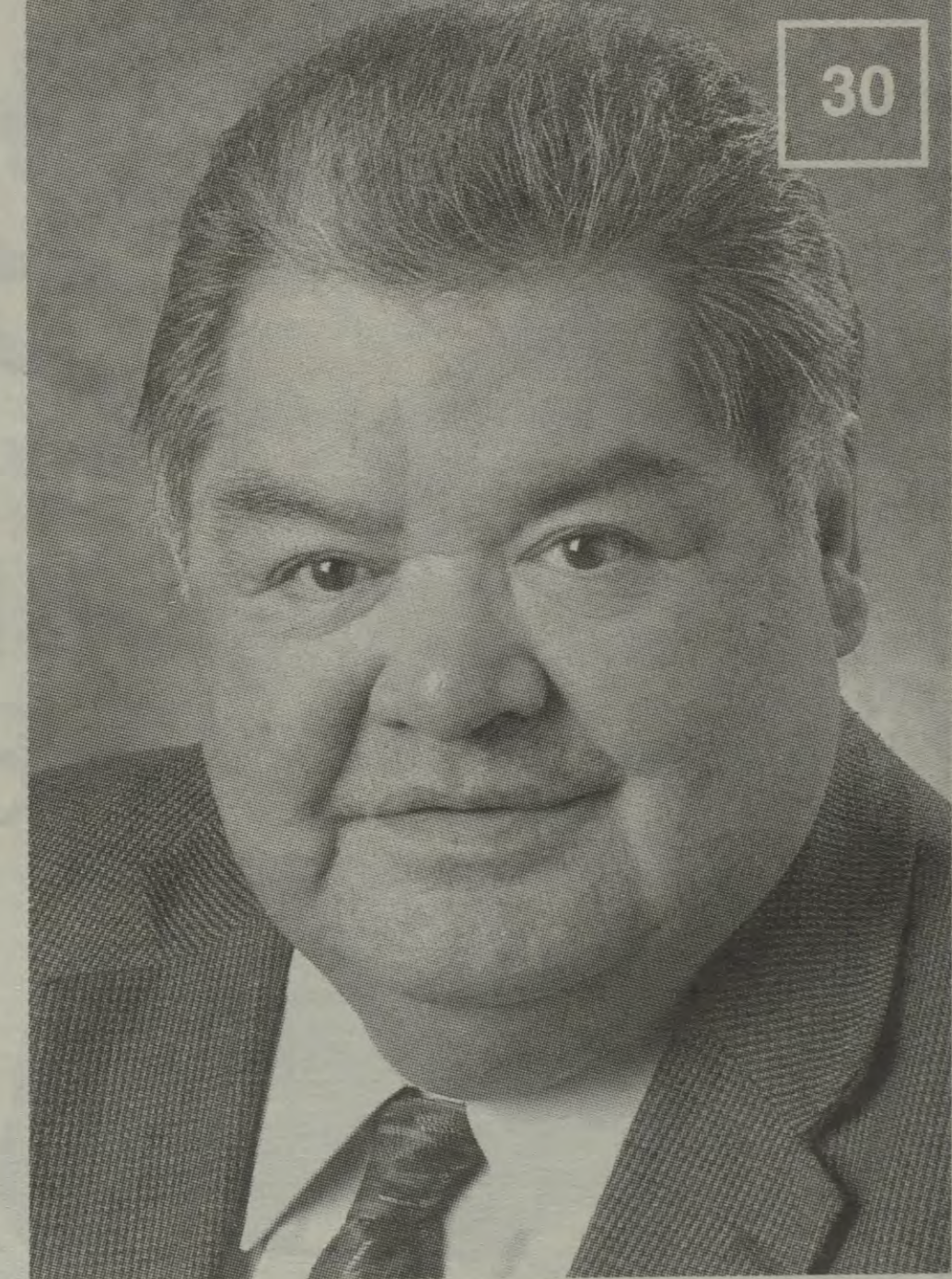
Oscar Lathlin, who went from working a trap line in northern Manitoba to becoming a cabinet minister in Manitoba's NDP government, passed away at the age of 61.



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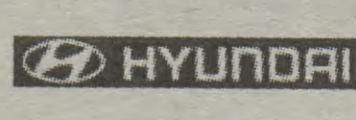


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Editorial: Stop the madness

With all the finger-pointing that was going on in Parliament these past weeks it's hardly a wonder that some of Canada's elite politicians got poked in the eyes a few times before Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean put an end to the nonsense on Dec. 4 and allowed Prime Minister Stephen Harper to prorogue the House to avoid a non-confidence vote of his government.

The year 2008 will go down as the Year of the Farce as far as Canadian federal politics is concerned, with an election that didn't need to happen and a coalition government that almost did.

The big loser in all of this is the Canadian public, of course, after paying a king's ransom to elect a group of people to get to work, and getting instead a bunch of children squabbling in a sandbox oblivious to their obligations to the electorate. Canadians didn't have the stomach for it, and got justifiably angry at the goings on.

The politicians were, all of them, oblivious to the personal suffering of many people on the brink of losing jobs, houses, retirement savings, and their sanity, during one of the most troubling times the world has seen economically in more than 80 years.

Stephen Harper is now saying that Canada may be headed towards an economic depression. This is a far cry from the "Don't worry, be happy" approach he was talking up on the campaign trail leading up to the Oct. 14 election. He was either lying through his teeth then to protect his own job, or has been proven completely out of touch with the realities of the global situation and therefore wholly incompetent as a prime minister.

One is compelled to believe the latter. Why else would a prime minister stoop to such pettiness as to cut the funding to the other political parties as his first action on the job? He is still thinking like a party leader, not like the leader of a government whose responsibility is to 30 million people, not just to the few who carry Conservative party membership.

That was the first poke in the eye, but then Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion managed to outdo Mr. Harper by poking himself in the eye with a hair-brained scheme to hook up with the other two parties in the House to form a coalition government.

The man who the Canadian people completely rejected during the election would become Prime Minister, not by choice, but by misadventure, and Dion's ambitions blinded him to the fact that he would have to crawl into bed with the NDP's Jack Layton and the Bloc's Gilles Duceppe to make that happen.

It wasn't enough that the Liberals have been swatted around by the electorate in the past two

elections, Dion was intent to make them political exiles for the coming generations, so out of whack was his understanding of Canadian voters. Well, Dion got his in the end, and so did Michael Ignatieff, perhaps the one Liberal that should have been leader all along.

Here we have to poke the eye of one-time Liberal leadership candidate Gerard Kennedy who, upon placing fourth in the 2006 leadership convention, threw his support to Dion instead of to one of the two front runners, Bob Rae or Ignatieff, giving Liberals the soft leadership of Dion over two years. Finally, Ignatieff is perched on the edge of Dion's chair ready to lead the Liberals out of the wilderness, and considering the Cheshire grin plastered across his face when his appointment was announced, he couldn't be happier.

Rae became the big loser all around. His strong support of the minority coalition even when Canadians had very squarely rejected it in the days leading up to the governor general's difficult decision to prorogue was an embarrassment and left the door open for a deft Ignatieff to grab the, albeit tarnished, Liberal crown.

Ignatieff managed not to get publicly attached to the coalition debacle while being seen remaining loyal to his leader, proving himself to, at least, be light on his feet while dancing on slippery parliamentary floors.

By the way, hat's off to Mr. Layton, who kept his mouth firmly closed while he had the canary trapped in his teeth, out of character for the NDP leader. Jack would have been the big winner of the coalition had it gone forward, gaining access to Cabinet posts for his fellow party members. Remember his support barely grew in the last election, and the coalition would have rewarded that. Jack could have been spouting off in support of the coalition, but he made the agreement and remained very closed lipped, probably holding his breath the entire time.

Rewards too would have gone to the separatists, who were big winners in the election, thanks to the Conservatives' mishandling of their election campaign in Quebec. And now because Harper threw Quebecers under the bus to save his own skin during the skirmish over the coalition government at the end of November, expect the Bloc to be big winners again as Canadians become poised to go to the polls again early next year with the return of government on Jan. 26.

Hmm, and they say Native politics is messed up.

Windspeaker

Letter: Canadians engaged again

Thank you Steven Harper (the bully), Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton, Gilles Duceppe et al for the most exciting and entertaining week in Canadian history since Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act during October 1970.

Last week's performance in Ottawa was a box office smash hit that managed to get huge ratings, even among legions of Canadians usually more involved in gazing at their own

navels.

Of course, this is not meant to be interpreted that they (Canadians) were so moved to get their facts straight or to think much for themselves. That would be asking too much. But at least they were briefly tuned in.

It was a great week. Is there any chance for more?

*Denis Hall
Saskatoon*

[rants and raves]

Page 5 Chatter

ON THE HBCC UFO RESEARCH

web site, which claims to serve the Canadian UFO Research Community, a witness reports seeing a meteor crash to earth from his location at the Elizabeth Metis Settlement. "Out of nowhere some fiery ball comes out of the sky and crashed. Then a bright light exactly like daytime! It was deadly, and after there was just sparks or something like that!"

Visit the odd site at <http://www.hbccufo.org/index.php>.

THE NEW YORK TIMES TIERNEYLAB

science page at <http://tierneylab.blogs.nytimes.com:80/2008/12/15/the-potlatch-scandal-busted-for-generosity/> John Tierney writes "What can we learn from the potlatch ceremonies of Indians in the Pacific Northwest? ... I suggest some lessons for holiday shoppers... I argue that the potlatchers have long been ahead of the rest of society in recognizing the social utility of gift-giving, and they were certainly far ahead of the missionaries and agents of the Canadian government who tried to stop these ceremonies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries." He said the Kwakwaka'wakw are still trying to recover ceremonial masks that were lost during a raid in 1921 on a potlatch hosted by Chief Dan Cranmer. Forty-five people were arrested at the ceremony, Tierney reports.

For giving stuff away? Isn't that what Chief Santa Claus does every Dec. 25? Arrest the guy in the red suit with a belly like a bowl full of jelly.

ON THE SCRAPPY QUILTER WEBSITE

at <http://mykawartha.typepad.com/quilting/2008/12/index.html> Marion McGregor (nee Beaucage) of Whitefish River First Nation, Birch Island, Ont. describes the chores she and the other girls did while attending St. Joseph's Girls Residential School from 1948 to 1958. "Washing, waxing and polishing hardwood floors were a weekly Saturday chore," she writes. "It was a task for the younger children. Cleaning the floor was done silently and in unison which required team work.

Getting on their hands and knees two girls were partnered together sharing a pail between them. A straight row of little girls was formed across the floor moving backward after each wash till the whole floor was completed." The waxing was then done following the same procedure. A nun supervised the work. The fun came when the girls polished the floors. "Dust rags were tied to the girls' stocking feet to serve as polishers. This activity required sliding the feet along the floor like a skater's stride.

This was the fun part of the chore because talking and playing tag in a quiet manner were allowed."

Leave it to the innocent to find some happiness regardless of the situation.

TYRONE MCNEIL, PRESIDENT

of the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and Grand Chief Edward John, political executive member of the First Nations Summit are fighting back against John Ivison who writes in the National Post that First Nations leaders focus too much blame on the federal government rather than taking innovative approaches to education. Ivison's outburst comes after the Assembly of First Nations rejected funding guidelines the federal government was attempting to impose on national Aboriginal education programs.

"Mr. Ivison is at least correct that reforming Aboriginal education policies is crucial," write the First Nations leaders. "However, he is entirely incorrect in suggesting that First Nations leaders do nothing more than blame Ottawa and simply seek more cash. First Nations across Canada have been working tirelessly to establish quality education systems, despite resource levels far below those provided to public schools." The federal government has been heavily criticized for under-resourcing when it comes to Aboriginal child welfare, and instead of learning a lesson and putting children's education first by properly funding Aboriginal education, it's trying to cheap out on the tab.

"Two years ago, the federal government passed legislation intended to improve outcomes for First Nations students in B. C. by recognizing the authority of First Nations for K to 12 education on-reserve. But First Nations are still waiting for funding to implement our new authority. First Nations children should not have to wait longer."

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We Need Your Input

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. and the Local Citizen Committee (LCC), as part of the ongoing forest management planning process, would like to invite you to inspect the approved (2009 - 2019) Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the French/Severn Forest.

Your input is needed to ensure the FMP reflects balanced, well-informed and fair decisions for the French/Severn Forest.

The approved FMP includes information on:

- The long-term management direction of the forest;
- The planned operations for harvest, renewal and tending and access roads for the first five-year term (2009 - 2019);
- The proposed areas of operation for the second five-year term (2009 - 2019);
- The corridors for primary and branch roads for the ten-year term (2009 - 2019); and,
- The major changes made after consultation of the draft FMP.

How to Get Involved

The approved FMP will be available for public inspection during normal office hours for 30 days (January 5, 2009 to February 5, 2009) at the following locations:

- Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. office, 72 Church Street, Parry Sound, P2A 1Y9. Contact: Barry Davidson at 705-746-6832, ext. 24;
- MNR Parry Sound District office, 7 Bay Street, Parry Sound, ON. Contact: Joe Johnson at 705-773-4238;
- MNR Regional office, 300 Water Street, Peterborough, ON. Contact: Roger Davison at 705-755-3219.

Arrangements can be made to view the FMP at a location in Toronto by calling this number: 1-800-667-1940.

The information and maps will also be available for public review on the MNR public website at ontario.ca/forestplans during the 30 day inspection period.

An appointment with the MNR District Manager or with a planning team member during non-business hours may be made by calling 705-746-4201.

Copies of the approved FMP summary and values maps may be obtained by contacting the MNR Parry Sound District or the Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. office.

Can't Make It?

The planning team members, the MNR District Manager and the LCC are available at any time during the planning process to meet with you and discuss your interests, issues or concerns.

During the 30-day inspection period, a written request can be made to the Director of Environmental Assessment Approvals Branch, Ministry of the Environment, for an individual environmental assessment of specific forest management activities in the FMP as described in the *Forest Management Planning Manual* (2004). A response to a request for an individual environmental assessment will normally be provided after the completion of the 30-day inspection period.

The planning team for the forest management plan consisted of the following people:

- Joe Johnson, MNR, Chair
- Maxine Davidson, Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc., Project Manager
- Barry Davidson, Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc., Plan Author
- Michael Henry, Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc., Operations Forester/Operations Planning
- Dave Deugo, MNR, Area Forester
- Jan McDonnell, MNR, Area Wildlife Biologist
- Laura Heidman, MNR, Resource Liaison Specialist
- Dave Miles, MNR, GIS Officer
- Kim Benner, MNR, District Planner
- Gord Martin, MNR, Area Lands Technician
- John McNutt, Tembec Industries Inc., Forest Industry Representative
- Vern Fallows, Parry Sound District Local Citizens Committee
- Wayne Pamajewon, Aboriginal Representative Shawanaga First Nation
- Wanda Noganosh, Aboriginal Representative Magnetawan First Nation

For further information, please contact:

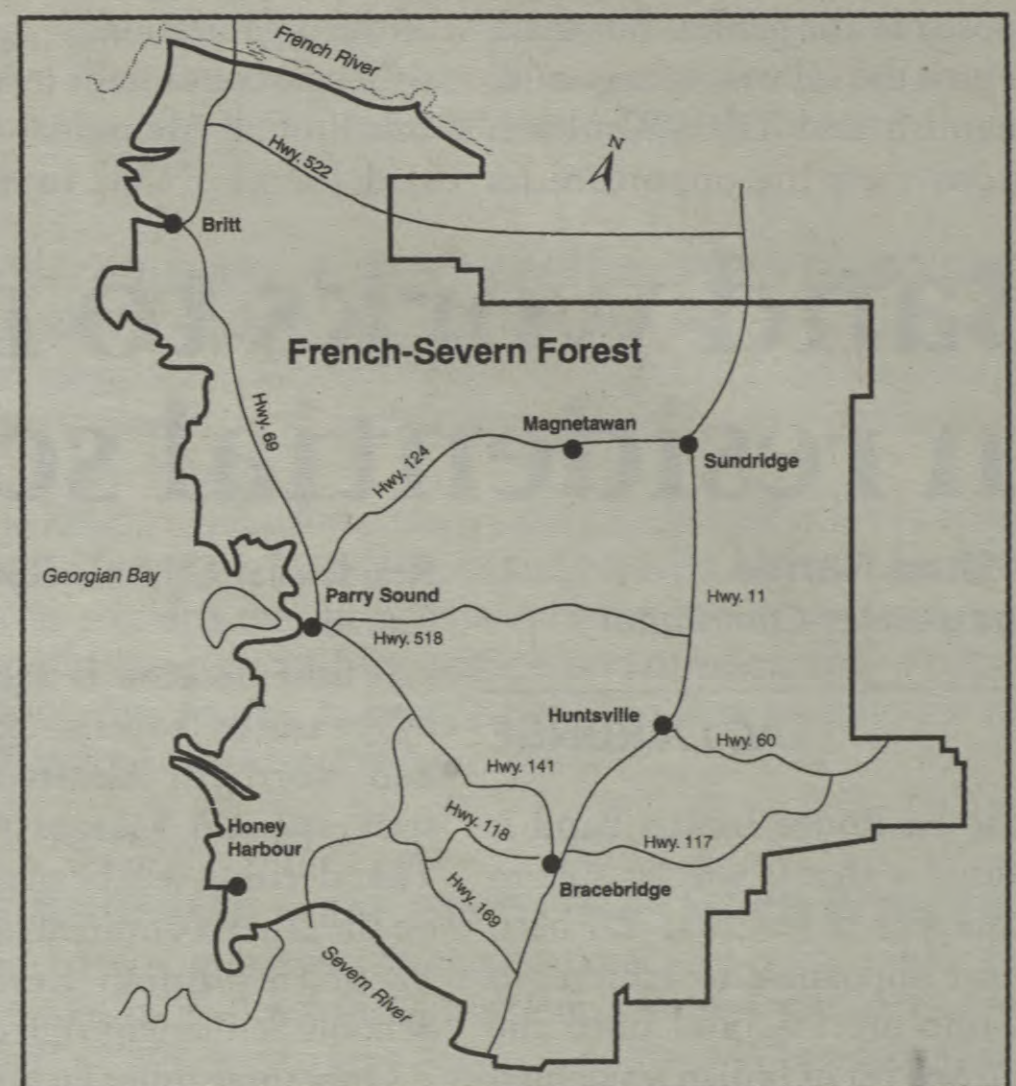
Joe Johnson, R.P.F.
Ministry of Natural Resources
7 Bay Street
Parry Sound, ON P2A 1S4
Tel.: 705-773-4238

Barry Davidson, R.P.F.
Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.
72 Church Street
Parry Sound, ON P2A 1Y9
Tel.: 705-746-6832, ext. 24

Vern Fallows
LCC Chair
1419 South Ril Lake Rd., RR #1
Baysville, ON P0B 1A0
Tel.: 705-767-2325

Following the inspection period, the approved ten-year term FMP will be available for viewing at the Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. office, the MNR Parry Sound District office, and the MNR Southern Region office. Arrangements can be made to view the FMP at a location in Toronto by calling this number: 1-800-667-1940.

MNR is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*. Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, however, your comments will become part of the public consultation process and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to send you further information related to this forest management planning exercise. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Anne Collins at 705-646-5553.



The casualties of Olympic glory

By Thomas J. Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Vancouver

Usually hosting the Olympics presents a nation with the opportunity to showcase the beauty of the homeland, but, as everyone learned with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it also presents those with complaints an opportunity to showcase a nation's flaws to the world.

Who can forget the protests last summer about China's human rights abuses with disruptions of the Olympic torch relay as it made its way toward Beijing's opening ceremonies?

There were violent clashes with Tibetan exiles, boycotts, and rallies.

And while some might think that China was a unique case, Canada's turn may be next when it hosts the world in 2010 in Vancouver and Whistler.

There's been a Web site established at www.no2010.com that includes a list of top reasons why some oppose the Olympics in Canada. The reasons are varied, and include the ecological destruction of the land, water and air. The Games will turn Vancouver into a temporary police state, the site argues, and the money put towards the Olympics could be better used to help the poor.

"No Olympics on stolen Native land," is another ongoing sentiment for Aboriginal people opposed to the games. But that's not how the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations view the opportunities

that come with having the Olympics in Canada. They are the Four Host Nations and their leadership has invested heavily in both time and energy to ensure that any benefits that accrue to the host cities in Canada will also accrue to the first peoples here.

"The 2010 Olympics and Paralympics will be taking place within our traditional territories so we came together a number of years ago," said Tewanee Joseph, the CEO of the Four Host Nations.

On Nov. 24, 2004 the four nations signed an historic protocol to ensure, among many things, that they would work together to present their territories and promote unprecedented Aboriginal participation at the Olympics.

"Our main focus is not just to host and welcome people to our protocols, but extend an invitation to Aboriginal peoples right across the country; First Nations, Inuit and Métis to participate with us in the games," said Joseph. Despite the Four Hosts' attempts to invite all Canadian Aboriginal people to gather under their umbrella, some are not buying in so enthusiastically.

One Tsimshian activist, Dustin Johnson, referred to the Four Hosts as "elite Native capitalists who don't represent the majority of Native people."

It was a claim that Joseph denied and characterized as a misconception of the intentions of the organization.

"It's not our intent to speak on behalf of all Aboriginal people," said Joseph. "Our intent is to

bring people together so they can tell their stories the way they need to."

Joseph added that, "our driving force behind our organization is celebrating the diversity that we have in this country."

"We have the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, as well as a number of provincial and territorial First Nations who are actually coming aboard as partners."

In an IPS News story, renowned Native activist Arthur Manuel, the former chief of the Neskonalith Indian Band of the Secwepemc Nation, claimed the government, in association with the Four Host Nations, is using millions of dollars "for the purpose of disguising the violations of human rights of the Indigenous people of this country."

Some refer to the unprecedented Aboriginal involvement in the 2010 Olympics as "Smile, because the world is watching." But that's just another misconception, according to Joseph. He believes that a positive experience with the Olympics can ultimately serve to remedy the human rights violations that Native protesters accuse Canada of indulging in.

"We see the Olympics and the Paralympics as not the end but the beginning and we need to be taking our place in Canadian society, as Aboriginal peoples to be leading the way in this country," said Joseph, adding that that includes those who are disenfranchised.

"I think we need to come to

terms with the challenges that we've had in this country," said Joseph. "We don't disagree with the people with the challenges we face; we know those. But at the same time, how can we take those voices, how do we approach government, how do we work with the private sector and actually springboard into the next century. We're going to be more prosperous as a people and not being on the outside always looking in."

Another group of people are also worried about being on the outside as the Olympic machine sends the poor scrambling for affordable housing. Finding accommodation for those competing in and visiting for the Olympics is driving home prices skywards, and is causing displacement for many who live in low-income housing.

"The desirability [of the area] coupled with the Olympics coming here is serving to drive property values through the roof," said Laura Track, a lawyer with the Pivot Legal Society.

"Another thing that's kind of significant is the fact that Vancouver is a peninsula so the downtown core is totally built out. There's really nowhere else to go to build and so development is pushing east, pushing into this neighborhood that has always been a low-income neighborhood," said Track about Vancouver's eastside, adding that there's been a surge of higher-end properties developing there.

With nowhere else to go and the shelters already operating at full capacity, many are forced to sleep outside.

Track said Aboriginal people make up about two per cent of Vancouver's population, but that percentage goes up markedly in the homeless environment.

"Aboriginal people make up about 32 per cent of the homeless population; a disproportionate representation in the homeless population," said Track.

And as the Games near, there grows a healthy percentage of Aboriginal peoples who are not quite caught up in Olympic fever.

Groups like the Native Warrior Society, in fact, strongly oppose the Olympics and have every intention of making their opposition known. Members already stole the original Olympic flag that hung in front of Vancouver's city hall in protest of the Games.

Vancouver and the Four Host Nations are attempting to appease opposition by shedding some positive light on the Aboriginal community.

"We're working on an 8,000 square foot Aboriginal pavilion. We've actually launched a retail-merchandising program. We're going to see First Nations Indigenous design as part of the whole retail-merchandising program with the Olympic rings," said Joseph, adding that one-third of the profits will go towards an Aboriginal youth fund.

Joseph said there will be every opportunity for Aboriginal young people to participate in the games and meet some of the athletes up close and personal.

"Hopefully that one small thing can make a difference for someone," he said.

Band works to include Timber Bay school in residential school package

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

LAC LA RONGE

Lac La Ronge Indian Band is optimistic that it will be able to accomplish a feat that has been almost impossible to achieve: to get one more school onto the approved list of Indian residential schools and hostels for compensation. If that happens, that will allow Lac La Ronge's band members and others who attended Montreal Lake Timber Bay residential school in northern Saskatchewan to benefit from the Common Experience Payment in the residential school settlements package.

"We feel we have a strong case," said Lac La Ronge Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. The band submitted its fourth and final entry for inclusion on Nov. 17. It is hopeful that the information the band's late lawyer Jacob Tootoosis and researcher managed to turn up regarding Timber Bay residential school will be enough to sway the minds of Indian

Residential Schools Resolution Canada.

A final decision is anticipated by the end of January, said Indian and Northern Affairs Canada spokesperson Margot Geduld. That decision will be made based on the criteria outlined in section 12 of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Only three other facilities have been added to the initial list of nearly 150 recognized residential schools and hostels across the country: Anahim Lake Dormitory in British Columbia (September 1968 to June 1977); Deh Cho Hall in Northwest Territories (Lapointe Hall); and, St. Paul's Hostel in the Yukon (September 1920 to June 1943).

"(Timber Bay) was not included in the settlement agreement list of eligible institutions because it just wasn't one of the institutions agreed upon for inclusion by the signatories of the agreement," said Geduld.

Lack of documentation, said Cook-Searson, was why Timber Bay wasn't initially included. As

soon as the agreement was signed in September 2007, Cook-Searson was in contact to see if Timber Bay was on the list. When she discovered it wasn't, the process to include Timber Bay was launched.

"We took it upon ourselves to research further," said Cook-Searson, noting that the band went beyond the archive centre in Ottawa and the Internet to gather its information. More than one year was spent researching additional sources.

"We feel we have enough evidence to have (Timber Bay) included. Without federal funding from the government, the school would not have been able to operate," Cook-Searson said.

Included in supporting documentation uncovered by the band is a letter from Indian Affairs in 1969 stating that Timber Bay "has been, and still is, serving a purpose."

If the school is included then as many as 300 Lac La Ronge members will be eligible for the Common Experience Payment, \$10,000 for the first school year

and then \$3,000 for each additional school year. Other funding is also available through the independent assessment process, which could net a former student anywhere from \$5,000 to \$525,000 or more based on physical and sexual abuse as well as long-term impact.

Cook-Searson notes that the school also had students from other bands, Metis and non-status attending, and that Lac La Ronge band members attended other residential schools that have been included as part of the Common Experience Payment.

Geduld said that Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada has received "a large number of requests for additions of institutions through article 12." Since Feb. 15, submissions were made for 83 schools to be added to those recognized for payments. Criteria for adding to the list of institutions are two-fold: that the child was placed in a residence away from his family under the authority of Canada in order to be educated and that Canada was solely or jointly

responsible for the operation of the residence and care of the children within that residence.

One of the "indicators that Canada was jointly or solely responsible" for operating the facility and caring for the children is that "Canada was at least partially responsible for the administration of the institution."

Said Cook-Searson, "We feel the evidence we provided firmly established that the government did have a significant hand in funding Timber Bay."

If the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada does not approve Timber Bay as an addition to the list of named institutions, Lac La Ronge Indian Band has the option to challenge the decision in Saskatchewan provincial court.

Signatories of the agreement are the federal government; plaintiffs represented by a legal counsel; the Assembly of First Nations; Inuit representatives; the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches; and Roman Catholic entities.

War of words and whales

By Thomas J. Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Nunavut

In late November a large group of more than 500 Narwhal whales became trapped in ice as they attempted to migrate. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) decided that with the nearest icebreaker a week away and the Narwhals lacking in both food and oxygen, the only choice was to orchestrate what the DFO refers to as a "humane hunt."

Inuit hunters from Pond Inlet came in to engage in a whale cull to end the suffering endured by the whales. It was a move lauded by some and heavily criticized by others.

"The Canadian government could have rescued those whales. They didn't make any attempt to do so," said Paul Watson, the founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

"They could have got an icebreaker in there. Their excuse at the time was the stress on the whales. I can't see how it would stress them as much as people shooting them, and killing them and having their family members blown away around them."

The Humane Society of Canada also protested the course of action and offered financial assistance to keep a hole in the ice from freezing over until the icebreaker arrived, but the offer was refused.

"I just found it incredible that they (DFO) spend millions of dollars breaking ice for sealers every year, but they can't make an effort to protect an endangered species and so many of them," argued Watson.

In a blog on his Web site, Watson freely and openly lambasted the government and the hunters. He referred to the DFO as "the most evil, insidious, incompetent and dangerous bureaucracy in Canada" and the hunters as "ruthless Inuit killers" among other things.

Both the DFO and many in the Inuit community are calling for his resignation and a retraction of the comments.

Watson argued that he has little reason to do either.

"I'm not going to apologize and

"It was a completely unregulated bloody massacre. Not a single DFO officer was on the scene and the Inuit killers roared and laughed barbarously as they inflicted torturous death upon these gentle creatures,"
— Captain Paul Watson.

I'm not going to resign and the government has no authority over me," said Watson. "And I said nothing to denigrate the Inuit culture."

Watson told *Windspeaker* that he holds the DFO, not the Inuit people, responsible for the deaths of the Narwhals.

"I do criticize the guys who were shooting the rifles who just happen to be Inuit," explained Watson.

Mary Simon, the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), completely disagrees with Watson's claims.

"Yes, I think they bordered on hatred," Simon said of his comments.

In her president's statement, Simon said she was both shocked and appalled by Watson's comments.

"The Narwhal whale cull was not something Inuit wanted to do for their own enjoyment. It was done because it was the humane thing to do to prevent these animals from a torturous death from starvation and drowning," Simon said.

She referred to the Inuit hunters as responsible, explaining that the meat has been shared, spread around the Arctic and nothing has gone to waste.

In regards to the reaction by animal rights groups, Simon believes it is associated with a severe misunderstanding of the Inuit culture.

"There is a real lack of understanding of who we are and our identity as a people and how much we depend on our livelihood for the very survival of our families," said Simon.

"People don't understand, not just our culture, but also the fact that the cost of living is just so exorbitant." Simon said most small communities do not have local stores where people can shop

for supplies, and where there are stores and when there is meat to be had it is often overpriced or simply old.

"So people still have to rely on hunting and fishing for our livelihood and it's more than just about our identity and our culture, it's about the survival of our people," she explained.

Simon believes that Watson would sing a different tune if the tables were turned.

"We want people like that to stay away from our way of life. Or else to come up and try to understand how we live and how we survive as a people."

Simon said the Inuit people have bigger fish to fry than taking on the likes of Watson for his comments, like focusing on sustainable harvesting; a task that Simon says is difficult with so many groups fighting to put the animals they depend on for food on the endangered list.

But Watson's comments went so far they couldn't be ignored.

"Every man who pulled a trigger on those whales is no different than the men who slaughtered the defenceless people in the pit at My Lai, Vietnam," Watson wrote to Terry Audla, head of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, the Canadian Press reported.

Simon said the comments made were disparaging to Inuit people and their practices.

Watson maintains that he speaks for the whales and that's where his sympathies lie.

"They describe it as a humane harvest. I hate the use of the word harvest when it comes to slaughtering animals. You harvest oranges, you don't harvest whales," argued Watson. "It was a massacre. It was a slaughter. It was not even a hunt."

"We want him removed. That's our objective," said Simon, who claimed in her president's statement that the ITK would seek advice on a course of action in this regard.

"Shut him down because if he is going to continue to talk irresponsibly about Inuit and equating our hunting practices to the humans in Vietnam, that is totally inappropriate and totally irresponsible and it borders on hatred."

CHIEF SOPHIE PIERRE OF THE KTUNAXA

Nation has been appointed the new chief commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission. The chief commissioner is appointed jointly by B.C., Canada and the First Nations Summit, and the appointment will require ratification by all three principals.



CHIEF SOPHIE PIERRE

"Appointing the right person is essential to ensure that the Treaty Commission works in an effective manner. We are confident that Sophie Pierre has the experience, knowledge and energy to bring to the role and I firmly believe that she is the right person to guide the commission forward in the important task of advancing negotiations and facilitating fair and durable treaties," said B.C.'s Minister of Aboriginal Relations and

Reconciliation Mike de Jong.

Pierre replaces Grand Chief Steven Point, who left in 2007 to become the province's Lt. Governor. She led the St. Mary's Indian Band for more than 20 years as elected chief. Born in Cranbrook, she holds a business administration diploma from Camosun College. Pierre received the Order of British Columbia in 2002 and, in 2003, a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the business category.

THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

is encouraging the Attorney General's office in British Columbia to proceed with a trial on the 20 remaining counts of murder against Robert William Pickton, who was convicted of six counts of murder one year ago.

"The November 2007 conviction of Robert Pickton brought a close to a sad chapter in the lives of six women; however there has been no closure for many of the other victims' families," said Grand Chief Doug Kelly, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to all the families who were completely devastated by the tragic loss of their daughters, sisters, aunts and mothers," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

There are more than 511 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, which represents the indifference of the state to the treatment of Aboriginal women and other vulnerable groups, according to the leadership council.

"We must bring an end to this indifference," said A-in-chut Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations. "These women must not be dismissed as the pursuit of justice demands equitable treatment of all citizens."

THE ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION

has filed a claim in Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton challenging the land tenure system in Alberta saying the permits granted to Shell Canada and other companies in the province's oil sands are invalid.

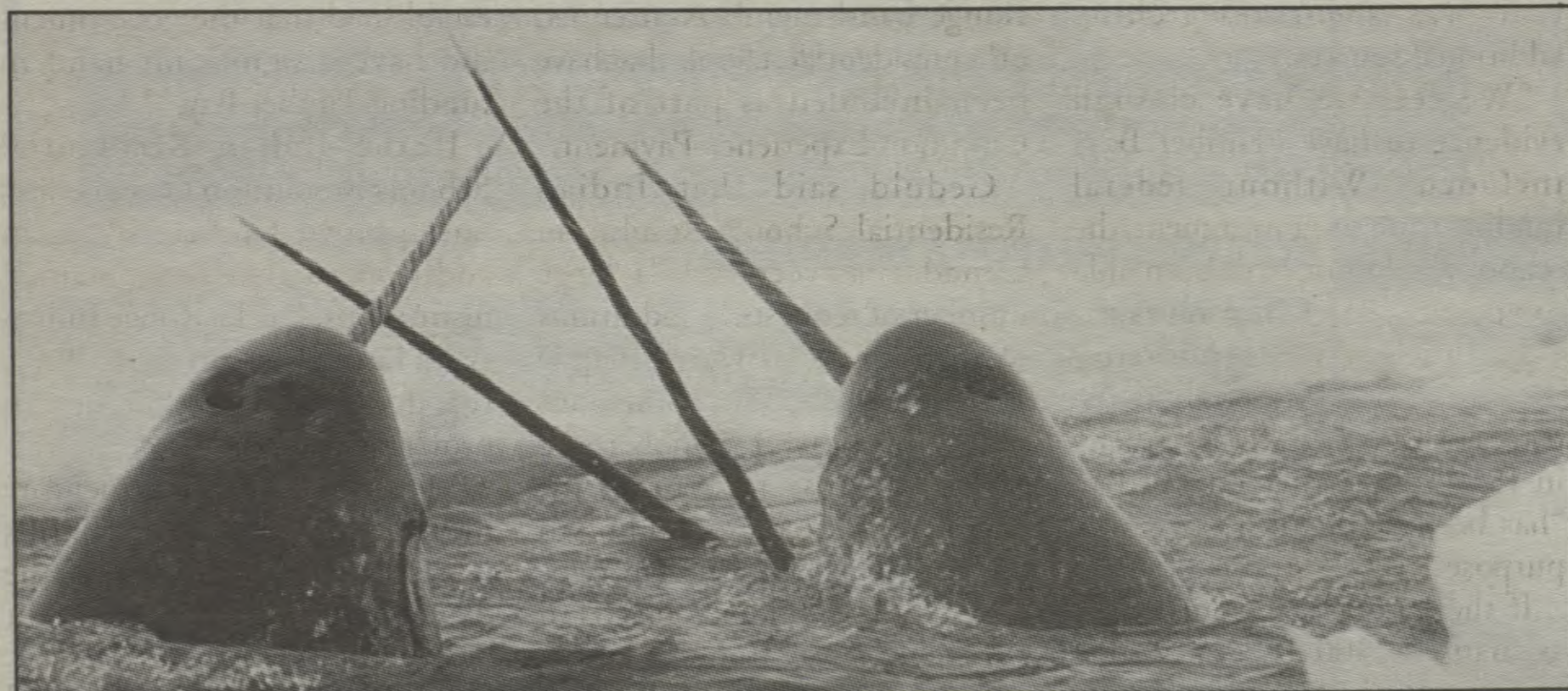
The nation claims the Crown's duty to consult was breached when the province failed to consult Natives before selling off rights to explore the land. The Athabasca Chipewyan's are asking that the permits be quashed and development stopped until the consultation is completed. The first hearing on the matter will be heard in the New Year.

THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS WANTS

Ottawa to live up to the funding commitment made under the First Nations Education Jurisdiction British Columbia Act passed in 2006, and to take action to address the underfunding of post-secondary education, and First Nations languages education.

"I cannot understate the importance of the Chiefs in Assembly coming together on this issue. We are in a post-apology era, and Canada has stated in the Throne Speech that they are committed to improving education for First Nations students, said Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. "Education is key to turning the page on a dark chapter in our history and to ensure that our children and communities have an enhanced quality of life and well-being. The government of Canada has the means to ensure educational success by honoring their funding commitments."

The chiefs rejected the federal government's new proposal guidelines for a five-year, \$268 million dollar program to address First Nations school accountability and relationship building, saying the new guidelines were excessively heavy-handed. The First Nations Schools Association in BC, working on behalf of the province's 130 First Nations schools, also rejected the new guidelines, observing that they reflect neither consultations with BC's First Nations schools nor the effective school accountability processes those schools have developed over the last decade.



As many as 500 Narwhal whales were trapped beneath the ice in the Arctic during migration, so the Department of Fisheries and Oceans orchestrated a "humane harvest" of the whales, a cull undertaken by Inuit hunters in November.

CAUT censures the First Nations University

By Christine Fiddler
Windspeaker Contributor

REGINA

The First Nations University of Canada faces pressure to change its governance structure after being censured in late November by the 65,000-member Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

The censure means that throughout Canada and internationally, academic staff must refuse appointments, invitations to speak, and participation in academic conferences at FNUC.

"The vote is not a reflection on the staff or students at the First Nations University... it is not a negative comment on them," said James Turk, CAUT's executive director. "It goes back to what happened in 2005 and all the events that have happened since then."

The censure springs from a controversial move by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) that year. Under the directions of FSIN Vice-Chief Morley Watson, who was then chair of the university's board of governors, the board suspended several senior administrators alleging financial impropriety. Officials seized the

university's central computers and copied the hard drive with all faculty and student records. Watson then ordered administrative staff out of their offices so that a forensic audit could be conducted. While two former employees were subsequently charged with fraud, the view was that the situation was handled with a heavy hand, was politically motivated, and breached the universal protocols of academic freedom.

After protests from the university academic staff and Elders, the University of Regina Faculty Association, and CAUT, the FSIN appointed an All Chiefs' Task Force to create a new governance model for the university. They came up with a report suggesting a smaller and depoliticized board that would respect and incorporate First Nations and governance traditions and ensure governance effectiveness and efficiency.

"And they made a series of recommendations to fix the problem," Turk said. "The most important recommendation they were making had to do with changes to the governance structure of the university."

He said university faculty can't be looking over their shoulder all the time in fear of a government authority interfering.

"Because then they can't do their jobs properly," Turk said. "So the practice everywhere in North America is to have a reasonable degree of what's called institutional autonomy. The university has to have autonomy from the government."

However, Turk said the FNUC board has had, and continues to be composed of, the largest group of political representatives of any university board in Canada.

"As the All Chiefs' Task Force suggested there should be two Elders and two representatives of alumni of the university on this board," he said. "When FSIN changed the [First Nations University] Act in 2008, they didn't take the advice of their own task force but instead created a board structure that is almost identical to the one that existed in 2004. The only difference is that one of the FSIN vice-chiefs is not chair of the board."

Ongoing governance problems at the university have led to the dismissal and resignation of the president, two vice-presidents, deans of two campuses, more than one-third of the academic staff and about half of the administrative, professional and technical staff. FNUC has furthermore seen a significant drop in enrolment and in research and special project

revenue, which fuels an already serious financial crisis.

University President Charles Pratt said any current changes to the governance structure would depend entirely on the university's board of governors.

"That would be something that there has to be a whole round of consultations," he said. "We'd have to look at the board and see what their recommendations are. As you know we had a massive discussion around governance so... any changes would have to be sanctioned and approved by the board of governors."

Pratt added that he hopes for a meeting between the board and CAUT so they can agree to a mutually beneficial solution, similar to the one reached last year between FNUC and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) who were also threatening sanctions. Changes were made when FNUC reduced the board size, FSIN Vice-chief Lyle Whitefish resigned as board chair and an operational review of the university occurred.

"We've had a board of 32 members in the past and now we're down to 19. AUCC was concerned about the (FSIN) vice-chief chairing our board of governors and his own decision

was to step down. Now we have a board of 18," Pratt said. "We continue to facilitate discussions with many external stakeholders, including CAUT and we'd like to look for some common ground." Pratt said the impact of the censure on the university has been kept fairly minimal, adding that the real impact is the disruption to students and faculty during final exams.

"AUCC is still very supportive and we're on full membership and within the last couple of weeks they've confirmed their support for us to the press. The University of Regina was quoted in the newspaper as saying that we have a very strong relationship with the First Nations University of Canada so that's a fair impact so far," he stated.

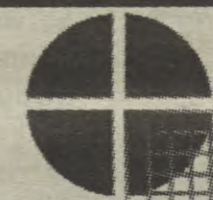
A statement released by FNUC's Student Association called on the university's board of governors to act on all recommendations put forth by the All Chiefs' Task Force.

"We are disappointed with the failure of CAUT and FNUC to engage in negotiations, let alone meaningful discussions before this vote of censure was carried," stated Thomas Roussin, the vice-president communications for FNUC's student association.

(See FNUC on page 20.)

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- An Introduction to Comprehensive Community Planning in First Nations

For more information on these pre-conference workshops, please visit the conference web site at www.afoa.ca/conference/2009.

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Let the survivors have a say, insists Blackwater

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Willie Blackwater is not pleased with reports that a panel of "very high-level people" have shortlisted a couple of lawyers and a negotiator to fill Justice Harry LaForme's position as chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Canadian Press quotes Pierre Baribeau, a lawyer for the Catholic entities, as saying, "The (selection) process has been agreed upon... (Former Supreme Court Justice Frank) Iacobucci

has worked very hard, and I would say that almost everything is set up to bring this to a closure so that we're able to move on."

LaForme resigned suddenly in October just before the commission was to move into public activities to hear survivors' stories about the abuses they suffered in residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation component is part of a package that settled thousand of legal claims against the government and churches for their operation of residential schools.

Names that are allegedly being bandied about for LaForme's position include Murray Sinclair

of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, Leonard Mandamin of the Federal Court, and Mi'kmaq lawyer and negotiator Bernd Christmas of the Membertou band in Nova Scotia.

"Why do you need to have a negotiator or a judge be on the commission," asks Blackwater, interim president of the National Residential Schools Survivor Society (NRSSS). "All you need is to completely understand inside and out with your soul and your spirit what truth and reconciliation is. It's about knowing what the experience is and knowing how to go beyond

the pain."

Blackwater has numerous concerns about the process to replace LaForme. High on the list is the fact that talks are being held behind closed doors with a select group of people. He says it "re-victimizes" those the commission is supposed to be serving.

"No matter what the National Residential Schools Survivor Society says, no matter what the National Residential Schools Survivor Society does we're totally ignored because we're not that important. It feels that we're being re-victimized," said Blackwater.

Not only has NRSSS not been included in the discussions, which got underway with representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Metis National Council, the Inuit, the Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches, the Catholic entities, the Indian residential school claimants, and the Canadian government in November, the NRSSS is not being made aware of discussions or decisions.

"It would be nice for them to communicate with us," said Blackwater. "I speak on behalf of a lot of survivors."

But Blackwater's involvement goes well beyond speaking for survivors. He maintains that it was the Blackwater case, his case, in October 1994 that got the ball rolling and eventually opened the door to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Blackwater was among 18 former residential school students who filed criminal charges of sexual and physical abuse against a dormitory supervisor of the Alberni Indian Residential School. Seven months later, the supervisor was convicted.

In 1996, Blackwell et al. began civil litigation against the Canadian government, the United Church of Canada and three employees of the Alberni Indian Residential School. Blackwater settled out of court when two of the plaintiffs died during the process. However, the case continued as Blackwater-Barney, making its way to the Supreme Court of Canada, which upheld the British Columbia Supreme Court's decision that the defendants were both vicariously and directly liable for the atrocities carried out

against the plaintiffs.

The Blackwater case resulted in thousands of legal actions being launched against the government and churches. The effect snowballed resulting in the Alternate Disputes Resolution process, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement agreement, the Prime Minister's apology for the residential school system in Canada, the Common Experience Payments, the Independent Assessment Process, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"The national chief (Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations) said he masterminded this whole thing. He wouldn't have had a foundation to work on if it wasn't for the Blackwater case," said Blackwater. "There would have been no foundation for our national chief to demand an apology on our behalf if it hadn't been for the Blackwater-Barney case."

But Blackwater's concerns go beyond the present closed-door discussions. The make-up of the commission and the government's hold on it are also pressing issues for him.

The NRSSS would like to see the commission's present members, Jane Brewin Morley and Claudette Dumont-Smith, dismissed and membership increased from three to five. All members would be residential school survivors, with at least two women and two men. The increased number of commission members would ensure across-country representation, explains Blackwater.

And Blackwater would like to see the commission moved out of Ottawa to a reserve and handled as a separate entity and not as part of Indian and Northern Affairs.

The approved \$60 million budget would remain and be meted out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Any legal or financial expertise that is required could be contracted and those working for the commission should all be Aboriginal.

"I would love to have Mr. Iacobucci start talking to grassroots people rather than those in Ottawa. There's more to life than Ottawa," said Blackwater.

"The true truth, when you dig down deep, is outside of Ottawa."

NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT OF RECALLED PET FOOD PRODUCTS CLASS ACTION

IF YOU PURCHASED OR YOUR PET(S) CONSUMED RECALLED PET FOOD, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

TO: All residents in Canada who purchased or whose pets consumed pet food or treat products recalled on or after March 16, 2007.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE?

This Notice is to advise Canadian residents that the Canadian Courts and the U.S. District Court have approved the Proposed Settlement of the various class actions and litigation commenced against Menu Foods corporate entities and other parties in relation to certain recalled pet food.

This Notice is just a summary. For more complete information, including a list of Recalled Pet Food Products, Plaintiffs and Defendants, you can read the Full Notice at www.petfoodsettlement.com or you can call the Claims Administrator at 1-800-392-7785.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

If you purchased, used or obtained, or your pet used or consumed pet food and/or pet treats that were recalled between March 16, 2007 and the present because they allegedly contained contaminated wheat gluten or rice protein concentrate ("Recalled Pet Food Products"), you may be eligible to participate in a class action settlement and obtain compensation.

WHAT ARE THE LAWSUITS ABOUT?

Plaintiffs allege through lawsuits filed in Canada and in the United States that various companies and other defendants manufactured, distributed, sold and/or marketed Recalled Pet Food Products, and that as a result of contamination of these products, persons who purchased or whose pets consumed the Recalled Pet Food Products were damaged. The lawsuits allege that some pets were taken for health screening, or may have become sick and/or died after consuming the Recalled Pet Food Products. Defendants have denied any wrongdoing.

WHAT ARE THE SETTLEMENT TERMS?

The Settlement provides for the creation of a \$24 million cash Settlement Fund from which eligible consumers may receive up to a 100% cash payment of reasonable, documented economic damages which means expenses incurred as a result of their purchase or their pet's consumption of Recalled Pet Food Products. In addition to compensation for expenses supported by documentation, consumers may also receive payment of up to \$900 for other reasonable and valid economic damages for which they do not have documentation. Expenses may include veterinary screening or treatment costs, death-related expenses, pet purchase or new pet costs, property damage and other costs.

TO MAKE A CLAIM

If you wish to make a claim under the Settlement, you must complete, sign, and return a Claim Form, along with any accompanying documentation, to the Claims Administrator at the address listed at the end of this notice. You may obtain a Claim Form by calling the toll-free number 1-800-392-7785 or by visiting the Settlement Website www.petfoodsettlement.com. **Claim Forms must be postmarked, faxed or emailed no later than January 27, 2009. Claims will be processed and paid in accordance with the terms of the Settlement Agreement.** If you have already submitted a Claims Form along with any accompanying documentation to the Claims Administrator at the address listed at the end of this notice, you do not have to submit a further Claim Form.

If you chose to be excluded from the Settlement and submitted an Opt-out form prior to the Opt-out Deadline, you cannot make a claim under the Settlement.

DOES THE SETTLEMENT APPLY TO U.S. RESIDENTS?

Yes, the same settlement terms apply to U.S. residents, but there are different timelines for completion of the various steps required to make a claim. If you are a U.S. resident who purchased or whose pet(s) consumed pet food or treat products recalled on or after March 16, 2007, please visit the U.S. page in www.petfoodsettlement.com, or contact the Claims Administrator at 1-800-392-7785 for information on the U.S. settlement and claims process.

WHO REPRESENTS ME?

The Court has appointed Canadian and U.S. lawyers to represent the Class. You do not have to pay these lawyers any money out of your own pocket in order to make a claim. You may hire your own lawyer, to help you complete the Claim Forms. However, you will be responsible for that lawyer's fees and expenses.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION?

For more information, you can visit the settlement website: www.petfoodsettlement.com, or contact the Claims Administrator:

In Re Pet Food Products Liability Litigation
Claims Administrator
c/o Heffler, Radetich & Saitta LLP
P.O. Box 890
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0890
1-800-392-7785

**QUESTIONS? VISIT WWW.PETFOODSETTLEMENT.COM
OR CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-392-7785**



Join Adam Beach and Tina Keeper for the **16th Annual NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**
March 6th 2009
Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall
Naaf.ca

[strictly speaking]
If only we were so popular here

I have written frequently about the interest that exists overseas regarding Canada's Native people. I have just returned from my ninth lecture tour of Germany, and second to the Czech Republic, extolling and spreading the gospel of Native literature and culture.



THE URBANE INDIAN
Drew Hayden Taylor

Once again, I have to say it: Native people, however we are perceived, are sure popular over there. In many ways we are romanticized, exoticized, and adored. Confidentially, I kind of like it. In the environment that created residential schools and Saskatchewan's infamous Starlight tours, it's nice to be in a place where saying you are Native Canadian will get you an eager smile and handshake, instead of a breathalyser or a federal apology.

Living up to the image is, however, a little harder

For instance, in my Prague hotel I found brochures near the front door advertising many interesting things for bored tourists of any culture to do while in town. Chief amongst them, a place called Club K 5. It's a unique establishment that

offers many diversions, including a restaurant, sauna, steam bath, massage, pedicure, manicure and a solarium for starts. But those are just the appetizers.

Club K 5 also offers more unique facilities, like strip shows and an escort service. What's of particular interest—Aboriginally speaking—is on the fourth floor. They offer what could be called theme rooms for the romantic.

You can find yourself as a knight and maiden in the medieval room, an emperor and slave in the Roman room, astronauts in the cosmic room, or—I'm dyin' if I'm lyin'—as Aboriginals in a cave. Yes, a cave. As Aboriginals.

Coincidentally enough, a cave is where my Indigenous date and I went after our Native high school prom. There's nothing like rock, moss, insects and dampness to set the First Nations

libido on fire. How did the Czech people know? You ain't been properly loved by an Indian until your head has been bruised by a stalactite. Headboards are for wimps. Unfortunately I didn't have enough per diem to do further research.

Germany however was just as, if not more, interesting. I was scheduled to lecture and perform a reading at Theatre Bonn. The first two things of interest occurred on the walk from the hotel to the theatre, where I passed by a large store front, broadly proclaiming "THE E.U. (European Union) LOVES CANADA". Inside the store were all kinds of representations of Canada. Almost all of them Native. Almost all of those West Coast. Blankets, totem poles, sculptures etc. Incidentally, in Prague, I also attended the opening of an art exhibit of Native art at a local museum.

Again, all West Coast art. I began to notice a theme here. It seems most central Europeans equate Native people only with the West Coast. And I happen to know for a fact there are caves all along the West Coast. In these dark economic times, I wonder if the Kwakiutl, Salish, and Tshimshian know what potential tourism possibilities exist in their backyards.

The other interesting thing that happened while in the city of Bonn was the assistant dramaturge of the theatre company, a young and intelligent woman, asked me quite seriously and innocently, what my name Drew Hayden Taylor meant in English. She assumed it was my Ojibway name. For a brief moment a number of phrases danced across my mind: He Whose Eyes are Blue but Heart is Red, or Spread Eagle or just simply, Cave Dweller. But that would be like shooting fish in a barrel, so I confessed it was the only name I had, other than "occupant".

But perhaps the most interesting revelation I received came in Wurzburg. At a dinner,

a local academic told me that when she was young, in fact when most Germans were young kids and they scraped their knees or stubbed their toes or banged their elbows, their parents would frequently tell them, as a way of psychologically dealing with the pain, "An Indian knows no pain."

Supposedly the little kids would then develop a stiff upper lip and stop crying, wanting to be like Indians.

An Indian knows no pain.

Obviously I don't think we know the same Indians.

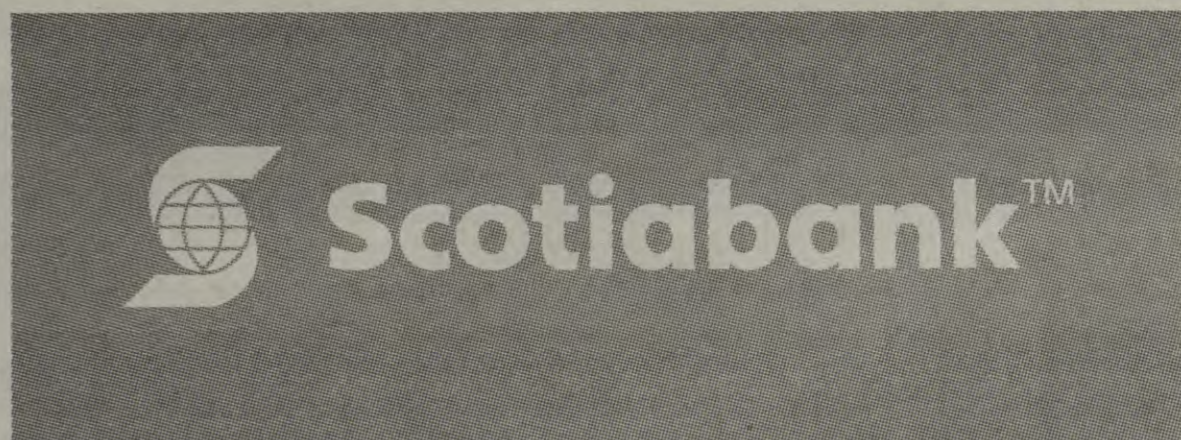
I know pain... you should see some of the relatives and ex-girlfriends I have. On one hand, I suppose this kind of saying could be construed as some sort of a compliment but obviously whoever came up with this phrase has never met a residential school survivor, or someone who was forcibly taken away for adoption, or made to fill out forms for the Department of Indian Affairs. There's a world of pain in the Native community.

An Indian knows no pain.

Maybe that's why they think we have sex in caves. That's gotta be painful.

GOT YOURS?

Did you get your 2009 calendar?



One free 2009 Aboriginal History Calendar is enclosed with every copy of the December issue of *Windspeaker* courtesy of Scotiabank. For more copies use the calendar order form below! Only a limited number available!

ALL POSTERS SHIPPED IN TUBES - NO FOLDS, CREASES OR MARKS - SUITABLE FOR FRAMING!

Unfortunately, it was not possible to send calendars with *Windspeaker* without folding. So this is your chance to get a nice clean calendar for your office, home, or for a gift.

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[windspeaker confidential] — Jennie Williams

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

Jennie Williams: A great friend is someone who will always be there for you even when they physically can't. It's a person who you can act your absolute true self around.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

J.W.: I get upset when people use stereotypes in their every day lives and have no respect for the values and beliefs in other cultures but their own. People need to have an open mind and have respect for all people no matter who they are and where they come from.

W: When are you at your happiest?

J.W.: When I am speaking to a person or a group of people and I can tell by their response that I am making a positive impact on their lives by talking about the things I believe in and think are important in life.

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

J.W.: Hopelessness.

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

J.W.: It is not specifically one person I admire; it is the women I meet who overcome adversity and many obstacles in their lives

and always stay strong and committed to staying positive no matter what comes their way.

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

J.W.: Live on my own at a very young age. I had to learn things quick. I had to grow up a lot quicker than people the same age as me at the time and sometimes it was not easy.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

J.W.: My greatest accomplishment so far would be receiving my award this year from the Governor General in Ottawa for being chosen as a National Aboriginal Role Model for 2008.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

J.W.: My goal is to travel the world. This year I had the opportunity to travel to many places across Canada and also to Mexico and Guatemala. There are so many more places I want to go and I look forward to the many adventures in travelling that are to come.

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

J.W.: I would like to be sailing through the mountains of Northern Labrador.

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

J.W.: Always listen to and remember advice you receive from your Elders.

W: Did you take it?

J.W.: I try my best every day of my life.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

J.W.: I hope to be remembered as someone who has made a positive impact on people's lives. I hope to be remembered for my kindness, respect and commitment to keeping our culture alive for future generations with all that I can give.

Jennie Williams was born and raised in Labrador. She is currently residing in Nain, Nunatsiavut. She is an Inuit visual and performing artist committed to keeping her heritage and culture alive through the arts. She has traveled many times across Canada to perform and also to Mexico and Guatemala.

She uses different mediums to depict the traditional Inuit way of life including drum-dancing, throat-singing, painting, photography and traditional crafts; she also coordinates workshops to teach others.

Williams recently received the 2008 National Aboriginal Role Model Award from the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) for her achievements.



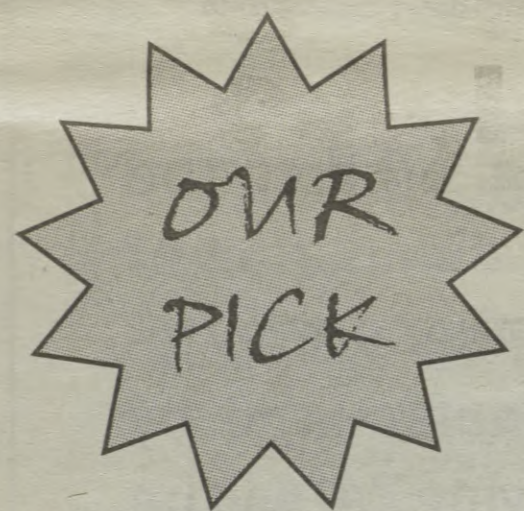
Jennie Williams

[radio's most active]

ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Holly Vee	One Kiss	Love, Spurs & Rock N Roll
McKinley Matters	Such A Fool	The Seventh Day
Crystal Shawanda	My Roots Are Showing	Dawn Of A New Day
Mitch Daigneault	She Wants	Driving All Night
Ashley Robertson	Deep In The Night	Woman In The White Dress
Billy Joe Green	Honey Girl	First Law Of The Land
Highway 373	For All Time	No Limits
Mark Jacob	The Sweetest Thing	Can U Believe It
Jordan Dunning Band	Cake Walk Into Town	Roots At Hand
John J. Cook	Hey! Hey!	Of Love And Life
Shane Yellowbird	Life Is Calling My Name	Life Is Calling My Name
Angus Jourdain	Warriors	Single Release
Robby Romero	Who's Gonna Save You	Painting The World
Art Napoleon	Addicted	Siskabush Tales
Little Hawk	I Want To Cry	Home And Native Land
Wayne Lavallee f. Holly McNarland	Jealousy	Rock n Roll Indian Cowboy
C-Weed	Black And White	Redemption
Rick Stavely	To Fly Again	Single Release
Nadjiwan	Close My Eyes	Philosophy For The Masses
Michelle Boudrias	I Like It Like That	Single Release

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:



Artist—Andrea Menard
Album—Sparkle
Song—Sparkle
Label—Independent
Producer—Robert Walsh

Menard's new CD will "Sparkle" this Christmas

Andrea Menard is a multi-talented entertainer and an accomplished playwright. She is also known for her work on TV's Moccasin Flats in which she played a police officer. She's playing the role of yet another officer in the dark drama Rabbit Falls which is into its second season on APTN. If that's not enough, Menard just released her third CD in November titled "Sparkle". The creative juices continue to flow for Menard who teamed up with her long time collaborator Robert Walsh who worked with her on "The Velvet Devil" and "Simple Steps" which are her previous CD's.

Sparkle was a Christmas release, but the album features music for all seasons including Evergreen which describes her own talent fresh and evolving with roots that run deeply into her Métis heritage. All the songs on "Sparkle" are original compositions where she invited some special guests to take part in the project. Award winning writer Maria Campbell was invited to translate "My Winter Song" in the cree language. Lorne Cardinal from CTV's Corner Gas and co-host of last years Aboriginal People's Choice Music Awards with Menard is her guest vocalist on the humorous duet called The Christmas Slump.

Sparkle also happens to be the name of one of the songs on the CD. According to Menard, Sparkle was one of those songs where a spirit whispered in her ear. There's sparkle of snow, sparkling of fire, sparkle of stars in the sky. She also said the word Sparkle meant the human heart and that we are all able to be illuminated. The thought warmed her heart and she knew it was something that had to be written. Just because the holiday season is over, doesn't mean that Sparkle can't be enjoyed throughout the rest of the year.

For more about Menard go to www.andreamenard.com.

If You Have a Home Located in Canada with Vermiculite/Zonolite Loose-Fill Attic Insulation

Your Rights May Be Affected by the W. R. Grace Bankruptcy

A settlement has been reached, and a Fund has been established to pay valid Canadian ZAI Claims against Grace. To preserve your claim against Grace, you must file the Bankruptcy Court approved claim form.

Your Claim Must Be Filed By August 31, 2009

If your home is located in Canada and has vermiculite/zonolite loose-fill attic insulation, you may have a property claim against W.R. Grace and its related entities ("Grace"). Grace has filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

What Is Vermiculite Loose-Fill Attic Insulation?

Vermiculite was used by Grace in certain non-roll home attic insulation that was sold from the 1920/1930s to 1984. Some of Grace's vermiculite attic insulation contains naturally-occurring asbestos and was sold under the name of "Zonolite Attic Insulation" ("ZAI") and under other brand names, including: Attic Fill, House Fill, Home Insulation, Zonolite Insulating Fill, Econofil, Quiselle Insulating Fill, Sears Micro Fill, Ward's Mineral Fill, Wickes Attic Insulation, Attic Plus, Mica Pellets Attic Insulation, Unifil and

Cashway Attic Insulation.

What Does It Look Like And Where Is It Located?

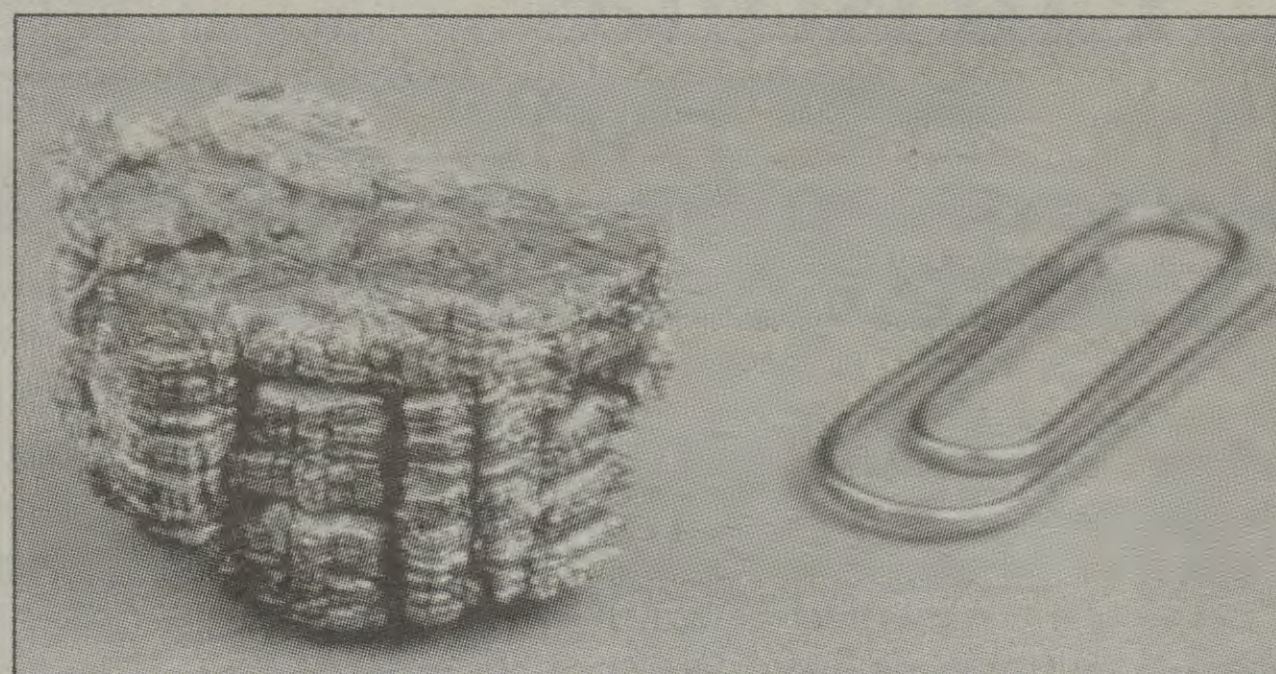
ZAI is an insulation product typically used in home attics and sometimes in walls. The granules are small, accordion-shaped nuggets and may have a silvery, gold translucent or brownish cast that may also appear black or gray over time. ZAI may be found underneath other insulation installed at a later date.

What Are ZAI Property Claims?

ZAI claims could include, among others, the cost of abatement or removal, the diminution of property value, economic loss, or other property-related claims caused by ZAI manufactured by Grace. Personal Injury Claims involving ZAI will be handled separately by a U.S. Asbestos Personal Injury Trust.



Loose vermiculite



Vermiculite nugget size

You may obtain the appropriate claim form and more information on how to file a claim by writing:

**Claims Processing Agent, W. R. Grace & Co. Bankruptcy,
P. O. Box 1620, Faribault, MN 55021-1620 or**

Call: 1-877-465-4817 or visit: www.graceclaims.com

Crystal Shawanda sweeps CAMA's clean

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

TORONTO

She's lives in the country music capital of the world, has had a number of hit songs and has a prestigious tour in the works.

But something that was missing for Crystal Shawanda was some hardware to recognize her successful music career.

That changed on Nov. 28 as Shawanda was in the spotlight for sweeping all five categories that she was nominated for at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMA).

The awards ceremony, which was staged at Toronto's Rogers Centre, was part of the annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival.

Shawanda, who grew up in Ontario on the Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve on Manitoulin Island, won her CAMA trophies in the Best Female Artist, Best Single, Best Video, Best Country Album and Album of the Year categories.

"I'm not used to winning anything," said Shawanda, a 26-year-old, who has lived in Nashville for the past seven years.

For Shawanda, this marked the first time she had even been nominated for a CAMA. Though she knew she was the most nominated artist, she said she hadn't really thought about how many awards she might end up actually winning.

"I didn't have any expectations," she said. "I was just more excited I was able to sing (as one of the show's performers)."

After her huge trophy haul, however, Shawanda was going to have to find somewhere to display her winnings.

"I'm going to take them home and enjoy them for a while," she said.

But Shawanda hinted that her trophies might not be staying with her in Nashville for too long. She said she would consider lending the awards to a school on the First Nation where she grew up so they could be displayed and hopefully inspire youth from her community to strive and reach great goals themselves.

Shawanda's surname translates into Dawn of a New Day in Ojibway. And that's what her latest CD is titled.

Shawanda believes one of the reasons the effort is receiving rave reviews is because a lot of work and time was put into it.

"We worked on it for two years," she said. "I'm really proud we took our time with it."

Shawanda was also thrilled that she was able to win all her awards on the same night another Canadian legend was honoured.

Buffy Sainte-Marie received a Lifetime Contribution to Aboriginal Music Award at the CAMA ceremony.

"Buffy Sainte-Marie was a huge mentor for me, musically and style-wise," Shawanda said.

As for her future, folks in various provinces and some American states will soon have an opportunity to see Shawanda live. She'll be touring in February and early March along with country music star Brad Paisley.

The tour will include stops in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia as well as the states of Washington and Oregon.

For Sainte-Marie, who now lives in Hawaii, she's proud of her latest accolade in her lengthy and distinguished career.

"Of course, it's very flattering," she said.

A bonus for Sainte-Marie was receiving her award at the ceremony held in conjunction with the Canadian Aboriginal Festival as it includes various Native events she has long supported.

"All of you have been such an inspiration to me throughout my life," Sainte-Marie said during her acceptance speech. "I've had the rare privilege of being able to have airplane tickets from show business, which have allowed me to come into your communities. And you guys have are the ones who keep showing up in my songs. And I thank you for ever and ever and ever for that."

Meanwhile, like Shawanda, Winnipeg's Eagle and Hawk had also been nominated for five CAMA. They ended up winning two awards, Best Group or Duo and Best Rock Album.

Band members had lost exact count of how many CAMA they have captured over the years. But Vince Fontaine, who sings lead vocals and plays electric guitar for the band, said there's a simple reason why Eagle and Hawk enjoy being a part of the CAMA, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year.

"We just come because it's a great Aboriginal event," he said.

Eagle and Hawk had also been nominated in the Album of the Year and Best Song Single categories, both of which were won by Shawanda.

Eagle and Hawk was also up for a CAMA in the Best Songwriter category. But this award went to Mitch Daigneault, another multiple-award winner.

Daigneault, a Regina native who lives in Battleford, Sask., also ended up taking home a CAMA for Best Male Artist.

Daigneault had won a CAMA in 2003 in the Best Country Album. Though he had spent almost a decade on the road touring, Daigneault took a bit of a break from that lifestyle and has devoted a good chunk of the past few years to being a stay-at-home father, helping to raise his son Zachary, who is now three.

And perhaps one day Daigneault's son will be honoured at a CAMA ceremony.

"He's already playing drums," Daigneault said of his son, who provided plenty of inspiration for his latest CD titled *Driving All Night*. "And he's trying to play

the guitar."

Of his two awards, Daigneault said his Best Songwriter trophy was a bit more meaningful to him.

"You always want the reward (of knowing) that somebody is saying you're doing something right," he said.

Meanwhile, there was also two other artists, Calgary's Tanya Tagaq and Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk of Toronto, who won a pair of CAMA each.

Tagaq won her awards in the Best Female Traditional/Cultural Roots Album and in the Best Album Cover Design categories. Both awards were for her latest works dubbed *Auk-Blood*.

Delbaere-Sawchuk was honoured for having the Best Fiddle Album and the Best Instrumental Album. Her latest award-winning work is titled *Omeigwessi Reel Métis: A Tribute to Watler Flett*.

A total of 26 CAMA were presented. Terry-Lynn Williams-Davidson a Haida Gwaii singer was honoured with a Keeper of Traditions in Aboriginal Music Award. Composer, conductor, writer and artistic director Bruce Ruddell was presented with this years Music Industry Award.



(Left) Crystal Shawanda of Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve located on Manitoulin Island, cleaned house at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards staged at Toronto's Roger Centre Nov. 28. For someone who has never been nominated for a CAMA before, She did well, picking up awards for Best Female Artist, Best Single, Best Video, Best Country Album and Album of the Year.



(Top) Eagle and Hawk was nominated for five CAMA, but walked away with two, Best Group or Duo and Best Rock Album.

(Right) Calgary's Tanya Tagaq picked up CAMA's for Best Female Traditional/Cultural Roots Album and Best Album Cover Design.

PHOTOS BY BRAD CROWFOOT



(Left) Winston Wuttnee (right) unexpectedly joined Darren Lavelle on stage during the CAMA's for a quick jig. (Right) Bruce Ruddell was honoured with the Music Industry award at the 2008 CAMA's.

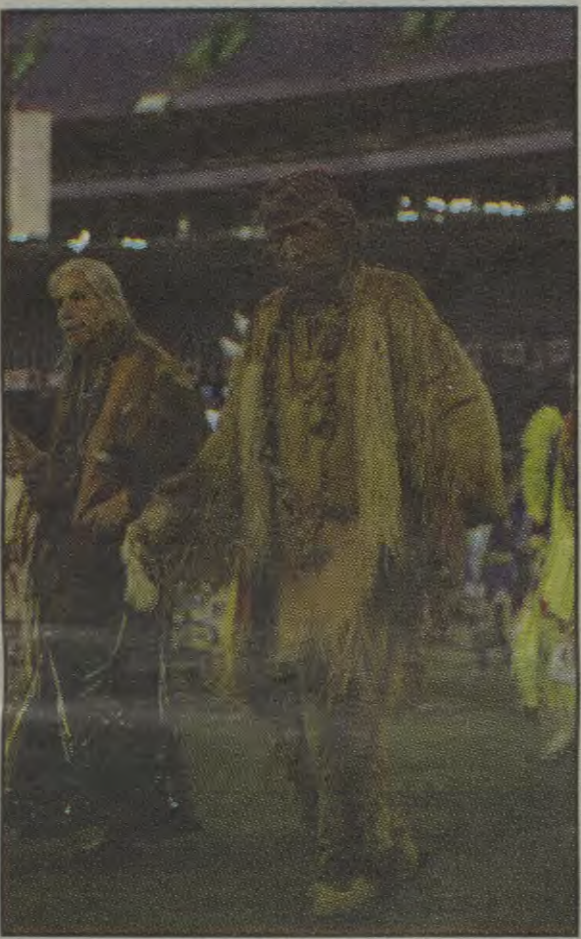


[festival]
**Grand
Entry**



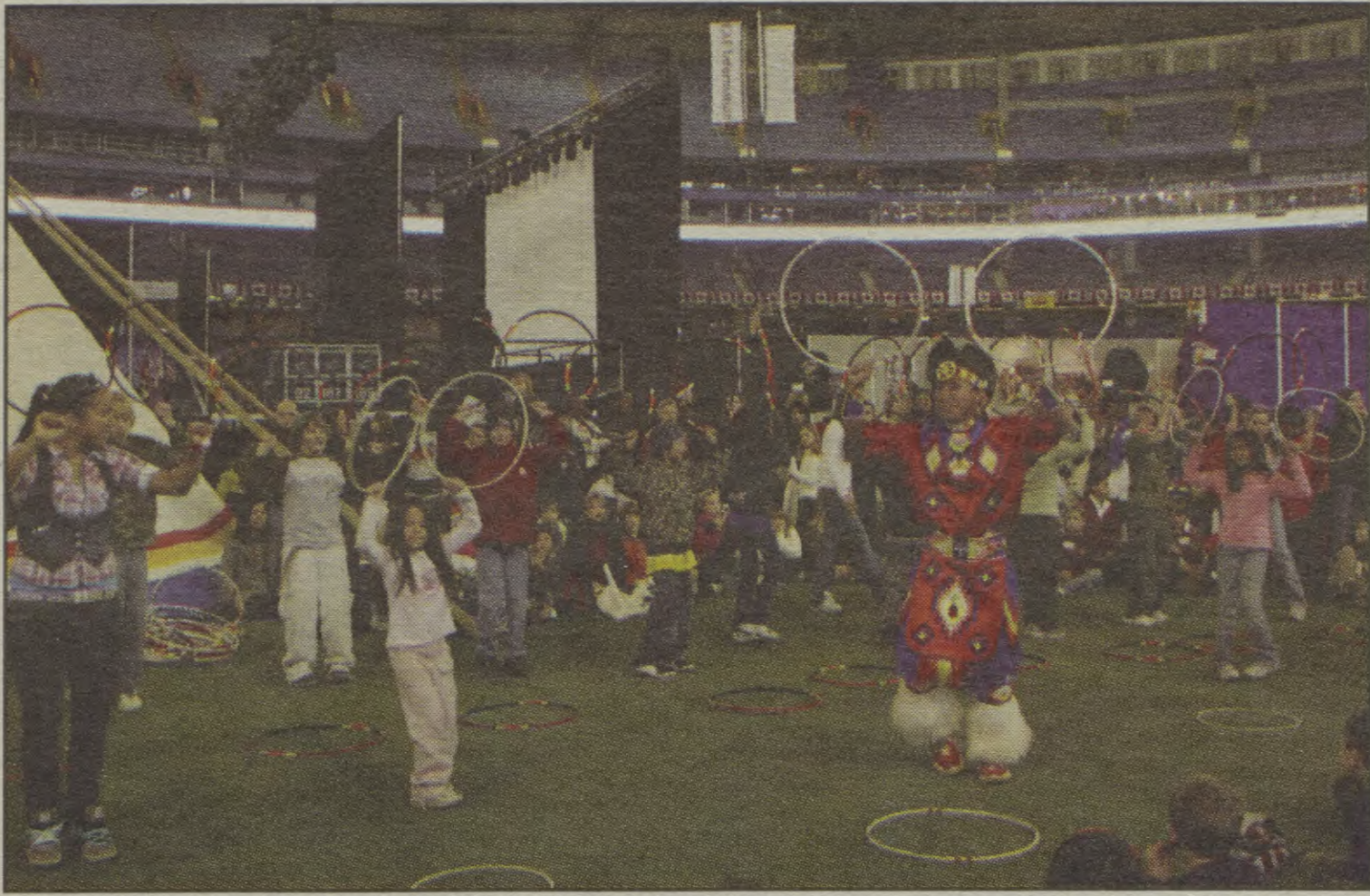
Ontario drum group, Poplar Singers were just one of many groups to welcome in the grand entry on Nov. 29 at Toronto's Roger Centre.

PHOTOS BY BRAD CROWFOOT



Education day

[festival]



PHOTOS BY BRAD CROWFOOT

Tony Duncan (right) from Arizona gets students involved during Education Day on Nov. 28 at Toronto's Roger Centre. Duncan is a four time world champion hoop dancer.



Students ask questions at the Talking Feather station during Education day.

FASHION



Models show off the stylings of Turtle Concepts Nov. 28.



(Left) Genevieve Fisher is an up and coming talent from London, ON, who entertained the crowd in the Performance Tent Nov. 29. (Middle) Best Rap or Hip Hop Album Nominees, Wabs Whitebird, 7th Generation and Feenix, performed at the Roger's Centre Nov. 29. (Right) Caley Watts of Saddle Lake, AB performed at the Music Cafe Nov. 29.



POP/R&B artist, Fara Palmer added a CAMA in the category of Best Producer/Engineer to her long list of achievements.



Michael Rios, Leslie Miranda and Abigail Rios had their face painted by Michelle French during the Canadian Aboriginal Festival.



Terry-Lynn Williams-Davidson was the winner for Keeper of Traditions during the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards held Nov. 28 at Toronto's Roger Centre.

Aboriginal choice school concept is growing

Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Prince George

Although the idea is not new for provinces like Alberta and Manitoba, British Columbia is now maneuvering through uncharted territory with the Aboriginal choice school concept. Meetings have been recently taking place and early reports indicate that the future looks cautious but bright.

Charlotte Henay, School District 57's principal of aboriginal education said that they would draw on the experience of Edmonton's Amiswacy Academy, Winnipeg's Niji Mahkwa school, and even study other best practices from other countries as far as New Zealand.

"There's a lot of misconceptions about what an Aboriginal choice school is. There hasn't been an Aboriginal choice school in B.C. so people don't have a large pool of experience or knowledge of Aboriginal choice schools to draw on," said Henay.

One surefire fact is that Aboriginal students in the mainstream education system do not possess a very flattering

track record.

"The Ab Ed (Aboriginal Education) board has initiated a best practice to respond to the failure of the system to meet the needs of Aboriginal kids," said Henay.

It is believed that the addition of Elders in the classroom could help students feel more at ease in their environment.

"The involvement of Elders intricately on a daily basis to speak to experiences that are unique to our community – the Indian residential school experience. To speak to traditional teachings," said Henay, adding that a cultural advisor could be in the cards as well.

Henay added that they would deliver content that has an Indigenous framework and an Aboriginal perspective.

"Story work would be an integral part of the way we would teach. We would be looking at Aboriginal learning styles, (such as) experiential. We'd be looking at maybe restorative justice as a framework for discipline practice," Henay explained.

And it's not just the material or the style that will be shaped, as even the teachers will be carefully selected.

"We're looking for more representation, so we're looking for more Aboriginal staff members. What we want is the best for our kids. So definitely there would be a screening process and there would be an inherent understanding, if not a written agreement, that staff would have to participate in professional development and activities that are going to drive culturally responsive teaching," said Henay, adding that there is a difference between culturally appropriate and culturally responsive teaching.

Henay noted that although the concept is only in the discussion phase now, it is a matter of when and where, and not what if.

However those what if's brought up during the meetings still put forth pressing concerns and serious challenges.

Some questioned if an Aboriginal choice school meant that non-Aboriginals would be on the outside looking in.

"It wouldn't be exclusively for Aboriginal students," said Henay. "It's about honoring all children and having Aboriginal children and non-Aboriginal children learn from each other as well."

Henay addressed that an all-

Aboriginal school would be a concept that walked a little too close to residential schools for some people's comfort.

Other concerns were things like transportation for those kids that would love to go but have no way to get there, and they live outside the school catchment area.

Henay also noted that image and stigma are issues that need to be looked at as well.

"There is still a lot of stigma in mainstream Canadian society and within this community that's linked to being Aboriginal. There's a concern with how you identify yourself. We have staff members, teachers, administrators who don't identify. There's concern about kids being further stigmatized by participating in an Aboriginal choice school," Henay expressed.

Even the proper school choice is up for debate. There are four inner city schools that have made the short list and need to be refurbished.

"There's a concern about having an environment that's going to reflect our values. So in terms of resources how much is the district going to put towards capital infrastructure."

Perhaps one of the biggest

challenges is not only making the school a success story, but also determining how success is measured.

"I think we have to be very careful with that because the perception is already that 'oh well it's an Aboriginal choice school therefore the standards must be different.' What we're saying is that we want education to be tailored to the needs of our kids," said Henay, adding that the Aboriginal community wants their kids to graduate from high school and have life choices.

"We have to have a discussion about what success is and what it looks like in our community before we can talk about how we're going to measure it."

As for funding, Henay said that it will be funded just like every other school in the district but added that they may need more.

"The needs may exceed those of other schools because we're setting up a new concept. So to meet those we're going to have to look for additional sources of funding within the district and without."

A decision on where the school will be located, among other items, is expected to be made by the school board trustees at the end of January.

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Riel's Last Poems Come Home

Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Winnipeg

It was not long ago that Canada's ambivalence towards Louis Riel asked whether he was a hero or villain. However what's becoming prevalent nowadays is "Louis Riel, the poet".

Only days before he was hanged for treason, Riel wrote some poems in his jail cell after his jail guard, Constable Robert Hobbs, gave him a notepad to do so. Initially, poetry was not one of Riel's well-know traits but lately his poetry has been surfacing.

"It showed that he was a very religious man (and) that he truly believed in God," said David Chartrand, the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). "I think it also sets the parameters that this is a man that truly believed in the future of a united Canada."

Riel gave the poetry to Constable Hobbs and it stayed in the Hobbs family for over 120 years. Only recently were the last poems of Louis Riel put up for auction.

Known as the father of Manitoba and the definitive defender of the Métis people, it was only fitting that on Nov. 25, the MMF put in the highest bid for Riel's poetry that was penned only days before death.

Chartrand explained that almost immediately the competition became fast and furious.

"Oh, it started quick. The opening bid was at \$5,000 and within seconds we were already at \$22,000."

Chartrand added that at the \$23,000 mark it started to slow down and they finally sealed the deal at \$27,000. With extra fees the final tally was \$32,050, but Chartrand added that, if necessary, the MMF was willing to go higher.

"I think we were going to get them at all costs. There was no stopping. We believe for us it was the significance of the message, and at the same time these were the last poems ever written by Riel," said Chartrand. "They were also in English, because most of his poems were in French."

The poetry is not yet available to the public, but Chartrand expressed his amazement towards Riel's demeanor in the face of death.

"It tells a lot of the man. In (his) dying hours you look at the poems and they were well described. There's no anger in the poems. Their well written, smooth penmanship tells you the man is not fearing. The man is very content that he is willing to give up his life for his cause and no matter what happens he's not going to be fearing for his life," said Chartrand. "He's going to accept what God has, in his view, set forward in the plans in his life."

"Usually you'd see someone in anger. You'd see shaky handwriting but it was very smooth. Very well written poems. So a lot could be said by just that alone."

Chartrand added that the eventual recognition of Riel as a leader in Canada was long overdue and identifies the MMF, along with other organizations, as the catalysts behind Canadians warming to the idea.

"Not long ago, I'm talking a few years, Riel was still considered a traitor. Riel was still considered a treasonous rebel who didn't deserve any respect whatsoever. He was not the founder of Manitoba, he was not the father of confederation, nor was he even considered to be any sort of historic developer of our beautiful country."

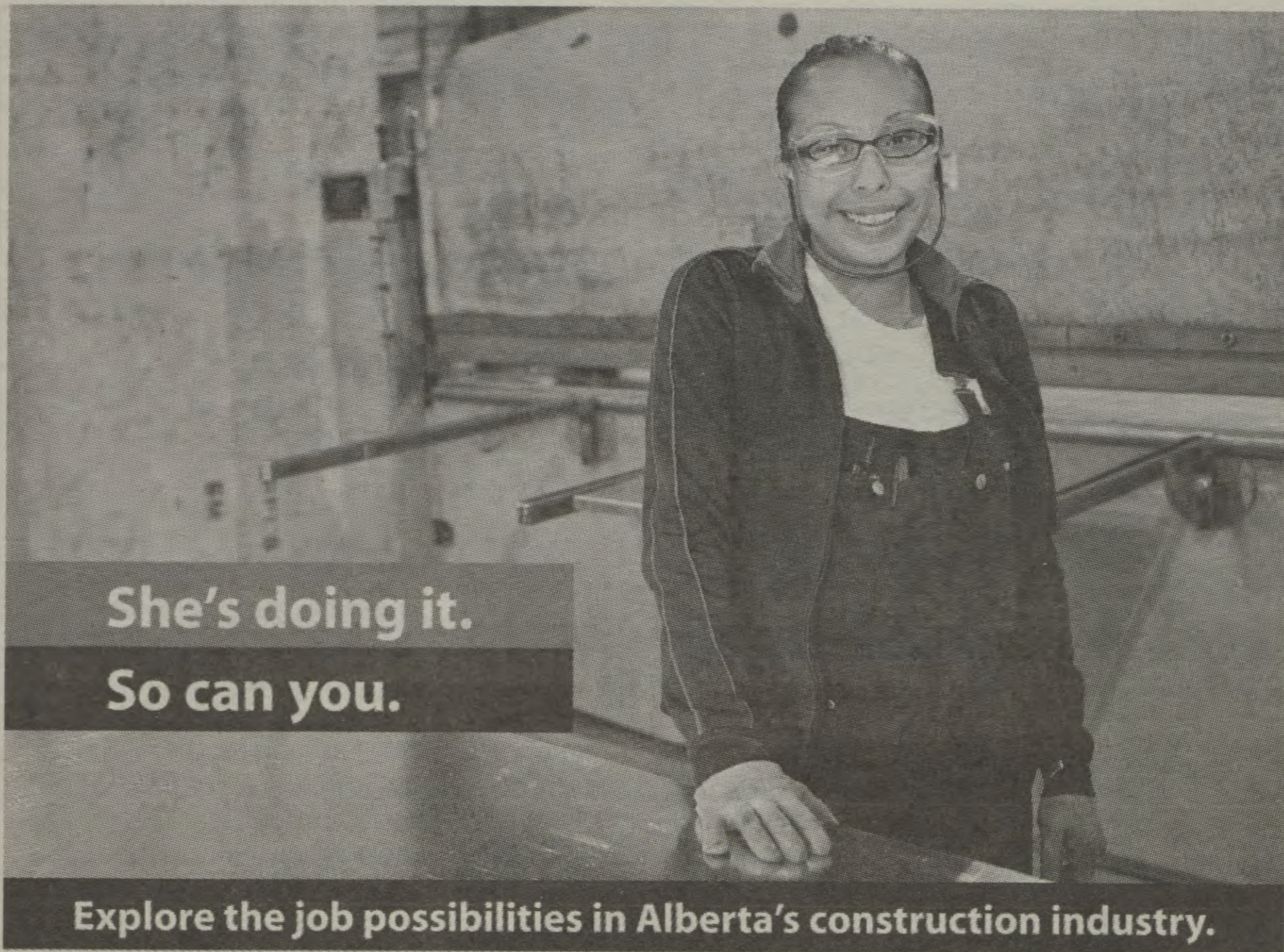
"In the last...close to ten years that entire envelope has changed and now you have a different sort of view as society as a whole. Society has made it very clear that they do recognize the true contribution Riel has made and that he is the father of Manitoba," expressed Chartrand, adding "now we even have a new holiday in Manitoba named after him."

Louis Riel day falls on the third Monday of February and Chartrand is planning to reveal the poems to the world at that point.

Currently they're being held in a bank vault and the long-term goal is to have them featured in the, yet-to-be-built, National Métis Museum. This Museum idea has been in the works for years, but Chartrand explained that with the government changing hands the fruition keeps getting delayed.

Along with the poetry, the MNF plans to have displayed an old pair of his binoculars, a sash, and even a clipping of Riel's beard.

The upcoming Louis Riel day will fall on Monday, February 16.



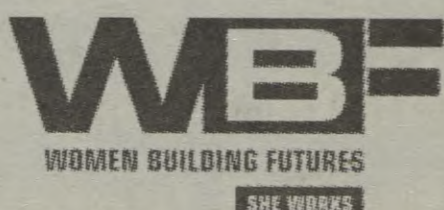
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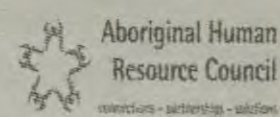
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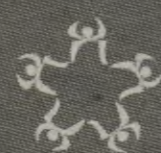
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FNUC censured

(Continued from page 10.)

"We are caught in the middle of this censure, as our post-secondary education is seriously threatened by an international campaign to reject our academic jobs or distinctions at FNUUniv." The student body wants to see the problem resolved, stability restored and the core funding issue dealt with.

Whitefish stated to media a day after the censure vote that he was caught off guard by CAUT's actions, but was hoping for meaningful discussions with the association in a meeting planned the next week.

Jo-Anne Episkenew, who is the chair of the university's academic council, told Canwest News that she questioned the relevance of a meeting between CAUT and Whitefish.

"It's really interesting that CAUT is meeting with Whitefish, who recently resigned as chair of the FNUC board of governors," she said. "Having him sit as chairman of the board was one of the problems CAUT perceived. He is no longer on our board, so OK, now they are going to meet with him to try to resolve (the governance) issues."

In a letter to the Regina LeaderPost, Turk responded by pointing out that the planned meeting between himself and Whitefish to discuss the governance problems at FNUC was not inappropriate.

"The FSIN is the government that has responsibility for the First Nations University Act, and any change to that act requires legislative action by the FSIN," he said. "Whenever there is a problem with the structure of a university, CAUT talks to the government that has legislative authority for that institution."

Although CAUT was ready to meet with Whitefish, the vice-chief cancelled the meeting for personal reasons. Whitefish refused calls from Windspeaker to comment on the matter.

According to Turk, once the FSIN and FNUC acknowledge the governance problems and are willing to fully resolve the issue, CAUT will immediately lift the censure.

"We just want to get the governance problems fixed. This was sort of the last resort, the last option we had because nothing had worked to this point," he said.



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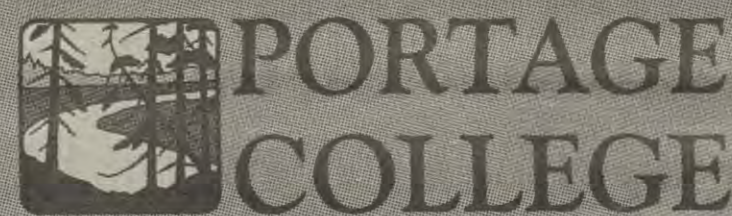
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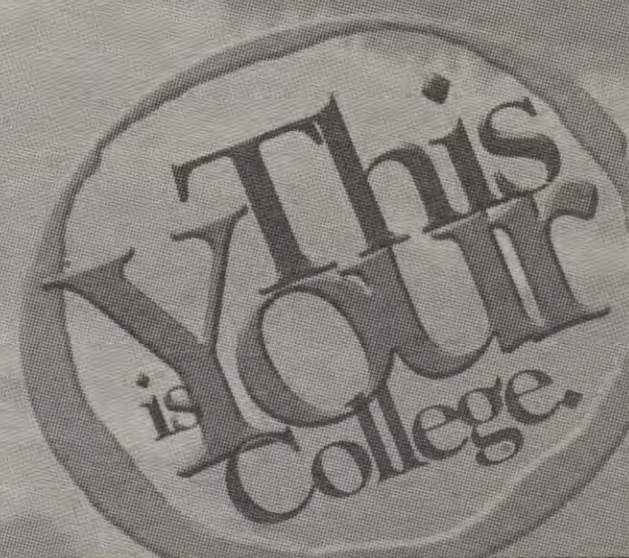
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Handbook produced to help youth in care

Chris Phalen
Windspeaker Contributor

Vancouver

A handbook produced by the Federation of BC Youth in Care Network (FBCYICN) will help Aboriginal children in government care transition more efficiently into adulthood.

Your Life – Your Rights is a resource booklet outlining the rights of access to government services for youth, put together by youth, with experience in B.C.'s child welfare system.

Jocelyn Helland the executive director of FBCYICN says youth leaving care and into a more independent lifestyle need rhetoric more easily related to them.

"Youth need to know what their rights are in a way they understand them," said Helland. "They don't need the legal version, they need plain language version."

Almost every care system in Canada does a poor job of preparing youth for what life is like beyond care according to Helland.

"Essentially they are given their green garbage bag full of belongings, led out the door and left to tackle the world all by themselves," she said.

While the book was not tailored to a specific demographic it will be handed out to a majority population of First Nations youth while in care.

According to Ministry of Children and Family Development statistics as of October 31, 2008 there are 9,026 children in ministry care. Of that total, 52 per cent are Aboriginal children.

B.C. Minister of Children and Family Development Tom Chistensen said aspects of the handbook will help Aboriginal youth specifically understand their rights to culture.

"Aboriginal youth in care, in particular, shouldn't shy away from asserting their right to be exposed to, and learn about their culture," explained Christensen who said the ministry was very proud to be behind the initiative carried out by the FBCYICN.

"It (the book) has a much greater likelihood of responding to the questions they (the youth) have rather than what we think they have, because it was developed by youth," he said.

Although the ministry pitched in \$70,000 in financial aid to produce the book Christensen reiterated that the FBCYICN should be credited for most of the implementation of the handbook throughout the child welfare system.

Part of the same credit falls on the shoulders of the many youth who took part in the preliminary consultations concerning the project three years ago when the planning process of the handbook first began.

Lacey Morin-Desjarlais a 23-year-old Saulteaux-Metis of the Muskowegan band in Saskatchewan was a part of that process, and she believes that a handbook like this could help Aboriginal Youth reclaim culture that gets muddled in government care.

"I think it is especially important for Aboriginal young people to know that we do have rights, and that we need to be empowered to things like knowing our culture, but the book is empowering in itself," said Desjarlais.

Desjarlais who spent eight years in the child welfare service system noted that rights speak to all races and all young people but it is especially important the government understands that Indigenous people have a right to know who they are.

"The needs of Aboriginal youth need awareness," said Desjarlais. "A lot of our culture has been lost and the book will

help when youth in care are thrown into mainstream culture."

Helland said she is hopeful they have done the book in a way that the FBCYINC can continue to build on it.

She said that they are currently working on a couple of sections to be added in the future. One section includes the rights of Aboriginal young people, a section devoted to the rights of Aboriginal youth on and off reserve as well as rights for youth with disabilities.

"It is very rare that young people are asked to guide a government project that will impact them directly. I have been told by people in government that this book is revolutionary as far as the process goes," Helland said.

"We are hoping people are so excited about this initiative that we won't encounter future barriers in government when we go to revise the content."

Business Quarterly Magazine – Winter 2009 Edition

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Awards recognize the success of Aboriginal businesses

By **BERNADETTE FRIEDMANN-CONRAD**
Winspeaker Writer

VANCOUVER

Celebrating leadership, and recognizing the contributions of Aboriginal businesses, those were the aims of the British Columbia Achievement Foundation (BCAF) in establishing the 2008 Aboriginal Business Awards.

In early December, Premier Gordon Campbell and BCAF chair, Keith Mitchell announced the eight award winners, and 13 Aboriginal businesses who received honourable mentions, will be recognized with a gala in early January.

"Congratulations to these 21 businesses for the leadership and entrepreneurial spirit they have shown in being selected for the first-ever B.C. Aboriginal Business Awards," said Premier Campbell. "Each one is an outstanding reflection of the contribution the province's Aboriginal business community is making to keep our economy strong for the future."

"The objective of the awards was to shine a light on Aboriginal

businesses, to develop an understanding that Aboriginal business does exist, that it is a growing economy, and that business opportunities can flow from other processes like the B.C. Treaty Process," said Industry Council for Aboriginal Business president, Marlane Christiansen, who also served on the Aboriginal Business Awards Advisory Board.

The independent board, which was comprised of representatives with vast experience in economic and business development in British Columbia, wanted to make sure, the inaugural award sent the right message.

"We had to take a look at how these awards would role out, discussed what the categories should look like, and developed some key messages," said Christiansen. "We wanted to be sure we captured the youth, and showcased young Aboriginal entrepreneurs under 30, who had achieved success in the start up and operation of new businesses."

In all, seven distinct categories were set up from small to large companies, to joint-ventures, and community owned businesses. "There are pretty exciting

community owned businesses in BC, and we were looking for leadership models, models for economic development and capacity building, best practices, something that could be showcased, that could be easily embraced by other communities."

The selection committee examined each business for factors such as the number of Aboriginal community members employed, if managers were drawn from within the community, and how positively the business impacted the greater area, region and economy.

For the community owned business ventures, a prerequisite was that the organization had to be 100 per-cent community owned. For the joint-venture category, which included Aboriginal and non-aboriginal affiliations, as well as partnerships between Aboriginal communities, the selection committee looked for extended learning and training opportunities.

Nomination forms had been distributed to all the First Nations in the province, the B.C. Métis



PHOTO BY BRITISH COLUMBIA ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION

Founder and president of CopperMoon Communications, Jacob Beaton is the Male Entrepreneur of the year.

Nation, government agencies, organizations such as the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (ICAB), Aboriginal Tourism, as well as development corporations, who distributed the forms further through their networks.

The B.C. Achievement Foundation, which spearheaded the awards, had human resources available to ensure the nomination forms were complete to answer any questions or concerns.

"There was a support

mechanism in there that I think was really great," said Christiansen.

As a result, the foundation received close to 100 nominations from across the province, and from various economic sectors. Christiansen said, the selection board, undoubtedly, had a tough time choosing the eight winners, but, while each category was examined according to its unique characteristics, the guiding principle was the same for all nominees.

See Winners on page 23.)



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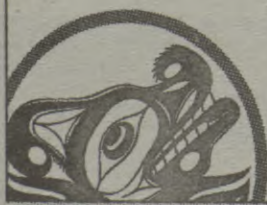
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FOR GENERATIONS

Winners of business awards announced

(Continued from page 22.)
 "We were looking for leadership, innovation and success. It wasn't sector specific.

We were looking at everything from the lone artist to big businesses, in which Aboriginal communities play roles; like mining and logging, and certainly in the tourism sector. We were looking for proven track records."

The Young Male Entrepreneur of the Year award recipient, Jacob Beaton founder and president of CopperMoon Communications, launched in 1999 certainly has that track record. Beaton said he was very excited to be recognized for his hard-work, and the past accomplishments of his company. "Something I hear a lot from my clients is that we don't celebrate our successes enough as First Nations people. So this is what I think is great about these awards, they celebrate success stories."

"I think these awards are really timely in that as a province we are seeing, in some sectors, a real downturn, but we are also looking forward to hosting the Olympics, and some other major

events," said Christiansen. "Because Aboriginal people have been so displaced economically in the past, unless you are actually building awareness about it, not everybody is going to know. So you have to help educate, and network to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together to talk about business. This celebration of achievements can only be good for business. If Aboriginal people and their communities are building good businesses, there is a positive ripple effect in the wider economy, and that's good for all of British Columbia."

It is hoped, the Aboriginal Business Achievement Awards will be a catalyst for new creation and growth.

"I hope that these awards will encourage the next generation of Aboriginal business people to have faith in their ideas, set up their own businesses and be well-positioned to receive one of these awards in years to come," said Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

Pierre appointed to chief commissioner of BC treaty commission

There is no doubt that Sophie Pierre has had a proud and illustrious career. She has been the chief of the St. Mary's Indian Band for over twenty years.

She is currently the chair of the Ktunaxa Independent School System and the co-chair of the First Nations Summit. She also is a board member of the Suzuki Institute and Canada World Youth.

On Dec. 15 Pierre received another feather in her well-decorated cap when it was announced that she will be the new chief commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission.

Pierre will be replacing Grand Chief Steven Point in the challenging and high profile position.

In order for the appointment to be official, Pierre needs

approval from B.C., Canada, and the First Nations Summit.

"Appointing the right person is essential to ensure that the Treaty Commission works in an effective manner. We are confident that Sophie Pierre has the experience, knowledge and energy to bring to the role and I firmly believe that she is the right person to guide the commission forward in the important task of advancing negotiations and facilitating fair and durable treaties," said the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Michael de Jong in a press release.

The B.C. Treaty Commission's mandate is to facilitate the negotiations of First Nations treaties in B.C., which should prove to be a serious challenge for the respected leader, as much of the land in B.C. is not settled.

Both Grand Chief Edward

John of the First Nations Summit and Minister of Indian Affairs, Chuck Strahl had nothing but nice things to say about Pierre as a leader.

"Chief Pierre is a highly regarded First Nations leader who has worked tirelessly to create improved opportunities for First Nations people in her community as well as across Canada. We are confident she will be effective in her new role, providing clear and decisive leadership and strengthening the renewal of the negotiation of fair, just and honourable agreements in B.C.," said Jong.

"We look forward to working with her and the other commissioners to create opportunities for all British Columbians through the modern treaty-making process," added Strahl.



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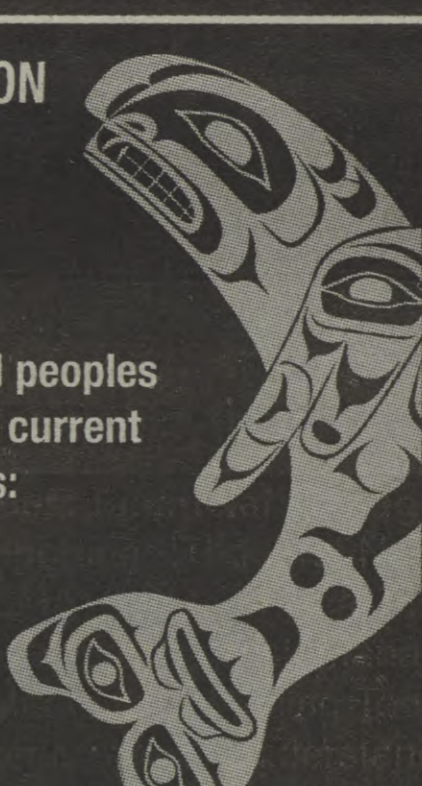
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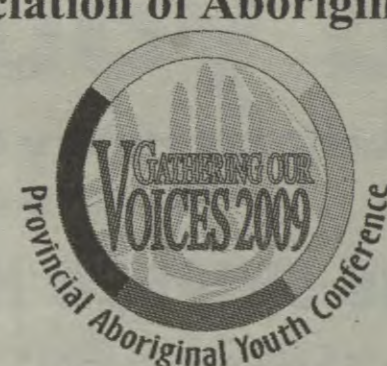
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Alberta Sweetgrass: Special Section providing news from Alberta

Treaty 7 to host 2009 AFN assembly

By THOMAS J BRUNER
Sweetgrass Staff Writer

CALGARY

For a rare change of pace, the Stampede and the weather won't be the only hot events in July for Calgary. Treaty 7 will play host to the 2009 Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) Annual General Assembly (AGA), and as a bonus the election of the national chief will be revealed as well.

"I'm not going to hide my good thoughts on that," said Treaty 7 Chief Charles Weasel Head of the Blood Tribe. "We're extremely excited about it."

He believes the benefits will be phenomenal.

"It showcases our national politics of the chiefs coming together, and also showcases our ability to host culture related to social aspects of our culture," said Weasel Head.

Weasel Head noted the benefits of the AGA and also Calgary will reap the rewards, from unique volunteer opportunities to financial windfalls.

"On the financial aspect of it, of course we realize that with so many people coming in from all over the country its going to be a good financial economic opportunity for businesses."

Perhaps the biggest shot in the arm for Weasel Head and '09 AGA is the fact that it will also serve as the platform for either the

new or the reelected chief of the AFN.

"Every third year we have the elections for national chief so it's a big boost in regards to numbers of peoples that will be coming in. It also means that there's a lot of work to be done," said Weasel Head.

Weasel Head expressed that committees are being constructed and local surveys are being conducted to ensure that the event is not only appropriate, but perhaps historically one of the best AGA's in the AFN's colorful history.

"We look forward to meeting the challenge. We look forward to giving Calgary a taste of national First Nations politics. It also gives us the opportunity in Treaty 7, the chiefs and the whole community, to let the country know that we've got the ability to coordinate and facilitate such a huge event. We're very confident that its going to be a successful one that will be remembered by everyone, including the city, the province, and many of the First Nations chiefs that come to this forum along with their families."

In addition to the AGA itself, there will also be a golf tournament, which Weasel Head suggested is a great opportunity for networking.

The AFN AGA will take place at Calgary's TELUS Convention Centre, from July 21-23, 2009.

Students experience Inuit life



PHOTO BY LAURA SUTHERS

Amanda Powley (middle) from Teacher's P.E.T. Inc. organized a day-long exercise on the Inuit. Nicholas, Kayd, Keaton, Emma, Jared and Kianna were just six of the 18 Grade 2 students who benefited from the in-school field trip exercise.

Back for a second year in a row, Amanda Powley an educator from Teacher's P.E.T Educational Services Inc. was in Wendy Fawcett's grade 2 classroom again giving an interactive Inuit presentation.

Just as the year before Powley said that "It was a blast."

"The Sweetgrass School has wonderful parent volunteers who are a huge help to me."

According to Powley, most of the research for the Inuit presentation was done on-line and through various textbooks, but affirms that working with Aboriginal Elders "would be an asset to developing a future field-trip."

"A lot of Canadian history can

seem really abstract to elementary students, and with the help of local Aboriginal Elders, I hope to make it more accessible and hands-on."

The grade two students definitely had a hands-on experience, creating Shaman pouches. Learning the Inuktitut language was a challenge, but using it through a matching game seemed to help. Powley said she is excited about developing an upper elementary presentation centered on the diverse histories of Canada's Aboriginal groups. She is currently working on a Grade 5 fieldtrip that will explore some stories about settlement in Canada, including Aboriginal influences.

"There are many fascinating stories waiting to be told and brought to the classroom," she said.

According to Principal Brent Billy, the school was named after Cree Chief Sweet Grass, who was instrumental in the protection of the Plains Bison.

"Chief Sweet Grass was considered a peacemaker by being the first chief to sign treaty 6. At that time he urged the federal government to protect the bison, which were being hunted to extinction. The school was named after Chief Sweet Grass because at the time of its construction, it was designed to be environmentally friendly and be energy efficient," said Billy.

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Great Spirit Circle Trail recognized nationally by CTA

The Great Spirit Circle Trail, located in M'Chigeeng, Ontario, was identified on the 29 Significant Aboriginal tourism locales in Canada.

A two-year collaboration with the Canadian Tourism Association (CTA) and Aboriginal Tourism Canada (ATC) has resulted in an elaborate list of 28 Aboriginal hotspots. The list was originally intended to be 29 but one of the establishments folded.

The Great Spirit Circle Trail has experienced exponential growth in the last four years and shows no signs of a slowdown. Kevin Eshkawkogan, manager of the establishment noted that just this last summer they experienced a 63 percent increase in nights booked.

The Great Spirit Circle Trail prides itself on providing unique, natural tourism from an Aboriginal perspective. They offer what they refer to as soft adventures, wilderness eco-adventures, and educational interpretive tours.

The area in which the Great Spirit Circle Trail operates is within the Manitoulin Island and the Sagamok region of Northeastern Ontario. Known as

having a beautiful landscape, it also possesses the world's largest lake in a fresh water island in the world.

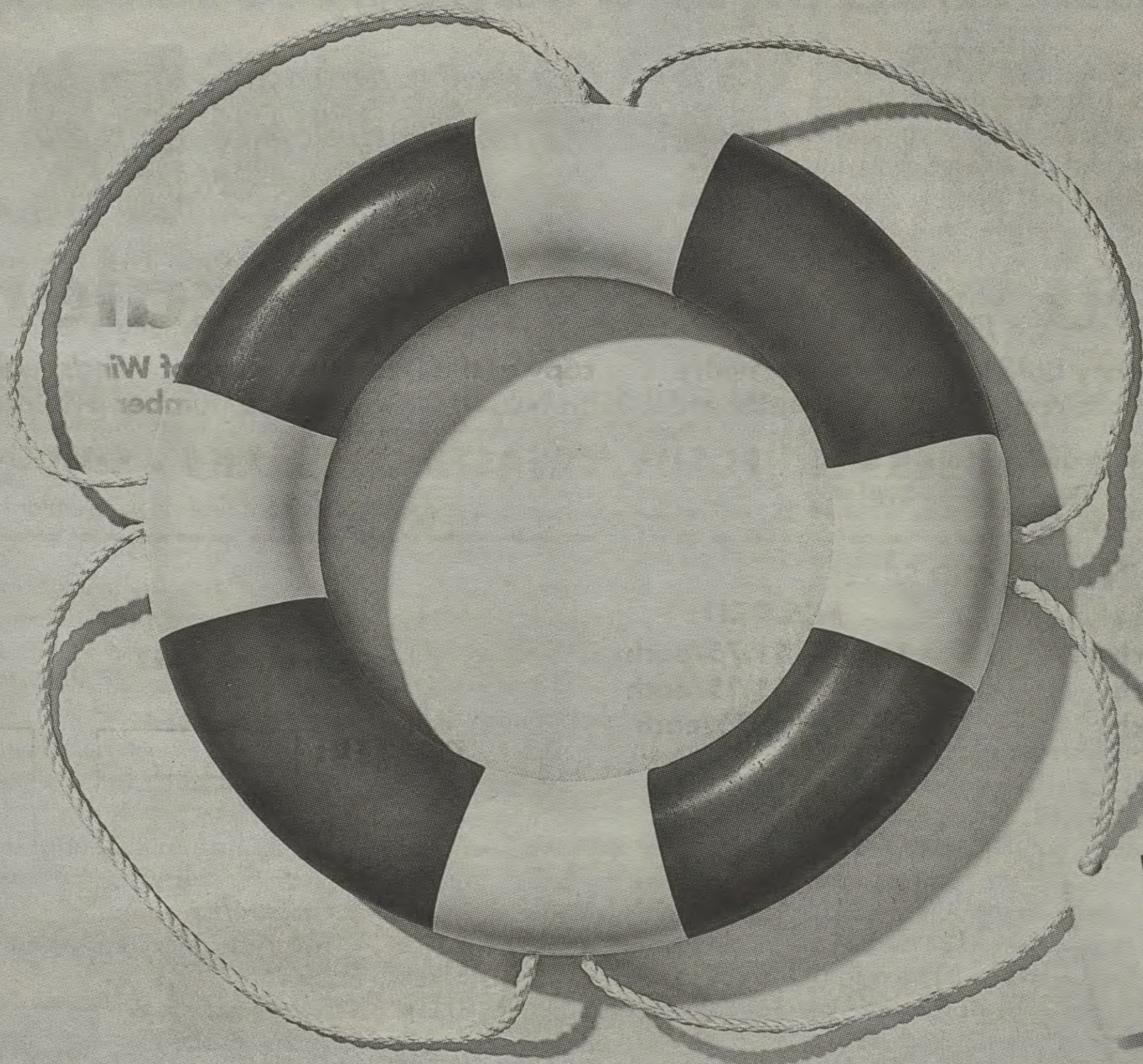
Some of the popular attractions include the Holy Cross Mission Ruins in Wikwemikong, Indian Head Rock at Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, and The World's Largest Dreamcatcher in Zhiibaahaasing.

Refocusing its approach to include experiential travel was the mandate of CTA, which helped conclude what areas made the esteemed list. The new approach was juxtaposed with ATC's goal to promote Aboriginal people as world leaders in tourism and still maintain harmony in our cultures.

Other areas and establishments to make the list were Aurora Village in Yellowknife, the Batoche National Historic Site in Batoche, and Hutel-Musée Premières Nations in Wendake.

Great Spirit Circle Trail is owned and operated by eight First Nation communities, and represents the Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatomi peoples.

For more information on The Great Spirit Circle Trail, or the other tour destinations, log onto www.aboriginaltourism.ca.



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Peters the first Aboriginal to coach basketball team

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

SAINT JOHN

Jason Peters is believed to be making a little bit of history.

But Peters, who turns 36 on Christmas Day, does not think it's that big of a deal that he is believed to be the first Aboriginal to coach a high school basketball team in New Brunswick.

Peters is the head coach of the Simonds Seabees, a senior girls' varsity (Grades 11-12) squad in Saint John, N.B.

"I just think it was something that was bound to happen," said Peters, a Mi'kmaq who was born in Saint John. "I've coached for quite a while. And I see it as something that has been earned rather than given."

Since 1989, Peters has coached his share of teams in the East Saint John Basketball Association. He also currently serves as the president of that association.

And he had also previously coached elementary school teams in his hometown.

The Seabees are participating in their provincial AAA league. Simonds is one of eight entrants in the league's Southern Conference.

The New Brunswick circuit also has Northern, Western and Eastern conferences. The top four finishers from each grouping advance to the playoffs.

The Seabees, who are scheduled to play 14 regular season games, were sporting a 2-3 mark following their first five starts.

"I can see us anywhere between fourth and fifth when it's done," Peters said of his club's anticipated finish.

Last season the Seabees advanced to their league's quarter-final round.

"This is very much a rebuilding year," Peters said. "The team lost seven players from last year."

And Peters had a somewhat difficult time putting together a roster for this season. A few seniors who were expected to return to the team this year opted not to play – instead they are working to earn some money for a school trip to Europe this coming spring.

"We only have a roster of nine," Peters said, adding only six of them played high school ball last season. "It's presented some challenges."

Especially considering three of the players are new to this level of basketball.

"One of them is a swimmer but she's quite the athlete," Peters said. "We also have a field hockey player. And the other one hasn't played basketball since the junior mini level (for those aged 8-9)."

The Seabees actually only had eight players on their roster during their first game of the season. And the situation got a little bit interesting for the Simonds' squad as four of its players had already fouled out of the contest with three minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.

The Seabees, who had to finish the match with just four players on the court (instead of the usual five), still managed to register a convincing 114-50 victory over

Hampton High School.

Peters said having only nine players on the roster also makes practices a bit interesting since he doesn't have enough bodies to play five athletes on offence and five on defence.

"It's been a lot of free play," he said of the Seabees' training sessions. "And we do a lot of read and react offences, which is basically if a girl does this another girl reacts to that."

Peters, however, is certainly enjoying his time in the high school ranks.

"It's a lot more competitive," he said of his previous coaching stints. "There's more in depth coaching and a lot more practices."

Peters said he knew there was a coaching opportunity available with the Seabees and he simply applied for the job.

His eldest daughter Mercedes, 13, is a Grade 9 student at the school. She's a member of the Seabees junior varsity basketball squad. Though she would still be eligible to play for this club again next season, she's expected to make the jump to the senior varsity team.

Peters also has another daughter, Bronwyn, who is nine. He's also coaching her junior mini level team in the East Saint John Basketball Association this season.

Peters said he prefers coaching females. And not just because he has two daughters of his own.

"I just find that with coaching females, they want to learn," he said. "They're very excited about the game. And they're more team



Jason Peters will be part of the new coaching staff for the New Brunswick girls' basketball team for the Canada Summer Games next summer.

oriented."

Peters' job with the Seabees is not his only new coaching gig. He recently found out he'll be on the coaching staff for the New Brunswick girls' basketball team that will participate in the Canada Summer Games this coming summer in Summerside, P.E.I.

Peters was added to the provincial coaching staff as part of the Aboriginal Apprentice Coach Program. This pilot project, geared towards the '09 and 2011 Canada Games, allows

Aboriginal coaches from across the country to work alongside mentor coaches in a multi-sport games environment.

Though this is only his first year of coaching at the high school level, Peters admitted yes, he wouldn't mind moving up and handling a squad at the university level in the future.

"There's only a certain number of university coaching jobs out there," he said. "But if I stick with it long enough, you never know what will happen."

Women's basketball squad support Aboriginal youth

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

WINNIPEG

Having fresh drinking water every day is something a vast majority of Canadians take for granted. But for those who attend Manitoba's Skownan First Nation School, their clean water comes via some corporate donations forged through a relationship with the Winnipeg-based University of Manitoba Bisons.

The university women's basketball squad has had a huge interest in the Aboriginal school, located four hours north of Winnipeg, since 2006 when some Bisons first visited it.

During a school visit last year, Bisons' head coach Pam Danis and her players discovered plastic bags had been placed over water fountains at the Aboriginal school as it was unsafe to drink.

"It's really sad," Danis said. "You hear about it all the time. But we saw first hand what happens when you don't have clean drinking water."

Danis then got the ball rolling to bring clean water into the school for a two-year period. She worked with representatives from

Career Trek, a non-profit group that provides programming designed to educate young people about the importance of staying in school and working towards post-secondary and career options.

Career Trek is the organization that first put Danis and the Bisons in touch with the Skownan First Nation School. Career Trek had already been doing some work in the school before the university squad also got involved.

Meanwhile, a pair of existing university sponsors, the Investors Group and Corpell's Water, also got involved in the project to bring clean water to the Aboriginal school. The Investors Group chipped in \$10,000 to the cause while Corpell's Water contributed the cost of water coolers, water bottles and the delivery of the water to the Skownan First Nation School.

Danis said she knew she had to try and do something to help.

"It was unexpected and an eyeopener," she said of her witnessing of the lack of clean drinking water at the school. "We live in a country that has an overabundance of water."

"But in our own country we

"I think it's a great experience for them. Most of them come from a privileged background."

—Pam Danis

can't supply adequate drinking water for everybody."

Danis was told this wasn't the first time the Aboriginal school had turned off its taps.

"It's ongoing," she said. "It's hit and miss."

Through their initial contact with the Skownan First Nation School, which was organized through Career Trek, the Bisons launched a Running With The Bisons project. This venture helps to promote educate and sport among Aboriginal youth.

Now, during their annual camps at the Skownan First Nation School, members of the Bisons help teach the Aboriginal youth about basketball. And in return, they themselves learn about Aboriginal culture from the students at the school, which offers classes for those in Grades 1-9.

"I think it's a great experience for them," Danis said of her players. "Most of them come from a privileged background."

During their three-day retreats

to the Skownan First Nation, which are held in September, members of the Bisons sleep at the school.

And they get to see that even in Canada there are communities with their share of struggles for things most people take for granted.

But the Bisons are not just passing on some basketball tips to the Aboriginal youth. During their visits, Danis and members of the Manitoba squad, also take some time to read to some of the younger children at the school, which has an enrolment of about 100 students.

The reading buddies program is primarily with those students in Grades 1-4.

"We try to connect with them," Danis said.

Team members also get to see members of the Skownan First Nation School during their playing seasons.

During the past few years, members from the Aboriginal school have been busing it to

Winnipeg either once or twice per season to see the Manitoba club in action.

The Bisons' playing roster does not include any Aboriginal players. But that could change in the near future.

That's because there is an Aboriginal player – forward Tessa Monais – who is a redshirt with the squad this season. Monais, who is from Cross Lake, Man., does practice with the Bisons, but she does not dress for any games.

By being a redshirted player, Monais, who is a first-year student at the Manitoba school, does not lose a year of playing eligibility in the Canadian university ranks. Athletes can play a sport for a maximum of five seasons at the university level in Canada.

Though she is training with the squad this season, Danis said Monais still has plenty of work to do, on and off the court, to become a regular member of the Bisons next season.

"She has a long way to go, academically and athletically," Danis said. "There's a chance she will be on the team next season. But she's going to have to focus on some intense training and get her marks up as well."

Sagkeeng push for improved health care

By SHARI NARINE
Windspeaker Writer

SAGKEENG FIRST NATIONS

A \$7-million addition to the Pine Falls Health Complex could herald a new day for Aboriginal health care in Manitoba – and perhaps across the country.

“We think (this facility) is going to be a model in how we want to do business in Manitoba and we think we’ll likely get national attention as well,” said Manitoba health minister Theresa Oswald.

The provincial government has committed funding to build a 16,000-square-foot expansion to the existing Pine Falls Health Complex, which will include a lodge. The lodge will be attached to the existing facility through a walk way.

“This is a good project,” said Sagkeeng First Nations chief Donovan Fontaine. “It’s a look at individual and holistic healing. I would love to see it come up elsewhere in Manitoba.”

Fontaine is a former board member of the North Eastman Health Association, in which the health complex is located,

adjacent to the Sagkeeng First Nations. After his election as chief he stepped down from the health board because of time commitments, but the need for Aboriginal inclusion in the health system was pushed forward by Elders Dave Courchesne-Jonier and the late Don Cardinal.

The new approach to health care has come to reality now, said Oswald, thanks to the “committed and impassioned” leadership of both the Sagkeeng First Nations and the regional health authority.

“Certainly over the last couple of years the impetus to really try and do things in a different way has really gained a lot of momentum. It has a lot to do with the people: the right people at the right time in the right positions of leadership. (There’s) an openness on both sides to work together and to really get things done.”

Leadership coupled with a high First Nations population on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, with 80 per cent of those who access services at the Pine Falls Health Complex being Aboriginal, makes the location ideal.

Oswald notes that there are “small pockets of efforts being made to have culturally appropriate health care” throughout Manitoba, but the Pine Falls expansion is the first state-of-the-art work to be undertaken for Aboriginal health care.

The lodge will be designed to accommodate large family gatherings for feasts and meals; to allow for traditional healing, such as smudges; and will be a place of education on Aboriginal history and teachings around healing and wellness.

Discussions are ongoing between Aboriginal advisors and experts in western medicine as to all the services the addition will offer in way of both modern and traditional health support.

“Our people are not only one way. This will offer both alternatives, both modern and traditional healing,” said Fontaine.

Oswald says her department is not “boxing ourselves in at the moment” with a budget for either operational costs or additional health personnel.

Discussions will take place

between Aboriginal advisors and the regional health authority to determine how the existing health care staff can be best complemented.

Oswald anticipates more nurse practitioners as well as higher numbers of Aboriginal employees in key positions such as physicians and nurses. She also notes that personnel will be needed to cover the traditional healing practices.

“Ongoing operating (costs) are yet to be determined and that part of it is still up in the air, but it’s very deliberately so. We didn’t want to go in with an overarching message saying that we want this to be developed in true partnership with Aboriginal people but at the same time prescribing who will work there,” said Oswald.

The minister is confident that such new facilities will also work to attract professionals to northern and rural parts of the country. “With this well-rounded facility, we think it’s going to be a magnet for human resources that really want to make meaningful change,” said Oswald.

While construction for the

addition to the Pine Falls Health Complex is expected to get underway in 2009 so the new-look facility can open in 2010, the Sagkeeng First Nations is continuing its lobbying efforts to have a new multi-use facility built on its own land. That facility would include a health and wellness centre as well as band offices.

Fontaine notes that the Pine Falls Health Complex is about creating a physical space for Aboriginal patients, while a health and wellness centre in Sagkeeng First Nations is about bringing in more physicians, dentists and nurses.

“We want to provide more services on the reserve,” said Fontaine, pointing out that there is a long waiting list right now for health care. Fontaine sees a new Sagkeeng First Nations health and wellness centre as complementing the extended Pine Falls Health Complex. “It’s a good partnership.”

Discussions for the multi-use facility in Sagkeeng First Nations are still in the preliminary stages and include examination of the current funding from Health Canada.

Research is done time to put into action

By SHARI NARINE
Windspeaker Writer

PRINCE GEORGE

The HIV infection rate for Aboriginal intravenous drug users in Prince George, B.C., is a

staggering 23 per cent according to partial results released from a 2008 study conducted in the community 800 km northeast of Vancouver. The rate for non-Aboriginals in the same community is 10 per cent.

“The rates are high among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal intravenous drug users. This is not an Aboriginal specific problem,” said Dr. Russell Callaghan, prime investigator for the survey, which was conducted

through a semi-structured interview at the Prince George needle exchange. Participants were asked about their needle-sharing practices, sexual behavior patterns and drug use.

Preliminary results of the

survey undertaken by the Northern Health Authority, the Northern B.C. Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Task Force and Public Health Agency of Canada were released mid-November.

(See CAAN on page 28.)

Our Voice, Our Survey, Our Future

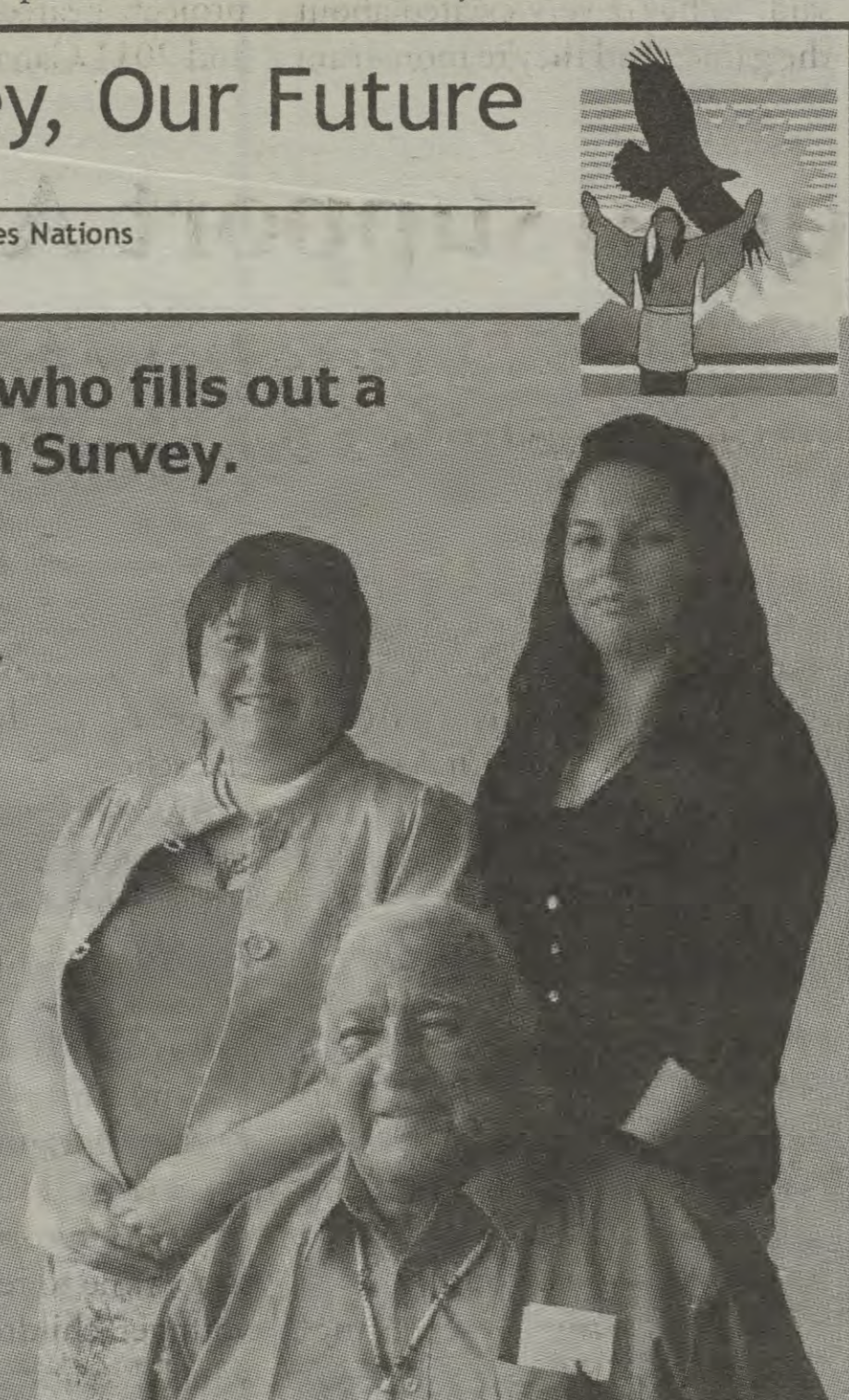
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CAAN focus on informing youth on HIV and Hep C

(Continued from page 27.)

Callaghan, who works at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in Mississauga, Ont., is originally from Prince George and has done research in the community for the past eight years. The high number of self-reported HIV rates that were being noted at the Nechako Treatment Centre raised flags, said Callaghan. That, coupled with the results of an earlier survey, the Cedar Project, indicated elevated rates of HIV and Hepatitis C among injection drug users and an elevated rate of cocaine use in Prince George, made the three parties decide to further study the situation.

"(The three parties) thought it was important and I was interested in this professionally," said Callaghan.

Prince George's HIV infection rate is second highest across the country when compared to similar studies undertaken in 2006 in seven other urban settings. Edmonton's HIV infection rate is the highest. Other communities examined in

the 2006 I-TRAC Canada Study were Toronto, Sudbury, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Regina, and multiple sites in Quebec. Prince George was not included in the 2006 survey.

The Northern Health Authority, the Northern B.C. Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Task Force and Public Health Agency of Canada will come together to both interpret the results of the Prince George survey as well as to decide how to move forward, said Cavanagh.

Kevin Barlow, chief executive officer with Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network in Ottawa, is not surprised with the results from this newest survey. "We've been aware for quite some time that intravenous drug users account for two-thirds of HIV infections in Aboriginal communities."

While the Hep C results are yet to be released, Barlow notes that more Aboriginals contract that disease than HIV. If needles are to be shared, CAAN encourages sterilizing needles with bleach and water, but while that works against the transmission of HIV,

it doesn't work for Hep C.

That Prince George has a high infection rate of HIV doesn't surprise Barlow either. He notes there's a large Aboriginal population in western Canada. "Other social factors are also very evident in our communities," he said, including high poverty levels and street-involved activities.

The results of the Prince George survey will be taken into consideration by CAAN's national task force for HARM Reduction. The HARM Reduction program has been operating for three years and is hoping for a fourth year of funding to come through. Barlow expects to get word on that in February or March.

"Injecting drug use has been a major focus because it is certainly where a lot of our concerns lie," said Barlow.

He notes that the HARM Reduction program is about more than intravenous drug use, though. It includes methadone maintenance, counseling and support, and condom distribution. Training sessions for front line workers are already

being delivered and if the funding comes through for the new fiscal year, CAAN will start working with law enforcement agencies, including police and prisons.

CAAN has also placed its focus on Aboriginal youth with a Web site that came on line in 2007. The site is in the process of being "reinvigorated," said Barlow, with a new program to be launched in January, which will focus on stigma, ignorance and discrimination (SIDS). The campaign is aimed at youth under 16 years old and its goal is to "get to them before they get involved with drugs and become sexually active."

Barlow notes that the spreading of HIV and Hep C through intravenous drug use isn't a huge concern for Aboriginal youth, who are more inclined to get involved in unprotected sex as they enter adolescence.

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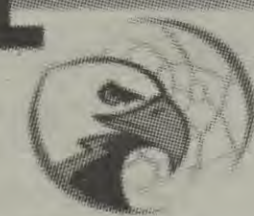
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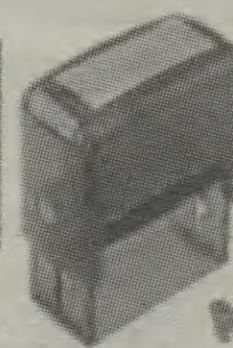
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OPPORTUNITY**

DEPARTMENT: Siksika Nation Tribal Administration Law Office
POSITION: Senior In House Legal Counsel
DATE POSTED: December 11/08
DEADLINE: January 30/09, 4:30 p.m.
STATUS: Three Year Term Contract
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS: Negotiable with experience

General Statement of Duties: This is a very visible role within the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration organization. The Senior In House Legal Counsel provides leadership to the Administration by providing business strategic, timely and accurate legal advice including advice on complex legal matters, litigation management, drafting legal documents, advising Administration as to legal rights. The Senior In House Legal Counsel will have fundamental day-to-day involvement with Senior Management. **CONTACT RECRUITMENT OFFICER FOR A COMPLETE JOB DESCRIPTION.**

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- Represent Siksika Nation Tribal Administration in various legal proceedings
- Provide legal advice and counsel to Siksika Nation Tribal Administration, including negotiating, preparing and reviewing legal documents and contracts
- Represent Siksika Nation Tribal Administration in litigation
- Must have awareness of and sensitivity of cultural/influences in the community
- Ability to make sound and fair decisions based upon available information
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For further information and prior to faxing, contact:
Candice Good Eagle, R.P.R. – Recruitment Officer
Phone: (403) 734-5567

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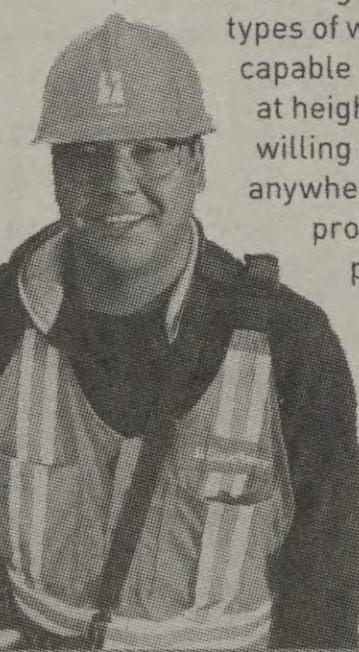
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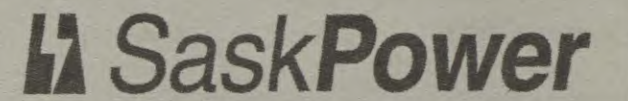
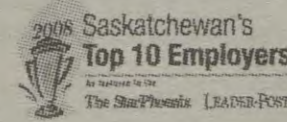
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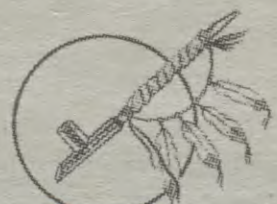
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[footprints] Oscar Lathlin

Lathlin remembered as a dedicated minister who never gave up

By Dianne Meili

Oscar Lathlin, who went from working a trap line in northern Manitoba to becoming a cabinet minister in Manitoba's NDP government, passed away at the age of 61.

He died at his cottage at Clearwater Lake, near his beloved Opaskwayak Cree Nation and The Pas on Sunday, Nov. 2. He had phoned one of his assistants late Saturday night saying he was having breathing problems, and was taken to The Pas hospital by ambulance but was pronounced dead early Sunday morning.

Lathlin, who was a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, had a history of respiratory trouble, but friends and colleagues said he never complained about his health and rarely spoke about himself in general.

His sudden death came as a shock to his community and the greater world of political officials. Accolades regarding his work poured out the week following his death, and many people posted comments about personal experiences with the affable Lathlin on a CBC news Web site. The overall theme of most tributes reflect the fact he was unlike most politicians – willing to give prompt answers and offer true assistance to people who approached him, while shunning the limelight and seldom speaking in cabinet.

Donna Meness wrote that she met this "smiling, quiet man" at the Assembly of First Nations library when he sought information about education and economic development.

"His belief in education and economic development were absolutely pivotal to the North, and that's something he never gave up on," Meness wrote. "It's so sad to have lost another good, strong Indian man who understood his responsibilities

towards his family, his community, his nation and his province."

Another message on the CBC Web site, who has worked in government for over 30 years, and who was a staff member in one of Lathlin's ministerial departments, wrote that he was "a very down to earth man, respected by myself and many of my co-workers."

Born on May 20, 1947, Lathlin was born at a time when Aboriginal rights and education were almost unheard of. When he lost his father at the age of 12, he supported his mother and siblings working trap lines near The Pas.

"When Indian Affairs staff came along to gather children for residential school, they could not and did not take him," said a family member, noting this was the case perhaps because officials recognized Lathlin was the breadwinner in his family.

Not one to give up on education, Lathlin attended day school and eventually moved on to Brandon University where he obtained a university degree and then a job with the federal government.

In 1985, Lathlin was elected chief of what is now known as the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, working to improve the local school and create new jobs.

During his office, community leaders signed a gaming agreement with the province, started the land management protocol for First Nations, and expanded the infrastructure on Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

Because Lathlin had confidence in his own Aboriginal people administering their own programs and delivering services, he was instrumental in the devolution of child and family services for Manitoba First Nations.

Lathlin was elected to the legislature in 1990 as the MLA for The Pas constituency, a member of the NDP opposition. One of his proudest moments – and a life event he considered one of his most significant achievements – was the fact he won all the polls in the last provincial election.

When the NDP took power nine years after Lathlin was first elected, Premier Doer named him minister of conservation, switching him to minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs in 2002.

With this last portfolio, Lathlin gained the ability to help spearhead development of the University College of the North, which brought post-secondary learning to 12 remote communities. His dream of providing education for his people was becoming a reality. Regarding his push for economic stability for his people, he also established the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund along with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs involving a \$20-million pool of money earmarked for assisting initiation and expansion of Aboriginal business.

Quoted in the Canadian Press, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Ron Evans said, "What I'm going to miss about him is his knowledge of the issues. Especially as he was a chief at one time, he fully understood the positions."

Fellow cabinet minister Eric Robinson, who oversees the culture, heritage, tourism and sport portfolio, expressed his grief over losing not just a political colleague, but a friend as well.

"It's got to be said that we've lost a very dear person, a great leader among Manitobans. He's going to definitely leave a void."

Robinson also pointed out how steadfastly Lathlin clung to his



Oscar Lathlin

roots, driving seven hours on many weekends from Winnipeg to The Pas over bumpy rural roads.

He remained committed to the area, even though The Pas townspeople held secret for 20 years knowledge of the killers of Aboriginal student Betty Helen Osborne, who was brutally raped and murdered by six non-Aboriginal males. Osborne was from Norway House – a smaller, more northern community – and was billeting in the Pas and attending high school there when she was murdered in 1971.

The ability to forgive, among a long list of other admirable qualities, and the sheer number of causes he worked for made Lathlin "a powerful voice" stated Gimli MLA and Education

Minister Peter Bjornson. "We were all taken aback with the news of his death...shocked."

Bjornson said any young Aboriginal person looking for a role model need look no further than Oscar Lathlin.

"He often said his father told him he should be a school teacher because it was a powerful position in the community...the ability to improve conditions through your actions, words and commitment," Bjornson said. "He never forgot that and took every opportunity when speaking with young people to discuss the value of an education."

Lathlin leaves to mourn his wife Leona, a son, and a daughter. He was laid to rest Nov. 8 in The Pas.

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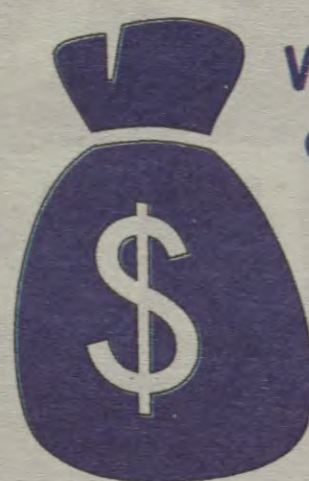
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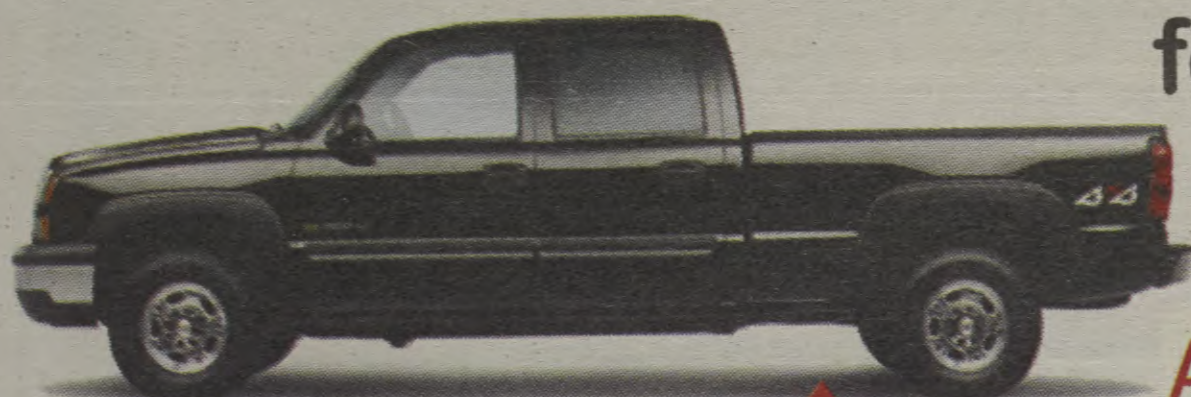


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